

Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling.

"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to wisdom".

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Table of Contents

1. [On Stress Location in the World's Chief Languages](#), by Dr. Walter Gassner.
2. [Education in Red China](#), by William Benton.
3. [Some Thoughts on the Use of the A. R. Alphabet](#), by Sir James Pitman.
4. [Tomorrow's Illiterates](#), a review, by Helen Bowyer.
5. [From "Out on a Limerick"](#), by Bennet Cerf.
6. [Thoze Spelling Deemuns](#), by Ralph D. Owen.
7. ["Rational Spelling"](#), a review.
8. [The Corpse in the Ivy Towers](#), by Victor N. Crasnoff
9. [An editorial on Self-Education](#).
10. [The Worm at the Root](#), by Helen Bowyer.
11. [Some Additions to the 7 Deadly Sins of Spelling Reformers](#), by Davis, Wingfield and Co.
12. [Some Objections to the Philosophy of a "hungry reader"](#).
13. [Laf Lienz](#), from here and there.
14. [An Apologetic Parody](#), a poem by Evelyn F. Boehm.

The very comprehensive 16 page article on "Homophones, Homographs and Heterophones — the Deceitful Words of English" is being included as a supplement sent to those academic subscribers. Other paid subscribers may have it free upon request. We merely thought we would not be wasting it where such technical articles would be unappreciated. Non-subscribers may have it at a cost of 75¢ prepaid.

This article contain 5 lengthy tables of material that required three years of research and many months of compiling. To the best of the author's knowledge, this material has never before been published.

Coming Attractions

The next issue of the Spelling Progress Bulletin will have some of the following articles:

The relationship between juvenile delinquency and lack of reading ability.

Spelling – its many ramifications.

Our Mentor, Homer W. Wood.

Keeping up with the experimental teaching projects.

Eyes that See Not.

Backwardness in Reading.

Is "Anguish Languich" useful?

The Feasibility and Means of Reforming our Spelling.

A comparison of three dozen proposed phonetic alphabet systems.

Do you have an article or a humorous poem that would interest our readers?

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 pp2-7 in the printed version*]

1. On Stress Location in the World's Chief Languages, by Dr. Walter Gassner, Sydney, Australia.

(Note: In this article, a letter enclosed in brackets [] represents a symbol of the International Phonetic Association; where a vowel is underlined, the vowel is understood to be stressed; such underlining is not the practice in any existing orthography. Russian letters are printed as capitals, so as to avoid confusion).

The aim of this article is to give readers an idea about the location of stress in the world's principal languages, and to demonstrate how important it is to have the stress clearly indicated where it is variable. A system of spelling in which no provision is made for the indication of stress falls short of being completely phonetic, – no matter how close it comes to the phonetic ideal in other respects.

English is not the only language that is in need of a reform of its spelling, though to be sure, none of the languages that use the Roman alphabet needs a reform as urgently as English does. Any language, – and particularly a world language, – has a twofold duty: to its own speakers, especially the rising generation, – and to foreign learners.

Such duties should be understood as referring only to the system of representing sounds in writing, which is man-made, and can therefore, be changed by man; pronunciation and points of grammar, no matter how illogical, cannot be altered by decrees or resolutions, hence, it would be futile to contemplate improvements of a language in these respects.

The duty a language has towards its own speakers consists in representing the sounds in a way that automatically suggests the written form. The question "How do you spell it?" should not be necessary, – except in cases where homonyms have to be distinguished or where variant pronunciations have to be taken into consideration. The proportion of such cases would always be comparatively small. The duty a language has towards foreign learners consists in enabling the learner to deduce the spoken form of a word from its written form once he has learned the "key", – which should be as simple and straight forward as practicable and free from arbitrary exceptions.

I hold the opinion that efforts at rationalizing the spelling of different languages should be coordinated. This does not mean suggesting a world-wide uniform system of representing sounds, such as is used in the system of the International Phonetic Association. This would necessitate an increased number of symbols, which should be avoided at all costs. Generally speaking, the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet should be sufficient but where a language uses letters written with accent signs, such as: ö, ê, è, or ligatures, such as æ, œ, – such additional symbols will, of course, continue to be part of the alphabet of that particular language.

It is intended, in a later article, to present ideas about the suggested co-ordination of efforts directed at rationalising the spelling of different languages. This article will merely deal with the stress aspect; other aspects of pronunciation will be referred to only where such a course is necessary for the sake of clarity.

What follows is chiefly a description of the existing position in certain languages with regard to stress. Where the condition is unsatisfactory, brief remarks will be added to show how it could be remedied. Such remarks should highlight the importance of stress indication, – they are not meant to be a final solution. It should be understood that it is only *word* stress that would be represented in the written form. Sentence stress will necessarily remain outside the scope of this article and of any spelling reform.

For the sake of uniformity of treatment, and with a view to providing a suitable basis of comparison, English is treated in the same way as other languages, viz., from the point of view of a person who learns it as a foreign language.

English:

Stress is variable and there exists no satisfactory means of representing it in the existing spelling. There are certain vowel sounds which occur only in unstressed syllables, viz., [ə] , [o] , [ju] , also unstressed [i] usually differs from stressed [i] to such an extent that the former could be regarded as an additional sound that occurs exclusively in unstressed syllables. No letters are provided for the sounds that occur exclusively in unstressed syllable; – they are all represented by letters which, in other positions, represent other sounds – the schwa sound being represented by at least 20 letters and letter groups.

In a book entitled "Rational Spelling", the author of the present article has shown how to indicate the stress by the use of so-called pre-tonic symbols, i.e., special symbols for the vowel sounds in the syllable that precedes the stressed syllable. Such a method is consistent and unobtrusive; its only drawback might be the occurrence of double letters in certain instances, tho they do not occur frequently as in the existing system, and, of course, are there on all occasions for a definite reason.

In my contribution to the Shaw-competition in 1960, in which, of course, only systems using symbols other than the letters of the Roman alphabet were admitted, I demonstrated how the stress problem could be resolved if special symbols are used for the sounds that occur exclusively in unstressed syllables.

At present I hold the view that the stress problem can be solved by extending the range of symbols so as to include æ, œ, and ë, symbols which are occasionally also used at present, – and by providing for the use of double letters in a very limited number of cases.

The fact that in a considerable number of instances, two words now spelt alike differ from each other merely by the stress (e.g., increase- noun, increase- verb), should make it abundantly clear that the stress problem should not be taken lightly.

The weak argument that in some cases the stress is uncertain can be countered in the same way as any other statement that the pronunciation of a word is uncertain: either a pronouncing dictionary should be used as a guide, or alternative spellings representing the different pronunciations should be admissible (e.g., a spelling representing "address" in America, and one representing "address" in British countries.)

French:

Word stress normally falls on the last syllable of a word, not counting the "e muet" which is either, in fact, silent, or the French variant of the schwa-sound. The written accent signs do not serve the purpose of indicating the stress.

For a spelling reformer, the stress presents no problem in French.

German:

The position is far from satisfactory, tho, of course, by no means as unsatisfactory as in English.

Stress may fall on any syllable. True it does not normally fall on the last syllable of a polysyllabic word of pure German origin, but words of French origin and slightly altered words of Latin origin which have the stress on the last syllable, are numerous. In words of pure German origin, stress

falls, as a rule, on the stem, and in compound words, on the stem of the first element (there are, however, some exceptions). Complications arise with prefixes. Among the prefixes that are attached to verbs, some are necessarily stressed, (such prefixes are separated from the stem and placed at the end of the sentence in certain forms, e.g., *ankommen* - to arrive, *ich komme an* - I arrive); others are necessarily unstressed, -(*bekommen* - to receive; such prefixes are inseparable); others again are stressed and separable in certain words, and unstressed and inseparable in others; e.g., *untergehen* - to set (of the sun), *unterschreiben*-to sign).

The schwa-sound is represented by the letter "e", which, of course, is also used for the representation of other sounds in both stressed and unstressed syllables.

Written accent signs cannot be used to indicate the stress, because there would be no room for them in the case of letters with the umlaut-sign: (ä, ö, ü). The remedy suggested for improving the position with respect to stress indication, is closely linked with the question of indicating the length of vowels, –which is not carried out satisfactorily either.

Under the present system, the vowels a, e, and o, are sometimes doubled when long: ie is similarly used for the long-i sound [ai]. It is proposed to extend the principle of duplication to the letter "u", and to use the combinations ae (for ä), oe (for ö) and ue (for ü) only in cases where the vowels concerned are long (at present the two forms can be used indiscriminately). Moreover, the double vowels and the vowel-combinations with e as their second element should be used only in stressed syllables.

Where there is no room for doubt regarding the stress, the long vowel-sounds can, of course, be represented by the simple vowel-letters.

Under the present system, a consonant which is not followed by another consonant is usually doubled when the vowel that precedes it is short. This practice will be continued, but, of course, carried out consistently and limited to cases where the syllable is stressed, – so that the double consonant serves as a stress indication ("Stress" is meant to include secondary stress, hence also the most prominent syllable in any element of a compound word). Where a consonant that follows a short vowel is followed by another consonant, the first consonant is usually not doubled, – it is so only in a limited number of cases; in a rational system the cases will be those in which there is a need to indicate the stress. Using ä instead of e will serve the same purpose (the letters e and ä when short represent the same sound, viz., short-e [e] but in unstressed syllables, e may also represent the neutral vowel).

Spanish:

Written accent signs (viz., the acute accent: ´) are used where the stress does not fall in accordance with certain fixed rules (viz., that the stress falls on the second last syllable where the word ends in a vowel, n, or s; and on the last syllable in all other cases); the letter i, preceding another vowel, does not make up a syllable, hence an accent sign is necessary on stressed "i" in the second last syllable; this would be unnecessary if the letter "y" were used for an unstressed i-sound preceding another vowel. No other changes are necessary, since the Spanish system of indicating the stress is well-nigh perfect.

Italian:

Stress on the last syllable is always indicated by a written accent sign, but there is no way of telling whether the stress falls on the second last or on an earlier syllable.

It is suggested that the use of written accent signs should be extended to all cases in which the stress does not fall on the second last syllable (e.g. *piccolo*-small). The accent sign to be used will be the

grave on "e" or "o", where the signs are open [e] and [ɔ] respectively; otherwise the acute accent.

As in Spanish, the introduction of y for unstressed-i preceding a vowel would considerably reduce the number of cases where a written accent sign is necessary.

Russian:

The position regarding stress is extremely unsatisfactory in Russian, – worse even than in English, in view of the fact that the various inflected forms of one word may have the stress on different syllables. Written accent signs are used only in books especially edited for beginners. There is, in the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet, one letter, viz. Ě, pronounced [j ɔ] or [ɔ], which is always stressed; however, the two dots are frequently omitted in print, and this renders both the stress location and the sound of the vowel concerned uncertain (the practice of failing to indicate the fact that the letter "E" is pronounced as [ɔ] is even extended to the "English" transliteration of proper names, such as Khrushchev, where the "e" is pronounced as stressed [ɔ] (Chruschtschow in German).

In Russian, most unstressed vowels differ considerably in quality from the stressed vowels. The letter "O" which represents the [ɔ] sound in stressed syllables, becomes [ʌ] or [ə] in unstressed syllables, as also does the letter "A"; similarly, E, И and Я become identical in unstressed syllables, – the letters which, in stressed syllables represent [j ε], [ji], and [ja] respectively, are changed into reduced [ji].

A reform of Russian spelling should be coupled with introducing the Roman alphabet. Since accent signs are used sparingly at present, they should, likewise, be only sparingly used in the Romanized form of Russian. This can only be achieved by using entirely different sets of symbols for the stressed and unstressed vowels. (Treating the "hard" and "soft" vowels as one, there are five vowels that may occur in stressed syllables, and three that may occur in unstressed syllables). In view of the need for additional vowel symbols, "y" and "w" will have to be put to good use by giving them vowel values; moreover, since "hard" [ε], i.e., the sound that does *not* palatise the preceding consonant, is rare except after certain consonants which are necessarily "hard", the letter "e" can be used for the schwa-sound [ə], i.e. the letters A and O when occurring in certain unstressed syllables.

Polish:

Stress regularly falls on the second last syllable, the only exceptions being certain verb forms and a few individual words, where stress falls on an earlier syllable. Since the number of cases where the stress falls otherwise than in accordance with the general rule is extremely small, it is thought that a written accent sign (the acute) might be introduced for the purpose of indicating the stress.

However, a complication arises, because there is one vowel which regularly has an accent sign no matter whether the syllable is stressed or not; it is ó, pronounced [u]. It will be necessary to replace this letter by the letter "u", which also represents this sound.

Portuguese:

As in Spanish, there is a rule stating that the stress normally falls on the last syllable in certain cases, and on the second last syllable in certain other cases. (The rule is slightly more complicated than in Spanish and need not detain us here). Where the stress falls otherwise than in accordance with the rule, written accent signs (the acute or the circumflex) are used.

The present position is entirely satisfactory.

Dutch and Flemish:

Stress is variable, and the existing system of spelling, which in other respects is almost perfect, fails to indicate it.

It is suggested to put an acute accent on a stressed vowel in a syllable other than the first. Since the letter "e" can always be doubled should it be necessary to make it clear that the vowel is long and stressed, it will be possible to leave the stressed vowel of the second syllable of a word unmarked if the first syllable contains unstressed "e" followed by a single consonant. This covers cases with the frequently occurring unstressed prefixes be- and ge-.

Danish:

Stress is variable and not indicated in the existing system. Here too, it is suggested to use the acute accent in cases where the stress is on a syllable other than the first. There is one letter bearing a diacritical mark: å, which represents [ɔ:], and which until 1948 was represented by aa. It is suggested that "aa" should be reintroduced for the unstressed syllable, so that a syllable with å will be understood to be stressed.

Norwegian:

There are two Norwegian languages. The one treated here is closely allied to Danish; it is the form chiefly used in towns.

Most of the remarks made under the heading "Danish" apply to that form of Norwegian, but there is an additional factor: the tone. There are two tones, usually referred to as the single and the double tone. Only stressed syllables are affected by it. It is suggested to use the grave accent in all cases where there is the double tone, and the acute accent for the single tone where an indication of the stress is necessary; the use of A will be limited to cases where the tone is the single one.

Swedish:

The position here is similar to that in Norwegian; the tone problem, too, exists. The present Swedish spelling uses three letters with diacritic marks: å, ä and ö. It is suggested to replace å by o, and to use some other letter for the peculiar sound between [o] and [u] now represented by the letter "o"; the letters ä and ö should be limited to stressed syllables having the single tone; the symbols which Danish and Norwegian use for these sounds: æ and ø respectively, might be introduced in all other cases.

