



**CHILDREN  
OF EUROPE**

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PHOTOS BY DAVID SEYMOUR

UNESCO

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## Letter to a grown up

I am not writing to you today out of resentment, although I could easily detest you — indeed I have done so more than once. There are excuses for my doing so, and I am sure you would agree with me if you knew what my life had been for ten years and the lives of millions of others who were children yesterday and who will be men and women tomorrow without ever having been “ young ”.

For you, childhood memories bring back some of the happiest years of your life : home, school, a garden or playground, your village or your street ; your mother, distressed because your knees were scratched or your pants torn ; your father, grieved because he had to punish you instead of being able to play with you ; squabbles with brothers and sisters over a doll or a jar of jam ; the old teacher whom you teased ; the dog, the cat... and so many other things.

I know all about those things because I have heard you, a “ grown-up ”, speak about them, and because I had the good luck — the only luck I ever had — to be seven years old when the war began.

I would like to speak a little about myself, but mainly about the 13,000,000 abandoned children in Europe who had their first experience of life in an atmosphere of death and destruction, and who passed their first years in underground shelters, bombed streets, ghettos set on fire, refugee trains and concentration camps. The survivors have grown up in a world of fear — not the healthy fear which a young savage has of the river he must cross, or of the wild animal he must kill — but the fear instilled by men who kill. We know that those who forced us to flee were soldiers ;

those who bombed our houses were airmen ; those who killed our parents, brothers and sisters were called an “ élite ” corps, meaning that they were the best ; and those who fought and massacred on the battle-fields were human beings.

Many of us were sent to a foreign country which had a different language, and family life was changed into life in a refugee or concentration camp. In such a world, which had no place for children or old people, we were “ educated ”. The day-to-day struggle for individual survival was our book of morals. Do not be surprised, then, by what we are today !

We have been cold and hungry, and lived in filthy conditions. We have all witnessed violence, and frequently we have been its victims. Our life has meant only threats and hardship. Because of this harsh schooling, some of us older ones acquired the habit of protecting our comrades ; but most had no thought other than self-preservation.

Thus, in our idea of the world, it was necessary to lie, to cheat, to steal and to be cruel, just to live ! Many of us were severely punished, simply because we wished to speak in our native language. I remember little Jacob, only ten years old ; for several years after the war, his face had a frozen look from his habit of speaking, and even singing, without moving his lips.

Sometimes we dreamed about true liberty. No doubt, your childhood was filled with dreams of Christmas turkeys, fancy dresses, or dolls dressed in satin and embroidery. Our childhood was different. Those who were born during the war never knew what had existed before. For them the only escape from misery was to dream of a kind princess, who, with a wave of her wand, could give them good food, beds to sleep in, allow them to play and shout and give them a mother and a father.

Today, those dreams have been killed by reality. Some have had the good fortune to find their homes intact. Some have been welcomed by parents or neighbours. But the majority have found nothing but loneliness and want. Martha, when seven years old, accompanied her mother on errands ; then she was caught by the enemy police under orders

to round up all children. Separated from her playmates, she remained four years in an institution for orphans, four years without news of her family; she forgot her native language. After the war she was sent back to her village, but she found none of her family there; all had been killed; once again she had to move on.

Joseph, at the age of thirteen, was arrested by the police while carrying messages between his hunted family and the Resistance Movement; he was tortured, mutilated and sent to a concentration camp. He did forced labour for four years. When he regained his liberty, at the age of seventeen, he had no family to welcome him.

Children lived through the battle of Warsaw, shut up in the ghetto; they saw it set on fire and witnessed the massacre of their own parents. Today, nothing remains to them but their bitter memories and hope in the new school which has just opened amidst the ruins.

Do you know what this means? Have you ever thought of the extent of the disaster? Open your eyes and your hearts; learn to see and understand. Come to Greece, Poland, France, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia or Germany — everywhere you will see the same poverty and the same needs; — roofs for houses, milk for feeding-bottles, meat for plates and teachers for schools.

There are 1,700,000 orphans in Poland, 100,000 in Warsaw alone. In Czechoslovakia there are 50,000. In 1945, in Hungary we orphans numbered 200,000 and 1,000,000 children were homeless. In Greece one out of every eight children is an orphan. There are 40,000 "sciuscia" in Milan, 65,000 in Rome, 75,000 in Naples and there are 3,000,000 homeless Italian children. In France, there are 250,000 orphans...

