

**THE BRAIN DRAIN**

# How Poor Nations Give to the Rich

**Our training of foreign students who fail to return home is serving to widen a "talent gap" in underdeveloped countries; a U.S. Senator's report on a growing problem.**

By WALTER F. MONDALE

THERE is nothing, quite literally, that the industrialized nations of the world can do for their less affluent neighbors that is more important than helping them develop the special knowledge and skills they so desperately need. The ideal and obvious way of accomplishing this purpose is to provide specialized training. So the United States Government has made it possible for thousands of students from Asia and Africa to receive high-quality education in this country.

One hundred thousand foreign students are in the United States today, about three-quarters from developing nations. Tens of thousands of other top professionals come here under exchange programs in medicine, science, and other priority fields. We have opened the doors of our colleges and universities to them, for the knowledge and professional skills they seek are indispensable to the progress of their homelands.

But before they can contribute to this progress, they must return home. And large numbers do not. Estimates of the number of Asian students who fail to go back range as high as 90 per cent. Thousands remain here as doctors, scientists, engineers, or teachers in our universities. And the percentage from other continents, though not so large, is still highly sobering.

Far from always bringing progress to poor nations, we are, in many cases, helping drain them of their most precious resource—human talent. And this brain drain is one of the prime reasons why the gap between the rich and the

poor of the world is not narrowing, but growing wider every day.

There are, of course, many brain drains. There is the movement, adversely affecting my state of Minnesota, of many of the best brains from the Midwest to California and the East Coast. There is the migration of scientists from Britain to America. Our nation was built by a brain drain from Europe. And many centuries ago, there was a brain drain to Rome from the outlying provinces.

But the brain drain from developing countries is particularly urgent. It compromises our commitment to development by depriving new nations of high-level manpower indispensable to their progress. It runs directly counter to the education and training we provide in our foreign aid. It is, in the words of Assistant Secretary of State Charles Frankel, "one of the steady, trying, troublesome diplomatic issues confronted by [our] government . . . one of the most important problems faced not just by the Department of State, but more important, by the United States and by mankind as a whole."

THE brain drain is serious among scientists. The National Science Foundation estimates that, between 1956 and 1963, 2,858 scientists and engineers from South America and 4,114 from Asia moved permanently to the United States. Charles V. Kidd of the office of Science and Technology calls this loss a "national catastrophe" to developing countries, since they have so few to build a base for scientific and technological progress.

The brain drain is severe and growing among doctors and health specialists. Dr. G. Halsey Hunt, executive director of the Educational Council for Foreign

Medical Graduates, reports that 10,974 of the 41,102 residents and interns serving in American hospitals are graduates of foreign medical schools. About 8,000 of these come from developing countries. Nigeria, with one-fiftieth as many doctors per person as we have, graduated nineteen physicians in 1963 from its one medical school; in the same year, sixteen Nigerian doctors were working in American hospitals. The Philippines graduates 1,010 doctors a year, and provides us 2,108 residents and interns.

According to Dr. Kelly M. West of the University of Oklahoma, "We would have to build and operate about twelve medical schools to produce the manpower being derived through immigration. The dollar value per year of this 'foreign aid' to the United States approximately equals the total cost of all of our medical aid, private and public, to foreign nations."

The brain drain is acute among foreign students. In the July 1966 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Cornell President James A. Perkins cites an estimate that more than 90 per cent of the Asian students who come here never return home. Incomplete Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics indicate that about 30 per cent of Asians entering on student "F-visas" adjust their status to permanent resident. We don't know the exact figures, but we do know that the non-return of students from Asia is of massive proportions—particularly severe for countries such as Taiwan, Korea, and Iran.

The record of government programs is far better. Of those that our Agency for International Development (AID) brings to this country for education and training, more than 99 per cent return,

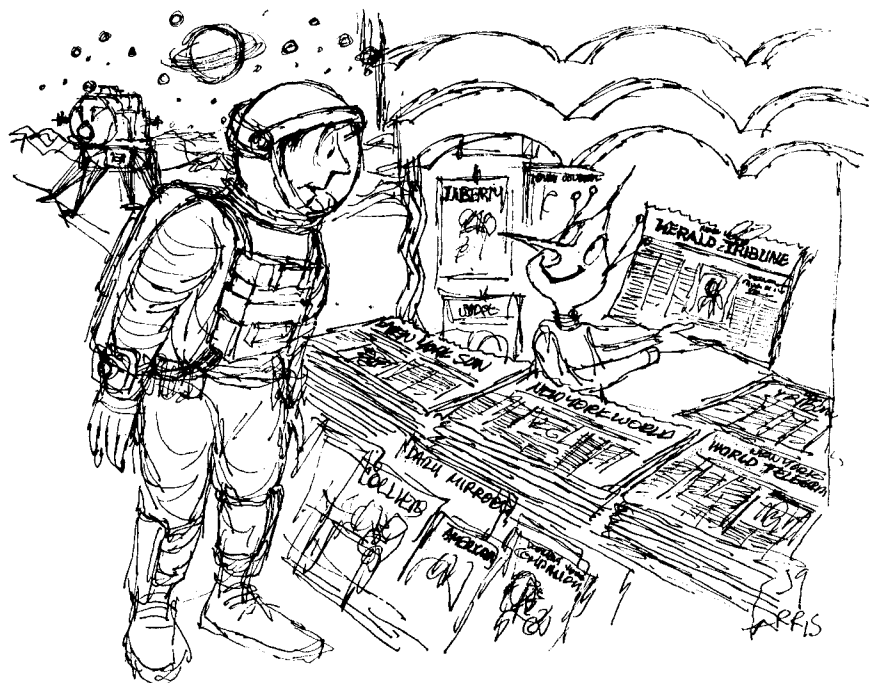
Walter F. Mondale is the junior United States Senator from Minnesota.