Roumanian:

Stress normally falls on the second last syllable, but in certain categories of words, on the last, and in others again on a syllable preceding the second last. The rules sometimes given are complicated and riddled with exceptions. Hence, it will be necessary to introduce the acute accent in cases where the stressed syllable is not the second last. There are three instances of vowels with diacritic marks. Two of these, viz., â and î represent the same sound, viz., unrounded [u]; in a reformed spelling system, one of them can be used for the sound when stressed, the other for the sound when unstressed. The third vowel bearing a diacritic mark, viz., ă, another "obscure" sound, will have to be replaced by some other letter (a redundant one), when stressed.

Czech and Slovak:

These are two distinct languages, but the position regarding stress is the same in both languages. Stress invariably falls on the first syllable of a word.

Hence, stress presents no problem in Czech and Slovak.

Serbo-Croatian:

This is the chief language of Yugoslavia. It can be written either with the Latin or with the Cyrillic alphabet; both versions are phonetically accurate as far as the consonants and the quality of the vowels are concerned. The stress is variable, but it never falls on the last syllable of a word. Tones, too, are an essential factor. A stressed vowel may be long or short, and pronounced with a rising or a falling tone. In dictionaries the following accent signs are used: acute ´ for a long vowel with a rising tone, ^ for a long vowel with a falling tone, grave ` for a short vowel with a rising tone, and double grave `` for a short vowel with a falling tone. These accent signs are, however, not in general use. To use them consistently would, certainly, be cumbersome, and most speakers are not aware of the existence of the tones. It is suggested to mark only the long vowels, – by making the use of compulsory for stressed vowels with a rising tone, and using double vowels (instead of ^ which is an unusual sign) for long vowels with a falling tone. Where a short vowel (no matter whether with a rising or falling tone) on a syllable other than the first of a word is stressed, it should be marked by doubling the consonant that follows.

Bulgarian, White Russian, Ukrainian, and Slovenian:

The last named language is written with the Roman alphabet, the others with the Cyrillic alphabet, which would have to be transliterated. Stress is variable in all these languages, and, in contrast to Russian, there are no vowel sounds which are restricted to stressed syllables (except in White Russian). Written accent signs are, therefore, necessary, and it is suggested that the acute accent should be used in all cases where the stress does not fall on the second last syllable of a word.

Modern Greek:

The alphabet of Ancient Greek is used with the various traditional accent marks. In contrast to Ancient Greek, these accent marks indicate the stress in Modern Greek, and the distinction between the acute and the circumflex has become meaningless. All words, except those which are completely without a stress, have an accent sign on them. If the Greek language were to be romanized, some of the accent signs could be discarded. There is no fixed syllable on which the stress is located, but it is thought, again, that it would be reasonable to assume that stress that falls on the second last syllable of a word, could be left unmarked.

Hungarian:

Stress invariably falls on the first syllable of a word. Stress, therefore, presents no problem to the spelling reformer.

Finnish:

The same remarks apply to Finnish. It seems, in fact, that Finnish is the only language in Europe that has a perfectly phonetic system of spelling.

Turkish:

Stress is variable and hard to define. There appears to be also a rise in pitch, as distinct from stress, which regularly occurs on the last syllable. Where it occurs on a syllable other than the last, it should be marked by an acute accent.

Arabic:

In literary Arabic, as against the colloquials of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the "Maghreb", and others, – stress falls on the second last syllable if it is long, i.e., contains a long vowel or a short vowel followed by two or more consonants; otherwise on the nearest syllable preceding it which is long; failing such a syllable, on the first syllable of a word. Provided there no exceptions to the rule, the stress presents no problem for romanizing the arabic language.

Hebrew:

It appears that stress most frequently occurs on the last syllable of a word if it ends in a consonant, the second last if the word ends in a vowel. Deviations should be marked by an acute accent sign in a romanized form of Hebrew.

Hindustani:

Stress is hard to define and apparently linked with musical pitch. In a romanized version, it might be disregarded.

Japanese:

Stress appears to be evenly spread over polysyllabic words. There are different tonal pitches on each syllable. A need to indicate them in the written form might arise where two or more words otherwise pronounced alike are distinguished merely by the different pitches.

Chinese:

Chinese is a monosyllabic language, – word stems invariably consist of only one syllable, represented in writing by one of the many thousand ideographs. Until recently, transliterations usually rendered each ideograph as a separate word. However, there is a growing tendency to combine word stems and thus create compound words or rather polysyllabic words. In modern colloquial Mandarin – as against the other dialects and the classical tradition, the stress falls only on one syllable of such a compound word, and in the official romanization recently introduced in China, such words are written as a single unit.

Tones play an important role in all Chinese dialects, of which there are about 20, all written in the same way when the ideographs are used, but pronounced in as many different ways. In Mandarin, there are four tones: the even tone, customarily marked thus $\bar{\quad}$, the rising tone, marked $\acute{\quad}$, the rising-falling tone, marked $\hat{\quad}$, and the falling tone, marked $\grave{\quad}$. In the romanization referred to, tone marks are used only in exceptional cases. This is indeed a drawback, since many words and groups of words are distinguished merely by the different tones. It is suggested that all *stressed* syllables should be provided with the appropriate tone mark, except the even tone in monosyllables and in words where the stress falls on the first syllable.

Malay and Indonesian:

The two languages are in most respects identical, apart from different spelling conventions. In Malay, the most frequent unstressed vowel sound is specially marked by a diacritic, thus: \ddot{e} . This is not done in Indonesian, hence stress is not satisfactorily indicated. Using an acute accent in cases where the stress is on a syllable other than the second last would solve the problem.

Final remarks:

Even in languages in which the stress is supposed to be invariably located on one particular syllable, the problem of stress might come up where it is a matter of rendering foreign words in their proper spoken form, including names, provided it is considered appropriate to translate them. In such cases, the acute accent would be used; but where this accent is utilized for other purpose (as in Czech and Hungarian as an indication of length), the stressed vowel would have to have some other indication such as underlining.

It is hoped that the forgoing remarks have made it clear that stress is a matter that should not be neglected when contemplating a spelling reform, in particular in the case of English, where it is so prominent.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 p7 in the printed version]

From RIMES WITHOUT REASON by the Simpler Spelling Association

Without guaisle

Whenever she looks down the aisle
She gives me a beautiful smaisle;
 And of all of her beaux
 I am certain she sheaux
She likes me the best of the paisle.

Hope she didn't have a pesne

A gallant young man of Duquesne
Went home with a girl in the ruesne.
 She said with a sigh,
 "I wonder when Igh
Shall see such a rain-beau aguesne.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 pp8-10,29 in the printed version]

2. EDUCATION IN RED CHINA, By WILLIAM BENTON,

publisher of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and former U.S. Senator from Connecticut. This article is based on the report of a special task force of researchers and scholars from the Britannica.

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CIRCULATING throughout Red China not long ago was a "best seller" written by one Kao Yupeo, a young Communist soldier. While the tale, a kind of autobiographical novel is pure soap opera thickly larded with propaganda, it has disquieting meaning nonetheless for the free world.

Kao writes that he was twelve when the first schoolhouse was opened in his home town of Taiping in the bleak province of northeastern China. He begged his peasant father to let him attend, but met blunt refusal: there was no money for tuition or supplies and the boy's work was needed at home. Kao was crushed, his desire to learn throttled.

But Kao was made of stern stuff. At twenty, as an illiterate Communist soldier in the Peoples' Liberation Army, he enrolled in a new kind of special class for members of his unit. Within a few years to learn to read and write so well that he was able to compose the story of his life – in 40 big chapters.

The Communist Government swiftly seized on the propaganda value of the work.

If the government performed a miracle of teaching with young Kao, it does not intend to do less with others in the vast, sprawling nation now under its domination. For a truly remarkable educational revolution, unprecedented in all history, is now sweeping across China.



"A truly remarkable educational revolution unprecedented in all history is now sweeping across China."

Red China, chafing impatiently to become a great world power, knows that it can achieve its goal only through education. Its faith in education antedates that of the West by centuries, and indeed by millennia, and goes back to the time of Confucius and the age of Pericles. Now its Communist leaders, who have been calling on that faith from the very start of their regime in 1949, are demanding that their schools do more things for more people - and faster - than any educational system in the history of the world.

Already so much has been accomplished that we must alter the image we have been harboring of that vast land. It is no longer a nation teeming with ignorant peasants and city slum dwellers. It is rather, a country coming alive with learning. People from the age of three to sixty, seventy, and even eighty are going to school.

The full story of what is happening inside the world's Big Red Schoolhouse is disclosed in a study just completed by a research task force which I established as publisher of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica." I have sought permission from the Peking Government to visit schools on the mainland. Refused an entry permit, I organized a team of experts to study Red China's, educational system. Throughout the past year, this group has investigated many hundreds of government and private sources of information here and around the world, interviewing refugees and combing countless documents. Their conclusions have profound significance for America and the rest of the free nations. I am reporting on them here for the first time.

The investigators tried scrupulously to separate propaganda from fact. This has not been easy because the bamboo curtain does not lift readily and the Red Chinese have learned well the techniques of exaggeration practised by their Kremlin tutors. However, I have tested the plausibility of the alleged facts against the judgment and knowledge of persons with long experience in China. What follows is as accurate a picture as can now be obtained in the West of the state of education in Red China.

The report stresses three major points:

- 1) That schools in Red China are literally leaping from the ground. They are coming into existence at the fastest rate the world has ever seen. In 1949, when the Communists seized power, China had only 350,000 schools serving 25,000,000 pupils. Now there are nearly 1,000,000 schools with 108,000,000 pupils, a rise of more than 400 per cent in the pupil population.
- 2) That the number of students attending institutions of higher learning has increased 500 per cent in the past decade. In comparison, our own college population, exploding at what we consider a staggering pace, has risen only some 40 per cent.
- 3) That a mass war on illiteracy - and illiteracy up to now has been virtually a national Chinese tradition - is under way. Scores of millions of peasants and industrial workers are attending "spare time" classes on farms and in factories. As a result, probably half the population of 700,000,000 now can claim to read and write, compared with less than 20 per cent only ten years ago.

Americans must understand that this enormous educational surge is being guided toward a political objective completely removed from the ancient aristocratic Chinese ideal of learning for its own sake. For 2,500 years, Western philosophers have agreed that the legitimate end of acquiring knowledge is to make good men. The Chinese Communists, however, believe something else again. Their educational system is completely geared to the creation of good Chinese Communists.

The new China's educational structure is riddled with Communist propaganda on every level. Mao Tse-tung, Communist Party chairman and the Party's undisputed ruler for thirty years, spelled out national educational policy early: "What we want," he said, "is a Marxist-Leninist approach in study." At all costs, Chinese education must serve the state.

For example, a teacher in a Peking school for factory workers drills his pupils in arithmetic with problems such as these:

- 1) In the United States, the number of half-starved people is twice the number of the unemployed, and is 5,000,000 less than the number of people who have to live in slums. As one-half of the number of the slum dwellers is 11.5 million, what is the number of the unemployed in the U.S.?
- 2) The total number of Japanese policemen and police reserve corps armed and equipped by the U.S. is 218,000. It is known that the number of policemen is 68,000 more than the number of police reserve corps. How many policemen and how many police reserve corps have been armed and equipped by the U.S.?

In every area of the curriculum, the United States is vilified and the Soviet Union praised. Thus a history teacher will tell his class that American troops used "poisonous germs" to kill Chinese war prisoners during the Korean war. But he will also "explain" that Soviet Russia extended the hand of friendship by sending medical teams to help China suppress outbreaks of bubonic plague.

But all does not run smoothly. "Incidents" have occurred at the "spare-time" schools for peasants and workers. Many teachers look upon these schools with something less than full patriotism. One primary school teacher in Hengyang burst into uncontrollable sobbing when she learned she was to be assigned to a workers' school. In Chengsa, a number of spare-time teachers ran away from their jobs one day and never returned.

Such reactions are understandable when one considers the student body: farm workers and factory hands are not nearly so pleasant to teach as wide-eyed first-graders. Many adults resent being wrenched out of lifelong habits and the Communist cadres, the party committees in factories, often foster active dislike for teachers, whose political status they downgrade.

FROM a research study published in Hong Kong comes this remarkable description of the treatment accorded spare-time school teachers: "Students often call their teachers bad names and require them to cook, sweep the floor, send messages, or even carry dirty water for them. Occasionally, the students humiliate the teachers by most disgraceful methods, such as buttock spanking, and a few teachers commit suicide after the humiliation."

The report adds this laconic comment: "All the people feel that teaching in the workers' spare-time

schools is really a hard way to earn a living."

All of this is part of the story of China's effort literally to lift itself educationally by its bootstraps. Now let us examine the background. How has it been done?

In 1949, Mao and his Communists won dominion over nearly two-thirds of a billion of the poorest, least industrialized, most backward mass of people on earth. Mao's leaders decided that the long-range success of their program hinged on educating this great mass of humanity to transform their small farms into modern agricultural enterprises and into a smoothly integrated industrial economy. They knew that national power stems from technology and that technology stems from knowledge. They knew that progress would be greatly speeded if every farmer and every worker were taught to read and write. They decided to make the short-term sacrifices involved in training millions of experts and technicians to build and run the farms and factories, to build the roads, dams and railways, and to create the modern wonders of chemistry and physics.

Early in 1950, Mao took up this challenge.

All schools were placed under the centralized authority of the Ministry of Education. In the years that followed, thousands of private institutions, including those operated by religious groups and foreign missions, were expropriated. The government's announced aim, spelled out by the vice minister of education, Chien Chun-jui, was "to create a national educational system based on help from Communist Russia, to establish a new kind of 'peoples' higher education and launch a border-to-border drive to eliminate illiteracy."

SOME 60,000 new primary schools sprang, into existence each year as the decade wore on; in the first three years alone, the pupil population doubled. Kindergartens were established for children between three and seven years old.

In 1949, there were 227 colleges, universities, and special institutions in China, serving 117,000 students. Today there are more than 1,000 with a total enrollment of 800,000. All are incorporated into one great machine with its master control panel in Peking.

In 1953, the Ministry of Higher Education took over final and direct domination of all institutions, except military academics, and drastic changes followed immediately. Many old institutions were abandoned. New ones were created to meet the urgent needs for technically trained personnel. Colleges were uprooted from coastal areas and moved to the interior - lock, stock, and facilities. Universities were merged; the specialties of some were taken away and reattached to others. It was somewhat as if most of the major eastern universities of the U.S. were suddenly picked up and put down in Ohio, Nebraska, and Colorado. And as if the famous Harvard Business School and Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania were wrenched from their mother institutions and reassembled at the Lincoln, Nebraska, Business Institute!

