Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society, 1992/1. J12

Contents.

The Society

Founded in 1908, the Simplified Spelling Society has included among its officers: Daniel Jones, Horace King, Gilbert Murray, William Temple, H G Wells, Sir James Pitman, A C Gimson and John Downing. Its aim is to "bring about a reform of the spelling of English in the interests of ease of learning and economy of writing".

The Journal

1. Message from Christopher Upward. Editor-in-Chief.

The Simplified Spelling Society owes a profound debt of gratitude to Kenneth Ives for his initiative and commitment in offering to guest-edit this American edition of the Society's Journal.

The Journal evolved from the modest Newsletter bravely kept going ten years ago by Mona Cross, who thereby managed to preserve the Society's invaluable world-wide contacts thru the thin years of the early 1980s. From the mid-1980s the Newsletter grew steadily from some 20 pages of ordinary typescript to the regular 36 page A4 format of the later issues of the Journal, densely packed with Times 10-point articles ranging from humorous anecdotes to articles of unrivalled authority, such as John Wells on the implications of English accents for spelling reform and Asmah Haji Omar on the Malay spelling reform. By 1989 it was attracting increasingly wide interest and attention. But it was also becoming clear that the Society had not the strength to produce such a substantial periodical and at the same time to campaign actively via the media and by lobbying, and to develop soundly researched reform proposals for English spelling. The Society's raison d'etre required that the latter be given priority, and the Journal, with great regret, was allowed to lapse.

Thanks to Kenneth Ives it has now experienced a resurgence. That is important in itself. But equally important is the leap it has made across the Atlantic. While valuable work has been proceeding in North America (one need only think of Ed Rondthaler with the American Literacy Council, Ayb Citron with Better Education thru Simplified Spelling, and figures like Edgar Gregersen, Julius Nyikos, Traugott Rohner and Arnold Rupert), from the perspective of Britain at least there has been the impression of a lack of coordination across the American continent.

Perhaps an American edition of the Journal may spark off new developments there. But whatever else, it will certainly strengthen existing bonds between the British and American ends of the campaign to simplify English spelling, and it will open up views of the American situation to British readers.

The world-wide significance of the Society's work must never be forgotten. The three main clusters of membership at present are (in descending numerical order) Britain, the USA and Australia, but individual members are also scattered far beyond the native English-speaking countries, the mailing list covering Japan, China, India and several European countries. Their voices are of no less importance: English is the prime world-language, English spelling is a world problem, and non-English speakers should be encouraged to make their views of English spelling known loud and clear. There is no doubt what their views will be: Professor Mario Wandrowska of the University of Salzburg in Austria didn't mince his words when he recently wrote (in German) that English spelling is an insult to human intelligence. What are we doing to our schoolchildren, when we spend so much time insulting their intelligence?

Editorial
Kenneth Ives

Since membership of the Simplified Spelling Society is widely scattered and only a few can get to meetings, circulation of the *Journal* makes a major contribution to the Society's aims and progress. It is a major means of building a community of spelling reformers, debating and developing programs of reform and publicizing our efforts and results.

With continuing appearance of the *Journal* thus essential to the Society's aims and progress, I offered to take some of the load off our over-worked Editor-in-Chief.

Because of problems in learning new software for a new laser printer, this issue is later and thinner than intended. With your help in writing or discovering items to include, the next issue can be the normal 36 pages, or larger.

Topics on which articles are especially desired include:
1. Needed research: a. on spelling alternatives; b. on the acceptability of various of these.
2. Ways of introducing some simplified spellings to adults.
3. Developing initial and medial teaching media, based on NS90, CS, and variants of these.
4. Ways of getting schools to try these out, based in part on the experience with ITA.
5. Reviews of recent spelling reform leaflets, pamflets, and books — Cut Spelling, NS90, BETSS, American Literacy Council publications.

The American Scene
While SSS has fewer than 20 members in the United States, two other organizations are active here: Better Education thru Simplified Spelling, and the American Literacy Council. There is also a small organization in Toronto, Canada, with its own version of simpler spelling, and an occasional publication. These are described in this issue.

Over a century ago, in the 1870's, the Spelling Reform Association had a chapter in Chicago, and the Chicago Tribune began one of its two main efforts to use and popularize reform. How can present spelling reformers get the following and acceptance to duplicate that achievement, and go beyond it?

A European Opportunity
"The International Latin Union wants Latin to be added to the European Community's list of endangered languages. It is asking the EC to set aside one million European currency units ($1.35 million) for the promotion of Latin — 2 % of EC's 'Lingua' budget for the study of less-taught languages." (*Wall Street Journal* 11 October 1990, page A10)

If the SSS were to be successful in getting a similar amount designated for the study and publication of materials on, and in, simplified English, what are some possible projects?

One might be the publication of an edition of *UNESCO Courier* in a simplified English, having perhaps 3 % of words changed. This would have a simplified word in about every fourth line. Some years ago, there was an edition of the *Courier* in American English, so this is not unprecedented.

Another would be the preparation and publication of initial and medial teaching media in NS90, Cut Spelling, or versions of these.

2. On Harmnizing Cut Spelng and New Spelling
Som ideas from Chris Upward for discussion at th meeting of th Simplifyd Spelng Society on 27 april 1991.

1. Bakground
At its meeting on 23 September 1988, th Society revewd its stratejis, in particulr discussng wethr it shud in futur comit itself to just one spelng reform proposal as its 'oficial 'policy. Minut 8 from that meetng states: "... it was <u>agreed </u>that we needd a pluralistic aproach to reform", in othr words, th Society wud se its role rathr as a forum for discussion of al ideas on spelng reform and a sorce of suport for watevr scemes it decided to aprove rathr than exclusivly as th vehicl for a singl sceme. Since then, two main scemes, Revised New Spelling (RNS), subsequently renamed **New Spelling 90** (NS90), and **Cut Spelling** (CS), hav receved th Societys main atention.

2. Difrnt scemes mutuly exclusiv?
In acordnce with th Societys new pluralistic aproach, ther is no necessity for th difrnt reform scemes it may aprove to relate to each othr in any explicit or lojicl way. Th Society can perfectly wel say, we hav a number of scemes, and each must be jujd on its own merits without regard to th othrs. Such a view howevr at once rases questions such as: ar th difrnt scemes mutuly exclusiv? dos th public hav to choose between them, if it is intrestd in implmntng a spelng reform at al? how can th public be persuaded to implmnt any reform if it is ofrd a ragbag of possbilitis?

3. NS90 and CS complementary?
Wen these questions ar askd of th relation between NS90 and CS, th ansr is that they hav difrnt purposes, but since each purpose is valid in its own ryt, they ar not necessrily mutuly exclusive. NS90 is desynd (as wer its ancestrs, th successiv versions of NS from erly in th 20th century onwrds) as a radicl reform of english speling, mor or less giving each foneme a singl standrd symbl or digraf, and not atemtng to preserv many TO forms for ther own sake. CS on th othr hand is conceved as a first-staje reform, being larjly confined to th omission of redundnt letrs, and therfor retainng a recognizeabl similarity to TO spelings for most words. Th public myt then react by asuming that CS leads on to NS90, and that th two systms ar desynd to be mutuly compatbl, NS simply taking CS furthr.

4. NS90 as an extension of CS?
To a significnt degree that is th relation between NS90 and CS. Being desynd as an 'ideal' spelng systm for english, NS90 has shed th most obvius redundnt letrs from TO, and to that extent bilds on th omissions of CS. As ocurs by CS Rule 1, NS90 rites *head* without <a>, *debt* without <b>, *scissors* without *<c>, handkerchief* without *<d> (?)*,heart without <e>, *foreign* without <g>, *honest* without <h>, and so on with exampls of redundncy for most letrs of th alfabet. And as ocurs by CS Rule 3, dubld consnnts ar simplifyd in NS90. Th major advance by NS90 beyond CS is that it respels sounds representd by aberant letrs in TO (e.g. *meni* for TO *many),* and it regularizes th long vowls with <ae> for long <a>, <ee> for long <c>, etc. Thus far we can brodly say that NS90 and CS ar mutuly compatbi, indeed complmentry, and th Society cud to that extent launch them in tandm in a concertd campain.

5. Wher NS90 and CS Conflict
Howevr ther is one major area in wich th two scemes conflict. CS Rule 2 cuts out certn letrs wich ar retained (i.e. restord, if NS90 is seen as a subsequent staje to CS) in NS90. These ar th vowl-letrs asociated with post-accentul schwa befor <1, m, n, r>. CS treats them as redundnt insofar as th <l, m, n, r> can be anlyzed as having sylabic valu. It takes words such as TO *apple, rhythm, mightn't, centre,* wich respectivly contain sylabic <1, m, n, r),* as modls for cutng TO *chapel, fathom, important, enter* bak to th same endngs, givng CS *apl/chapl, rythm/fathm, mytnt/imporint,*

cenir/entr. NS90 on th othr hand adopts <e> as a standrd symbl for shwa, and so presumably spels these words as *chapel, fathem, importent, enter.* (Th sampl of NS90 provided by th minuts to th Societys meeting on 14 july 1990 howevr demnstrates sevrl patrns wich retain TO vowl-letrs for post-accentul shwa: *sekretari simbol, leson, japaneez, prymari, inishal, eksepshonal;* such exceptions to th regulr spelng of post-accentul schwa <e> in NS90 leve a major problm of TO unreformd — riters wil stil hav to lern a difrnt spelng for th midl sylabl of *separate, desperate, corporate.*)

6. Th problm of post-accentul shwa
Post-accentul shwa represents one of th gretst spelng dificltis in TO, since th pronunciation of th unstressd vowl is identicl, but many difrnt letrs ar used to spel it, ofn arbitrly. Th larjst numbr of alternativ spelngs ocurs befor final <r>, as in TO *burglar, teacher, amateur, Yorkshire, actor, neighbour, centre, murmur, injure, martyr,* but many alternativ also ocur befor < 1, m, n>. Th magnitude of th problm in TO can be jujd from th fact that out of 290 pajes in th *Penguin Rhyming Dictionary* as many as 14 ar needd to list al th shwa + <l> endngs, 9 to list al th shwa + <m> endngs, 19 to list al th shwa + <n> endngs, and 37 to list al th shwa + <r> endngs, a total of virtuly 80 pajes, or wel over a quartr of th hole dictionry, and that excludes al those words in wich othr letrs folo th <1, m, n, r> (like *difficult, important, history).* One myt argu that post-accentul shwa represents perhaps th bigst singl prob lm in english spelng, certnly it causes an enormus numbr of errs.