First of all, we need more research on the magnitude and causes of the

The present medical situation is a national disgrace. The growing shortage of American health personnel has been evident for many years. That we should, in the face of such clear evidence, need doctors from countries where thousands die daily of disease to relieve our shortage of medical manpower is inexcusable. And our dependence has increased—in 1951, only 9 per cent of our hospital residents were foreign; by 1964, this

As a third part of a brain drain program, we should encourage our colleges and universities to make their programs for foreign students more relevant to the needs of their homelands. In opening their doors to these students, our colleges and universities perform a national and international service of the first order. But they face a difficult paradox—the better their foreign students adjust to university life, the longer they extend their studies; and the more successful they are academically, the more likely they may be to want to stay permanently in the United States.

**T**O resolve this paradox, we must devise programs for foreign students which orient them toward the needs of the developing nations to which we hope they will return. For this purpose, I would urge that the Congress authorize funds for pilot grants to educational institutions, to support special curriculums to relate particular fields of study to problems faced by developing countries, and special counseling to help students maintain contact with their homelands and shape educational programs which



prepare them for rewarding careers there. Such programs should concentrate particularly on foreign students not sponsored by the federal government, since it is among these students that the brain drain is most acute.

As a fourth step, we must give far more attention to helping developing countries make effective use of the skilled people they do have. These countries thirst for skilled, professional manpower, yet often do not provide good opportunities for those already there. This is, of course, why many leave.

There is ample evidence to support the conclusion of Professor George Seltzer of the University of Minnesota that the brain drain "may be symptomatic of a host of fundamental shortcomings regarding the development and utilization of high-level manpower." And as one American university dean has put it, it is difficult to advise an Indian engineer to return home if "there is a high risk that he will be a clerk-typist for the next ten years." Many underdeveloped countries lack effective economic and social institutions to attract the right man to the right job, to award posts on the basis of potential and capabilities rather than personal connections, and to allow a bright young man to advance as fast as his abilities merit.

The responsibility for meeting this problem rests primarily with the countries affected. We have learned through hard experience that self-help is the crucial factor in the progress of developing nations. Without it, any aid program is futile. But in countries that are serious about self-help, our aid can supply a vital ingredient to development, by providing needed capital and concentrating attention on fundamental problems.

Although it has been badly neglected, the effective use of professional and skilled manpower is clearly such a fundamental development problem. And as Gregory Henderson of the United Nations Institute of Training and Research has suggested, AID can assume an important role in helping hard-pressed students who return find the right jobs. One model worth careful study is the Indian Scientists' Pool, through which the Indian government guarantees temporary placement to returning scientists so they have time to shop around for suitable permanent employment. Another possibility is opening recruiting and placement offices in this country; the Ford Foundation has just granted \$200,000 to an Indian business group to support such an office in New York.

**I**MPROVED placement is, of course, only part of the answer. Another part may lie in promoting diversity and pluralism in developing countries, so that individuals can establish their own businesses or schools or cooperatives, and develop and test their talents in the crucible of experience. Another need is to remove some of the deep-rooted frustrations of professional life in developing countries—low salaries, lack of adequate facilities, limited opportunities for advancement, and insufficient recognition of the value of professional work. None of these can be accomplished overnight. But it is surely time to give this problem the priority it deserves.

Finally, we should consider negotiating bilateral agreements with developing countries severely hurt by the brain drain, to modify the effect of our visa and immigration policies. This is an area where we must tread with extreme care.

We must not violate in any way the spirit of the new immigration law. Yet the new emphasis on the skills of the immigrant regardless of origin clearly exacerbates the brain drain, and already we are seeing its effects. Fifty-four immigrants from India in the preference category for professional and technical workers came to the United States in fiscal year 1965. But with the reallocation of unused quota numbers provided by the new legislation, 1,750 Indians in this category—more than thirty-two times as many—were admitted one year later. There is also, of course, the continuing problem of adjustment of student visa status.