Now what is it like to be a pupil in a Chinese Communist school? Consider any three-year-old youngster. Let us call him Lin Chang and say that he is the son of a factory worker in Kaifeng, Hunan Province. Lin's experiences will be typical.

LIN will enter kindergarten and remain until he starts primary school at the age of seven. The government has announced that the kindergartens were established "to bring about healthy physical and mental development of children" before they begin their actual schooling. It seems far more likely, though, that there was a more practical reason - to release Lin's mother for construction labor while bringing Lin under Communist influence at the earliest possible moment.

Lin will go to primary school for six years, studying language, penmanship, arithmetic, history, geography, natural sciences, physical education, singing, drawing, and handicrafts. And he will undoubtedly be part of a large class going on split sessions. By 1955, rapidly expanding Communist schools were having woes of a sort understandable even in America. Most were on split sessions. Many were reporting serious shortages of supplies and complaining of a lack of financial support. And teachers were protesting they were being paid less than industrial workers and occupying social positions below those of untutored government functionaries.

If Lin passes his examinations at the end of his sixth year, he goes on to secondary school. This is also a six-year affair, divided into a junior middle and senior middle program. Should he fail he is assigned to work as a laborer. But he has great incentive to continue his schooling because, as a secondary school graduate, he will be trained as a technician or member of a factory staff.

Lin needs some luck to crack the bottleneck in the flow of Chinese education. It lies in the secondary system. The reason, as elsewhere in the world, is a lack of teachers, buildings, and facilities. In Harbin, an electrical welding school has to hold classes in a bare dormitory room and it is fortunate to have that. In Shanghai, Tientsin, and Kwangtung, secondary schools are so scarce that primary school graduates - youngsters of thirteen - recently were ordered to move to border regions to serve in wasteland reclamation programs. Top national education officials are giving the problem high priority. They know there are now 92,000,000 youngsters in the primary schools - but only 15 per cent of this number can be accommodated in junior middle.

If Lin can make it, he will be assigned either to a general or a specialized secondary school. In the former, he will follow an academic program with strong emphasis on science and political indoctrination. His hours will be long and his studies hard. For example, in his first year of upper middle school - about equal to the high school sophomore year in the U.S. - he will study algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, human anatomy, modern world history, Chinese geography and literature, economic geography of foreign countries, general political knowledge, foreign languages, physical education, and map drawing. The next year trigonometry will be added to this imposing list.

IN his politics course, which he will take for the entire six years of secondary school, Lin will be thoroughly steeped in the theory of revolution, the basis of Marxism and Leninism, and the fundamental policies of the Chinese Communist Party. Even in a general course, he will study industrial production, taking many trips to nearby factories. And even if he is a city boy, he will study basic agriculture, experimenting on lots owned by the school.

The specialized schools give instruction in more than 200 specific areas, including 163 in the field of engineering, each representing an acute national need. The schools include such diverse fields as forestry, pharmacy, and broadcasting.

If Lin is a promising student, there is a chance he will be sent away to boarding school for his secondary studies. This is a system the Chinese have borrowed from the Russians. Millions of Communist youngsters are now attending these boarding schools, most of them of high school age, although some are in primary grades.

The boarding schools are not compulsory but strong pressure will be put on Lin's mother and father if they object. In Peiping recently, a number of parents protested that children sent away from home would be deprived of mother love, whereupon the *China Youth Daily* took them sharply to task:

"Parents should understand that their children are going to live in a Communist state where the old and young will be both properly taken care of," the paper wrote. It then offered this further observation; "It is for society to raise and educate the young into a new generation and give the kind of love that no maternal love can ever hope to compare with."

Lin Chang will have to perform physical labor all during his student days because all education in Red China is guided by the "unalterable" principle that learning must be combined with productive work. No level of education is exempt. Mao and his followers are determined that not a single man-minute shall be spared from the task of building the nation.

Thus Lin and millions of other tots are assigned to chores upon entering primary school. As a first-grade student, he is given light tasks each day. By the time he has reached third grade, he is working two hours daily - even helping to harvest crops, tilling soil working in a factory. In his early teens, at the equivalent of our junior high, he will be dividing his time between labor and study.

Nor is the rule relaxed in the universities, where students and professors alike are required to place their labor at the call of their Government and the Communist Party. They work on school farms, pick up rocks for dam construction, help clear away debris in the wake of the recurring and devastating Chinese floods. When the Government announces a fly and mosquito campaign, professors as well as students sally forth armed with swatters. Frequently a great university empties out for two hours in midday as all hands war on insects.

All this adds up to an unpaid work force of imposing proportions, and this force has undoubtedly accomplished much.

The state exercises total control over the admission and assignment of students. If Lin Chang aims at college, he will have to take stiff examinations that are conducted on a local district basis which is nationally controlled. Then he must undergo a rigorous investigation into his political background and qualifications. If he clears the hurdles, the government will then assign him to a specific course of study in a specific university.

In higher education, Lin will find few if any so-called general courses. The Communists have downgraded the importance of the general academic departments. The "specialty" is king. Students must focus on a narrow segment, often of a narrow field, in order to meet the particular needs of the nation for particular skills. Thus Lin may be assigned to any one of some 180 specialties - perhaps mine operation, electric motor or materials manufacture, the production of edibles and seasonings,

paper manufacture, timber processing, city planning and the like. He will concentrate in his one area for his full four years.

After graduation, what? Will Lin Chang pick his own future and his own work? Hardly. He will be sent wherever he is most needed. In 1958 for instance; 64,000 college and university graduates, diplomas in hand, went directly to the backward rural areas to assist local agricultural and small industry producing teams. They were not individuals so much as they were 'produced units' responding to the orders of their producers. That the end of college days meant for them residence in a one-room unheated hut near the junction of two unpaved muddy roads in an inaccessible frontier province rather than an apartment in warm Canton or cooler Peking was a matter of fate in which they, like all of their fellow graduates, had little voice and no real choice. But their destiny is now helping to pull China upward and onward.

Of all China's achievements in education, certainly one of the most remarkable is the vast program of what we call adult education. Hundreds of thousands of night schools, winter schools, spare-time classes have been set up all across the nation wherever space and a teacher - no matter how inadequately trained - can be found. Classes are held in school buildings, yes, but also in kitchens, barns, factories, basements and, when the weather allows under the open sky. By the end of 1958, some 60,000,000 Chinese men and women were enrolled in some kind of school, an all-time record for any nation.

The greatest single aim in these spare-time classes is to teach the masses to read and write. The written form of the Chinese language actually encourages the perpetuation of illiteracy. In Chinese, there is no alphabet. Writing the language requires mastery of separate characters or ideographs, for each word to be expressed. A fairly complete Chinese dictionary lists 40,000 such characters. Newspapers use about 4,000. And, to add to the complexity, many of China's regions speak their own dialects.

First step in the literacy battle was a decree making Mandarin Chinese the national language. Second was an order that promises ultimately to eliminate the Chinese ideograph itself. The government promulgated a set of alphabets by which the old-style characters could be spelled out. With this tool, totally illiterate peasants can be taught to write words and entire sentences *within days*.

The Chinese estimate that in 30 years at most they can reach the level of a first-rate power technically and scientifically. Under the influence of Mao's propaganda, the Chinese people see these goals dancing before their eyes and they like the visions. They are striving to make them come true.

Hollow boasts and impossible dreams? Perhaps. But it would be wiser to keep our eyes unwaveringly on what is happening in the Orient while we enlarge and expand our own educational system. We see how Russia is moving forward and we are beginning to take the lesson to heart. Neither Russia nor the United States can afford to ignore Red China.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 pp11–16 in the printed version*]

(* asterisks indicate AR (ita) characters which are not available in conventional fonts.
See character chart.)

3. Some Thoughts on the Use of the A. R. Alphabet, by Sir James Pitman.

13th February, 1962

Dear Mr. Tune:

First, congratulations generally on your October issue, and in particular, in respect of the article on the Augmented Roman, on the way in which you have handled it and have overcome printing difficulties.

I would like to suggest that it is time that we recognize important, indeed fundamental, differences: in particular between *teaching reading* and *teaching spelling*. We must surely accept that reading is a very different process from writing, and that, in learning to read, there arises no issue of "spelling reform", only a reform in the method of teaching reading, and that incidentally, even in writing, the issue is more one of greater tolerance on the part of the recipient of what is written than of spelling or even of reform.

May I make the first point clear. In reading, the value of the alphabet is in the learning process only, not in the application of it when learnt. The Mandarin in China is able to read his arbitrary symbols as easily as (some say more easily than) we read our alphabetic ones – once he has become as familiar with them as we have become with ours. It is, therefore, only during the process of learning, and of becoming habituated to visible symbols, that any alphabet plays its beneficial part.

If, then, we expect that the benefit of the alphabet can be only in the learning processes, then we ought, in any amendment of the Roman alphabet, to bear in mind that what is presented to the child ought:-

- i) to have as few difficulties as possible in terms of systemization – and systemization is the essence of the benefit of the alphabet;
- ii) to be related to the romanian reading environment in which the child is living now and will be required to continue to live.

In respect of (i), I suggest that "augmentations" must be accepted as a *sine qua non*. It is true that a digraphic roman alphabet (rather than an augmented one) will greatly ease the task of printers and makers of typewriters, but since by definition the purpose is to remove difficulties from the child, it is irrelevant to remove them from adult specialist craftsmen! Moreover, it must surely be conceded that to a child a digraph must present greater difficulty than an augmentation. The heterotypic value of *t* in *tie* and *thie* (*thy*), and that of *i* in *tin* and *thie*, are as bad as the heterotypic value of *a* in *all* and *any*. A new character for each sound, *th**, *th**, *ie**, must surely then be introduced if we seek to remove difficulties from the child since –

- a) we seek to condition the child to the idea that a character has only one sound value, and that the value of *t* is what it is in *tin*;

- b) we seek to condition the child to read characters in a word from left to right, and thus to pay special attention to the initial (i.e. left-hand) character in any group of characters, and to give to that left-hand character the value of that character.

It follows necessarily from the above that –

- i) only a new character can lead the child to make the positive and unequivocal association which is desired, and to avoid even potentially misleading him into making the false association of the sounds of *t* and *h*, with the necessity of his then dissociating them from what he has been taught, and finally, as a second stage, making a new, quite different and very sophisticated association with a very different sound. (Incidentally, such new characters need not be those of the Augmented Roman. I am here dealing in terms of a general principle, not of particular application).
- ii) such augmentations ought to be designed to resemble (in the eyes of the habituated reader, if not in the eyes of the child) the digraphs, while yet not vitiating the principle of (i) above. The practicality of such a compromise may be seen from consideration of the way in which the digraph *vv* seems to have its own positive association without need for any such dissociation from "double-*vée*", or "double-*u*".

This preference for augmentations rather than digraphs, and this desirability for a compromise which insures that the augmentations shall nevertheless closely resemble the digraphs to which they are each related, is enhanced by two further considerations:-

- A) The occasions for confusion to the child through digraphs and the opportunity to give help by augmentation are both very frequent and very important. After all, the word "*the*" at present confronts the child with all the confusions of the digraph, and is the most common word and the one which is met inevitably at the very outset of the child's approach to alphabeticism. From this it may be safely supposed that augmentations must be preferable to digraphs, and that from their design they ought to give the *maximum* help to the child, both in the early stages of learning and in the later transition stage. They ought, therefore, to be designed to give distinction from the constituent characters (as in (i) above), yet to retain a close relationship to the ultimate digraph (as in (ii) above). E.g. *fathers** is nearer to *fathers* than is *faadherz*.
- B) The "top coast-line", the length of the word forms and the initial characters, of the matter presented to the child are of very special importance in that they ought, all three of them, to be as similar as possible to those which he will need ultimately to learn, if the maximum help is to be given to the child. (Confirm on page 14 of "Learning to Read" by James Pitman for the "top coast-line", and your own experience in reading difficult manuscript, firstly for the length of word, and secondly in the importance of the legibility of the beginning of words.)

From all the above, I conclude that it is reform in the teaching of reading in the early stages, not spelling reform, about which are centered your interest and mine in Augmented Roman and in the Reading Research Project now being conducted in England.

We now come to the second and fundamentally different aspect of what is often mistakenly confused with the first, because the two have come to be classed together under the single title

"Spelling Reform". After all, spelling is writing and is the "emissive" part, and reading is the "receptive" part. It is the writing-wise work of individuals who have learnt to read, and wish to communicate individually with those who also can read.

It is here desirable to make the very necessary distinction between individual communication, which has a readership of one or two, and mass communication, which has a readership of many hundreds, if not millions. I suggest that we ought therefore to recognize that, in individual communication the only "spelling reform" in which we need to concern ourselves, is a reform in the attitude of those who receive such individual communications. There is no reason why such tolerance should be now (with our present characters) withheld. After all, those who now receive through their ears individual communications have a very tolerant attitude to the variety of communications they receive from those to whom they seek to listen. What we need in "spelling reform" is surely no more than the same kindly tolerance, a tolerance moreover which will not be aware of the difference. Take the simple conjunction *and*. Its sound in speech varies from

- (1) "and it came to pass";
- (2) "charity und kindness;
- (3) "apples and pears ";
- (4) "buttons an bows";
- (5) "Indiar_ and China";
- (6) "bacon 'n eggs";

(and there are others as well); but whichever of these six sounds is spoken, the intended meaning is always understood – and the difference not even noticed by the ear of the listener. The eye is more acute than the ear, but why should tolerance not be given by the eye also? The fact that the eye has all the time in the day to decipher meaning (whereas the ear loses its opportunity in the immediacy of the next sound) should argue for greater, not less, tolerance for the eye than for the ear.