7. Post-accentul shwa in CS
By usuly cutng out th vowl letrs concernd, CS removes th major part of th problm, riting for instnce just <-r> *in burglr, teachr,* amatr*, Yorkshr, actr, neibr, centr,* murmr*, injr* martr*.* Thr ar howevr som patrns wher CS canot make this cut, because th vowl letr also indicates th valu of a preceding letr. CS thus fails to solv th post-accentul shwa problm aftr soft <c>, aftr a palatized consonnt, and aftr long vowls that ar not spelt with a digraf:

— CS has to keep th <e> in *grocer* in ordr to distinguish it from th patrn of TO *soccer,* CS *socr,* and th <i> *in pencil* in ordr to distinguish it from th patrn of TO *uncl,* CS *uncl.*

— CS has to keep th <io> in *ration* (altho it cuts TO *fashion to* CS *fashn)* in ordr to distinguish it from th patrn of TO *fatten,* CS *fatn.* Simlrly, (io) pronounced shwa has to be kept in al th 1,000+ words ending in <-cion, -sion, -ssion, -tion, -xion>.

— CS has to keep th <e> in *later, diner, super in* ordr to distinguish them from th patrns of TO *latter, dinner, supper,* wich ar CS *latr, dinr, supr.*

8. NS90 cud finaly solv th problm of post-accentul shwa.
Despite th enormus advantajs in regularity and economy acheved by CS Rule 2, wich normly cuts out th letrs stranding for post-accentul shwa, th patrns of exception listd in §7 abov represent quite serius limitations on CS's achevemnt in this area. Howevr, a mor radicl reform, such as NS90. cud resolv these dificitis entirely, by riting *groesr/socr, pensl/uncl, rashn/fashn/fatn/suspishn/invaezhn/pashn/naeshn, laetr/dynr/soopr.* As it now stands, NS90 not merely dos not remove these residul dificultis of CS, but it actuly abandns th substantial gains that CS dos acheve and in so doing preservs som serius problms of TO. To that extent, NS90 is clearly incompatbl with CS, and th public wil need to be givn a convincing reasn wy this shud be so, if NS90 is to enjoy th credbility that its desyn myt othrwise deserv.

9. A practicl problm of inconsistncy in NS90
So far this problm has been anlyzed simply in terms of inconsistncy between NS90 and CS, and th failur of NS90 to retain th regularitis acheved by CS. Howevr, even on its own terms, NS90 is inconsistnt: for exampl, *defer* retains <-er>, *concur* retains <-ur> and *astir* chanjes to *astur.* Such inconsistncis represent a major trap for both readrs and riters.

9.1 Th problm for riters.
If, as apears to be th case, TO *apple/chapel* ar not alynd in NS90 (as they ar in CS *apl/chapl,* but left as *apl/chapel,* then th riter canot tel from th pronunciation how to spel eithr word and that NS90 dos not rite *apel, chapl* .Simlrly with final <m>, th riter canot tel from th pronunciation wethr to spel TO *rhythm/fathom as rithm/fathem* or as *rithem/fathm;* with final <n>, th riter canot tel wethr to rite *hadnt/importent or hadent/importnt,* and with final <r>, th riter canot tel wethr to rite *centr/enter or center/entr.* Th contrasting NS90 spelng of th rymng endings of TO *radical/article* (NS90 *radical/articl,* CS *rudicl/articl)* is anothr exampl of th problm. If over a quartr of dictionry words in english contain post-accentul shwa befor <l, m, n, r>, NS90 leves th riter with a vast area of orthografic ambiguity.

9.2 Th problm for readrs.
Th problm for riters cud of corse be resolvd by insertng <e> for shwa in al cases, giving *apel, rithem, hadent, center.* That howevr merely increses th problm for readrs, since in NS90 th letr <e> also has th traditionl valu of TO short <e> as in *bet* and, befor <r>, in *her.* This means that th readr can no longr tel how to pronounce <e> in th environmnts concernd, and th foren lernr wil stil be unable to tel from th spelng that TO *to rebel/a rebel* ar difrntly pronounced (cf CS *to rebel/a rebl).* Worse stil NS90 creates new hetrofones, wich is th most glaring anomly of TO (as in th two pronounciations of *tear* in *tear drop/wear & tear).* If we take th TO pair *deafer/defer,* we find that CS distinguishs them quite satisfactrly as *defr/defer;* but NS90, it apears, wud spel them both as *defer.* Total ambiguity of this kind may not be very comn in NS90 (and it is to avoid ambiguity with TO *conquer, aster* that NS90 rites *concur, astur),* but thr wil be latent ambiguity in th NS90 forms of al th 25%+ words in english wich contain post-accentul shwa. For foren lernrs, ho canot be expectd to no th pronunciation of words as nativ speakrs do, this is an extremely serius drawbak to NS90.

10. Compatbility of NS90, CS th solution
It is symtmatic of this previusly intractbl problm that NS itself has thru its histry fluctuated in its proposed spelng for post-accentul shwa. Now that a solution is availbl, it shud be adoptd. Riting post-accentul shwa as in CS has th foloing advantajs: it wud -
— remove a major ambiguity from NS90 for both readrs and ritrs;
— create mor economicl spelngs (e.g. *rashn* insted of *rashen);*
— enable CS to point ahed to NS90;
— enable NS90 to refer bak to CS;
— giv th Society a mor coherent overal program.

I therfor propose that NS90 shud be amendd, to incorprate CS patrns as the standrd spelings for post-accentul before < l, m, n, r >.

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3. Important Omissions
Chris Upward

A simple test of the degree of disturbance caused by the omission of individual letters in words is printed below. Readers are invited to rank the following incomplete spellings of the word *important* in order of visual disturbance, with the figure zero given to the TO form, and marking the others with the rank 1–9, number 9 indicating the one found most disturbing.

Rank	Spelling	Rank	Spelling	Rank	Spelling	Rank	Spelling	Rank	Spelling
0	important		iportant		imprtant		imporant		importat
	mportant		imortant		impotant		importnt		importan

4. The Long Vowels Reconsidered
Kenneth H. Ives

Lacking letters of their own in English, the long vowels have been a problem for spelling reformers. The usual rendition of these, in World English Spelling (Dewey 1970: 90), the SSS proposals, and Simplified American Spelling (Ronthaler n Lias, 1986: 1), is an "across the board" rule to add "e" to the short vowel. The basis for such a rule seems shaky. Consider the following data, based on Dewey's counts of words, letters, and sounds in 100,000 words of running text.

Table 1

Sound -	/100,000	Spelling -	# now,	occur %
long a	7,790	ae	0	0 %
long e	7,114	ee	1,152	16 %
long i	5,961	ie	153	2.5 %
long o	6,091	oe	38	0.6 %
long u	6,051	ue	53	0.7 %
Totals	33,007		1,396	4.2 %

Only one of the five simple long vowels is spelt this way more than three per cent of the time! To apply this rule to "long a" requires respelling **all** examples of that sound, lengthening most. Hence this is **not** a simplification of spelling for it! Nor is it a respelling easily recognized by present users of English, since no examples now exist.

It appears then that we should abandon this sweeping rule and took more closely at unambiguous present spellings for the long vowel sounds.

Perspective
In seeking suitable rules for representing the long vowel sounds, several premises underlie the present essay.

First, getting spelling reform started is difficult. Hence initial steps should have few changes and clear benefits, if they are to be accepted and adopted.

This implies that these proposals need not be "perfect", nor considered as final for all time. They should however move in the direction of an ultimate consistent system.

Long "a"
One conventional unambiguous fonemic spelling for "long a" is the "ai" spelling initial or medial in a word or syllable, as in "aid, maintain". Another is the related end-of-the-word "-ay" spelling.

A third spelling is "-a/ " at the end of an accented syllable, as in "ed/u/ca/tion". This has a few complications for foreigners, so needs to be expanded. it is pronounst long in two syllable words "nation, nature", but short in three syllable words "national, natural', and long in multisyllable words.

A fourth spelling for "long a" is the accented indefinite article "a". (Dewey 13)

Table 2: Long "a"

Spelling	/100,000	%	Examples
retain -ai-	906	11.7 %	maintain
retain -ay	1,109	14.3 %	play, way
retain -a	1,123	14.5 %	education
retain <a> accented	272	3.5%	a
convert they..	1,122	15.7 %	thay, whair
convert -ea-	244	3.2%	grait, braik
convert a-e	1,918	24.7 %	caim, maik
Totals	6,794	87.6 %	

Using these four rules retains present spellings in 44 % of occurrences of the "long a" sound. This should be far more acceptable to present users of English.

One major respelling, of "they, their, there, where" to "thay, thair, whair" would regularize a few common words. A slight difference in the pronounciation of the "ai" sound before "r" may need a pronounciation rule, but need not have an added spelling.

Most of the <ea> spellings pronounst "long a" are "great, break" and their derivatives.

This leaves the common but clumsy "a-e" spellings as the major remaining spelling to change. Here there are many homofones with different   meanings. These we somehow understand in conversations, and would become indistinguishable except by context in writing as well: "fair/fare, flair/flare, gait/gate, hair/hare, main/mane, pain/pane, plain/plane," etc.

Long "e"
The commonest spelling for "long e" sound is final "-e" in short words: "he, me, she, we". Second commonest unambiguous spelling is "ee".

Changing "ea" spellings to "ee", and the clumsy "e-e" spellings, would regularize about a fourth of this sound's spellings.

