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## Unesco's Tarnished Image

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) was formed in 1946 amid high optimism and with excellent sponsorship. Eleanor Roosevelt was a key figure in the early years, and Archibald MacLeish voiced the hopes of many when he said, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. . . ."

With the passage of years Unesco's image began to tarnish. Although its financial support was derived from the advanced countries, its biennial General Conference came to be dominated by politicians from the Third World, who have little knowledge of what science is all about and who have taken political steps injurious to Unesco's objectives. Illustrative of these were actions taken 2 years ago designed to diminish the status of Israel.

During the current General Conference at Nairobi there has been a softening of the stand toward Israel. However, there has been a new ugly manifestation of politics.

The General Conference has adopted a resolution designed to intimidate the nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) such as the International Council of Scientific Unions. The resolution that has been adopted

requests all the international nongovernmental organizations which maintain relations with Unesco and retain bodies or elements linked with the Chiang clique and having illegally usurped the name of China or using any other names, to take measures to exclude these bodies or elements immediately and to break off all relations with them.

Also implicit in the resolution is the threat to withdraw intellectual cooperation and financial support from the NGO's. Thus Unesco attempts to dictate the countries or geographical areas from which the NGO's may obtain their experts or members.

These latter organizations generally eschew intergovernmental politics, recognizing their divisive nature and their tendency to destroy other types of human pursuits—such as science and culture—which draw people together rather than drive them apart. Such nonpolitical activities are conducive to transnational cooperation in fields which promote international amity and which enrich the quality of life.

Since Unesco is in process of destroying its own usefulness, those who are interested in advancing science, culture, and education should now explore alternative avenues.

For example, in the sciences there are many nongovernmental organizations dedicated to international cooperation. One complex of such bodies, the International Council of Scientific Unions, recently met at the National Academy of Sciences (*Science*, 5 November, p. 587). Part of the support for ICSU comes from the advanced countries via Unesco. Such support should now be furnished directly.

In addition to ICSU there are new instrumentalities which deserve trial and greater public awareness. One is the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, the multinational, nongovernmental, East-West research center outside Vienna, Austria, which only 4 years after its inception is showing substantial promise in multidisciplinary exploration of problems to mankind. Still newer is the European Science Foundation, which is composed of representatives of some 45 scientific institutions—research councils, academies, and so forth—from 16 Western European countries. Apart from these existing bodies, thought should be given to the creation of new organizations to perform the tasks which Unesco is abandoning for politics. Further, governments that now contribute large amounts of funds to Unesco would do well to examine whether such funds would not go further in advancing international cooperation in education, science, and culture if invested elsewhere.

The Third World should be made aware that it risks losing both financial support and, more important, intellectual cooperation.

—PHILIP H. ABELSON