If in a "spelling reform" a new system of spelling were to be introduced, and such toleration were not given, because a rule were to be made that you must spell as a certain Mr. A. speaks, then "the last state of literate man will be worse (or certainly little better) than the first" – because we will need to remember how Mr. A. pronounces just as printers now need to remember how the "*Printers' and Authors' Guide*" lays down our present conventions. For instance, we will need to decide whether *eethe**, *iethir**, *eethir**, *iethur**, *eethur**, etc., or *tumaetoe**, *tomatoe**, *turmatu**, *tomatoe**, etc., is the pronunciation which we should adopt as the touchstone for our new convention of spelling. Daniel Jones' English Pronouncing Dictionary (apart from other choices) illustrates the confusion which will face the writer over the potentially silent "t": he gives the choice of omission in "krismas", gives none in "chestnut"* , and compromises over "poescard"* and "poesman"*. Kenyon and Knott give so many alternative pronunciations for so many words, even within the limits of American "dialects", that when Scottish, English ("Received Pronunciation", Cockney, etc.), Welsh and Australian dialects have been added as a start, the task of deciding what conventional sound to "spell" will be not significantly better under "Spelling Reform" than it is to determine the conventional spelling today under "Traditional Orthography". Anyone who may have read the article by Frank B. Gilbreth, in "Life Magazine" of early October, 1960, on the pronunciations of the English of the two Presidential candidates, headlined "Dictionary of Bostonese - Humorist gives Campaign Guide to words of Candy and Lawge" (Kennedy & Lodge!) will recognize that

- (1) there is no "standard" English which can produce new "Standard" spellings;
- (2) that no printer could tolerate the diversity of "spellings" of his variety of authors;
- (3) that in consequence, the reading-wise consideration rather than the spelling-wise one must be the dominant one; and
- (4) that in a context in which no-one may expect to be presented with a visual representation of what he himself speaks, any more than on T.V. he expects to be confronted with a pronunciation closely resembling his, what alone will be relevant will be that the visual representation shall indicate a sound sufficiently resembling any of the varying sounds which he recognizes and understands in speech, for him to be able to identify the word and understand it – just as President Kennedy's and Winston Churchill's words are identified and understood by listeners who never themselves speak them even approximately in either of those forms.

Of course, this reservation that the writer will need to memorize arbitrarily acceptable pronunciations will be valid only if it be supposed that tolerance and freedom will not be allowed to the individual. If, on the other hand, it can be agreed that he shall be allowed the same license to misspell (i.e., to depart from one authorized and conventional spelling) as he now has to mispronounce (i.e., to depart from some necessarily equally "authorized" pronunciation – conformity with which, fortunately, is not so required), provided only that he be understood, then not only does this reservation fall, but the case for "reform" with it, for all we need do is now to allow to present-day literates that license in question for departures by them from our present Traditional Orthography.

From this I conclude that the only spelling reform in which we should concern ourselves is one which allows for individual (not mass) communication the same latitude which we now allow in the field of speech, and that we should require our manuscript and typescript correspondents to submit themselves to no more strict discipline than that of comprehensibility and good manners. If I were to spell in a digraphic Roman alphabet "iedher", and you similarly to spell "eedher", or I were to spell in Augmented Roman "ask", "pass", and you likewise to spell "ask, pass", we would understand one another in writing as we would in speech. If, however, someone had a cleft palate and were to write to you as he, with his speech disability, speak, then he would hardly be understood, and would be clearly seen to be writing with bad manners. If I am, however, understood (and you are), then we see on paper the pronunciation of each friend and conjure up a more complete and satisfying personal relationship.

But what about print – which is a mass, not an individual, communication? May I start by supposing that the English language is destined to become more and more the world language until eventually it will have achieved that world-wide convention which establishes the common and generally accepted convention, and thus the means of world communication. In which case, print is destined for a world-wide circulation, and it is immaterial what Kenyon or Daniel Jones may claim to be the "U" (= Upper-class) speech of leading people in only parts of the globe, even those persons as important as those selected in a chosen part of America and of the south of England. Surely what is relevant is wholly world-wide understanding for print, in a context in which there is already a considerable world-wide conventionality of English print, and in which it will be clearly

best to prefer those print forms which are closest to the existing print-convention, provided however, they be print forms which would be universally understood. For world English purposes, surely the chosen form must be that which would be understood most readily in print in relation to what would be understood if heard. If, for instance, the sound "perthshier"* is preferable in relation to traditional orthography to the sound "purthshu"*, then the former ought to be the print-form, seeing that any man from the south of England and any American would immediately understand (as an American friend of mine did this September) when a native of that Scots County pronounced it his way – a way more in accordance with the existing print-convention than any other pronunciation. Some words will need to go one way, some another, in the balance between different speech groups. "want, what, sceduel*, aerplaen*," will go the American and Canadian way, but those who, as the R. P.-speaking English do, make distinction between "knotty" and "naughty", "feud" and "food", will be similarly supported by the consequential preference for discrimination as "notty, nauty*; fued*, food*," which more closely coincides with the present print-convention.

My conclusion is, therefore, that if a new orthography (in, say, A. R.) were to be introduced to parallel T.O., the printers should continue to confine themselves to a Procrustean discipline, but it will be a new one which will be based on a continued recognition of the fact that, for reading from print, it is desirable that there should be consistency between one page and another, one year and another, one English-speaking country and another, so that all, when skilled in the rapid acquisition of meaning from the printed symbol, may take advantage of their habituated skill and may be able, with immediacy and certainty, to recognize a particular form in association with the established meaning; and that for this purpose, a new *Printer's and Author's Guide* should be carefully thought out so that there may be as little departure from the present accepted conventional forms as possible, provided, however, that anyone reading the new form and being guided in pronunciation thereby, shall be made certain that, were he anywhere in the English-speaking (or understanding) world to pronounce any word with the sounds that the characters signify, he would be unfailingly understood. For example, as between "clurk*, clak, clark, clerk", the last will be the obvious choice because anyone pronouncing it that way would be understood (even though he may be supposed to have come from "perthshier!"*) and it retains its meaningful association with the related words "cleric" and "clerical". But in all such forms, the English-speaking world (as distinct from those to whom English is a foreign language) will continue to pronounce all such words as they always have (clurk* (Amer.), clak (R. P.), etc., because in the first place, they learnt to speak before they learnt to write or read, and will thus stick to what they speak, and will be very rarely influenced to make a change because of what they read, and in the second place, because they will see "clerk" so often in the parallel literacy of traditional orthography which for a hundred (possible hundreds of) years will carry on and be read in the form "clerk", without influencing the pronunciation of the reader any more than it does now.

Finally, may I emphasize that there is no conflict between these, my views about standardization for the mass communication of print, and this, my plea for tolerance in individual written communication. Indeed, it is only in print that standardization and the subordination of individual and local interests to the world interest, are, in my opinion important, indeed vital to the survival of English as a widely comprehended language.

In individual writing - as in speech - I am all for freedom, not only for regional difference in speech, but for individual differences, provided they are comprehensible and good manners; (for example, I happen to say- "tief*, tiepografical*, typical", in which the middle one is a very singular peculiarity)

and I claim that to pen them thus would not be wrong because I believe that to be free to pen that form in a personal letter would be to make myself not only fully understood but to be idiosyncratic so reasonably that there could be no allegation of any disregard to the feelings of the recipient. However, I recognize that there will be a strong tendency towards standardization for at any rate the common words, and that the manuscript writer will tend to deceive himself that he does in fact pronounce as he will prefer to write. We English will use "want" and suppose wrongly that we thus pronounce it.

In the teaching of children to read, there is a half-way problem, between the license of individual spelling for manuscript and the constriction of standardization for print. There is on the one hand, a case for arguing that if the economics of educational publishing allow it, as much variety should be encouraged as economics will permit. In Northern Ireland, for instance, they say "mən", not "man". If the cost is not too high, it may well be argued, let them have their "mən", and let them be encouraged to help the reading beginner that little extra bit too; equally, that in America, in the many districts which make no discrimination between "naughty" and "notty", nor between "fued" and "food", the localized textbooks *might* depart from standardization in a supposed benefit to the child. Against this may be argued: first that five-year-old children seem, in listening to the T.V., to adapt their hearing of words to tolerate such discriminations made in the speech of others but not observed in their own speech; secondly, that there is a good reason on phonetic grounds why the ear (and therefore the eye) should so adapt itself easily. This is so because "a" and "ɑ", "au*" and "o", "ue*" and "oo*", etc., are closely related in speech – as would also be expected, seeing that it has been because of such resemblances that the varieties have evolved; thirdly, that we will know a great deal more about this problem from the present research where the experience in Oldham (where no such discrimination is observed between "cask" and "cash*"), and in Harrow (where it is observed), will teach us much; fourthly, that to use "ɑ" and "a" heterotypically in "cask" and "cash*", as do those in Oldham and most of America, is no different from using "c" and "k" heterotypically in "cat" and "kitty". Not only is there strong reason to suppose that the research will confirm that, whilst the young child cannot at all tolerate heterotypic values ("a" standing for radically different values in "an, any, wont, plæt, aul*, father*, cabbij", or "t" standing for one value in "then" and another in "ten"), he can readily tolerate heterotypes such as "cat", "kitty", "until", "till", in all speeches, and even more easily than "c" and "k", those such as "cask", "cash*", "notty", "nauty*", so far as they are relevant to their speech; fifthly, that so many books (over 200) have been published by so many publishers that A. R. (if effective as a teaching intermedium) is already so far launched towards a single standard form that it will be economical to cater for all schools with that standard, and above all more beneficial for those children who move from school to school, or even from one dialect area to another, if they were to be assured that they will find the same form of printed word, whoever their teacher, wherever they are taught; and finally, that before variety is deliberately and (if the arguments above be sound), for insufficiently beneficial reasons, introduced, those so setting aside the discriminations, which our present orthography maintains and which large populations of the English-speaking peoples observe and those thus obstructing the development of publishing standards of potential convenience value to the schools and their pupils, should think most carefully. They should bear in mind that, if the English language in print-form is to serve its purpose best as a world-wide convention in communication, it is desirable that there should be a world-wide conventionality and that, even within the limited field of teaching children to read, liberty should be spiced with discipline; in other words, that the tower of Babel ought not to be erected but rather avoided, in a context in which there are, through the standardization of print and its wide distribution, and thanks to the cheapness of paper and the reduplication processes, the

opportunity and the means which we enjoy to prevent that "Babelization", which the Romans, in their paper-less days, had no chance to prevent.

In precise and constructive terms, then, I suggest that for the reasons set out above, those who have regarded themselves as spelling reformers should:

A. Concentrate on benefitting those who are now learning – whether in the English-speaking countries learning to read, or in other countries learning both to read, to speak and to understand English as an additional tongue.

In this enterprise we should recognize the greater benefit in general of augmentation over a digraphic method, and either accept that some form of Augmented Roman in particular is (of design) the desired form for the benefit of those who seek so to learn through such an intermedium – or suggest an improved augmented roman alphabet better than Pitman's if they can do so; and if not accept it and foster it.

B. Accept that if (P)A.R. were to confer benefits of learning on a sufficient scale to become the universally, or widely, used method of learning, then whilst T.O. would thereby be continued and probably perpetuated, (P)A.R. would be likely to become accepted widely as a parallel alphabet and with its new orthography, just as those other roman alphabets which differ far more from one another than does (P)A.R. from lower-case traditional orthography are widely accepted today. E.g.:LEARNING, learning, [1] and just as the radically differing arabic numerals have been widely accepted in parallel with the continuance of the earlier roman numerals.

C. Aim at preserving, so far as may be possible, (whilst maintaining a very high degree of benefit to the learning processes) a single standard conventional form for print as near as may be to the present lower-case T.O., in order to minimize the dangers of babelization and enhance the chances of English language print and speech becoming world-wide in their immediate comprehensibility and use.

D. Permit and encourage the tolerance of variations in individual (but not mass) communication. There will be a tendency for all to write the forms which they read, and for all frequently recurring words to become standard, but there ought to be no snobbish rejections of particularly the less frequently recurring words in a form which, although it is an idiosyncratic variation, is neither a hindrance to understanding nor an affront to the current speech (e.g. the aich-lessness of Cockney, and the 'boids" of Brooklyn, might possibly continue to be frowned upon).

E. To decide to sit tight in patience for several generations to see which way the English speaking world will move in the relative popularity of T.O., with its upper-case, lower-case, and cursive alphabets, in relation to A.R. with its single alphabet and its far fewer characters.

F. To welcome the publication of George Bernard Shaw's 'Proposed British Alphabet' when it appears in all the public libraries and all the book shops of the English speaking world.

But of this (the Shaw Alphabet) no more at the moment, save to point three questions which Shaw posed to me: "How can you, Jim Pitman, expect to succeed where Sir Isaac Pitman, your very great Grandfather, and so many other men have consistently failed?" "How can you expect men who have acquired a skill in writing the present T.O. to learn any additional system of writing, unless it

furnishes them with substantial advantage in use?" "How can you expect any such advantage to accrue to the user unless, as Isaac Pitman did with his Shorthand, you have the good sense to get right away from those characters which suited triumphal arches in Rome and were designed for chiselling in stone a language very different from modern English?"

Perhaps your readers will discuss propositions A to E (let us leave F till later this year when the book has been published), and thus propel the cause which we all have at heart along a new and more productive, because hopefully purposive, route.

Perhaps, too, they will try their minds on what may rightly be set out as the *advantages* of "Spelling Reform" when based on the Roman Alphabet. Are there any which might be added to the following list? –

- (a) Reading-wise: Learning more easily initially.
- (b) Speaking-wise: Learning for a few words when first met in print a more acceptable socially, but not necessarily more widely comprehensible, pronunciation, (e.g., ambivalent, robot, plagiarism) without need of recourse to a pronouncing dictionary.
- (c) Writing-wise: Saving not more than 5% of characters if the reform be digraphic, not more than 16% if it be augmented. (In practice, any such benefits of economy will be deferred for say 20 years – only those conditioned from childhood to the new writing will escape a probably greater loss of time due to deliberate rather than instinctive writing).
- (d) Spelling-wise: Enjoying (but only if Society were to extend good will and tolerance in lieu of contempt and conformity) a choice between two alternatives:-
 - (i) Individuality based to a greater or lesser degree upon the individual pronunciation of the writer, and extending in potential of variance from what all would regard as disciplined freedom at one end, to licentious chaos at the other; or,
 - (ii) Conformity (but to a more satisfying arbitrariness) to a norm for all the commonly used words, and either reference to a spelling dictionary if it is desired to conform to the norm (e.g. minorrrity, say, rather than "mienorrity"), or the risk of a departure from the accepted norm by use of a form which would nevertheless be understandable in context, and ought to be acceptable, because based upon a speech form no less understandable and acceptable.

Yours sincerely,
James Pitman.

The Editor will welcome a discussion of the several points brought up by Sir James Pitman, but cannot promise to use all of them if this turns out to be the conflagration that it seems likely to start.

Some of the points brought out are or should be considered axiomatic. There are others which may be the subject of discussion – and still others that need clarification by experimental teaching evidence. The latter are being evaluated as the experimental results are noted. Please keep this in mind when you are considering your criticisms.

4. "Tomorrow's Illiterates", a review by Helen Bowyer

The S. P. Bulletin staff lays it down with the same question which all these "back-to-phonics" books evoke – what is the matter with its eight contributors that they set their sights so low? When they could so easily propose for our children the whole loaf of a one-sign=one-sound spelling, why do they stop with the starveling half loaf of a mere attempt at packaging the mouldy anomalies of our present one?