The final "ee" sound in longer words, where it is a separate syllable, is more of a problem. The "-/y/" ending is used to be pronounced as "i", but in recent decades this seems to have shifted to "ee", at least in the United States (Random House 1975). Hence we need a rule that "final syllabic 'ee' is often spelt 'y'", with examples "eezy, meny, very". But what do we do with "committee"?

Table 3: Long "ee"

Spellings	/100,000	%	Examples
retain -e	3,142	44 %	be, me, we
retain -ee-	1,158	16.3 %	feed, meet
convert -ea-	1,385	19.5 %	eech, heet
convert e-e	444	6.2 %	compleet
Totals	6,129	86.0 %	

Long "i"
Short words ending in "-y" are about 19 % of long "i" sound, while "ie" spellings are not over 3 %. Hence the Simplified Spelling Society's decision to concentrate on "y" for this sound has a statistical basis in current usage.

Table 4: Long "i"

Spelling	/100,000	%	Examples
-y short words	1,151	19 %	by, my, why
retain -i/	1,0304	21 %	by, final, item
convert i-e/y	1,802	30 %	lyk, syd, tym
Totals	4,803	80 %	

This requires four rules. The "ie" sound is spelt "y", except that at the end of a first syllable it is spelt "i". Before a consonant, or at the end of a word or syllable, "y" is a vowel. Monosyllabic words ending in the "-y" are pronounst "ie".

Long "o"

The most frequent spelling of "long o" (as in a "oh") is the final "-o", formerly often spelt "-oe". The final "-ow" can easily be converted to this (some TV weather reports now use "lo"), as can the few "-oe" endings. Some confusable "-o" spellings should only be adopted after conversion of common present "-o" spellings now pronounst "oo", to "-u" — "du, tu". The unambiguous "oa" spelling might well be retained for initial and medial positions.

Table 5: Long "o"

Spelling	/100,000	%	Examples
retain -o	1,879	30.9 %	go, o/ver
retain -oa-	243	4.0 %	oat, boat
convert -ow/-o	671	11.0 %	belo, sho
convert o-e/oa	1,199	19.7 %	hoam, roal
Totals	3,992	65.6 %	

Long "u"

Over half the occurrences of this sound are in short, in words ending in "-o", "to, do". These conflict with the "oa" pronunciation of "go, so", a different "ending vowel is long" pronunciation. Changing these words to "tu, du" is fonemic and unambiguous. In these spellings, the unstrest forms are pronounst <-uh> (schwa), providing a clue to readers. And they are shorter than final <-oo>. Converting these two "too, doo" would lengthen spelling for half this sound.

Pronounced, however, are better converted to <oo>, to handle their possessive and other forms. Thus "you, who" become "yoo, yoor, yoorz; hoo, hoom, hooz". We may not need to retain <-s> ending on possessives. They are 0.6 % of words, Dewey count 616.

The other alternatives of using "ui" (fruit, suit) requires changing 7 % of this sound away from the familiar "oo" spelling (food/fuid?). And in and initial position, confusion could arize: is "uiz" spelling "ooze" or "use"?
The "final u" spelling also applies to syllables, as in "con/clu/sion".

Table 6: Long "u"

Spelling	/100,000	%	Examples
convert to, do	3,057	51 %	du, tu
convert -ue	42	1 %	du, tru
retain -u, -uth	164	3 %	du/ty, truth
retain -oo-	370	7 %	food, scool
convert you	989	17 %	yoo, yoor
convert who	318	5 %	hoom, hooz
convert u-e	54	1 %	rool, shoor
Totals	4,994	85 %	

Long "iu" sound
This sound as a separate syllable is often spelt initially "u/", as in "u/nit", or medially as in "ed/u/ca/tion". This rule might as well be retained. Initial "u-" before "s, z" (but not "sh") is also pronounst as "long u". This sound at the end of a word or syllable can be spelt "-iu", retaining some visual resemblance to present "-ew" spellings.

While the alternate "vyu, fyu" spellings eliminate one rule and spelling, this counters the "y before a vowel is a consonant" rule.

Table 7: Long "iu"

Spelling	/100,000	%	Examples
retain u/	360	32 %	unit, unison
convert u-e	248	22 %	ciur, piur
convert -ew	233	17 %	fiu, viu
Totals	841	71 %	

Gutteral "uu" as in "could".
There seems no clear, unambiguous way around using the "uu" spelling for this sound. The "oo" spelling is used almost as often for a different sound, and difficulties were noted above for other spellings for that "long u" sound, especially in an initial position.

While just using <u> is an attractive shortcut, it has problems. How then could we distinguish between "buck/book, cud/could, putt/put"?

Table 8: Long hard "u"

Spelling	/100,000	%	Examples
convert could	546	21.2 %	shuud, wuud
convert full	604	23.4 %	puul, puut
convert book	388	15.1 %	guud, luuk
Totals	1,538	59.7 %	

The change to "uu" spelling in nearly half the cases is in words which already have one "u", and changes another letter (usually <o>, <l>, or both!) to the second <u>. The change of <oo> to <uu> does not alter the shape of a word.

While every word using this sound would be respelt, this is less than 3 % of total words.

Summary

Using these rules, rather than the "add e" rule for long vowels, retains 35 % of traditional spellings that would otherwise have to be changed. This compares to only 4 % for the "add e" rule. "These spellings should thus be far more readily accepted.

Table 9: Long vowels.

Retain:	%	/100,000:	Rules:	Spellings:		Total:
				New:	Now:	Sound
long a	44 %	3,410	4	3	19	7,770
long e	56 %	4,000	2	2	20	7,114
long i	40 %	2,455	4	2	14	5,961
long o	35 %	2,122	2	2	19	6,091
long u	9 %	534	3	2	19	6,051
long iu	32 %	360	2	2	13	1,138
long uu	0 %	0	1	1	11	2,577
all 7	35 %	13,181	18	14	115	36,702

Recommendation

If the above statistics and arguments are found to be persuasive, they would lead to some recommended changes in NS90 (as NS92?).

1. Include, for all long vowels, rules that the "vowel at the end of a word or syllable is pronounst long'".

2. For "long a", retain also the present rules for "-ai-, -ay".

3. For "long o", extend the "vowel at end' rule to the respelling of "-ow" words.

These changes increase retention of present spellings:

Table 10: NS retains:-

Vowel	NS now	NS92?
long a	0 %	44 %
long e	16 %	56 %
long i	19 %	40 %
long o	5 %	31 % + 11 % -ow → -o

For "long e" in <-e> words, and for "so", this changes the explanation from "special case or word sign" to a fonemic rule.

Similar rules might well be adopted by the American Literacy Council. They would make it easier for learners to move from literacy in Fonetic to literacy in traditional orthography.

Many of the other changes implied in this article would benefit by further analysis and discussion before being proposed for adoption.

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5. Language Planning and Social Change
Ralph Cooper, 1989, Cambridge University Press.
Reviewed by: Kenneth Ives

The author contends that an understanding of language planning demands an understanding of the social changes which promote it.

Four examples of language planning, and their relations to the social and political movements of their times, are used to introduce this volume. They are:
1. The founding of the Acadamie Francaise in 1634;
2. The promotion of Hebrew in Palestine from about 1881;
3. Feminist language changes, from about 1971;
4. The Ethiopian literacy campain around 1974.

Three types of language planning are defined: status, corpus, and acquisition planning.

"Status planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the allocation of functions among a community's languages." An example is the choice of language or languages for governmental signs and documents in multilingual communities. Official languages are of three kinds: status, working, and symbolic. English is a status and working language. Irish (Gaelic) is both of these (tho to a lesser extent for working use) and a symbolic language (also, required for certain jobs).

Corpus planning includes spelling and other language structures. "A planner may devise a spelling system that is easy to learn, easy to use, economical to print, inexpensive to implement", which is an improvement on the system it is to replace. But "the public may greet the proposed reform with enthusiasm, indifference, scorn, or disgust".

Acquisition planning refers to organized efforts to promote the learning of a language. The British Council nurtures libraries abroad, and sends experts to organize workshops about methods of teaching. There are three overt language acquisition goals: a. as a second language; b. reacquisition by a group which lost it; c. acquisition of a language so it won't lose ground in competition with others. Means employed may affect 1) opportunity to learn; 2) incentive to learn, 3) both.

Social changes
Each example of language planning which appears in this book arose in the midst of social change. What changes affect language planning?
1. Climatic shifts, volcanic explosions, and soil erosion are all physical changes. Location at a geographic crossroads, with the intermingling of differing cultures, promotes social changes.
2. Substantial changes in population provide another dimension. Rising expectations in a population, resulting from, or producing economic changes, are another dynamic.
3. Discovery and invention may be the most important source of social change. The invention of movable type made books cheaper, and led to wider literacy. Improvements in transportation and communication are also important.

4. Cultural diffusion. A prime example is the spread of English as a language of science, administration, and international trade.
5. Ideas and beliefs. Nationalism in the past and present; and interculturalism, also affect languages. Modernization has been a major influence in the past century.
6. Decision making, at all levels of society, may affect language.

Theories

There are at least five major theories of social change: evolutionary, cyclical, functional, conflict, and dependency.