Many were injured by the bombings and in the concentration camps; they are crippled for life; 250,000 Polish children suffered in this way. Some have had two or three limbs amputated; others are blind or deaf. In two villages in Alsace and in Normandy 500 children between four and fourteen were seriously injured. More than half of them had a limb amputated, and one-tenth had their faces burnt.

In the early days after the war, we were very hungry ; there was little food in the towns and without money or help we had to try to find food for ourselves in any possible way. Living mostly in groups, many carried on a black market and many pilfered in order to live. The girls frequently had no other choice then to sell cigarettes or turn to prostitution. They naturally preferred that for which you, the “ grown-up ”, paid them most.

Certainly, things now are getting better. International organizations have helped ; Unrra then the International Children’s Emergency Fund. Unfortunately their means are limited ; they themselves estimate that they can give aid only on a reduced scale — from 200 to 300 calories per day — to less than 6 per cent of the total number of children, expectant mothers and mothers feeding their babies in the European countries.

Governments, charitable associations and the trade unions have tried to supply us with homes and food. In Italy, 115,000 abandoned children have been grouped in 693 State institutions ; 25,000 have been sheltered by private institutions, which are also helpin another 250,000. In Poland, more than 700 children’s homes have been established by the Government, municipalities and various organizations. In Czechoslovakia, seventeen centres have been instructed to find families willing to give homes to abandoned children.

Each has done his bit and every country has made great efforts, but there is still a long way to go. Even if you succeed in saving our lives, you will not yet have achieved the main thing. You still have to make men of us, human beings capable of living in society — not the society which we have known, but another and better society, in which children no longer will be killed by men.

You must help us to make up for lost time. We were not able to go to school and many of us cannot read or write ; many do not even know their native language. We older ones must learn a trade in order to earn an honest living.



We know that this will not be easy. Apart from all the destroyed schools and school equipment, there are now many more children to teach and fewer teachers. Five years without schooling, five dark years, will perhaps leave deeper traces upon us than even the physical privations.

For five years the children of Poland were denied the right to learn and to participate in social activities. The Nazis shut most Polish schools. No child could attend classes higher than the fourth grade in the primary schools. Classes were limited to three hours a day.

In Greece, nine-tenths of the schools were destroyed and 200,000 children are unable to attend primary school. In classrooms which are much too small, there is only one textbook or desk for three or four pupils. In Italy, more than 3,500 schools were completely destroyed, 17,000 seriously damaged, 30,000 slightly damaged and millions of children are unable to receive the necessary teaching.

In Poland the situation is particularly bad. 5,600 teachers, or 23 per cent of all the teachers, disappeared during the war; today, 3,000,000 children, 3,000,000 "backward pupils", are in need of 17,000 new teachers.

Everywhere the most elementary equipment is lacking. For lessons in science we are obliged to make rough and ready apparatus ourselves. Thus, a class in the suburbs of Warsaw improvised laboratory equipment from American food-cans, and Hungarian pupils of a secondary school in Szeged made weights for the chemical laboratory out of pieces of wire.

We need tools and machines. These difficulties are common to all war-handicapped children, whether or no they are orphans or mentally deficient. The means at our disposal are inadequate for acquiring even the most rudimentary schooling or professional training.

We need a complete re-education — not only those of us whom you now call "deficient" and those who have been seriously mutilated, but also all those who have been retarded in their education for two or three or more years.

Those who still have a home or have found one are privileged persons, but superhuman efforts will have to be made to save the others, the abandoned ones. Many already have an adopted "mother" or "father" and that is no doubt the best solution. But many others are still alone, with no other prospect but the orphanage. How glad they will be, then, when they hear of the "children's villages" established and run by us!

These villages have sprung up almost everywhere in the war-devastated countries. They will remain in our minds as the finest adventure of our childhood. What children have not dreamed of such a model republic!

Our villages of today fall very short of the villages of our dreams, but they are far in advance of anything which has been achieved up to the present. Already they have their own history, a history as wonderful as any we might read about in books... if we had any.

In the neighbourhood of Rome, thousands of abandoned children were living on plunder. They were organized in bands, each with its armed leader. Don Antonio Rivolta, who knew them and who had known their families, decided to help them to find their way back to normal life. Field kitchens left behind by the Germans at first were sufficient to give them a bowl of soup and a slice of bread.

Then, one day, Don Antonio asked them : " Would you like to help me found a free village without any police ; a children's village where you will be able to learn and work ? " Many accepted and went to Civita Vecchia, where the flag of the new Democratic State was set up.