If "phonics" is even a half loaf, A. J. Ellis used to assess it at about one tenth.

Take the *gh*, which infests the pages of our school books from first grade on.

About the best you can do with its deviant functions is to assort them thus:

1. When *gh* usurps the place of the legitimate "f" in *laugh, enough, cough*.
2. When it does ditto with the "p" of *hiccough*, and the simple "g" one hears in *ghost, ghastly, ghetto, ghoul*.
3. When it indicates that the preceding "i" is long, as in *high, light, tight*.
4. When it is pure excess baggage inside a word as in *daughter, draught, height, freight*.
5. When it is pure excess baggage at the end of a word, as in *though, plough, through*.

But even if we could throw *gh* on the rubbish heap of worse than useless consonant transcriptions, what about the vowel confusion which generally accompanies it? How is the child to know that the "au" of *laugh* and *draught* has the sound of *daft* and not of *daughter*? Or that the "ei" of *height* is the long "i" of *hie*, not the short "a" of *eight*, or the long "ee" of *seizure*, or the short "e" of *heifer*? Worse yet, how is he to sort out the five pronunciations of "ou" which confront him in *cough, though, through, tough, bough*. Only by an expenditure of time, and a fixation of attention urgently needed for something more worthwhile – for information about and understanding of the world in which he is to pass the next seventy or eighty years.

Much the same indictment could be brought against c, qu, and x. If they could be drummed out of the alphabet, and out of the school, "s" and "k" could do the same workmanlike job through our whole vocabulary that they do with *see, gas, – kin, sink, seeks*. But no; as far as Dr. Walcutt is concerned, these three redundants can go on befogging our youngsters through *sin, cinder, scintillate, hence, sense, tic, pick, reek, pique, excess, access, axis, assent, ascent, cycle, sickle*. And hundreds more of their like, which perhaps Mr. Walcutt can take in his stride, but which not one child in a thousand is ever going to do.

Or ever has. Not in the whole three centuries plus, during which the phonic method held all but absolute sway, from Harvard College to the backwards mother with her Bible in her lap and her six-year-old at her knee. Not even way back in Benjamin Franklin's day, when school enrollment was so much more select than now. Else why did he write: "Whatever the difficulties and inconveniences of changing our spelling are, they will be more easily surmounted now than hereafter. Some time or other it must be done, or our language will become the same as with the Chinese, as to the difficulty of learning and using it."

Nor, apparently, were the schools doing any better with it a century later. Else why did ten thousand teachers, led by professors from fifty leading colleges sponsor a referendum to Congress which read in part: "It is currently stated by leading educators that the irregularity of the English spelling causes a loss of two years of the school life of each child, and is a main cause of the alarming illiteracy of our people." And why did Andrew D. White, first President of Cornell University, lash out at "the

fearful waste of time on the part of millions of children in learning the most illogical mode of spelling, probably, that the world has ever seen; the only result being to weary them of books and blunt their reasoning facilities."

Oh, yes, there is a claim now that phonics was inexpertly taught in those days. Those ten thousand teachers and the professors who led them, didn't know enough about the relationship of our 42 basic speech sounds to the 250 overlapping spelling units by which we transcribe them, to get said relationships clearly in their pupils heads. But research and experimentation has now clarified all that, and organized these units into phonic systems, each of which has proved its power to make a good reader of any normal child. "Tomorrow's Illiterates" devotes its final chapter to a resumé of 15 such.

Careful attention does, to be sure, reveal some differences among them, but to the spelling reformer, every little variation of presentation, every little emphasis on this point rather than that, every little different device for holding attention and impressing memory is lost in the essential - and deplorable identity of their *raison d'être*. For, let them use film strip on a screen, or go to the opposite length of excluding pictures from even their first primers; let them begin with sight words or start off at once with selected speech sounds and the simplest depictions thereof; let them use the standard LOOK AND SAY books or prepare their own somewhat less inane reading material, what every one of them aims at is to teach a spelling that should not be taught at all.

Should not, because need not, – a fact to which every school dictionary bears witness. Which of these does not junk from its parentheses some 206 of those 250 slithery spelling units to which all of these system-makers cling? Cling as insensately as the most obdurate of the Look-and-Sayers whom Dr. Walcutt so unsparingly berates. Take the Thorndike-Barnhart Beginning Dictionary. Where in its pronunciation-respellings do you find "gh" falsifying the utterance of *laf, ruf, lit, hit, frat, tho, throo*? Or C, Qu, X, left to ride rough-shod through *since, scene, sick, – liquid, quake, axe, accident*, while every impulse of the child's burgeoning reasoning, cries out however subconsciously, for the consistency, the true analogy of *sins, seen, sik, –likwid, aks, aksident*.

Where, moreover, do the pronunciation-spellings of this – or any other school dictionary – torment him with the silent letters which belie the sound of *debt, sign, hour, knife, calf, salmon, hymn, write*, though their rhyme words *bet, mine, flour, life*, etc. get along quite well without any such. And what about those doubled consonants which clutter up the like of *abbott, add, aggravate, Allen, grammar, merry*? "Back-to-Phonics" joins "Look-and-Say" in the feeble alibi that said doubling is required to indicate that the immediately preceding vowel is short. But isn't it just as short in *habit, adage, agate, Alice, glamor, very*? The school dictionary settles the matter with single, simple stroke. It decrees that in its parentheses, a vowel used alone in an accented syllable, shall never be anything except short – shall never, that is, transcribe any sound but that of *bad, bed, bid, bog, bug*. So, will all consonants which, in the entrie, have been doubling themselves in the aid of this effect, here return to single status, and devote themselves exclusively to the one and only sound for which the dictionary key makes them responsible.

Hasn't it ever occurred to Dr. Walcutt and his associates that what our desperate reading problem calls for is the beautifully drastic solution which lies right beneath their eyes every time they open a school dictionary? In our Whole vast land is there a physically normal six-year-old above low moronic who couldn't soon and happily master *hav, haf, laf, graf, jiraf, woz, hwot, yot, meni, bild, bizi, nat, nok, ruf*, no matter how hopelessly he is now failing with *have, half, laugh, graph, giraffe, was, what, yacht, many, build, busy, gnat, knock, rough*?

But in fairness to the writers of "Tomorrow's Illiterates", one should ask with how many back-to-phonics crusaders the school dictionary *does* register. Had it done so with Rudolf Flesch when he

smashed into "Look-and-Say" with his "Why Johnny Can't Read?" But whether or no, he at least evinced an awareness of the magic a fully phonetic alphabet could work on our reading situation. Speaking of Dr. Frank Laubach of the Missionary Committee for World Literacy, he says "He always starts by working out a phonetic alphabet for the language he is dealing with, and then teaches the natives in very short order how to read and write with it. Yes, if you have a perfectly phonetic alphabet, you are in a sort of dream world where teaching to read and write is no problem at all. This is all but true, for instance, of Spanish, Italian, Finnish, Czech ... But lets get back from this dream world to the harsh realities of English. "

But why should there be a harsh reality to get back to? Who or what imposes it on us? What is there in our Bible or our Constitution which obligates us to retard our children's education with 250 jumbled spelling units when their dictionary reduces these to 43? And lines them up in a one-to-one relationship with the 43 basic sounds of which our whole great dictionary vocabulary is built.

To be sure the diction key will need to undergo some change of appearance. The diacritics by which it indicates its long and special vowels are unsuitable for handwriting and a nuisance on the typewriter. But what could be simpler than to replace them by vowel digraphs. In the demonstration which follows, these will be the ones which Sir Isaac Pitman was proposing way back in 1895.

Pronounce ai, ee, ie, oa, oo, as in laid, lee, lie, load, loom – aa, and au as in bazaar and because – ou and uu as in foul and full, u as in must, murmur, minus, uh-huh, final i as the y of body, th and tth as in then and thin, zh as in azure, vision. Give all other letters and digraphs the sounds they most commonly transcribe in today's orthography. "The" is here treated as a word-sign and left unchanged.

Hou dutth the litl krokudiel improov hiz shiening tail,
And splash the wauturz ov the Niel on evri goaldn skail?
Hou cheerfuli hee seemz too grin, hou neetli spredz hiz klauz,
And welkumz litl fishiz in with jentli smieling jauz.

"Yes?", laft Maark, "Wel, Ie just hoap our frend gets thee implikaishnz. The vurs iz from Alis Throo the Luuking Glas, iznt it? – hur vurzhn ov "Hou dutth the litl bizi bee?"

"Alis in Wunderland, if mie memuri survz mee," ansurd Faathur Hoil.

How easily – and delightedly – even five year olds can learn to read in a notation as simple and trustworthy as this, our subscribers already know. In our [Bulletin of March, 1961](#), Dr. Helen Bonnema, Principal of the Edgewater School, Denver, Colo., describes the experiment she had started in her kindergarten the previous September, using a slightly different but equally phonetic alphabet. In our issue of [October, 1961](#), she sums up the results of the full year of the project in an article which we urge on the attention of Dr. Walcutt and all other crusaders for nothing more efficacious than "phonics".

But even to this reviewer, "Tomorrow's Illiterates" has one high merit – the vividness with which it pictures the plight of the children on their way for inclusion in its title.

The Mac Neil Clinic, in Saskatoon, Canada, is a service of the Provincial Department of Health. For years its Director *had been concerned* by the fact that one half to two-thirds of all categories of disturbed children referred to it were children whose symptom syndrome included the inability to read. Six years ago at his request, it began offering reading therapy. In Chapter 5, Mrs. Hildreth Rawson, in charge of this service, offers these observations:

"Children in our society who fail to learn to read when their classmates seem to be succeeding, become sick children. Those who start school with developmental lags, or emotional tensions, or *mild* neurological disabilities develop *more severe* symptoms within a few months of their initial failure, even when this failure is disguised as postponement."

"Nor do children who start school apparently free from mental or emotional disadvantage come through their reading failure unscathed." They "develop subtle manifestations of regression and anxiety within the first year of school. The stability and courage of many children is shaken when they cannot cope with this first challenge of the world outside their homes."

"It has been a surprise to us to discover" she continues, "that the younger the non-reading child, the more acutely disturbed he and his family are likely to be... To tell them to wait, to do nothing, is to deprive the child of his rightful support and to precipitate in him a lowered self-concept."

"We are now developing some promising ways of coming to the rescue of these non-reading children. The first is very early school-age diagnosis. Each year for the past five years, the number of six and a half, and seven year old non-reading children referred to us has doubled... Next in importance, is to close the gap which separates a child from his class-mates of comparable ability as rapidly as possible. The poor reader of normal ability must learn at a pace usually twice, sometimes three times that of his classmates in order to overtake them. We are now developing methods of teaching which will meet this requirement. (to Mrs. Rawson's later qualification of this last statement, we will take up a little further on.)

"Six years ago", we continue her verbatim, "we were pleased and satisfied when the children learned to read, But after a while we learned to expect this, and then our eyes were opened to the great range of secondary gains which accompanied their new achievement... Pale, passive little boys, their arms hanging limply at their sides, their faces a frozen mask, begin to put on weight, to have color in their cheeks and sparkle in their eyes. Their awkward movements tend to disappear. Instead of shy silence, they shout a gay greeting as they come in and race upstairs to the reading room."

"So rapid and so striking are these physical and emotional gains, we think we must often have made our diagnosis backward". Her present belief is that, in many cases, children do not fail to learn to read because they are sick. Rather, they are sick because they have failed to learn to read.

The young non-reader of delinquent pattern, she diagnoses as "hitting back at a society which seems to be shutting him out from its best secrets". Of one ten year old who kept everyone concerned in turmoil for months, she writes, "Michael's problem, like that of many other children, was to transfer comprehension between the spoken and the printed symbol. This can be accomplished at six just as well as at ten for the normal child. To see that it is done at six is the *most fruitful mental hygiene progress we could attempt today.*" To this splendid statement we will return a little later.

The Williams Street Workshop in Glen Falls, N. Y. exists, among other things, to rehabilitate non-readers. In Chapter IV of "Tomorrow's Illiterates", its Director, Mrs. Helen R. Lowe, gives a poignant account of the plight of the young adult non-reader in this second half of the twentieth century.

Arthur Young, a painter and carpenter, came to the Workshop at the age of 24. With him he brought a New York State high school diploma which certified that he had satisfactorily completed the curriculum requirements by the Board of Education for the high school. He also brought his final report card certifying that he had received the highest grade – H for Honor – in English throughout his senior year.

"I really thought I had a high school education," he commented somberly, "till I tried to get a job.

For Arthur found he could not read, even at primer level. He could not drive a car because he could not pass the test for a driver's license; he could not read the street signs or traffic directions. He was unable to order from the menu in a restaurant. He could not read the mixing directions on a can of paint, or the label on a shipment of sheet rock. He had been cheated and swindled in various ways as a consequence of his inability to read.

He began going to the workshop two or three evenings a week and applied himself earnestly to all the phonics of which our English print permits. But it was more than a year before he could plough through even a fifth grade story, and more than two before he attempted the vocabulary and construction of "Santa Claus and the Tenth Avenue Kid", – a piece of adult fiction for which Mrs. Lowe makes no great literary claim.

"I had selected it," she explains, "because it was just beyond the range of his experience, and full of implications and allusions strange to him. When we had finished it," he said, 'I want to read that again. I want to know what it feels like to get all of these things as I go along.' Arthur had learned to read."

Here too, we will withhold comment for a moment.

In Chapter 6, we return to the tie-up between reading failure and delinquency. Its writer is Melitta Schmideberg, M.D., Director of Clinical Services for APTO (Assoc. for the Psychiatric Treatment of Offenders). She opens it with: "Reading retardation among delinquents is particularly striking. According to statistics of the New York Training School for Boys, out of 150 boys aged 12 to 15, 45 are below the 2nd grade reading level... The usual story of a non-reader delinquent, as we see him at APTO, is that he stays in bed till noon, then gets bored and goes out and steals a car."

If her "usual" shocks credibility at first, a little reflection makes her story seem natural, even inevitable. Not being able to read or write, the older delinquent can't have the social interests, the hobbies, the decent friendships of other boys, so what else is there to do with his time but pass as much as possible of it in bed? And not having any of the skills for earning an honest livelihood, in what lawful way can he come by the money he must have? As for conscience, the *dance* and *dumbbell* status to which his failure to learn to read relegated him, in the eyes of even his primary classmates, has withered that into hopelessness, bitterness, and defiance of a social order which permitted that status to befall him.