Based on the examples and factors reviewed in the book, the author arrives at three pages of tentative generalizations. Twelve of these 24 are:

2. Language planning cannot be understood apart from its social context or apart from the history which produced that context.
3. Language planning is typically motivated by efforts to secure or maintain interests, material or nonmaterial or both.
4. Language planning may be initiated at any level of a social hierarchy, but it is unlikely to succeed unless it is embraced and promoted by elites or by counterelites.
5. Neither elites nor counterelites are likely to embrace language planning initiatives of others unless they perceive them to be in their own interest.
8. If language planning serves elites and counterelites, it may also serve the mass, particularly insofar as it strengthens the individual's sense of dignity, self-worth, social connectedness, and ultimate meaning as a member of a group linked both to the past and to the future.
9. Whereas it is in the interests of establisht elites to promote acceptance of a standard, it is in the interest of counterelites to promote the acceptance of a counterstandard.
12. Political democratization or increased political participation exerts pressure to increase access to literacy. This may lead either to reducing the gap between spoken and written varieties, or to increasing access to formal education, or both.
15. Language policy alternatives which are consistent with the values and belief systems of the target population are more likely to succeed than ones which conflict with those values and beliefs.
16. Corpus planning (such as spelling reform) prior to changes in the functions for which a language is used is unlikely to be effective. It is only after a language begins to be used for new functions that corpus planning in behalf of those functions is likely to be effective.
17. Acquisition planning is unlikely to be effective if the language in question serves no useful function for the target population.
18. When establisht elites seek to extend their influence or to resist the incursions of rivals, when counterelites seek to overthrow the *status quo,* and when new elites seek to consolidate their power, we find pressure for language planning. We also find pressure stemming from ideological and technological changes, which sometimes motivate and sometimes reflect shifts in political and economic arrangements.
21. Successful language planning is seldom a one-shot affair. Implementation of a decision may require repeated efforts by planners to cope with the resistance of those they seek to influence.

Corpus Planning

Spelling reform is one type of corpus planning, so more of what the author reports on this is relevant for SSS members consideration.

There is a growing literature which offers criteria for judging the adequacy of writing systems (14 authors on this are listed, page 126).

Psycholinguistic, technical principles and criteria are concerned with the extent to which the writing system is easy to learn, easy to read, easy to write,, easy to carry over to another language, and easy to reproduce by modern printing methods. These criteria may conflict with one another. What is easy to read is not necessarily easy to write and print. What is easy to learn is not necessarily easy to use. (Editor's note: Shaw Script, for example!) For persons becoming literate, an orthography should indicate the sounds of the words, but for more advanced readers, an orthography should indicate meanings rather than sounds.

With an alphabetic system, the last symbol in the plural forms of *cat* and *fiddle* would be different (cats, fidlz). Similarly, the second vowel in each of the following pairs would be represented differently in the first word than in the second — *mendacious, mendacity; narcosis, narcotic; serene, serenity; seduce, seduction; contrite, contrition.*

On the other hand, if one believes that a fluent reader recognizes not the correspondence between symbol and sound, but rather the correspondence between symbol and meaning, one will design a writing system which reflects underlying grammatical and lexical forms. Thus the last symbol in the plural forms of *cat* and *fiddle* would be the same, as such spelling represents the plural morpheme rather than its phonological representation. Similarly, the second vowel of each member of the word pairs enumerated above would be spelt the same, since such a spelling facilitates identification of meaning.

To what extent, then, should a writing system represent the phonological realization of a text, or should it represent abstract underlying grammatical and lexical structures, if one's principal goal is fluent reading? And does it really matter?

A more pressing reason for a relaxed attitude towards technical considerations is that these seem less important for the acceptance or rejection of a writing system than social considerations. (128)

Industrialization, the spread of literacy, and the rise of nationalist movements combine to form national standard languages. Language planning is a typical adjunct of these national movements, as their leaders seek to mold the new standard to mobilize and unify those they hope to lead, to legitimate their claims, and to buttress their authority. (Editor's note: Thus with the rise of nationalism in Quebec, that Province establisht an Office de la Langue Francaise, partly to translate technical terms onto French roots, rather than use the Latin or Greek root terms the Anglo engineers used.)

Successful corpus planning "is a delicate balancing act" between the old and the new, traditionalism and rationality. It requires sensitivity to what the target population will "like, learn, and use". The public must be told "why what is being offered to it is desirable, admirable, and exemplary." Neither untempered traditionalism nor uncompromising rationality are workable

solutions to corpus planning problems. One route is to appeal to popular usage by speech networks which are favorably regarded. (154–5)

Some Implications
With these perspectives from the book, what kinds of programs by spelling reformers might be needed to link some spelling reform efforts to the social changes in progress or in prospect? What are the major social changes that spelling reform could become a part of?

1. INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL organizations: United Nations, particularly UNESCO; the European Community, especially its Lingua subdivision (with a budget of $50 million a year).

2. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS for trade, scientific and technical activities.
a.   Several decades ago, chemistry organizations changed their spelling of "sulphur" to "sulfur". Next they could change "phosphorus" to "fosforus'. Later "cloreen, oxijen, hydrojen" might be adopted.
b.   Airline and travel associations and businesses could institute a change from the irregular "flight" to the shorter, regular "flyt".
c.   There are often-used spelling anomalies in other fields. Getting one or a few in each field changed, under sponsorship of appropriate organizations, would also help spread the idea that spelling can and should be moderately simplified, by tapping into these varied "speech networks".
d.   This approach may require creating and nurturing an internal "spelling reform caucus" in each such organization.

3. MODERNIZATION: This is a trend away from status and reward based on heredity or age, to status and reward based on performance. As such it is often based on "rationalization", the analysis and redesign of activities for more effective and efficient outcomes. How can spelling reform become a part in various modernization movements?

4. LITERACY programs, and the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) for adults can be another "entry point".

5. The trend in some parts of the United States, at least, to EVALUATE schools and teachers on PERFORMANCE of their students. This, coupled with an expressed need to include more science, and more and better writing, in the curriculum, provide added "entry points".
a.   This calls for development of initial teaching media and lesson plans as a way to reduce time spent on spelling, and the discouragement to writing that this entails.
b.   A key factor here is securing their acceptance and use in schools. They might be faized in "a grade a year" in early grades. Later a "medial teaching media" version of partly reformed spelling may be needed. Its acceptance in secondary schools (later in colleges?) would make a transition to reformed spelling by adults an easier task, as these students graduate.

6. A Spelling Reform for the 1990's for English Speaking Adults
Kenneth Ives

As a contribution to the debate on how to introduce spelling reforms, the following seven steps for adult users of English are proposed, with their rationale, for possible adoption, one a year, from 1993 thru 1999.

For those adopting them, these seven steps offer several accomplishments:
A. Abolish <ough, augh, ph, igh> spellings.
B. Double the use of <j> and triple the use of <z> in English spellings of their sounds.
C. Regularize the spelling of some of the words which need two or more changes.
D. Remove almost all (94%) of "short a consonant e" spellings ('have' — "hav").

Securing the acceptance and use of some spelling reforms by a substantial number of adults is a major challenge facing the spelling reform movement. When a reform secures at least 5% acceptance, it is firmly establisht and can move toward majority use. Unfortunately, even modest spelling reforms in English have rarely achieved this level of acceptance.
A few of Noah Webster's proposals, in his 1828 Dictionary, are now dominant, especially in the United States. Thus "musick, publick" are no longer in regular use. The National Education Association's spelling of "program" is dominant in the US; "catalog, dialog, prolog' are in considerable use. But the Kucera and Francis study in the 1960's found "altho, thru" at about 1% acceptance in printed materials.

While major progress in spelling reform may come thru use of initial and medial teaching media in schools (the metric system is now taut in US schools but not widely used by adults) but adult acceptance of some reforms may be a prerequisite to that.

1. Because getting a first step accepted and adopted is the hardest, and most important, it consists of words already having more fonemic alternate spellings in most American Dictionaries. This parallels the publication by the Simplified Spelling Board in the early 1900's of its list of "Three Hundred Words Spelt in Two or More Ways". There are over 3,000 of these (Emery 1973), but practical lists should not exceed 30 words.

> altho, tho, thru, thruout, thoro, thoroly;
> dropt, fixt, mixt, spelt, stopt;
> catalog, dialog, prolog; cataloged, cataloging;
> programer, programed programing;
> analyze, -d, comproniize, generalize, legalized;
> canceled, labeled, traveler, totaled;
> buses, gases; defense, offense, pretense;
> and for British users: program, favor, honor, labor.

These 28 root words and 6 derivatives (plus 4 British) count at least 2,633 in Kucera's study of a million words, and about 184 in Dewey's count of 100,000 words.

2. The Simplified Spelling Society's STAGE I replaces the <ough> spellings with their eight pronounciations, and the <augh, ph> spellings:

enuf, ruf, rufly, tuf;
aut, baut, braut, faut, saut, thaut, thauts;
caut, dauter, taut; laf, laft, lafing;
emfasis, fenomena, fenomenon; filosofy,
filosofer, filosofical; fotograf, fotografic;
fosforus, fone, telefone.

These 19 root words and 9 derivatives count 1,932 by Kucera, Dewey est. 266. Since they include 17 of the 35 different <ough> words Dewey counted, and 9/10 of their occurrences in his sample of 100,000 words, readers can carry the rule thru on the other words with <ough> spellings. (18 words, 38 occurrences). Similarly, the list includes 6 of the 8 <augh> words, and about 30 of the 32 occurances. The <ph> words were 60 in Dewey's sample, with 108 occurrences. The list includes 14, with about 36 occurrences. While the remainder is 46 different words, they averaged 2 times each in Dewey's count so could easily be handled by readers.

Somewhat related is the replacement of <igh> by <y>, and <eigh, aigh> by other appropriate vowels.

bryt, delyt, fyt, fyting, flyt;
hy, hyer, hyest, hyly, hyt, hyway;
lyt, lyts, lyted, lytly; myt, nyt, nyts, tonyt;
ryt, ryts,syt, slyt, slytly, tyt.
strait, nabor, naborhood. ait, aiteen, aity.

These 15 root words and 16 derivatives account for a third of the words and 3/4 of the occurrences of these <igh> spellings. The remaining 60 which Dewey found occur only 3 times each, on the average, in 100,000 words, so can be respelt by readers and writers as they come along.

4. Spelling reforms which operate by one rule at a time do not handle well many confusing words which have two or more non-fonemic spellings. Hence the need for some steps composed of such words. A first one myt well be:

avrij, bizness, bizy, colij, cuzin, duz, duzn't;
eezy, eezily, faiz, fizical, foren, nolij;
masheen, -s, masheenery; peepl peepls;
pozitiv, rezon, rezons,- sezon, sez, skeeni, wait.

These 19 root words and 6 derivatives count 4,161 in Kucera, about 601 in Dewey's study. They account for about 0.5% of words in an avrij text.