The free citizens of this republic built and furnished their huts themselves. As far as possible, they have complete freedom to come and go as they please ; they are not fenced in, and there is no punishment for a deserter ; if the latter comes back he simply resumes the place he had before.

There are no fixed rules ; the laws in force have been worked out by the children themselves and they frequently change them. Those who were leaders during the period of vagabondage have usually become administrators — the mayor and his deputies — elected by ballot.

The electoral campaigns are lively. All the citizens remember the day when the semi-official newspaper, " The Village Bell ", acquired a rival in " The Truth of Marangone " brought out by one of the candidates himself.

The republic has its own bank and money. The currency is somewhat unusual, being based on merit. It is used as a reward for all activities ;

manual, school or social. It gives the right to buy games and delicacies in the village shop. Sometimes it can be exchanged for real money. Civita Vecchia is only one example. We have other villages ; in France Moulin Vieux, and many others, where kindly grown-ups have taken child refugees from all countries and given them all the responsibilities of running their " cities " ; in Italy the " Children's Town " of Turin, and the Pestalozzi Village, where 132 orphans of seven nations are housed ; in Hungary, the " Children's Town " of Hajduhadhaz ; in Switzerland, the Villages of Marcinello and Trogen ; in Holland the " Foundation for 500 Jewish Children " .

Everywhere abandoned children are gradually ceasing to live in isolation and are preparing themselves to enter the true social community among men, among their compatriots.

Before leaving the Village, we must have made good the years of schooling which we have lost, learned a trade and even begun to practise it. Everything has been tried, all methods have been applied, every kind of experiment made.

Although not all efforts have been crowned with success, the results are encouraging. This is what Professor Ernesto Codignola wrote about the Pestalozzi Children's Community : " In the Children's Community, voluntarily opened in the poorest quarters of Florence, work is the backbone of our existence. It is so well incorporated into the organization that it is no longer a problem. Teachers and pupils share the responsibilities. None of them feel that it is beneath their dignity to turn from their studies to the humblest tasks in the scullery and the " kitchen garden " .

At the Hameau École in France there has been a marked improvement in the intellectual standard. The pupils have a choice between twenty-three trades and their best teachers are workmen, carefully chosen for their skill.

In the Village of Hajduhadhaz, in Hungary, we have also developed vocational training under the direction of skilled workers. In this way, we have established a printing-press, a shoe-maker's shop and a dress-making shop.

Those who so desire and are particularly gifted are given the chance of becoming engineers, doctors and so forth. Some even intend to come back one day and live near the Village.

Such successes as these maintain our enthusiasm. But it is sad to see how limited our efforts are; 400 children at Trogen, 500 at Apeldoorn, 60 at Moulin Vieux — a few thousands in all — whereas so many more could be saved from misery and ignorance if we could only take them.

The movement is growing rapidly. Thanks to Unesco, an important conference was held at Trogen, in Switzerland, and an “International Federation of Children’s Communities” was founded. That is only a starting-point. We now have not only to establish new villages but to extend and improve those already existing.

Unless all countries come to our aid, the task will be beyond our strength and beyond the strength and devotion of those who are working so generously for us.

The smallest difficulties create insuperable problems for us. If we wish to establish classes in accordance with our needs and wants, we are unable to purchase the few text books and the school material which are necessary — especially projectors, maps, coloured pencils and drawing paper, boxes of paints, musical instruments and so forth. If we wish to build up the health of so many neglected bodies, the smallest acquisition of gymnastic or camping material threatens to upset our budget.

Believe me, all of us war handicapped children can still forget what we have witnessed, what you made us witness. You can help us a lot. We homeless children have our neighbours for a family and you “grown-ups” are our country. We ourselves shall be “grown-ups” in a few years and, if we then see that millions of us have been abandoned a second time, we certainly shall lose faith in that ideal for which you fought.