Because of the chain of bad consequences which follows even a three months reading retardation, Dr. Schmideberg believes this should be corrected before it gets any worse. Though she does not expressly word it in a parallel statement, you feel she joins Mrs. Rawson to the effect that to see to it that every normal child learned to read at six, would be the most fruitful anti-delinquency program we could adopt today.

As for the present crop of non-reading offenders, she feels that learning to read should be made a condition of probation. It was largely because the courts felt that such a condition couldn't be enforced, that APTO began providing elementary instruction for them in the three R's.

Dr. Schmideberg does not specifically lay the blame for the non-reading offender on "Look and Say", but her participation in Dr. Walcutt's all-out onslaught on it, would seem to indicate that she agrees with him. For the same reason, one assumes that APTO went about its rehabilitating *via* the phonics road. She gives no data by which one can judge the success of its effort, but since, when she wrote, this was in its third year, one can conclude that she found the results worth while.

But how *much* worth while? Were they what they would have been had English already joined that "dream world" of phonetic spelling, of which Dr. Rudolph Flesch spoke? If, for instance, *isle, guile, lisle, style, file, buy, sign, sigh* had already dropped their silent letters, regularized their long vowels and presented themselves in all the consistency and predictability of *iel, giel, liel, stiel, fiel, bie, sien, sie*? And going back to the William's Street Workshop, what of Mrs. Lowe's Arthur? Here was a young man with the good sense and good behavior to pilot himself through a standard high school in spite of an almost total inability to read. And for six years thereafter to earn what one assumes was an honest living in a more or less skilled field. If the three headed hydra which rears its *ch* in *church, chef, chemist*, had met his eyes as *church, shef, kemist*; if *scissors, phlox, equation* had presented themselves as *sizurz, floks, ekwaizhn*, would a whole year of earnest application have passed before he could get the sense of a fifth grade story? And another year before his mentor thought it wise for him to attempt a carefully selected piece of adult fiction?

Think back on Dr. Laubach's experience. Often his pupils were tribesmen who had never read a word – to some of whom, indeed, the very concept of transmuting sounds into symbols was new. Over and over again, he has demonstrated that if you just transmute them consistently, predictably and simply, there's hardly a physically and mentally normal adult or child over five, but can put sign and sound together and write them into words. And is so thrilled by the experience, the job is now to supply him with enough reading matter.

But it is Mrs. Rawson who leaves us with the strongest case for NOT BACK TO PHONICS – FORWARD TO PHONETICS. [11](#) For if any teacher on this continent has what it takes to make a success of the former, you'd suppose it would be she. Judging from the five pages in which she sets forth her techniques, nothing could exceed the skill – and the warm, reassuring understanding – through which she removes the "reading block" from those of her charges *from whom it is removable*. But what of those from whom she finds it is *not* removable? Or only partially so?

In the following quotation on them, the italics are this reviewer's way of calling attention. They would seem to be needed in view of the sweeping claims for the phonic method made or implied throughout so much of the book.

"Children *under ten years* of age, of *normal intelligence*," Mrs. Rawson sums up her experience, "can always be taught to read at their mental age. Children from ten to twelve can *usually* be rehabilitated, continuing through school and doing *reasonably well*. For older children, satisfactory recovery depends on the number of years of retardation, and the damage to the personality this has caused. These children, thirteen to sixteen years of age, have been considered stupid in a peculiar way all their school lives. They have had *no reason* to doubt the accuracy of this judgment. Treatment will at least restore their self respect, and teach them the significance of their handicap."

But will it? Or rather, for how long? Take the thirteen year old who came to the Clinic reading, let us say, at the nine year norm, and whom all its efforts have failed to raise significantly above that. When Clinic days are over; when he is again on his own among agemates studying textbooks way above his reading ability, and shut out from normal participation in all too many of their out of school interests and activities - when, in short, he is again a dumbell to be charitably treated by the kindly and taunted by the cruel, – how much of this restored self-respect will he retain? How much support will he draw from what his sympathetic Clinic teacher told him about the significance of his handicap?

How much *then*, or through the sixty or seventy years of this charity, this cruelty, which loom ahead of him?

As long as she must keep her reading therapy in line with the rampant malphoneticism of today's orthography, this will probably be the best that Mrs. Rawson can do for most of her reading failures over twelve. And for some of those over ten. But suppose that hardly had "Tomorrow's Illiterates" come off the press when Canada entered the "dream world" of phonetic spelling, – what would she be reporting of them, on, let us say, the first anniversary of that blessed move?

My guess is that her account would begin somewhat to this effect: "I lost no time in getting as many of them as possible back to the Clinic and peppering them up much as follows: 'The trouble has not been in you, but in the chaos of the spelling with which we have been obliged to confront you. Now that we have banished all this chaos, you can start work again, secure in the happy certainty that you *are going to learn to read*. How, you ask? For the moment, let's leave the *how*, and concentrate on the *what*. That *what* will be books you never dared look at before. School books in geography, history, science, and on the level of those most of your aagemates are studying now. And story after story - romance, adventure, mystery, space travel – of the sort for you older children, – that your grown-up brothers and sisters, –even your parents like to read. For in all the fifteen, twenty, thirty thousand different words which will make up this reading material, there wont be one which you would not soon be able to manage by yourself. Most of them at a bare glance, the rest after just a little careful scrutiny. How come? Because every letter or digraph of every last word in this new reading material will transmute itself, always and only, into just the one sound officially entrusted to it. Never more, hereafter, will you find a symbol confusing you by using itself also for a second sound – to say nothing of a third, a fourth, a fifth! Look at the four words I've written on the blackboard: *laid, aisle, said, plaid*. You notice that they all contain the vowel digraph: *ai*. But should they? Not any more! Since *ai* is to be the spelling from now on, of the sound of long *a*, and nothing but long *a*, with the first of these four words is the only one which can rightfully use it. But every word in the whole English language which rhymes with *laid* – words like *fade, preyed, stayed*, – is equally entitled to its service, and from now on will be spelled of was *faid, praid, staid*." "See how simple this is?"

"Well, those of you who don't quite get all that I've been saying, will get it very shortly. Will you take my word for that? Good! Keep right on believing not only that you are *certainly going to learn to read*, but also that you are going to have a wonderful time while you are doing it. Now, shall we begin a review of the first essential step in the process – the recognition of the basic sounds that make up our whole great, beautiful mother tongue?"

And the end of this account? – what could it be? the answer to that, I leave to those who, like myself, have taught the *reeding* and *rieting* of their phonetic native speech to illiterates in their home land. Above all, I leave it to Dr. Frank Laubach and his long experienced colleagues in Asia, Africa, and the islands of the seas.

We are now in the sixth semester since Sputnik I started the flooding of our press with "The Challenge of Soviet Education". Not even yet have our schools evinced a glimmer of realization that what, fundamentally, that boils down to is the challenge of Soviet spelling, – itself among the most nearly phonetic of all earth's major tongues. Till we meet it with a comparable regularizing of our own orthography, books like "Tomorrow's Illiterates" may have their little day among us, but they will hardly narrow by a *verst* the gulf between the fundamental literacy of Russia's young and ours.

[1] The title of an article by Helen Bowyer in the Phi Delta Kappan, February, 1961.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 p22 in the printed version]

5. From "Out on a Limerick",

A collection of over 300 of the World's Best Printable Limericks – assembled, revised, dry-cleaned, and annotated by Bennet Cerf. Reprinted with his genial permission.

A jolly old Southern colonel
Has a humorous sense most infolonel.
 He amuses his folks
 By laughing at jolks
That appear in the Ladies Home Jolonel.

The fabulous Wizard of Oz
Retired from business becoz
 What with up-to-date science
 To most of his clients
He wasn't the wiz that he woz.

There's a young man who lives in Belsize,
Who believes he is clever and wise.
 Why, what do you think,
 He saves gallons of ink,
By merely not dotting his "i's".

There was once a man not unique
In fancying himself quite a shique.
 But the girls didn't fall
 For this fellow at all,
For he only made thirty a wique.

Langford Reed.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 pp23–25 in the printed version]

6. THOZE SPELING DEEMUNS

Ralph Dornfeld, Professor of Education, Emeritus, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A MAN named Mr. John Pough calls on you and hands you his card. To be polite you try to pronounce his name. What will you say?

Mr. Po – *o* as in dough or toe
Mr. Puf – *u* as in rough or cuff
Mr. Pawf – *aw* as in cough or off
Mr. Poo – *oo* as in through or too
Mr. Pou – *ou* as in bough or doubt

If you are wise you will say, "How do you pronounce your name sir?"

This illustrates the fact that no one can know with certainty how to pronounce an English word which he has only seen written or how to spell a word which he has only heard but never seen written.

Differentiation

English as a spoken language is easy to learn. Foreigners can pick up a speaking knowledge of English more easily than of any other European language. But when they try to read English or try to write English, they have a rough time, because English is cursed with an outworn, illogical system of representing words.

Let us contrast English to German, Swedish, or Turkish. In Swedish *every letter* has one sound, and every sound is *invariably* represented by the same letter or combination of letters.

In other words, German, Swedish, or Turkish has an almost perfectly scientific method of representing its words. It is so simple that a child in the first grade learns to read and write and spell at the same time. In fact, *spelling is not taught as a separate subject*.

Why is German or Swedish or Turkish spelling so efficient? Because they are designed to perform only one function - namely to consistently represent the sounds of the words as pronounced today.

Why is English spelling so inefficient? Because it tries to do two things:

- (1) Show the history of the word, and
- (2) show the present pronunciation of the word at the same time as it shows its history.

The word *laugh* is spelled as it is, in order to show that it is a first cousin of the German word *lach* and that 500 years ago it was pronounced as the German word.

But today the word is pronounced *laf*. Here, then, the historical interest defeats the practical need.

Chaos

English spelling is chaotic because of several variables:

1. Single or Double Consonants

To illustrate:

immune	amend	elude
amuse	commend	allude

To gain control over this variable rationally, the average person would have to devote several years to the study of Greek, Latin, and French etymology. If he lacks the time for such study he must undergo the same kind of conditioning as a white rat in maze or a monkey learning to ride bicycle.

2. Silent letters and Duplicate Consonants

Every silent letter is a mummy, a speech habit long dead but carefully embalmed and displayed, even though it has a musty smell. English spelling resembles an archaeological museum.

b in bomb, dumb, thumb, lamb, comb, tomb, debt, debtor

g in gnu, gnostic, gnat, gnome, gnaw

k in know, knowledge, knoll, knuckle, knot

l in calf, half, balm, calm, palm, psalm, stalk, talk, walk

p in psalm, psychology, pneumonia, pneumatic, pseudo-, receipt

w, in write, written, wring, wrung, wrought, wrath, wroth

Then there are the *duplicate consonants*:

g (soft as in *gin*) Duplicating *j* as in *jam*

gh is useless wherever it occurs

c (soft as in *cent*) Duplicating *s*

c (hard as in *corn*) Duplicating *k*

ph duplicates *f* everywhere

3. Vowels

Even more serious is the confusion concerning the representation of vowel sounds.

In the pronunciation of present-day English we distinguish 17 vowel and diphthong sounds. Since we have only 5 vowel signs, we must use combinations of letters to represent most of the 17 sounds.

Here confusion reigns. More than 250 combinations of letters are used to represent the 17 vowel sounds, or an average of 18 different combinations for one vowel sound.

To illustrate:

The long sound of *o* as in *open* is represented in our present system of spelling by 19 different letters or combinations of letters:

eau (chauffeur)	o-e (more)	ou (four)
au (mauve)	oe (toe)	o - ue (rogue)
au - e (beau)	oh (oh)	ou - e (course)
eo (yeoman)	oo (floor)	ough (though)
ew (sew)	os (appropos)	ow (know)
o (no)	ot (depot)	owe (owe)
oa (coal)		

In the following sentence the long sound of *o* is represented in eleven different ways:

"Our *chauffeur*, although he stubbed his *toe*, *yeomanly* towed *four* more boards through the open door of the depot."

All of these useless, conflicting patterns are musty, smelling mummies for us adults, but they are nagging, taunting demons for the children who are learning to read.

Now let us turn to our bright-eyed, eager child entering the first grade. He can speak English, and he has a vocabulary of 1000 words or more. He wants to learn to read and to write. But in spite of the care exercised by the author of the reading book and by his teacher, he finds that learning to read is like a visit in the crazy house.

Here are some samples of his tormentors:

"Mary, *watch* Tommy *catch* the ball."

"Tommy, *put* your *cup* on the table."

The more intelligent the child is, the sooner he is annoyed by such inconsistencies as

Watch catch cow low put cup shoe toe

At the end of the first school year the German, Swedish, or Turkish child can help himself with phonics (because his language has a consistent, logical scheme of representing the sounds of words). But at the end of the first year of school, the English-speaking child, even if he has an I.Q. of 125, still is very much handicapped.

Is it any wonder that in English we have to compile such lists as W. Franklin Jones' "One Hundred Spelling Demons"? Is it any wonder that we have to organize remedial reading classes in secondary schools and even in colleges? Are we to "Point with Pride" at our having such classes? A visiting Turkish educator would think we should be ashamed of it. It is no accident that during World War II the Selective Service reported 1,750,000 draftees in need of reading instruction and made the statement that 12 percent of our population is functionally illiterate. [\[1\]](#)

What About It?

Benjamin Franklin, scientist, and statesman, believed in extending scientific methods to language. In 1768 he composed and circulated "A Scheme for a New Alphabet and Reformed Mode of Spelling."

In a letter, defending his proposal, he wrote:

"Whatever the difficulties of reforming our spelling now are, they will be more easily surmounted now than hereafter; and some time or other it must be done; or, else our writing will become the same with the Chinese as to the difficulty of learning and using it." [\[2\]](#)

Dr. Frank Laubach, who has had amazing success in promoting literacy the world over has taught millions of people to read in 200 languages. How has he done it? By using or inventing a consistent, phonetic system of spelling for each language. Thus, the pupil can concentrate on a single symbol for each sound.

Dr. Laubach says:

We could sweep the world with this system of phonetic key word teaching if it were not for one obstacle - the spelling of the English language! If we spelled English phonetically, American children could be taught to read in a week. We needed only a day with the Philippine dialects. I can see only one thing to do - start a strike against the way English is misspelled - become a spelling Bolshevik! I suppose that unless we revolt we shall be handing on this same accursed orthography to our children, and our children's children to the crack of doom." [\[3\]](#)

Action

Let us recognize that language is a living, growing organism but its spelling is a handmade garment which can and must be changed when it becomes a straight jacket.

Let us abandon our smugness ("what was good enough for me is good enough for my child") and our fatalism ("it can't be done" attitude). Let us catch up with the people of Germany, Sweden, Turkey, Russia, and most countries of Europe, by subscribing sincerely and without mental reservation to the principle that:

The only function of spelling is to represent consistently the sounds of the words as spoken (by the majority of speakers).

