DRAFT OF SDS PEACE PROJECT PROPOSAL

BY

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The Peace Movement and the Student Movement

As a partisan political issue, peace has become the most unifying of liberal commitments. It runs the risk, however, of lapsing into a hollow issue whose content and goals are never manifest in any deep sense. Requisite to a thorough knowledge of the problems of peace and war pointing to solutions is the acceptance of these problems as a proper field of academic inquiry and experiment. The two immediate needs of the peace movement are a broader base of enlightened support for its partisan goals, and clearer channels for the efforts of the partisan whose concern is that of the scholar. As a field of study where the student can relate his achievements to the world which needs them desperately, investigation of peace issues can produce educational and practical inroads toward solutions.

General Problems of the Peace Movement

The outstanding problem is effectiveness, important primarily because it is serious enough to infect the commitment of those potentially involved with a corrosive pessimism. In setting proximate goals for study and action toward peace, attention must constantly be paid to establishing and developing instruments to exert responsible pressure on the Pentagon and the UN. Decision-making with regard to arms control and disarmament is necessarily limited to a small group of men already under terrific pressure. Participation in the reaching of top-level decision must be grounded in deep knowledge, broad concern and flexible programming which can be focused on areas of immediate priority.

The second recognized need is the institutionalization of means to explore the issues involved with peace, and to use the diffuse fund of knowledge and alternatives for conflict resolution. The loci for this projected goal would appropriately be the nation's campuses, where both the resources and the concern exist largely untapped. Study could and should legitimately be carried on through universities. But the viability of the campus as a center for political organization and influence, and the effectiveness of its agencies in national decision-making are highly questionable except in terms of the student. Exploration and development of agencies premised on partisan lines—affirming the value of issue-oriented education, and conceivably adopting a parallel, liberal political stance—are vital.

The third, urgent for the formulation and perpetuation of the preceding two, is to expand the core of people now consciously concerned with the practical solving of problems which peace presents. Again, these persons dwell on campus as well as in Washington, and the bridge between Washington and the campus in this area is tenuous. So are the solutions, at this stage. Workable alternative solutions must be developed, and means must be found for injecting them into the political sphere. By involving people who do not intend to devote their academic careers to study of these problems, we develop attitudes which will support the assumptions of those who do, if not the actual measures they produce. The importance of this support is both educational and political.

What Students Can Do to Advance Peace Education

First, students on all grade levels can involve themselves in academic work toward solutions of practical problems, and in research, for peace. Second, students can involve themselves in the political-educational community as citizens committed to peace and the resolution of conflict.
Two-Year Program in Peace Education and Research on the Campus

To initiate the necessary breakthrough in peace education and research, we propose an initial two-year project to be carried out on the campus. The project would be under the auspices of Students for Democratic Society, an established educational organization functioning nationally and on the campus level of discussion and communication. As the student department of the League for Industrial Democracy, it is both associated with a tradition of democratic education and draws upon a range of personal loyalties extending throughout the liberal, labor and academic communities. Its close association with student action groups provides for the carryover of educational programming into programs of direct action and protest.

Peace Education and Research Program on the Campus

Study groups would be organized on the campus, functioning as independent groups built around a small core of students and faculty interested in planning and discussion, hopefully growing to a dozen or so participants. They would meet regularly and informally, selecting problem areas, defining the issues within them, gathering, organizing and evaluating factual sources toward a realistic and informed program outline. Priorities for the group would include:
1) delineation of individual and group research projects, integrating them with regular curricular work or graduate research wherever possible.
2) Use of influence and discussion, both private and public, to gain university acceptance of "peace and war" as a legitimate field of research and interdisciplinary study.
3) development of an educational program to carry into the academic and civic community through lecturers, forums, articles in student newsmen journals, circulation of literature.

Peace Education and Research Program on the National Level

The national office of Students for Democratic Society would centralize resources and promotion of the student peace research programs. A student peace research and education coordinator and staff would be hired to administer the national program. Their jobs would include:

1) initial correspondence and field work necessary to set up contacts on the campus and get the project started.
2) continuing promotion, publicity and organization of the project through speaking, writing, soliciting funds and services, planning conferences.
3) serving as liaison with the existing adult centers (Peace Research Institute, Institute for International Order, Committee of Correspondence, Center for Research in Conflict Resolution, Carnegie Endowment Fund) aimed at opening their intellectual resources to student groups, seeking cooperation in setting up local groups, investigating and suggesting ways of involving students in their activity.
4) preparation and circulation of reference bibliographies, program outlines, and discussion guides for groups organizing research projects.
5) coordination of the peace research project with the general SDS program of publications, chapter activity and field service.
6) Liaison with existing student and adult peace action groups.
Peace Project Proposal

The national office would assume two continuing program functions:
1) preparation of a Student Peace Education and Research Bulletin. This regularly published summary of study group activity would be analogous to the Committee of Correspondence Bulletin, providing for the sharing of ideas and information, progress reports, debates and articles.
2) maintenance of a Peace Research Press Service publishing frequent press releases and features designed to draw public attention to the thinking in the peace effort. This would attempt to crack mass media and concentrate a heavy barrage on the secondary press with the aim of legitimizing concern and discussion about the issues of peace and war among responsible citizens.

Conference Program

The work of the study groups and the national office would periodically be integrated through a series of two-day regional conferences. Each conference would adopt a theme broader than the topics of individual research groups, defining, relating and expanding the issues involved and attempting to arrive at some preference among alternatives. Materials and resource lists compiled and produced by individual study groups would serve as working papers for the conferences, and resource personnel could be drawn into the program for filling in gaps in information. Such conferences would organize the factual and conceptural material from specialized research groups in concentration on broad problems. Themes might include "Attitudinal Barriers to Peace," "Alternatives to Cold War," "Economics of Peace," "Non-Violence in International Relations," "World Government and World Law," etc. Proceedings of the conferences would be published in the Bulletin.

The First Four Months

Correspondence and communication will be the immediate time-consuming needs in getting the project off the ground. The coordinator and his assistant will initiate the project through the following means:

1) Ten schools whose students and faculty are rich enough in concern and desire to participate in peace research and education are to be selected:

   Carleton     Berkeley
   Illinois     St. Louis
   Michigan     Minnesota
   Harvard      New York City
   Oberlin      North Carolina

   The staff must make contacts and exploit existing contacts, giving the local contacts information, programs and resource material to use in planning initial projects for their groups.

2) The idea on which the peace education and research project is founded must be communicated to other groups working in the area--their interest and cooperation solicited wherever possible. SANE, the Committee of Correspondence, the Center for Research in Conflict Resolution and other organizations mentioned earlier could provide valuable contacts on the campus. Mass mailings, correspondence and travel are necessary to effect coordination with these other groups.

3) The national staff and the contacts must prepare a comprehensive mailing list, a bibliography of reference sources which will eventually be a library on peace and related issues and problems, and put out the news letter.
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