*Des millions d'enfants se sont éveillés à la vie dans un monde de ruines et de mort.*

*Millions of children first knew life amid death and destruction.*

*Millones de niños han empezado a vivir en medio de la muerte y la desolación.*

*Orphelins abandonnés et chassés par les bombes, nous essayons de vivre au milieu des destructions que vous avez laissées.*

*Orphans, abandoned and bombed out... We struggle to live in the wreckage you have left us.*

*Huérfanos, abandonados bajo los bombardeos... Ahora tratamos de vivir entre los escombros que nos habéis dejado.*











*Comme cadre : un amas de ruines. Comme jouets : des instruments de mort.  
Our playground : ruins. Our toys : shell-cases and bombs.  
Jugamos entre las ruinas. Nuestros juguetes son cajas de municiones y bombas.*





*Voyager sans payer, fumer des cigarettes volées, trafiquer au marché noir : qui nous a enseigné qu'il y a mieux à faire?  
We sneak free rides, we smoke stolen cigarettes, we buy and sell on the black-market. Who has taught us any better?  
Viajamos sin pagar, fumamos cigarillos robados, vendemos y compramos en el mercado negro. Nadie nos ha enseñado nada mejor.*









*La police fait son travail; mais qui nous donnera une maison, une école?*

*The police do their job — but who will give us a home and a school?*

*La policía cumple con su deber : pero ¿quién nos dará casa y escuela?*



*Des ennuis avec la police! angoissés, nos aînés guettent à la porte de la salle d'audience.*

*In trouble! Our parents wait for us anxiously at the door of the Police Court.*

*¡Culpables! Nuestros padres nos miran ansiosos desde la puerta de la comisaría.*



*La maison de correction : ce n'est pas le foyer que nous rêvions.*

*The Reformatory — This is not the home we dreamed of!  
¡El reformatorio! ¡No era ése el hogar con que soñábamos!*



*Des fillettes de quinze ans... de treize ans, marquées par l'inhumanité de l'homme. De quoi vivront-elles maintenant?*

*Girls of fifteen... even as young as thirteen... have bitter memories of man's inhumanity. How are they to live from now on?*

*Chiquillas de quince años... hasta de trece... tienen amargos recuerdos de la crueldad humana. ¿Cómo han de seguir viviendo?*









*La prison... ou l'hôpital pour soigner le plus horrible des maux?*

*Is it to be in prison — or in wards for the ugliest of diseases?*

*En la cárcel, o en las salas de las enfermedades más horribles...*



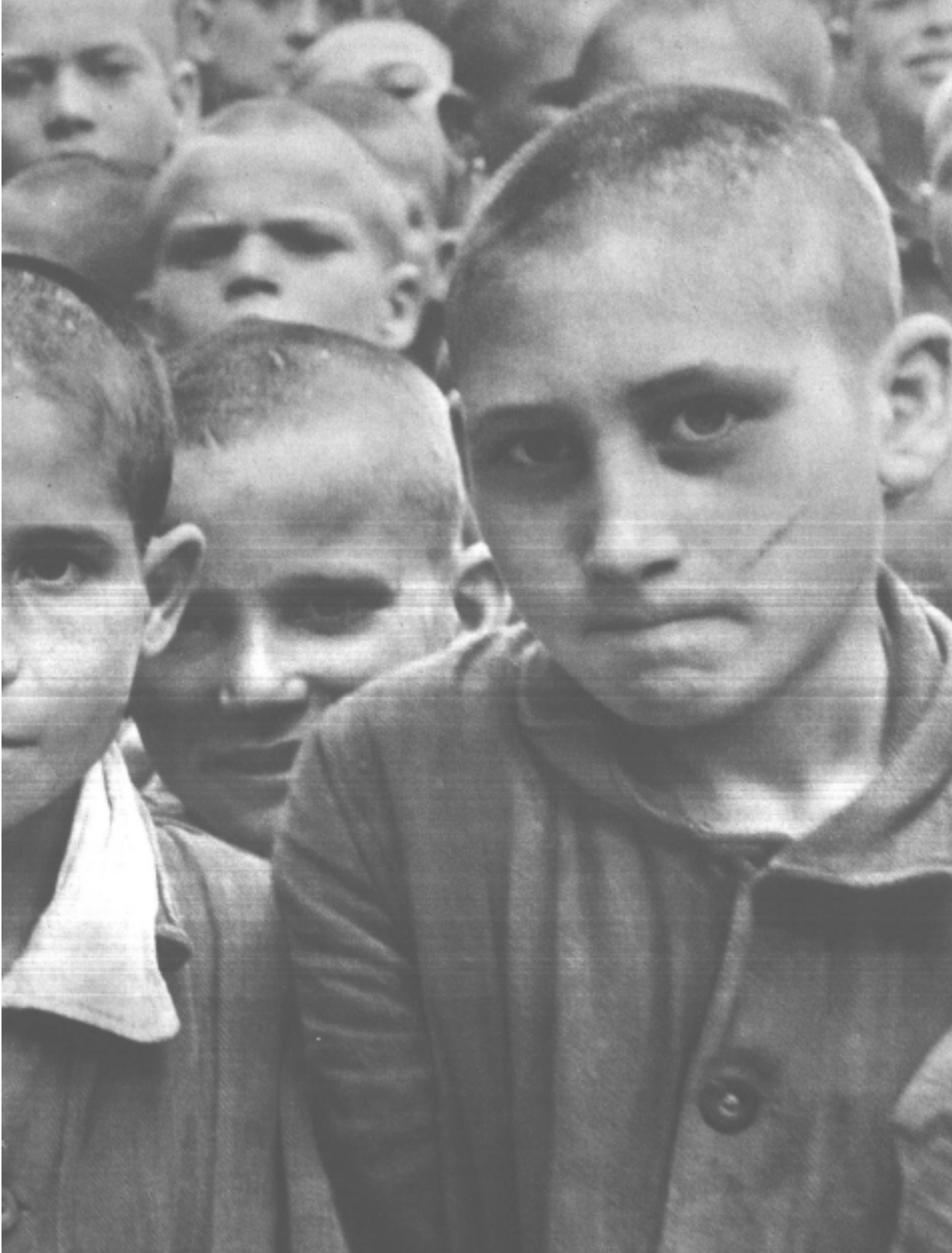
*Un ballon! chose rarissime... surtout dans une maison de correction.*