Hope

In 1930 the Simpler Spelling Society of Great Britain and the Simpler Spelling Association of America applied the principle of frequency count to the representation of English sounds. As a result they approved and recommended to all the people who speak English a system of spelling in which each sound is consistently and invariably represented by that letter or combination of letters which has represented it most frequently in other traditional spelling. Thus the sentence cited above.

"Our chauffeur, although he stubbed his toe, yoemanly towed four more boards through the open door of the depot" becomes

"Our shoefur, auldhoe he stubd hiz toe, yoemanli toed foer moer boerdz thruu dhe oepen doer ov dhe depoe."

Progress

For twenty years, this system has been used successfully in Scandinavia in teaching secondary school pupils to read and write English.

The Simpler Spelling Society, under the leadership of scholars like Dr. Daniel Jones, has begun publishing a series of beginning readers. The first one, *The Little Red Hen*, is a beautiful volume. It is being used successfully in beginning classes in a number of public and private schools in England and Wales.

In 1949 a bill to create a Commission on Spelling Reform was defeated in the House of Commons by only three votes. Many people in Great Britain believe that both the children and the millions of illiterate adults in the British Commonwealth of Nations would benefit by the adoption of this system of World English Spelling.

The use of World English Spelling in the schools of the English-speaking countries would release annually hundreds of millions of pupil-hours and hundreds of thousands of teacher-hours of effort, time which could be devoted to more useful learning.

Let us add another article to the children's Charter of 1930: "The right of every child to learn to read and write the English language through the medium of a consistent, phonetic system of spelling."

Opportunity

The members of the Educational Press Association of America can render a great service to education by

1. Discussing spelling reform in their journals without prejudice or ridicule.
2. Encouraging the optional, alternative use of World English Spelling in beginning reading books.
3. Encouraging young people in schools and colleges to use World English Spelling in their written work.
4. Encouraging the optional, alternative use of World English spelling in textbooks for adult illiterates and foreigners.
5. Encouraging the optional, alternative use of World English Spelling in books designed to be used for people who want to learn English as a second language, e.g. in Germany, Japan, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.
6. Appointing a Standing Committee on Spelling Reform.

[1] "Literacy" in *American People's Encyclopedia*.

[2] Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin, ed. by Jared Sparks, Boston, 1840, vol. VI p. 295.

[3] Frank Laubach: *The Silent Billion Speak* (New York, Friendship Press) p. 56.

Reprinted from the JOURNAL OF BUSINESS EDUCATION, MAY, 1961. Copyright by Robert C. Trethaway.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 p25 in the printed version*]

"The following review appeared in the journal "The Australian Highway" in 1956.

7. Rational Spelling By Dr. Walter Gassner

English, in comparison with other languages, suffers from one serious disadvantage which might easily offset the many advantages with which it is so richly endowed - its unphonetic spelling, or rather, the discrepancy between its sounds and its spelling. On the one hand, a letter may be pronounced in up to a dozen different ways, so that a person not acquainted with a word in which such a letter occurs cannot know how to pronounce it. On the other hand a particular sound may be represented in an equally large number of different ways, which is the chief cause of the difficulties school children have when learning to spell.

In recent years numerous proposals for a simplified English spelling have been launched. Bernard Shaw left a fortune for the formulation and promulgation of a new alphabet which, in his view, needed to be introduced because there are more sounds in English than letters in the Roman alphabet.

Rational Spelling, by Dr. Walter Gassner (Semantography Publishing Co., Sydney) is a system of reformed spelling, in which the problem of phonetic representation is handled with scientific thoroughness. Without the introduction of new letters the sounds of English are indicated as consistently and accurately as in a phonetic transcription. Stress, too, is marked in a consistent, yet unobtrusive, way - without the use of written accent signs.

"Rational Spelling" aims at (1) enabling foreigners to deduce the pronunciation of every English word from its spelling; (2) enabling English-speaking school children to spell correctly without memorising individual words (with one important proviso dealt with below); and (3) keeping departures from the existing system at a minimum. It does not aim particularly at reducing the length of words - this has to be stated specially because some readers will be disappointed when finding that some words become longer. Nevertheless, the words that become shorter will far outnumber those that become longer, and a great deal of time and space will be saved.

He considers it essential that a reform of such consequence as that of English spelling should contain nothing that could be regarded as a step backward - and worsening the chances of intelligibility in even a single instance would be such a step backward. Those who oppose any spelling reform often use the existence of homonyms (words with the same pronunciation but different meanings) as an argument to discredit the idea.

Dr. Gassner's system is the answer to that argument. He solves the problem as follows: For every sound there will be a symbol (that is, a letter or a letter-group) that is used in normal circumstances: for example, for the sound of "ee" in "tree" that symbol will be "ee"; therefore, "he" will be spelt "hee," "evening" - "eevning," "steam" - "steem," "people" - "peepl," and "chief" - "cheef."

In addition, some sounds will have a second symbol which will be used only where a word has to be distinguished from another word with the same pronunciation. For the "ee"-sound this second symbol will be "ea," which will be used in such words as sea, weak, beach, heal, so as to distinguish them from see, week, beech, heel. Any reader who can recognise the sounds of English should be in a position to use the system, and to write the words in the same way as was intended by the author.

It is the considered opinion of this reviewer that whenever the competent authorities envisage the introduction of a reformed system of English spelling, they should give due consideration to Dr. Gassner's proposals.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 pp26–28 in the printed version*]

8. The Corpse in the Ivy Towers, by Victor N. Crasnoff,

The recent *meteoric* success of the Russians in scientific and engineering fields should not be a surprise to Americans. It is a matter of simple arithmetic – preponderance of brainpower generated by ease of learning.

While we still teach our unhappy children to write and read the Caxton 15th Century English, which they no longer speak, the Russians, by virtue of two language reforms since Caxton's time – one at the beginning of the 18th Century and the other as recent as the year 1918 – teach their children to write and read the language they currently speak. The result: Russian pre-college schooling is only 10 years instead of our 12; the most important, however, is the fact that the Russian student in his pre-college course acquires an automation of writing and reading the mother tongue comparable to our automation of writing and reading numbers – that is to say, a proficiency of writing and reading at first sight without the aid of a dictionary, *every word* of the Russian language, including all proper names. (Dictionaries, by the way, are almost non-existent in Russia, being needed only to discern meaning).

In vivid contrast to this amazing mastery of the native tongue of the Russian college entrant, is our side of the story related in the pamphlet: "The English Language in American Education", by Thomas Clark Pollock, published in 1945 by the Modern Language Association of America: "In recent years both secondary schools and colleges have discovered that they must cope with a widespread problem of 'remedial reading'. They have found, that is, that large numbers of their students simply do not know how to read properly and must be taught to read before they can proceed with the education appropriate to their years and native abilities."

"Recognizing facts like these, some contemporary educators have given counsel of despair, recommending that American education largely abandon the hope of imparting a mastery of the mother tongue, or retain it only for the gifted and privileged few."

The educators, however, appear to be a bit too critical in this appraisal of their students. Caxton writing, being what it is, is a very uncertain guide to today's pronunciation, and since textbooks of their studies are on subjects often unfamiliar to students, these textbooks, of necessity, contain many new words which students cannot read without outside help or reference to a dictionary. It is only natural, therefore, that the American student must spend much of his valuable study time on deciphering the writing in textbooks and memorizing the spelling of new words. The Russian student, on the other hand, whose textbooks are written in the same form as the pronunciation guide of the language he currently speaks, is relieved of this drudgery and is free to devote all his learning time to the study of the subject.

Unfortunately, illiteracy in English-speaking countries does not end with the college entrant. The impeccable spelling we see in print and business correspondence is the work of professional scribes. The most common road to literacy in America is the hiring of a stenographer. The dependence on the professional scribe for the graphic form of our writing, however, has the detrimental effect of the lack of practise, so that, in the course of time we tend to forget the spelling of even the simplest words. As an example: "It did not develop much power. About 10 of my schoolmates would go to the r. r. and pick coal to burn" (Henry Ford, October, 1913. Attempt at autobiography, written longhand at home during a sick spell). A little honesty on our part will reveal that we cannot spell much better than Mr. Ford.

To aspire to world leadership in the field of science and in the breath to condemn the use of science's most effective tool in its own cultural setup is one great incongruity of the American scene today. The tool in question is, of course, the ALPHABET – a set of graphic signs DENOTING ELEMENTARY SOUNDS, by means of which the *sound* of words can be represented in writing by depicting the *sequence of elementary sound* comprising the spoken word in allied alphabet letters. Needless to say, no such elementary sound bond exists between today's spoken English and Caxton writing. Obscured by the deadwood of silent letters, unnecessary letter combinations and great confusion in elementary sound representations, Caxton writing is anything but a portrayal of sound in Modern English by the instrumentality of the alphabet.

Languages using the instrumentality of an alphabet are known as *phonetic*. Today's Russian is a good example of a true phonetic language.

One of the most ardent proponents of phonetic spelling for English of recent times, the late George Bernard Shaw, estimated the added effort of his people in using the fossil written forms of today's English to cost Britain each year a fleet of battleships – a high price to pay for the privilege of a fetish-worship of the family skelton. To save his countrymen this wasted effort, Mr. Shaw had devised an alphabet for phonetic English and also had offered a large part of his estate of some two million dollars for the purpose of evaluation of this alphabet and its further development. At a probate hearing of his will, held early in 1957, there appeared no takers. In spite of the callous disregard of Shaw's offer by those in the Ivy Towers, the Appeal Court of London, to keep Shaw's dream alive, had the courage and the foresight to set aside \$23,240 from Shaw's estate for the purpose of the study of phonetic writing.

The late Rev. Wm. W. Keat, Professor of Anglo-Saxon, Cambridge University, another proponent of phonetic spelling for English, once wrote: "I do most fervently hope that one of the subjects introduced in this 20th Century will be the study of phonetics, including the history of the adaptation of written symbols to spoken sounds. Whenever this is done, the study of languages will enter upon a new phase, and all will be brightness and light and knowledge where at present there is dense and most discreditable gloom." Rev. Skeat's words sound almost prophetic of the current situation.

There is nothing puzzling about phonetic writing. The fact is that as far as English is concerned, all the necessary instrumentality for making it phonetic is already set up and the *English Phonetic Language* itself already exists and is in everyday use.

Since the *Pronunciation Key* of the *Dictionary* is made up of reliable graphic signs denoting elementary sounds, it has all the necessary qualifications for being the true Alphabet of Modern English. And since the written forms of the *Pronunciation Guide of the dictionary* are visual representations of the sounds of Modern English words means of this alphabet they, in turn, constitute the *Phonetic English Language*.

Having thus discovered both the true *Alphabet of Modern English* and the *Phonetic English Language* itself, we can now proceed to revamp the writing of English on the basis of these discoveries.

In defence of American youth, it must be pointed out here that the language they cannot read, but must remember, is the unreadable *Caxton English* and that they can read the *Phonetic English*, the *Pronunciation Guide of the Dictionary*, equally as well as the Russian student reads his *phonetic Russian*.

What is needed, then, to make us literate, is not a course of "remedial reading", but the kind of "remedial writing" offered by the Pronunciation Guide, which anyone can read.

The first step in the program of revamping the writing of the English language along scientific principles is, therefore, the obvious one – to relegate the written forms of *Caxton English* to the 15th Century history, where they rightfully belong, and substitute for them in the written forms of the Pronunciation Guide and, thus, with one bold stroke, remove the stigma of illiteracy from the English speaking peoples.

The graphic form of the Pronunciation Guide, however, is quite unwieldy and while it solves most admirably the reading problem, the writing of it would be very difficult. This brings us to the second step of the revamping program – the simplification of the *Pronunciation Guide Key*.

Even a cursory look at the Pronunciation Key of today's dictionaries will show that there is something radically wrong with them. The generally accepted number of elementary sounds in English is 42. Modern dictionaries, however, list anywhere from 61 to 66 graphic signs for elementary sounds of their pronunciation keys. Here are some of the listings:

1. Harvey's Revised English Grammar, copyright 1896, by Thomas A. Harvey, lists 42 symbols for the elementary sounds.
2. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, copyright 1953, by G. & C. Merriam Co, lists 61 symbols for elementary sounds.
3. Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd Edition, unabridged, copyright 1934, by the G. & C. Merriam Co, lists 66 symbols for elementary sounds.

The number of symbols seems to grow with the size of the tome.

It stands to reason the oral make-up of the English language has not changed in the last 60 years so much as to justify an addition of from 19 to 24 elementary sounds to the pronunciation key. These additions, being the result of too many nurses, are redundant and have no place in the *Alphabet of Modern English*.

The simplification of the Pronunciation Key effected by Shaw is quite simple – the dropping of the surplus elementary symbols. His choice of graphic signs for the identification of the speech sounds was most unfortunate and had provoked much glee and derision, Nevertheless, Shaw's alphabet is based upon the scientifically correct philosophical concept. The design of graphic signs is a mere technicality which could have been easily resolved into a satisfactory form, but – "So resolute is the world to despise anything which carries with it the air of simplicity" (Edgar Allan Poe).

The Crasnoff System: Phonetic Spelling for English, outlined in the pamphlet "The Case of the Lost Postulate", published in 1951 by the William-Frederick Press, is another simplification of the writing of the Pronunciation Guide of the Dictionary, so arranged, that an accurate graphic portrayal of the sound of Modern English words is made with the existant Latin letters without additions of any new letters or marks.

Summing it up: We already have everything we need for the change-over of English writing to the phonetic principle, – all that remains is the will to change.

The importance of the change in our concept of writing assumes an added significance in the light of news from China. The following press release appeared in most of the newspapers of this country:

"Seoul, Korea, Dec. 29 (AP). President Syngman Rhee, a staunch anti-Communist, had a good word for Red China today. In a statement President Rhee praised the recent Red Chinese decision to adopt the Latin alphabet and junk the ancient ideographs or characters of multiple strokes. 'Even those opposed to the Communists can offer nothing but tributes for such a forward looking step,' he said."

The decision of which President Rhee speaks is the decision of Red China to change from the ideographic to phonetic concept of writing and from characters of multiple strokes to Latin letters arranged into an ALPHABET DENOTING THE ELEMENTARY SOUNDS OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE. This does not necessarily mean that the Latin letters in this new Chinese alphabet will be allied to the same elementary sounds to which they are allied in the Latin alphabet, for the elementary sounds of Chinese language are different from those of Latin.