5. While the "soft c" rule is about 100% accurate in English, the parallel 'soft g' rule is only 54% accurate. This is below the 75 % minimum for a rule to be very useful. The letter <j> was introduced into English only several centuries ago. Its more extensive use could faiz out the "soft g" rule. An initial list of such changes would include some vowel changes, as <ge, gi, gy> are being replaced:

brij, chainj, chainjed, chainjing, chainjes;
charj, dainjer, ej, enjin, enjincer, exchainj,
jencral jeneraw; imajin, juj, jujment;
laj, larjer, larjest, larjly; manajer, orijinat
rainj, rejon, rejonal rejons; reujon, relijus;
staij, strainj, sugjest, sugjested, waij, waijes.

These 21 root words and 13 derivatives count 4,161 in Kucera and about 400 in Dewey. This (with 3 in step 4) more than doubles the 421 <j> in Dewey's count. Thus these words chainj 215 of the 'soft g' spellings, reducing that rule from 54% to about 30% application.

6. While <s> pronounced <z> at the end of words, especially plurak is too frequent and too regular to be changed early, <s> pronounced <z> in the niiddle of a word is not so *regwu.*

Currently < z> is the least used letter, tho its sound is the 11th most common. An initial list of medial < z> respellings is:

huzband, muzic, muzical; prezent, -ed -ly;
prezerv, prezident, -ial; prizon, -ers;
reprezent, -ing, -s; reprezentativ, -s; rezult, -ed, -ing;
thouzand, -s; vizable, vizit, viziting, vizitors.

These 12 root words and 13 derivatives count 2,376 in Kucera, and about 268 in Dewey's list. With the <z> words in Step 4, they bring Dewey's count of letter <z> from 284 at 0.06% of letters to about 875, three times its present use.

7. After the Norman conquest of England in 1066, French scribes could not read their own writing and tell if a word ended in <u> or <v>. So they added an <e> after those ending in <v>, even tho this conflicted in many cases with the rule that "vowel consonant e makes the vowel long". With the advent of typewriters and now word processors, this expedient is obsolete.

hav, havn't; activ, creativ, detectiv, effectiv,
extensiv, expresiv, giv, givs; impresiv, liv (verb), livs;
nativ, negativ, objectiv, relativ, relativly, sensativ: curv, twelv.

These 17 root words and 4 derivatives count 5,702 in Kucera and about 784 in Dewey.

SUMMARY

Step:	Roots	Variants	Kucera	Dewey	j	z
Start					421	284
Step 1	28	6	2,633	184		
Step 2	20	9	1,932	266		
Step 3	15	16	4,118	497		
Step 4	19	6	4,161	601	51	323
Step 5	21	13	3,776	400	400	
Step 6	12	13	2,376	268		268
Step 7	17	4	5,702	784		
Totals	132	67	24,698	3,000	872	875

These seven steps together affect about 3 % of words in an average text. Thus they are a gradual introduction to reform and to getting the idea of spelling reform accepted.

Benefits
Viewed from the perspective of people we hope will adopt early steps of spelling reform, what problems do each step help resolve for them?

Step 1 aids reform acceptors who feel they need Dictionary backing for their first efforts, to help them respond to objections.

Step 2 helps readers avoid the confusion of 8 pronounciations for <ough>, and helps writers of words presently spelt <ough, augh, ph>.

Step 3 helps writers with "long i" sound by omitting the silent <gh> now in many such words, and using <y> for this sound, except in the initial syllable, "I, final, item".

Step 4 helps readers and writers with some common irregularly spelt words.

Step 5 helps writers with <j> sound words, reducing and eventually eliminating the alternate <ge, gi, gy> spellings. It helps learners pronounce, reducing their conflict over words having a hard < g> sound tho followed by <e, i, y>, get, give

Step 6 helps learners with the words listed, so they don't startle others with "soft s" pronounciations of words usually pronounced "z", and produce confusion between "precedent" and "president"!

Step 7 reduces conflicts in learner's pronounciation with the rule that 'final < e > makes the earlier vowel *long.*

As most of the changes shorten words, when they become familiar they will speed both writing and reading for most people.

Adoption
Many spelling reformers are convinced of the need for step by step progress on reform. But how do we get a substantial minority of the public to adopt one or more of them or other, steps? This requires some spelling reform effort focused on "marketing". About 80 years ago, Andrew Carnegie contributed about $250,000 over 20 years to this kind of an effort in the United States. This supported publicity, literature, and field staff. Public acceptance of a few changes resulted. One large circulation magazine, the Literary Digest, used a noticeable number of reformed spellings into the 1930's. How can we secure the funds, effort, and program to do as well or better in the 1990's?

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7. Spelling: A National Sport
Susan Baddeley

On the 26th of November 1988 a large proportion of the French adult population went back to school again. Seated behind wooden desks in the Chaillot theatre in Paris, or, more comfortably, at home in front of the television screen, they took down a short text dictated by Bernard Pivot, presenter of the popular weekly book programme *Apostrophes*, who was dressed for the occasion in a schoolteacher's grey overall.

This unlikely-sounding event was the 4th in a series of annual National Spelling Championships, founded by Pivot himself, and which by now have become something of a national institution. Relying for their success on a strange mixture of nostalgia for the daily dictation of many people's childhood and the spirit of competition, these 'championships' have at least one thing in common with Olympic events: it is well-nigh impossible to achieve a perfect score. As a German colleague recently said, "It could only happen in France".

Why only in France? Firstly, because of the nature of French spelling, which lends itself particularly well to this kind of competition. It is extremely complicated, full of mute internal and final consonants, of homonyms distinguished graphically (the word *lait* for example has no less than thirteen homonyms), with doubled consonants whose use is irregular, even among words belonging to the same family, and accents which are often unpredictable: the circumflex accent, for example, no longer has the phonological function of denoting long vowels that it once had in many French words. Above all, French spelling is grammatical, with agreements of gender and number made between nouns and adjectives (though not always), in verb forms (past participle and reflexive verb agreement), and the conjugation of verbs in writing is extremely complex.

In order to write French, some Latin and Greek may also be useful: the fact that the word **alléger**, meaning 'to lighten' is written with double <l>, whereas its antonym, **alourdir** ('to weigh down'), only has one <l>, can be explained by the fact that the first is derived from the Latin **alleviare** and the second is a French formation, from the adjective **lourd** with the prefix *a*. However, no amount of Latin and Greek can explain forms like **nénuphar** ('water lily'), from the Arabic **ninufar**, or **dompter** ('to tame', from which the English word **daunt** is derived), from the Latin **domitare**.

Secondly, and perhaps most important, there is the attitude of the French in general towards their national spelling system. Known as "poor man's Latin", spelling is mastered (or not, as the case may be) at a cost of several hours' teaching per week at junior and secondary level, with weekly dictations (no marks if you make over five mistakes…), and by the absorption of large numbers of complicated rules and exceptions. Those who manage to come through it unscathed naturally have proprietary instincts towards something they have put so much time and effort into making 'theirs'. Good spelling is required for access to public positions (since Napoleon), and it is perhaps no coincidence that the French word for a spelling mistake, **faute**, can also mean 'misdemeanour', 'lapse' or even 'sin'!

To the organisers and to most of those who take part, it's "just a game", to be put on a par with crossword puzzles and other word-games, of which the French are particularly fond. However, to an outsider the whole thing seems fraught with contradictions. For many foreigners, the French language is to be admired for its qualities of precision, elegance and regularity. Yet, in these spelling championships, we see all the anomalies and aberrations of its written system dragged out

in the name of "love of the French language". Most of the difficulties put into the dictation are anomalies, which have no justification (not even etymological) and cannot be retained by any logical process.

It is also distinctly worrying that not even the best 'professional' spellers are able to take down a text of 200 or so words without making a few mistakes. If the 'champions' can't do it, what about the rest of us? Today, the ability to read and write one's own language correctly is such a necessity (one could even say: a civic right, since this year is the anniversary of the French Revolution) that it seems irresponsible to maintain unnecessary complication for the sake of a game, and for those who happen to like this sort of mental gymnastics.

The whole business is not, however, entirely negative: the championships draw attention to the fact that French has a particularly complex spelling system, and the contestants are aware more than most people that many of its difficulties are unnecessary. Even Bernard Pivot himself, when interviewed recently, declared that he wouldn't be against a certain amount of "weeding" in today's spelling. Most important, the substantial media coverage given to the championships also gives spelling reformers a chance to be seen and heard.

For those interested, here is the full text of the dictation. Incidentally, two days after the Spelling Championship took place, the newspapers reported that 90% of French schoolteachers were in favour of spelling reforms. Sheer coincidence?

Text of dictation
La longue balade des mots
Les mots ont la bougeotte. Seuls ou groupés, ils forcent les frontières, passent par-dessus les vallons, les vallées et les puys, s'immiscent dans nos fourre-tout, voyagent avec nos nippes et nos affûtiaux. Voudrait-on les empêcher de s'envoler tous azimuts que cela se révélerait inopérant. Car les mots sont cachés dans notre bouche, embusqués derrière nos quenottes, notre luette ou nos amygdales.

Sitôt arrivés à Montréal, à Canberra ou à Kinshasa, à peine avons-nous, les uns ou les autres, desserré les lèvres, que les mots, pressés de s'égailler dans la nature, s'échappent comme des étourneaux. Les mots sont d'infatigables globetrotters. Ils se jouent des fouilles et des censures. Les mots sont libres comme l'air.

Mais, de tout temps, les mots se sont battus pour vivre. Que de verbes et d'adjectifs, frappés d'obsolescence, se sont retirés du trafic! Que d'onomatopées se sont ressemblé, concurrencées, apostrophées, nui, exclues! Que de substantifs caducs et prétentieux de petits-maîtres se sont laissé supplanter par les mots succulents des rastaquouères!