*A ball... rarest of treasures, especially in a reformatory.*

*Una pelota... el más raro de los tesoros, sobre todo en un reformatorio.*











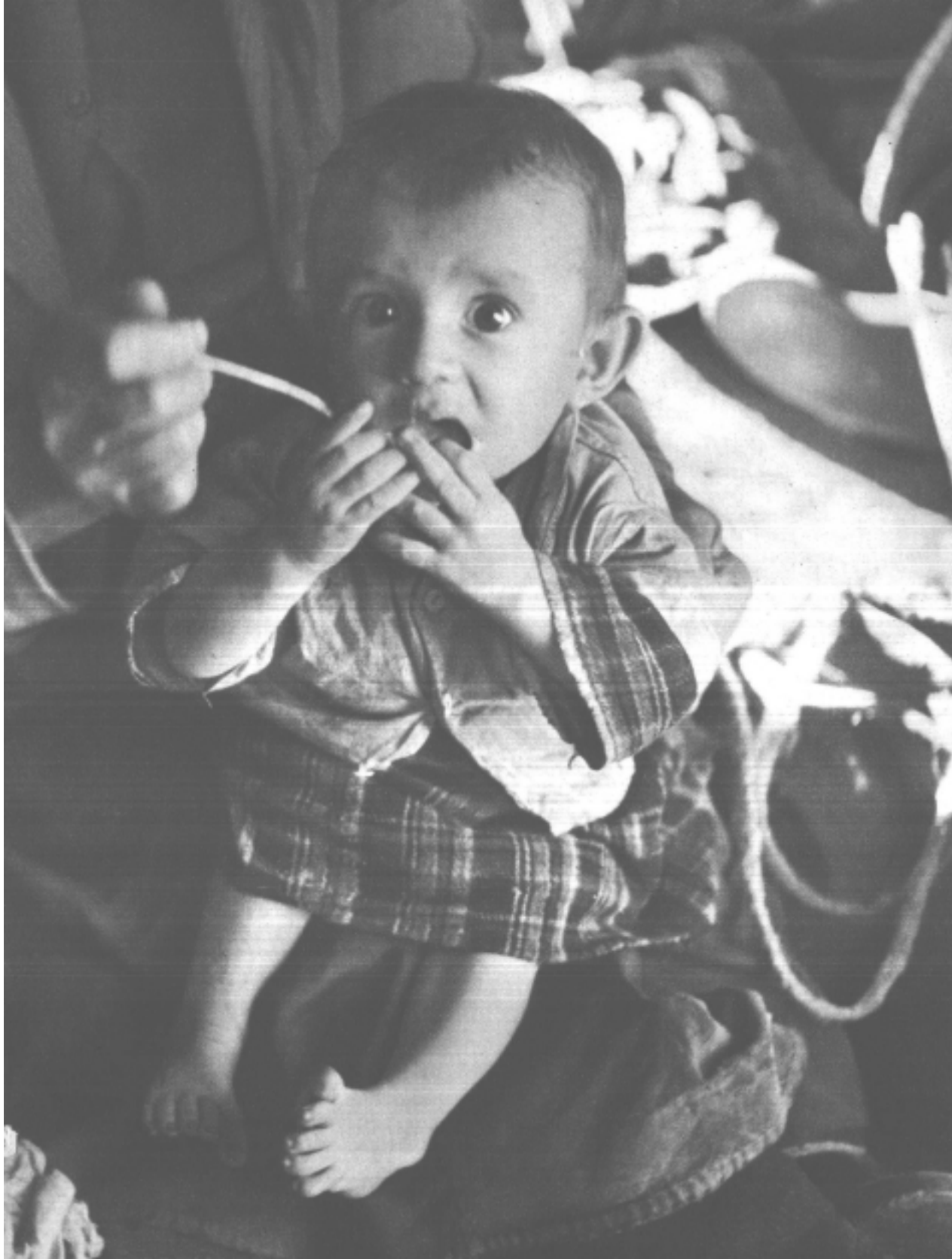
*Cinq ans que la guerre est finie... Et des milliers et des milliers d'entre nous sont encore sans foyer!*