If, under the impetus of the resultant ease of learning, afforded by this development, China should now proceed to generate brainpower in the same ratio to population as other countries with phonetic languages, such as Russia and Japan, she would soon surpass many times the brainpower of any one nation in the world today. The political implications of the Chinese language reform are, therefore, tremendous.

"And he left his lore to the use of his sons – and that was a glorious gain" (Rudyard Kipling), but when a heritage interferes with progress and the continued preservation of it threatens our very security, we must have the moral courage to bury it in the nostalgic past, and to make the necessary fundamental changes in our cultural setup.

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Victor N. Crasnoff is a retired Mechanical Engineer for the Olin Industries, who came to the U.S.A. as an officer in the Russian Artillery Unit in 1915. He resides in Godfrey, Ill.

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Reprinted from Newark Evening News, New Jersey. Wednesday, Dec. 14, 1960

9. A News Editorial.

If your youngster doesn't like school, don't worry too much about. He may be one of the gifted ones who can educate themselves. Dr. Victor H. Goertzel, a psychologist, analysing the careers of 77 world figures, finds most of them did not like their schools either.

Seven of the 77, who include such personages as Chancellor Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Mark Twain, and Bernard Baruch, did not complete elementary school. Seven were elementary school graduates and 14 didn't go beyond high school.

The significant fact in the education of the Dr. Goertzells 77 is that all were "hungry readers". This suggests that in our current acceptance of the indispensability of college training, we may be overlooking the possibilities of self-education. An education can be obtained by intensive reading. Certainly there can be no true education without it.

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10. THE WORM AT THE ROOT by Helen Bowyer

I write of an unwitting lot
Of parents, teachers and what not
Who tolerate the spelling in our schools,
Who frustrate their little Johnny
With *sunk* and *monk* and *money*,
With *whose* and *shoes* and *news* and *rules* and
ghouls.

Though they know that education
In an alphabetic nation
Demands a quick and sure ability to read,
They waste his unreturning time

On *limb* and *climb* and *hymn* and *rhyme*,
His memory on *home* and *comb* and *roam* and
cede and *knead*.

They know the mounting frequency
Of juvenile delinquency
(The casual murder of a mother
Or some such little other
pecadillo as we read of every day)
Stems largely from poor Mike and Maisie
Who simply couldn't jump the crazy
Gulf between our orthographic *look* and *say*.

And YET

Well, there's oceans more to tell,
But I'll end my doggerell
With, "Let's summon our good sense, if any,
To respell *scent*, *meant* and *many*,
In the "one-sound-one-sign," order
Which just across our southern border,
Blesses Spanish from Tijuana, to Chile's farthest shore,"

Do you ask "But how begin it?"
I will show you in a minute,
If your interest holds out a few lines more.

Of the 250 jumbled spelling units in which our 40 basic speech sounds are awash, this demonstration junks 212. To the remaining 38, it adds two new ones (uu and zh) of which we have long stood in need, and restricts each of the resultant 40 to the transcript of one only speech sound. Pronounce ae, ee, ie, oe, oo as in *maelstrom tee, tie, toe, tool* – aa as in *baa* and *bazaar* – ou and uu as in *pout* and *put* – u as in *must, murmur, minus*, – zh as in *seizure* – italicized th as in *think*. Give all other letters and digraphs, the sounds they most commonly transcribe in conventional spelling

Heer'z to an awaekund lot
Ov paerunts, teechurs and hwot not,
Hooz yung wil reed with eez and plezhur
And soe in dyoo and boiyunt mezhur
Kan grapul with the studiz esenchul too our tiemz,
Aul bikaus this sied our bordur,
Sounds and sienz stand fuul in ordur,
Maching wun-too-wun as *throo* thooz faar-flung Spanish cliems.

Reprinted from the International Language review, Colorado, U.S.A.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 p31 in the printed version]

**Some Additions to the 7 Deadly Sins of Spelling Reformers ([Dec. 1961](#))
From Leo G. Davis, Santa Paula, Calif.**

11. Ten Booby-traps on the road to Orthografik Stability.

1. Dwelling at length on current irregularity, instead of future stability.
2. Dreaming of impossible perfection, instead of practical stability.
3. Worrying about minority pronunciations. (We can't serve two masters).
4. Inventing new letters or using present letters in unorthodox manner.
5. Making every possible change, instead of just the necessary ones.
6. Worrying about consonant digraphs. (They never confuse anyone).
7. Trying to neutralize or omit the unstressed vowels. (They are there even in hurried speech).
8. Using a digraph to indicate a diphthong. (UE for the e-u and y-u phonemes).
9. Offering different spellings for homonyms contrary to fonetik simplicity.
10. Suggesting that ADULTS change their personal spelling habits. (They wont).

**Fred C. Wingfield, Denver, Colo, offers:
Some Delinquencies of Spelling Reformers**

1. Conceit regarding one's own skeme; prejudice against or no time for examination of other proposed methods.
2. Failure to acquaint oneself with the science of phonetics.
3. Hamstringing one's system by the immediate requirement of new alphabet symbols.
4. In the "Phonetic" skemes, lack of conformity to the rule: For each grapheme, one and only one phoneme.
5. Failure to comprehend that *all* the letters of our Roman alphabet are urgently needed.
6. Twisting the pronunciation to fit the system, instead of making the system conform to the pronunciation (e.g., the word "America").
7. Origination of skemes that require more letters than are used in conventional orthography; or whose letter economy is negligible.
8. Failure to realize that a reconstruction of English spelling unavoidably must make a change in appearance; a phonetics system will inevitably "look so strange". (Its about as logical to think one can go swimming without wetting the feet, as to believe that a respelling which is honestly phonetic" should not cause a drastic change in the "looks".

Dr. Walter Gassner, of Australia, suggests another "sin":

1. Introducing personal factors, e.g., opinions that certain written forms are acceptable whilst others that belong to the same category are not. (Reformers sometimes establish a rule, and then enumerate exceptions based on the opinion that such and such a form would be shocking, being too unlike the present spelling.)

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 p31-33 in the printed version]

12. Newark Evening News, Wednesday, Dec. 21, 1960.

To the Editor:

Sir, if your youngster doesn't like school, don't worry, he may be able to educate himself; all he has to do is to become a 'hungry reader', like Winston Churchill or Bernard Baruch. So, says in effect your editorial!

Never have schoolchildren been less likely to develop into "hungry readers". If your youngster doesn't like school, it is chiefly because his introduction to reading has made of it a laborious guessing game to be avoided whenever possible.

After learning to use the ten digits he is soon able to read numbers like 97,653 on first sight. If he learned to use the 26 letters as Churchill and Baruch did, he would just as easily read words like "convent" with a sense of achievement and a feeling of adventurous self-sufficiency. But no – it looks like the image of "convent" which is among the few hundred words that he has been taught to recognize as "pictures" just as the Chinese and Japanese learn their thousands of pictograms.

So Johnny guesses the wrong word, misses the meaning of what he is reading and gives it up as "not worth the trouble". Small wonder that he dislikes school.

William W. Murphy, Glen Ridge, N. J.

Newark Evening News, Wednesday, Dec. 28, 1960.

To the Editor:

Sir - William W. Murphy's comments on your editorial "Reading" were not nearly strong enough. A committee responsible for reviewing the curricula for public schools in a Western city reports that schools are failing to produce a sufficient number of students who can read rapidly, accurately, and with pleasure. The committee indicates this failure is one of the most formidable barriers to education.

The difficulty, of course, is more basic than school curricula. American English is a conglomeration of the world's tongues. Rules of grammar are arbitrary, antiquated and argumentive. Without facility in spelling and syntax, Johnny finds reading a difficult chore.

The elementary schools could help Johnny considerably. I suggest they discard sight methods, replacing them with old-fashioned phonetics and the spelling bee. English spelling is not an entirely rational system, if the basic words and sounds of letter combinations must be memorized. The secondary schools might make reading more enjoyable by discarding some of the so-called classics. Literature appreciation courses, except for students who plan intensive studies of English, are dull and tedious.

Parents, however, cannot expect the schools to do the job alone. If they are really interested in their children's progress, parents will put strict limits on the time their offspring spend watching T-V and on what they watch.

Karl Force, West Orange, New Jersey.

Newark Evening News, Jan. 15, 1961

To the Editor:

Mr. William W. Murphy sent me a copy of the editorial entitled "Teaching Reading" published in the Wednesday, Dec. 21, 1960 issue. He also sent me a copy of his entire letter showing that you omitted the last paragraph, as follows: "The Report of the San Francisco Curriculum Survey Committee contains the following comment: 'Perhaps the most formidable barrier to a more solid and mature education in the United States is the failure of the schools to produce in sufficient numbers, students who read rapidly, accurately and with pleasure'".

To my way of thinking, you missed the boat. This is far more important than the part you did quote because it is an indictment of our schools for their failure to teach reading. The S. F. Curriculum Survey Com. was composed of 8 professors, the heads of departments in Stanford University and the University of California – all of whom are recognized authorities in their teaching specialties. They also quoted Wm. S. Gray, who stated "Records of the achievements of pupils show that 20% to 30% of the pupils who enter either junior or senior high school read so poorly that they can engage in *required* reading activities only with great difficulty". And the New York School Board report by Bernard E. Donovan, as quoted in the New York Times of Wed. Dec. 14, 1955, stated that a shocking 55% of the pupils entering high schools were reading below their grade levels, some of which were more than five years below their grade level. This report was not based upon a small sample, but on the examinations of 47,756 pupils.

If we are going to keep up with Russia in the cold war, it is imperative that we find and eliminate the basic cause of this deficiency in reading. The S. F. report also says: "We recommend a systematically phonetic approach to reading". While this is a step in the right direction, it will not solve the basic cause of the difficulty, which is the erratic, inconsistent, illogical spelling of words in English – a system (if such it may be called) that has more exceptions to the rules than conformals – that stifles the child's natural attempts to use logical reasoning in tackling the spelling of a new word he has only heard, and which usually gives him no definite basis to pronounce a word he sees in print for the first time. How, in the name of common sense, can you expect a student to have confidence in his ability to learn spelling and reading when the rules for spelling are violated by more words than follow the rules? Most teachers have given up trying to teach rules for spelling because of this dilemma. Most of our books that today attempt to teach reading do so by a vast systematic guessing game – try this or that until you get a pronunciation that you think is right or fits the situation. Tell that to the poor bewildered student and you are only likely to confuse him all the more.

The only satisfactory solution to the basic cause of reading difficulties is a reform of our spelling so that all words are spelled by a regular system of rules based upon a dependable phonetic association between each letter (or digraph) and the sound it is supposed to represent. In other words, one sound and only one sound for each letter or digraph. Many of such systems have been devised but there can be no way of getting them put into use without being sponsored by the United States Government as the Official Spelling. After the government sets such a precedent, the newspapers, magazines, schools will follow. Schools will need to train candidates for government jobs, who will be required to use the new spelling in their work, for without a facile knowledge of the new spelling, they could not qualify. Advertisers are already recognizing the value of phonetic spelling by selecting important names for their products in phonetic spelling. Perhaps you have noticed: foto, Kix, Kwik-Snax, Krispy Kake Kones, Kodak, Noxzema, Thermos, Prestolite, Jello, Jiffy-Jell, Aplbutter, Rinso, and hundreds of others.

Last year Congressman Harlan Hagen introduced a Bill to establish a National Grammar or Spelling

Commission, which would have the power to select the best method of reforming our spelling. No action was taken because there did not seem to be enough parents who were sufficiently interested to write to their Congressman asking for action on this legislation. Until and unless an aroused public demands action on this Bill (to be introduced again this Jan.), probably we will get the same postponement again. The merit of the case does not seem to have any effect on our legislators, only the pressure by interested groups seems to be the cause of action. It all depends upon the parents and the teachers. If they are satisfied to have only half of their pupils able to read up to their grade level, then nothing will be done. Until they are aroused sufficiently to demand action by their Congressmen, and more particularly by Congress-woman Edith Green, Chairman of the Special Education Committee, which has bottled up this Bill, you can be sure it will remain unknown, unwept, unconsidered, and unacted upon – a monument to the lethargy of the American parents and teachers.

Yours truly, Newell W. Tune.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 pp33,34 in the printed version]

The following were sent in by Ralph D. Owen, Ph.D, President of the Simpler Spelling Assoc. They are written in World English, the system of reform sponsored by them and also the British Simplified Spelling Society.

13. Amerikanz Abraud.

A yung man huu reesently had tuurd England woz telling of hiz indignaeshun oever an insident dhat okurd when he vizited dhe Touer ov London.

An afabil Briton aproecht him, "Amerikan, arn't U?" he askt. "I thaut soe, from uer aksent."

"Dhe nurv ov that gie, maekin a krak liek dhat", sputerd dhe Amerikan, he woz dhe wun dhat had dhe aksent".

(reprinted from the Coronet, May, 1953)

A harast Swiss gied had been trieing to fiend sumthing too reely impres an Amerikan tuurist in hiz parti. In despaer he plaed hiz last kard on dhe magnifisent vue ov dhe Alps from dhe Lausane.

"Izn't dhis dhe moest buetiful vue U hav ever seen?" he askt. "O, I doen't noe", sed dhe Amerikan. "Taek awae uer laeks and uer mountinz and whot hav U got?"

Laf lienz.

Joenz: Mie wief wun \$800 at dhe raes trak yesterdae and split widh me."

Brown: O, U got haf?"

Joenz: No, she pakt hur bag and left me."

Sien on a stenoe'z desk

Its too laet to agree with me – I'v chanjd mie mind.

Gonphur Coughie.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1962 p34 in the printed version]

14. An Apologetic Parody, by Evelyn F. Boehm,

Oh, dear, dear, what can the matter be?
Deer, deer, hwot can the matter bee?
Dere, dere, whaht can the matter bea?
Joey can't spell worth a dime!

I asked him to write me a list for our shopping.
The list he did right, sent my intellect flopping.
I scarcely could read it the way he wrote it,
It was so distressingly bad,
It woz sew distressingly bad!.

The wurds that he rote, I skairsley coud reed them,
The wae that he roat them, I wish you'd hav sean them,
They wer so distresingly bad!
They wur so destrsingly bad!

He listed some bier to bring hohm two his father,
A suite chalklit bar too bring four his brother,
Sum sole for the kat, a bown for the dog,
Some seed for the bird, some fead for the hawg,
Then shugar and sawlt, kawfee and tee,
He rote down in order to get them four me.
Along with biskits and bred for hiz brekfest and mign.

Oh! I tel yu our Joey can't spel wurth a digm!
Owe, dear, dear, what can the matter be?
Deer, deer, wot can the matter bee?
Dere, dere, waht kan the matter bea?
Joey can't spel wirth a deim!