Le vocabulaire détonnant et drolatique des sans-culottes a eu l'heur de régénérer substantiellement la langue. Tes esbroufes d'hier, ô ma langue! sont devenues prosaîsmes rabâchés d'aujourd'hui. Que de fois t'es-tu retrouvée, ma douce péronnelle, ballottée au gré des modes imprévisibiles! Maintenant, tout va plus vite, et les mots, eux aussi, se sont mis au prêt-à-porter, au clonage, à l'apocope spontanée. "Je cause, tu causes, il cause…" La plus belle cause, c'est la langue.

[Gerhard Augst: see **Journals**]

8. Update on the Reregulation of German Orthography
Gerhard Augst

In ***Journal* 89/2** (Item 6) we published an account of recent proposals for simplifying the rules for writing German, up to their submission to the West German government in October 1988. Professor Dr Gerhard Augst, a member of the Commission which prepared the proposals, here brings us up to date on developments to September 1989.

Alarmed by the emotional public discussion of the proposals, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the West German Länder decided to set up a Working Party. Its task would be to examine the proposals of the Institut für deutsche Sprache's Commission. Its brief from the outset ruled out the question of how words were to be spelt, as the proposals on this point were unacceptable. (This means that two areas are excluded from political discussion: the decapitalization of nouns, and the spelling of words.) The Working Party of the Ministers of Education showed a high level of understanding of the issues in its examination of the remaining proposals (regarding punctuation, joining words to form compounds, splitting words at line-ends, and the spelling of foreign words) and gave members of the Institute's Commission the opportunity for clarification. Probably before the end of 1989 it will publish the views of the Education Ministers, which will almost certainly prove to be broadly favourable.

The other German-speaking countries have meanwhile issued no official statements; but unofficially it appears that they too regard the proposals for reforming the spelling of words as too radical.

In October 1989 the experts from the four German-speaking countries were to meet in Vienna to give further thought to the question of reforming the spelling of words (including foreign words). At the same time as suggesting possible reforms, the rules are to be reworded, as another major orthographic problem is that the rules and exceptions are in some cases contradictorily and confusingly worded, i.e. in a rather user-unfriendly manner.

A conference of ministerial officials from all four German-speaking states, which had been planned for 1989, was postponed until 1990.

9. Publicizing Reform

In mid-1991, Better Education thru Simplified Spelling had its message on 10 billboards in the Detroit, Michigan area. The Detroit Free Press publisht the following article about this event.

E-Z Wordz Bilbordz urj that speling B simplified

For ubowt the next thre munths, 10 bilbordz in metro Detroit r urjing us tu start spellng liek this.

"Let's change: Have to hav, though to tho, through to thru" the signs say.

Abraham Citron, a retired Wayne State University professor and founder of Birmingham-based Better Education thru Simplified Spelling Inc., is leading the push to change English spelling.

"Our spelling can be described as ridiculous and outrageous and inefficient," Citron said Friday.

"Why should you spell have, H-A-V-E? You don't need the 'e'," Citron said. "We are making it more difficult to turn out good spellers, good writers and good readers."

The billboards began going up three weeks ago. Gannett Outdoor Co. of Michigan donated the space for 90 days on each sign.

Citron, 78, who once taught spelling to fifth-graders in Illinois, believes children would learn to spell faster with his phonetic program — spelling words the way they sound. Proper names would be left alone.

His group claims about 200 members in six counties, including some educators. They pay dues of $20 a year to support the cause. The group paid $69 to print the billboard posters but the space was donated free for 90 days by Gannett.

Citron began his quest for spelling reform in 1978 while teaching graduate students in education at Wayne State University. He said the students often complained about the difficulty of teaching spelling and reading.

"The more I began to look at it, the more I felt we could do a lot better with our students if we made our spelling more rational" he said. He spends about four hours a day trying to get corporations and government bodies, like the Department of Defense, to support his ideas. Many people won't listen.

"People now feel it's the way God expects us, to spell" Citron said.

Even some who are sympathetic with the cause doubt there ever will be substantial change in English spelling.

Philip Runkel, former superintendent of schools for the state, lent his name to the group, but said he no longer is involved.

'I like the concept, but it's a very difficult concept to sell" he said.

Jan Simms, who teaches spelling to third-graders at Hickory Grove Elementary School in Bloomfield Hills, said she liked the idea, but asked "where would the challenge be?"

"I can sort of understand where he's coming from," said Simms. "But there's really a history behind our words."

Citron said the roots of words would still be identifiable. He said that through gradual change, his group could have a big impact over 20 years.

Judy Hood, a language arts specialist for the Michigan Department of Education, doubts it.

"I can't see it happening within the six months or 20 years or a century, even."

10. BEtSS Progress Report, 1991.
Better Education thru Simplified Spelling

One important action taken during the past year has been a more effective mobilization of our volunteer resources. Long-time president Charles F. (Chuk) Kleber was named chairman, with specific responsibility for fund-raising; Abraham F. (Ayb) Citron, former executive director, was elected president, with a charge to oversee BEtSS' programs, and public relations executive and BETSS board member Dutton Morehouse accepted the post of the executive director.

We believe the action plans being addressed by BEtSS today are the most realistic in the twelve-year history of this national nonprofit organization.

1. We wil soon hav two informational publications to send in response to inquires: A short brochure wil answer the basic questions about BEtSS and simplified spelling, and wil invite further questions.

A major booklet wil present "the case" for simplified spelling and educational reform in some detail and wil encourage recipients to become members of BEtSS.

You will receive a copy of each of these brochures as soon as they hav been printed. We encourage you to request additional copies for your own use in spreading the word that simplified spelling offers a sensible means of helping to achieve needed educational reform.

2. BETSS now has a 22-minute professionally-produced videotape which makes the case for simplified spelling graphically and persuasively. We wil be glad to loan you a copy for your review and use with business, educational, governmental and community organizations.

3. We are experimenting with methods for getting the BEtSS message in front of ever-broader audiences. Ten outdoor billboards, donated by the Gannett Outdoor Advertising company, wil appear shortly thruout the Detroit, Michigan area. We are looking forward to the opportunity to test the effectiveness of this communication tool and are considering broadening this effort to other major communities.

4. We are working to develop effective coalitions within the, business and educational communities. Spelling simplification as a primary means of educational reform is a highly cost-effective means of helping to improve workforce preparation, which has become a principal concern of American business and government.

5. We hav begun a professionally-directed public relations effort; we are embarking on a targeted membership campaign; we are working toward the publication of two books on simplified spelling; and, we are beginning to work to reach and influence government officials and elected representatives.

We hope you wil write letters to the editors of local and national newspapers and magazines, sharing your own   feelings about spelling simplification and educational reform and suggesting that it be a part of the national agenda.

As we seek to broaden our base for funding solicitations, we welcome your suggestions of foundations, corporations and individuals who may be responsive to a request to become involved in our cause. In addition, we would appreciate receiving clippings as you may discover helpful articles that relate to spelling, workforce preparation, illiteracy and educational reform.

You may respond to BETSS at 24034 Bingham Pointe Drive, Birmingham, Michigan 48010.

11. A Brief History of BEtSS

Better Education thru Simplified Spelling was founded in 1978, by Abraham Citron. He is now retired from being a professor of Educational Administration at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. BEtSS' aim is to promote gradual, step-by-step simplification of English speuing. It expects this to take 20 to 30 years.

The Board of Directors is composed of 24 business and educational executives in Michigan including a university president and several advertising executives.

An International Advisory Board of over 100 consists of business, educational media, and other leaders from 27 states and 5 foren countries. These have included writers Isaac Asimov and S. 1. Hayakawa, Professors Albert Mazurkievicz, John Downing, Valerie Yule, and also Fergus McBride of the U. K Reading Association.

BETSS encourages business and other organi zations to use "hav, tho, thru" in internal correspondence.

The, organization has emfasized getting articles in newspapers and magazines. These have ranged from the Michigan Reading Journal in 1981 to the Detroit Free Press article on the billboard project, reproduced in this issue of JSSS. In 1984, Abe Citron gave a presentation at the Sociological convention in Detroit, on "Spelling Reform as a Redistribution of Power. This was later publisht, in very condensed form in this Journal 1988 No. 1, page 33.

In 1985–6 BETSS officers met with several foundations, in Michigan and in New York City, including the ITA Foundation, to try to interest them in broadening their scope to include spelling reform within their funding guidelines.

Proposed Study Center

Later they commissioned a study of a possible major program. Results of this study were reported in their Fall 1988 newsletter, SOUND SPELLING, as follows:

The main recommendation of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation of Ypsilanti, Michigan in its Report to BEtSS, delivered in December, 1987, is that BEtSS create, establish, found and bring into existence a well-supported CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SPELLING REFORM. This Center, as outlined in the Report, would hav three main functions. It would:

1. conduct research on key aspects of spelling reform hypotheses and models;

2. act as an international clearing house for information and research on English spelling reform;

3. publish and stimulate publication and dissemination of information (including research) on spelling reform.
In a special meeting in 18 January 1988, the BETSS Board of Directors accepted this recommendation of the High/Scope Report. Planning by both governing boards now assumes:

1. The Center wil be well funded.

2. The Center wil be placed as part of the operation of High/Scope, independent of BETSS.

3. BEtSS leadership and Board wil hav an important input on policy decisions of the Center. (Two members of the BEtSS Board, Dr. John Porter and William Dannemiller, are now members of the nine-member High/Scope Board.)

Following the recommendations of its President, Dr. David Weikart, the High/Scope Board has agreed to incorporate the principles of phonetic spelling reform into its well known and successful program of pre-school education.

In conversations between Dr. David Weikart and Charles Kleber, President of BEtSS, the first 12 months funds for the Center hav been tentatively placed at $800,000, with $600,000 allocated for founding expenses (personnel, research, space, equipment, etc.), and $200,000 as an endowment.

Neither Board has as yet dealt with the finances of founding such a Center, but both are convinced that the funding must be substantial. Dr. Weikart and Mr. Kleber hav discussed several specific strategies to secure the funding needed to create such a Center.