*Five whole years since the war ended and thousands upon thousands of us are still homeless.*

*Cinco años enteros hace que ha terminado la guerra, y aún hay miles y miles de nosotros sin hogar.*











*Pour dormir : la terre nue — ou de la paille — et une couverture pour trois ou quatre.*

*Our bed is the bare earth and three or four of us share a blanket. Some are lucky to have a little straw.*

*Nuestra cama es la tierra desnuda, con una sola manta para tres o cuatro. Algunos tienen la suerte de poseer un jergoncillo de paja.*



*Auront-ils plus de chance que nous dans la vie?*  
*Will these babies have a better chance than we have had?*  
*¿Tendrán estos pequeños más suerte que nosotros?*

*On distribue quelques paires de chaussures ; mais combien  
devront s'en passer...*

*Some of us are given shoes, but many others must go  
barefoot.*

*Algunos han recibido zapatos, pero otros muchos andan  
descalzos.*







*Du lait pour les enfants... Mais c'est tous les jours qu'il leur en faut!*

*Milk for the children sometimes, but they need it every day.*

*Algunas veces hay leche para los niños, pero la necesitarían todos los días.*





*Des médecins se dépensent sans compter; mais ils sont trop rares, et trop rares aussi les lits d'hôpital.*

*Our doctors never spare themselves, but they are so few and hospital beds are hard to find.*

*Nuestros médicos trabajan sin parar, pero son tan pocos, y es tan difícil encontrar una cama en un hospital.*





*Quelques aveugles, quelques infirmes ont rencontré l'aide  
qui leur permet de revivre.*

*Some blind children, some cripples have been given help  
and can live.*

*Algunos niños ciegos, algunos mutilados han sido alen-  
dados y pueden vivir.*









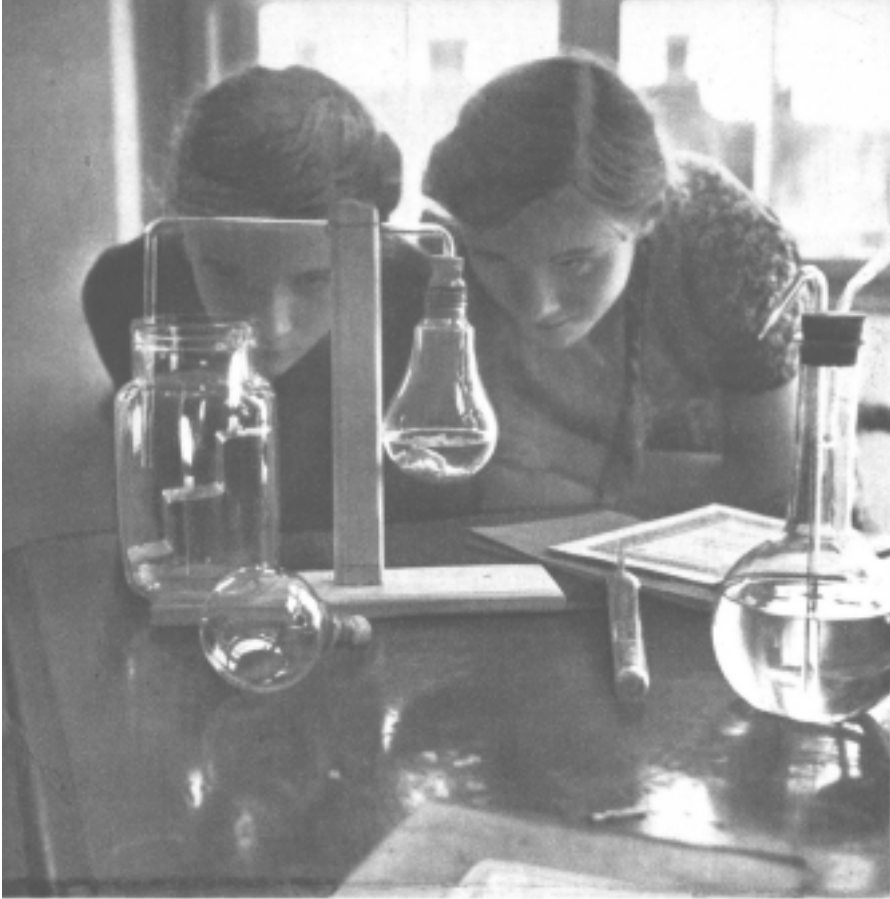
*Des mattres ne ménagent pas leur peine; faites-leur confiance... et à nous aussi! Mais ne nous refusez pas les moyens de réussir.*