Because of the severity of these problems, together with the importance of maintaining the general provisions of our immigration law, we should explore the possibility of bilateral agreements with certain developing countries to deal with brain drain problems as they arise in each national case. Such agreements might require that students from particular countries return home for two years before becoming eligible to immigrate to America, as those on the exchange program must now do. And these agreements might establish a mechanism for considering the needs of a developing country in our immigration policy, as well as our own needs. Any such bilateral agreement should definitely require that the developing country take specific steps to improve opportunities for talented individuals.

Such agreements, of course, would involve some limits on the freedom of the individual who wishes to come to our shores. Yet no one is advocating today an open immigration policy; the question rather is whom we shall accept, and who shall be kept out. Since we have determined, as one basic principle, to place high priority on our need for skilled people, we should likewise find some way to consider another principle, the needs of countries whose development is a goal of our national policy.

In other words, what is needed is some way to strike a balance, in immigration policy as in the other areas I have discussed. For our people do need doctors, as our economy thirsts for more scientists and engineers. We prize the presence of foreign students on our campuses. We profit from the contribution of immigrants from all continents to our national life. Yet if we would build a world where our children can live in peace and freedom, development of poor nations must likewise receive high priority in our national policies. And if we continue to neglect the brain drain, the gap between rich and poor will grow wider still, and hopes for lasting peace will vanish for our century.

Such a disaster we must do all in our power to avert.



*"Actually we're not interested in territorial gains so much as the unification of Europe under one efficient political and economic system."*



# VOLTAIRE'S TIMELESS EMINENCE

By JACK VALENTI

ONCE THERE WAS a superb old courtesan named Ninon de Lenclos, who, in her eighty-fourth year, became attracted to the bright mind of the ten-year-old son of her notary and author of her will, one M. Arouet. Young François Marie Arouet, she thought, will become a credit to his nation if his mind is employed usefully. She told her notary she would leave 2,000 francs in her will to the young boy if the father would buy him books to read. The famous courtesan died, the books were bought, the boy read them, and grew up to become Voltaire.

If one believes the story, then Ninon's legacy may well have marked the most spectacular outcropping of wit and arrogance and literary splendor of all time.

François Marie Arouet was born in Paris on November 21, 1694. His mother was Marie Marguerite D'Aumard, of fragmentary noble lineage. He was the youngest of five children, so puny and sickly at birth that no one gave him long to live. Throughout his life, he suffered illness, real, imaginary, and contrived; never, to hear him tell it, did he manage a day without some intrusion of ill health. He lived to be eighty-four.

Voltaire is a timeless eminence. He mingled in his person and in his creativity immense wit and wittiness, a very solid pragmatism, and a very inflammable idealism. He possessed bottomless energy; he had a business acumen that made him, and kept him, a millionaire with shrewd investments before which any Wall Street house would genuflect in appreciative awe; he was educated by Jesuits and scoffed at some of the rites of organized religion.

He hated laziness, never understood the idle mind or person, and never allowed himself not to work; he left an enormous bulk of writing—more than fifty plays, countless poems (a bare catalogue of them fills fourteen royal octavo columns), numberless tales (of which *Candide* is the most perfected), histories,

general criticism and miscellaneous writing, and correspondence—tons of it—to most of the eminent literary lights, rising and fading kinglets, princes of the blood, and mistresses (his and others) in Europe. Voltaire was the sauciest, angriest, the most prolific, and, possibly, when it served him practically to be so, the most mendacious of all letter-writers.

There was nothing odd about Voltaire; he liked women, loved most of them, was capable of faithfulness and faithlessness and could plausibly justify either. With a matchless aplomb he was kind to husbands of the wives he made love to, even managing to live for fourteen years with Madame du Châtelet and her husband, who had the good sense to spend most of his time with his regiment. (It is an indicator of French tolerant morals that society was less surprised at the Marquis's acquiescence than the lovers' fidelity.) One of Voltaire's early tutors was the Abbé de Chaulieu, who declared, with solemn finality, that wine and women were the most delectable boons granted to man by a wise and beneficent Nature. Voltaire did not need urging to take up this regimen. However



Voltaire, sculptured by Houdon  
—"immense wit and wittiness."

delightful the pleasures of the flesh, though, they never diverted him from the compulsion to work.

Voltaire had a horror of being ponderous or heavy-footed. He suffered bores, boredom, and pundits with ill grace, viewing them with the same distaste he democratically felt for some reigning monarchs, and rival literary lions. He resented the "profusion of useless things with which they wished to load my brain. My motto is, TO THE POINT." His whole life consisted of work, fleeing into exile, returning, and then fleeing again, journeying from one mistress to another, from one temporary home to another, and finally returning to die in Paris after an exile of twenty-eight years.

Posterity honors him; and women, and society in general, found him irre-  
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Voltaire presiding over a dinner party which includes the Abbé Maury, Condorcet, and Diderot (engraving by Hubert).

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