In the long history of English spelling reform, nothing like such a Center has ever existed. The leaders of both Boards hav confidence that the establishment of such a Center, together with the respected research it wil conduct, wil generate and focus national and international attention on the problem of cur spelling system at a level never before approached. They believe that research results generated and disseminated by this Center, over the years, wil help prepare key institutions for spelling change.

Unfortunately, tho substantial grants have been applied for, funding for this has not yet been secured.

12. American Literacy Council
Ken Ives

The American Literacy Council is successor to the 1876 International Convention for the Amendment of English Orthography, which developed into the Spelling Reform Association. In 1906 the Simplified Spelling Board was establisht, on Andrew Carnegie's promise of annual funding. In 1920, with the end of Carnegie funding, the Spelling Reform Association was reactivated. In 1930 it produced a phonemic alphabet, and later World English Spelling, close to New Spelling. Following the death of Godfrey Dewey, it was reorganized as the Phonemic Spelling Council, later renamed American Language Academy, later changed to American Literacy Council.

The Council publisht a Fonetic Spelling Dictionary in 1986, and more recently a literacy software program called Sound Speler. Its December 10, 1991 Newsletter reports primarily on the latter:

The Council has been negotiating with several education publishers that have expressed interest in distributing the SoundSpeler literacy software. SoundSpeler, a technological culmination of many years. of orthographic research, is a significant, if unassuming way of introducing the public to simpler spelling.

During 1991, much time and effort has been spent debugging, personalizing and polishing the program, and testing by Columbia University Teachers College has just begun.

Of the several software distributors that have expressed some interest, three are ready to market the program.

One, Optimum Resources, of Norfolk, Connecticut wants to:
1. add exercises to test the user's spelling,
2. divide the program into grade/reading levels, and
3. provide a lesson management system which can track the progress of users by name.

Another, Instructional/Communications Technology of Huntington, Long Island (NY), will:
1. have a non-exclusive distribution right for three years starting in November, 1991 and
2. list SoundSpeler in the current and subsequent catalogs across the three year period.

A third, Gessler Publishing Company of New York City, is a major player in the foreign language market and hopes to add SoundSpeler to their small but growing list of ESL (English as a Second Language) materials. Their catalog goes out to 150,000 schools, libraries and other institutions, and should give SoundSpeler and the Council a higher profile.

While the program's ultimate objective is to promote simpler spelling, SoundSpeler and its related spinoffs — if interest on the part of education distributors is an indication — will also be a primary source of revenue in the future. Due in part to the abstract nature of our long-term strategies, some

conventional sources of revenue, such as grants from corporations and foundations, have not been forthcoming.

Even so, other revenue sources, namely the membership drive and renewal, should provide new blood in terms of members and needed membership capital.

A second endeavor has been the placement of 'Fonetic Speling' Menu (i.e. the 'Fonetic Speling' Dictionary on floppy/hard disk) in several shareware catalogs. 'Shareware' is a "try before you buy' software marketing concept that allows consumers to obtain copies of programs for evaluation.

Consumers may test new programs, such as 'Fonetic Speling' Menu, in the privacy of their own personal computer. Shareware programs require payment to authors if found useful and if used beyond a reasonable period.

Thus, at little cost to ALC, the nuts and bolts of spelling reform are beginning to circulate thru catalogs of 40 software distributors in the U.S., Canada, Britain, and Australia to an audience of well over 4,000,000 educated, English-speaking adults.

Potential user-fee revenue notwithstanding, three points should be considered:

1. 'Fonetic Speling' Menu, complete with running comparison of 'Fonetic' and English, allows the user to analyze our orthography and translate text from English to 'Fonetic'. Thus, FSM is far more 'usable' than the printed 'Fonetic Speling'Dictionary.

2. SoundSpeler receives a significant plug in the FSM. Given shareware's audience, it is not unrealistic to conceive of thousands of users who would, in turn, know someone troubled by English spelling. They could contact us to receive an order form or more information.

3. The Council may obtain the names and addresses of people who have requested the 'Fonetic Speling' Menu. Those names and addresses will be added to the ALC mailing list for future (membership) reference.

President of American Literacy Council is Edward Ronthaler. His assistant is Joseph Little. The Advisory Board includes Harvie Barnard and Helen Bonema Bisgard, who were advisors to *Spelling Progress Bulletin* when it was publisht by the late Newell Tune. Also on the Advisory Board is John Henry Martin, author of the IBM "Writing to Read" program.
See links.

13. Kanadian Langwaje

The Internasional Union For The Kanadian Langwaje is successor to the Simplified-Speling Sosiety Ov Canada. This organization, headed by Ted Culp, publishes an occasional four page newspaper, at $2 a copy. In 1986 it began to develop its plan, described in 1990, which seems to use International Phonetic values for many vowels. Some of the letter and sound correspondences are:

Sound:	spelling	examples
aw	aa	taak=talk, athor=author
ah	a	glas akt
ay	ee	geet = gate, cet = ate
ee	ii	hiit = heet, sliip = sleep
ue	uu	tuu=too
ch	c	curc=church, benc=bench
k	k	kaled=called
	q, x	(dropt)

NOUNS: Infinitives can be used as nouns, "-ing" forms are abolisht.
ADJECTIVES: Nouns cannot be used as adjectives. Adjective forms end in -ik, -us, -al, -ful, -abel, -nes, -les.
ADVERBS: Add -al to the adjective.
ABBREVIATIONS: These are abolisht.
VERBS: All conjugations are abolisht. This results in phrases like: "she go, he du think".
"Ultimateli, al verbs wil must tu end in — ize/aiz."

Le fransais-torontois
Under the same authorship, a regularized version of French is also proposed.
NOUNS: These all become neuter.
ARTICLES: Thus these reduce to: "le, une; les, des".
ADJECTIVES: These all have one form, all are singular.
VERBS: use of "etre" is abolisht in favor of "avoir", for past indefinite. Verbal endings in present singular are abolisht. The subjunctive mood also abolisht.
ACCENT MARKS: Two are eliminated now, others later.
SILENT LETTERS: "must to be eliminated".
SPELLING CHANGES: ge/gé - j; ph → f; g/c/sc → s; qu/que → k, kw; and others.

14. 1933 Cut Spelling?

Jean Hutchins has sent the following list of abbreviated spellings found in House Deeds 1933 Abstract Title, along with their full forms. Measurements for the land used acre, rood, perch. An elderly solicitor commented that when he trained he had to learn all such abbreviations.

shld: should	docts: documents	abstg: abstaining
intt: interest	sufft: sufficient	pce: piece
sd: said	Ppal: Principal	pcl: parcel
pd: paid	Regy: Registry	ppty: property
furr: further	dely: delivery	resply: respectively
subjt: subject	Coy: County	possed: possessed
thr: their	Esq: Esquire	prems: premises
hrs: heirs	Atty: Attorney	paymt: payment
appt: appointed	stips: stipulations	site: situate
rect: receit	calr: calendar	Mtge: Mortage
acknd: acknowledged	pt: part	Mtgee: Mortgagee
thrby: thereby	prodon: production	este: estate
thrin: therein	ppses: purposes	parlars: particulars
thron: thereon	afsd: aforesaid	admst: admeasurement
throf: thereof	pursce: pursuance	jt: joint
thrar: thereafter	orwise: otherwise	colrd: coloured
thrinbfe: thereinbefore	moys: moneys	Tree: Trustee
thrabts: thereabouts	admors: administrators	exors: executors
thrto: thereto	Purr: Purchaser	exs: executors
whrby: whereby	altd: altered	rt: right
whrof: whereof	witht: without	bldgs: buildings
decd: deceased	ineumbs: encumbrances	sevl: several
descd: described	succors: successors	diron: direction
intdd: intended	agmnt: agreement	benefl: beneficial
mentd: mentioned	exes: expenses	covs: convenants
convd: conveyed	abt: about	covtd: covenanted
belongg: belonging	exon: execution	absly: absolutely
havg: having	dwg: dwelling	contg: containing
wtg: writing	discon: disretion	Septr: September

15. The Simplified Spelling Society
Annual General Meeting — Saturday 27 April 1991 — Minutes

Committee members present: Chris Jolly, Govind Deodheker, Chris Upward, Mona Cross, Jean Hutchins, Bob Brown, Frank Garnett (representing Alun Bye).
Members present: Ron Footer, Frank Jones, Adrian Murphy (part time).
Apologies for absence: Laurie Fennelly, Paul Fletcher, Alun Bye.

The meeting opened at 10.45, Chris Jolly in the chair.

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the last AGM on 28 April 1990 were approved and signed.

2. **Matter arising:** Charitable status — Bob Brown reported that he was, for the present, ignoring the past history of refusal (on the grounds that it was a long time ago and many things could have changed) and approaching the Charity Commissioners afresh. After discussion, it was agreed to continue to seek charitable status provided it did not mean a large expenditure on legal fees and the like. It would save about £l,000 of tax annually, and potentially more if it were ever decided to realise some of the capital gain in investments.

3. **Chairman's report:** Chris Jolly summarised the significant points of the last year:
— There has been a subtle change in the teaching of literacy, and discussions of phonic vs. non-phonic methods, are now firmly on the educational agenda. The kind of pressure we can bring to bear is thus more likely to be heard.
— An article in the Times Educational Supplement by Chris Upward has opened floodgates of publicity. The Chairman and Chris Upward have each appeared on several radio programmes, both have talked to many journalists (with generally useful coverage resulting) and Chris Upward is booked for a forthcoming TV talk programme.
— Altho not very visable, a great deal of useful work has been done over the last year, for example Chris Upward's efforts in bringing Cut Spelling to press, and the Chairman's own experimental work with new orthographies in schools.
— The Chairman sees the Society's role as providing a debating forum on the kinds of reform possible and how they should be introduced. Some members may have firm personal views about these things but they should approach discussions with an open mind. It is our clear duty to involve a wider public in debate.