*Teachers do their very best. You can count on them — and on us — but you must give us a fair chance.*

*Los maestros hacen cuanto está en su mano. Pueden ustedes tener confianza en ellos — y en nosotros —, pero hay que darnos escuelas para ver lo que podemos hacer.*





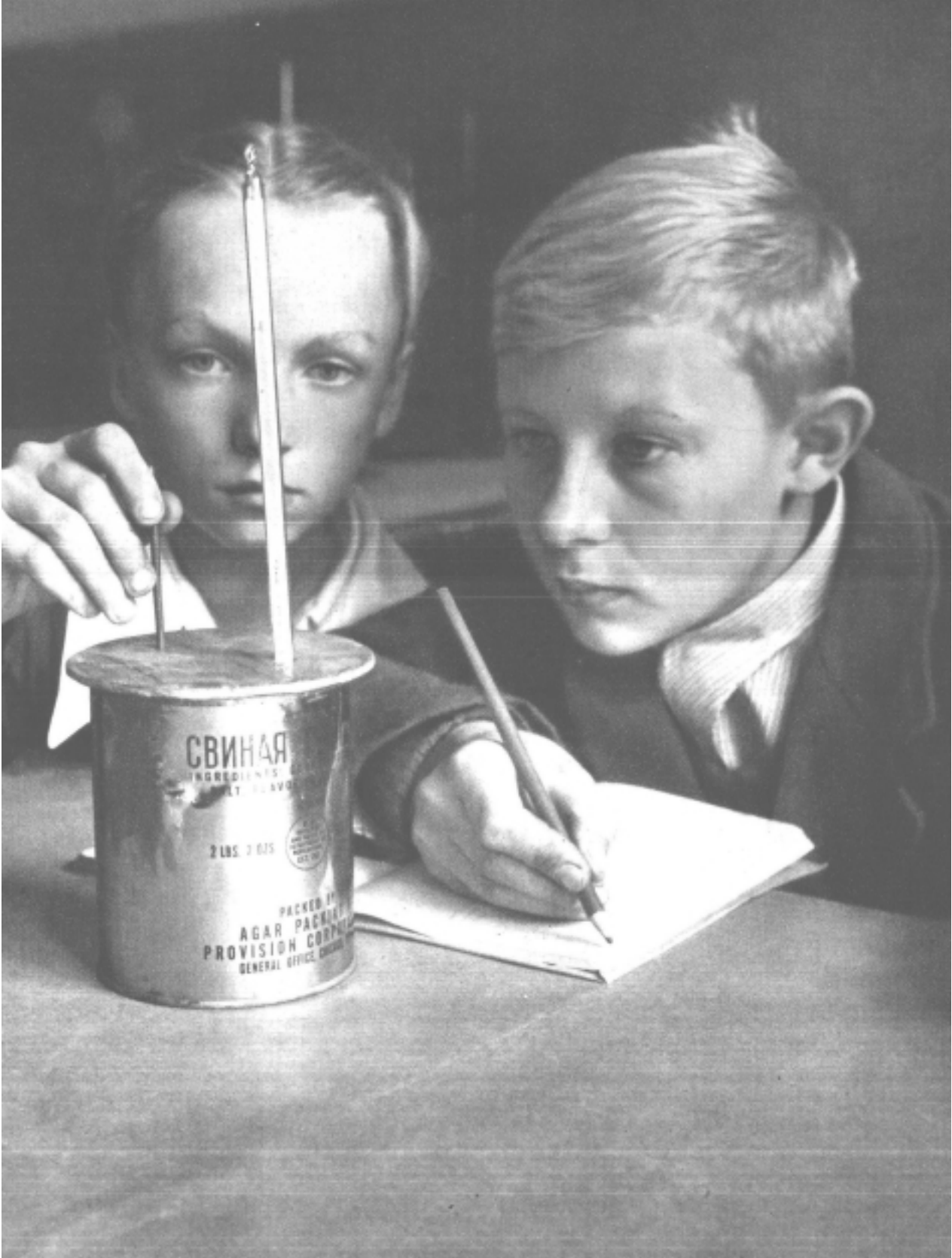


*Nous équiperons nous-mêmes les laboratoires de nos classes de sciences par nos propres moyens... Nous ne sommes pas exigeants pour ce qui est du matériel.*

*For the science class we can make many things ourselves. With a little help...*

*En la clase de ciencias podemos nosotros mismos hacer muchas cosas. Con que se nos ayude un poco...*





СВИНАЯ

INGREDIENTS

2 LBS. 7 OZS.

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AGAR PACKING  
PROVISION COMPANY  
GENERAL OFFICE, CHICAGO



*Nos vêtements aussi, nous nous en chargerons... et nous apprendrons à composer les livres dont nous avons besoin.*

*We can also make clothes for ourselves... and we'll learn to print our own books.*

*También sabemos hacernos la ropa... y aprendemos a imprimir nuestros libros.*





*Avec quelques outils et un peu de cuir nous fabriquerons nous-mêmes les chaussures qui nous manquent.*

*With a few tools and some leather we'll make the shoes we need so badly.*

*Con unas cuantas herramientas y un poco de cuero nos confeccionaremos los zapatos que tanta falta nos hacen.*

*Après tout, pourquoi ne pas nous initier à tous les travaux?  
After all — we must learn to do all the work of the world.  
En fin de cuentas, tenemos que aprender todos los trabajos  
que se hacen por el mundo.*





*Nous reconstruirons nous-mêmes nos écoles!*  
*We will even rebuild our own schools!*  
*¡Hasla reedificaremos nuestra propia escuela!*





*Donnez-nous les outils : nous aiderons à bâtir un monde nouveau!*

*Give us the tools, and we will help to build the new world.*