4. **Secretary's Report:** As he has only recently taken over from Laurie Fennelly, Bob Brown first read a short report from the retiring Secretary, the main points of which were:
— On election to Committee, LF came to feel that the Society had lost its way, being diverted by ita, not publishing anything, forgetting New Spelling, and only acting as a discussion group.
— He had worked over the years to rectify these problems, in particular of late concentrating on bringing out a new edition of New Spelling, as the last one was in 1948!
— This is now nearing completion and it is with the printers. It will be distributed free to members during May. LF felt it should be used as the spearhead of the proposed promotional drive during 1991, altho other schemes could obviously be presented on a discussion basis.
— He welcomed Bob Brown to the post.

BB restricted his comments to:

— Noting that he has now taken over the Membership Secretary role too, previously carried out by Chris Upward. He reported 107 names currently on the member list, 82 of whom had been sent reminders regarding subscriptions with the AGM mailing.

— He intends to be quite active this year. The first task is to get together a decent stock of publications that can be given or sold to enquirers, then to launch a promotional drive to encourage more enquirers.

A motion was put by Chris Jolly (seconded Chris Upward) that "the Society would like to express its appreciation to Laurie Fennelly for his excellent work as Secretary." Passed unanimously.

5. **Editor's Report:** The main points of Chris Upward's report were:

— He very much regrets that pressure of other work had made it impossible for him to get out a Journal since Autumn 1989. There was a strong feeling from his correspondents that it had an important role in holding together discussion on the subject worldwide. The work pressure is presently getting worse. CU is investigating appointing a guest editor to bring out a couple of issues, and would welcome help and suggestions from suitably qualified members. It was suggested and generally agreed that his title should now be changed to Editor-in-Chief, reflecting his likely supervisory role in working with other editor(s).

— He does plan to issue 2 or 3 Newsletters per year. — He reported that he has just been awarded a contract by Oxford Univ. Press for a book on English spelling, and will report on what slant this will take when he has agreed its scope with the publishers. It had been thought that the OUP might be interested in publishing Cut Spelling but they have now declined. — He reported more detail on his recent radio and newspaper exposure, and his involvement in a proposed major TV debate on phone vs. non-phonic teaching methods.

6. **Treasurers Report.** Frank Garnett, the Society's auditor, read the report from Alun Bye, who very much regretted not being able to be present due to ill health. The main points were:

— AB's gratitude to Mr Garnett for standing in for him.

— Two typing errors have crept into the Accounts as circulated prior to the AGM. (1) on the Balance Sheet the 1989 figure for the Nationwide Anglia account should read £2501 not £2510. (2) on the Schedule of Investments, tax credits on the Ferguson holding should be £55 not £555. Totals are unaffected in both cases.

— A detailed commentary on the figures was then given. (Any member wanting a copy of the full report, please contact the Secretary.)

— AB expressed his willingness to serve again if asked.

In discussion following the report, AB's suggestion was agreed that the funds in the Nationwide Anglia account should be consolidated into the higher-interest Barclay's account. It was also generally agreed that the balance between interest-bearing cash accounts and capital growth investments seemed about right. The Accounts were formally adopted by unanimous agreement. Chris Jolly proposed a vote of thanks to Alun Bye and Frank Garnett, seconded by Bob Brown and passed unanimously.

7. **Appointment of Auditor.** Frank Garnett said he was happy to continue and was reappointed, with the same fee of £100 being set.

8. **Subscription:** A motion to leave it at £10 for the calendar year 1992 was proposed by Chris Jolly, seconded by Chris Upward, and passed unanimously.

9. Re-election of President. Under our Constitution, Dr Donald Scragg came to the end of his three-year term at this meeting and had previously indicated his willingness to serve another term. His re-election was proposed by Chris Jolly, seconded by Govind Deodekhar and passed unanimously.

10. Election of Committee: It was noted that the President, Secretary and Treasurer were ex-officio committee members, and that up to eight others could be appointed. The following expressed themselves willing to serve and were elected by unanimous vote in each case, having been proposed by Bob Brown and seconded by Frank Jones: Mona Cross, Govind Deodekhar, Laurie Fennelly, Paul Fletcher, Ron Footer, Jean Hutchins, Chris Jolly and Chris Upward.

The meeting then closed and reconvened as a meeting of the newly-elected Committee.

A principal business of the Committee was discussion and arrangements for next issues of the Journal. Details were left in the hands of the Editor-in-Chief (See his Message, and Editorial in this issue).

Dates of Meetings for the coming year were set as: 13 July, 1991, 26 October 1991, 11 January 1992, 25 April 1992 (AGM), all to be at the YWCA Central Club as usual.

Chris Upward then presented for discussion his article "**On Harmnizing Cut Spelng and New Spelling!'** (elsewhere in this issue).

[Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society, 12, 1992/1 pp23,24]

16. Spelling Test for Everyone

This test includes some words many people cannot spell. Our spelling is so inconsistent and irrational that it really must be **memorized** to be learned. The national columnist L. M. Boyd has indicated that the spelling of several words in this sentence may be difficult: (You might check to see how well you do. Very few get them all right.)

Outside a	minascule cemutery	sat an	embarrased pedler
	miniscule cematary		embarassed peddler
	minescule cemetery		embarrased peddlar
	minuscule cematery		embarrassed pedler
and a	harrassed cobler nawing	on a	laserated
	herassed cobbler gnawing		lasurated
	harased cobblar nauing		lacerated
	harrassed coblar gnauing		lasorated
bone while	gazing on a lady's	ankle with	unperalled extucy.
			unparaleled ecsticy.
			unparalleled ecstecy.
			unperelleled ecstacy.

17. Memories of the SSS fifty years ago
Peter Hadley

We are grateful to the author and to *The Spectator* for their permission to reprint the following reminiscences which, with minor amendments, formed the bulk of an article that appeared in *The Spectator* on 12 March 1988 (p.19).

In 1937, as a young editor in the publishing house of Pitman, I was recruited by the then Mr I J Pitman (later Sir James) to be one of a committee of the recently revived Simplified Spelling Society, with the object of preparing a new edition of the proposals for spelling reform first put forward in pamphlet form in 1912, under the auspices of Sir George Hunter. My chief had inherited from his grandfather, Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of the shorthand system that bears his name, a fanatical zeal for the subject, and had therefore offered to undertake publication of the proposed book.

The committee formed for this purpose was chaired by Professor Gilbert Murray, then President of the Society, the other members being Professor Arthur Lloyd James, the BBC adviser on spoken English, Professor Daniel Jones, Professor of Phonetics at London University, Mr Harold Orton, of King's College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Mr Walter Ripman, the surviving author of the original pamphlet, Mr I J Pitman and myself.

Flattered though I was at finding myself in such distinguished company, and obliged to sit in on — and even participate in — their deliberations, I could not myself share their enthusiasm or feel any great confidence in the eventual outcome. That English spelling was indeed a hopeless jumble of inconsistencies bearing little relation to the spoken word, and baffling to those, indigenous or alien, who had to master it, none could dispute: that there was the slightest chance of any far-reaching reform seemed to me highly questionable.

Americanisation might eventually substitute *program* for *programme*, and *sox* for *socks*, but it was surely too much to expect that those who had themselves had to learn English the hard way could ever be persuaded to change the spelling of *baths* to *baadhz*, or *always* to *aulwaez*. Yet such curious transliterations had to be accepted in any comprehensively revised system of spelling restricted to the 26 letters of the existing alphabet universally enshrined in typewriters and (then) printing presses throughout the world.

In retrospect it seems strange that such a distinguished classical scholar as Gilbert Murray, whom one might have expected to oppose any reform of traditional spelling, should have lent his name and his remarkable intellect to the perpetration of such linguistic contortions. But as Professor Lloyd James put it:

> To us, brought up in the birthplace of our language, its history and traditions are amongst our most cherished treasures. The idiosyncrasies of its spelling are as dear to us as our ancient landmarks and national monuments. Its visual appearance is almost sacred. But, alas, sound is sound, and sight is sight. To expect the hundreds of millions of English speakers, present and to come, in all parts of the world, to be burdened indefinitely with our traditional English spelling is to expect too much.

One factor that lent impetus to the work of the committee was the news that a legacy of £18,000 — a considerable sum in those days — was waiting to be claimed by any society devoted to spelling

reform. Unfortunately there was a rival potential claimant in the Society for Pure English, and so the Simplified Spelling Society had to get its skates on. On legal advice, it was necessary to call an annual general meeting in order to prove that the Society was properly constituted, and no such meeting had been held, it transpired, since 1908. Not surprisingly, those few who attended the meeting convened at Pitman House were distinctly long in the tooth.

I do not know to this day whether the Society beat its rivals to the legacy. However, the committee's work progressed, till in June 1938 the results of its deliberations finally appeared in book form. An extract from the final chapter ('A Specimen of Simplified Spelling') must suffice to show future generations what was in store for them if the hopes of the Simplified Spelling Society were ever realised:

> To dhe lurner interested in dhe histori ov dhe langwaej dhe oeld speling wood be eezili aksesibl; far mor eezili dhan dhe speling ov Chaucer or eeven Shakespeare. He wood be aebl to traes derivaeshonz kwiet az eezili az nou; and he wood enjoi dhis graet advaantaej, dhat he kood not eskaep dhe soundz and deel widh leterz oenli — which iz at present soe seerius a daenjer in dhe paath ov dhe yung stuedent ov langwaej. He wood aask himself agaen and agaen whie dhe oeld speling (unliek dhe nue) deeviaeted soe freekwentli from dhe pronunsiaeshon.

By way of a postscript to my story, a brief but true anecdote. In May, 1940, as an infantry platoon commander, I was sheltering in a very muddy Belgian slit trench from a rain of German mortar bombs when the last consignment of mail from England was delivered to us. There was only one letter for me, which I eagerly tore open. It was from Harold Orton, who wrote that as the committee of the Simplified Spelling Society was unable to meet in wartime, it fell to him to ascertain the opinion of its members as to whether the word *bicycle* should be spelt *biesikl* or *bysikl*. It was not the best of moments to apply myself to the resolution of such a difficult and important question. A fue daez laeter, I woz on dhe beechiz at Dunkirk — and I kood hav dun widh a biesikl, or eeven a bysikl, in geting dhaer.