*Dadnos los instrumentos para ello, y ayudaremos a construir un mundo nuevo.*



*L'affection, la compréhension, l'aide de certaines « grandes personnes » ont assuré à quelques-uns d'entre nous bonheur et sécurité et leur ont permis de rattraper un peu de leur enfance perdue; mais la salle de classe à l'ombre des arbres, le terrain de jeux édifié sur les ruines, seule une minorité en profite.*

*With the love, understanding and help of grown-ups, some of us have already begun to build a secure and happy life — to regain a part of our lost childhood — in classrooms under the trees, in playgrounds among the ruins — but still only some of us.*

*Con el amor, la comprensión y la asistencia de los mayores, algunos de nosotros hemos dado ya los primeros pasos en una vida segura y feliz, hemos recobrado un poco de nuestra infancia perdida, en las clases bajo los árboles, en los campos de juego entre las ruinas. Pero sólo algunos de nosotros.*





*Faites-nous une place dans votre monde. Bientôt nous serons de « grandes personnes »: ne nous abandonnez pas une seconde fois, nous désespérerions alors de l'idéal pour lequel vous vous êtes battus.*

*Share your world with us. We too shall be grown-up people in a few years. Do not abandon us a second time and make us lose forever our faith in the ideals for which you fought.*

*Compartid vuestro mundo con nosotros. También nosotros seremos dentro de unos años personas mayores. No volváis a abandonarnos, no permitáis que perdamos para siempre la fe en los ideales por los que habéis luchado.*

wtorek 7 września



Basia Szamborowska  
i niepewna w nocy padł deszcz  
zachmurzone

zoda 8 września opłisnie  
jest silny wiatr  
jest chłodno  
na niebie chmury



wtorek 8 września jest pochmurno  
nie jest dość chłodno



czwartek 9 września jest pochmurno  
niebo słabo jest dość chłodno



piątek 10 września jest słoneczna pogoda  
słoneczna jest jęmi i ciepło. jest  
klasie

Basia Szamborowska

