Education and the People's Peace

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EDUCATION AND THE
PEOPLE'S PEACE

Educational Policies Commission

National Education Association of the United States and
the American Association of School Administrators
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Foreword

For assistance in planning and reviewing the manuscript of this report, the Educational Policies Commission is indebted to the Committee on International Relations of the National Education Association, which appointed a special subcommittee to work with the Commission in outlining and reviewing the issues with which the document deals. The members of this subcommittee were BEN M. CHERINGTON, KENNETH HOLLAND, and GRAYSON KEFAUVER. The Commission is also indebted for assistance in consultation to PAUL R. HANNA, ERLING M. HUNT, I. L. KANDDEL, WALTER M. KOTSCHNIG, FLORA BELL LUDINGTON, and WILLIAM F. RUSSELL.

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ONE MORE CHANCE

War itself does not solve problems. It multiplies and intensifies them. What the Allied victory (in 1918) did achieve was to give statesmanship an unparalleled opportunity at the conclusion of the war to work out and apply solutions upon which a stable civilization could be built. Military victory gave us our chance, but we lost it.—FRANCIS B. SAYRE

1.

The intoxicating news of Allied victory on November 11, 1918, was greeted with wild jubilation in the streets and prayers of gratitude in the homes and the churches. Millions of people in this country and elsewhere believed that the defeat of the Central Powers had ushered in a long period of peace, plenty, and freedom. While the war was going forward, the people of the United States had been sustained and energized by a great faith. They believed that they were fighting "a war to end war" and to "make the world safe for democracy."

It is surely evidence of the indomitable courage of our race that even today, when the bright and well-remembered expectations of yesterday have been hurled into utter ruin and confusion, there still persist the same settled purpose, the same determined optimism. Our hopes were deferred; they are not abandoned. We scan the short record of the interwar years anxiously asking, "Was this step a wise one; did we fail here; what can we learn from our experience?" Our people have not given up the struggle to attain a decent and peaceful world; we listen for the
voice that will give us a positive program for peace, a program to which we can attach our loyalties and aspirations. We still believe in the possibility of a world where men can learn to walk together in dignity and peace; our past failures to achieve such a world only add to our resolution and sharpen our inventiveness.

Those who remember the sacrifices of 1917-18 and the hopes of 1919-20 cannot help but ask what was wrong with our policy and actions. How did the rich and costly fruits of victory escape our grasp? World history would certainly have been different if the United States had joined the League of Nations. But would that action alone have prevented the present conflict? Will similar action, alone, prevent another war? Has there not been somewhere a fatal flaw in the whole philosophy and procedure for maintaining peace?

Three months after the Armistice, the school administrators of the United States met in Chicago for their annual convention. In July 1919, the "peace convention" of the National Education Association met in Milwaukee. These conventions shared in the general happiness and pride in our great and recent military victory. They exulted in the realization that "in the crisis of war the schools were a mighty agency for victory," and they pledged the continued devotion of public education in the days of peace to "true Americanism and world democracy." The president of the Association rejoiced that during the war "education has become the chief concern of the statesmen of the world."

These conventions passed strong resolutions, while the issue was still a burning one, in favor of the League of Nations and they urged "the creation of an International Commission on Education . . . to provide for a world-
education in the elements of democratic citizenship and the extension of the privilege of education to all people and to all classes." The opening speaker at one convention was vigorously applauded when he said, "The only League of Nations that gives any assurance of a permanent peace is the league which the teachers of the earth shall write in the minds and hearts of the children."

They also recognized in their resolutions that the war had precipitated a crisis in the task of making democracy effective. In meeting that crisis, they declared, "A nationwide, even a worldwide, program in education has become a vitally essential factor." Then they added this significant statement: "If our ideals of humanity and democracy are to continue, even for ourselves as an American people, it is essential that we . . . demand from all nations the education of their people in the fundamental ideals and principles of good government." They agreed to help form an international teachers organization; they urged that the government of the United States send two or three hundred students abroad each year for higher education, with their living expenses paid, as the living expenses of naval or army cadets are paid, out of public funds.

These conventions faithfully reflected the optimism of the moment. "Imperialism as a world force is dead! The funeral was but yesterday," cried one speaker. And the United States Commissioner of Education declared that "all isolations, splendid or otherwise, are gone forevermore."

A few voices were raised in warning, and these voices, tho they no doubt commanded intellectual assent from the educators, went unheeded as far as public policy was concerned. Said the president of the University of Minnesota: "We have a right to be proud . . . But . . . it will be futile to . . . establish a League of Nations, unless there is back of the peace terms and of the League of Nations
a world-citizenry. . . . A peace founded on coercion can never survive; only a peace founded upon . . . a mutuality of purposes secured thru definitely planned systems of education . . . stands a chance of surviving.”

An even more devastatingly accurate forecast of possible events was hazarded by another speaker, who declared: “The Great War was a cunningly contrived conspiracy carried to its tragic climax thru an educational system. Another variety of educational cunning might enable Germany again to become a menace to mankind. Unless . . . the children of all free men are trained effectively in all of those habits and arts that make for national solidarity and strength, and for international sympathy and understanding, the safety of civilization cannot be guaranteed, even by a League of Nations. A world half educated will be only half free.”

Nine days later in Washington, another educator, formerly the president of Princeton University, laid before the Senate of the United States for ratification a treaty embodying adherence of this country to the League of Nations. Before the year was out the proposed basis for international organization was rejected, no statesman took up the cause for which the educators pleaded; the educational aspects of the League’s work constituted a minor afterthought and, altho they and their teachers did not know it, the children then in the schools began to get the education that was to serve them for the Second World War.

When, during the interval between wars, the educators of the world talked about large-scale international exchange of students, a strong international office of education, consistent teaching of democracy and international goodwill, men in positions of power seldom paid attention.

One-tenth of the expenditures for diplomatic activities and conferences would have financed the international educational plans with a bounty beyond the wildest hopes of the educational leaders. But not one-tenth—no, not one-hundredth—of these funds were directed to international education. Education for world citizenship was merely a title for a book; it was never accepted as a goal for statesmanship in the real world. Education, the instrument that had become, in wartime, “the chief concern of the statesmen of the world,” was relegated to a secondary position in peace by most of the world’s political leaders.

By most of them—not by all. As the years went by there came to power one group that saw with fearful clarity that the effectiveness of all social planning is based upon education. These were the rising leaders of the modern dictatorships. For their wicked purposes, they lavished on education and youth almost unlimited attention, prestige, solicitude, and resources. They regimented the mind and militarized the spirit of their youth before they dared to build them weapons of war.

Thruout modern history, the instrument of education, by which we mean here the schools, colleges, and other organized agencies whose primary function is the inculcation of attitudes or the dissemination of knowledge, has often been used to shape national policies that led to international ill will, aggression, and war. It is the central thesis of this document that this trend should be and can be reversed. We propose nothing less than the systematic and deliberate use of education, on a worldwide basis and plan, to help safeguard the peace and to help extend the democracy for which this Second World War is being fought.
We stress the importance of education because in the past, statesmen who sought to promote the peace of the world have been so exclusively concerned with political organization and strategy, trade and treaties, armament and disarmament, and issues of international law that they have never given serious and sustained attention to the great force of education. Yet this force, rightly organized, could have added powerfully to their efforts. Ignored or wrongly directed, it has brought their shrewdest plans to ruin.

We do not wish to claim too much. Education is a force with which statesmen ought to reckon in planning the international relations of the future. This does not mean, however, that education alone is sufficient to guarantee the peace and security of nations. Without parallel and simultaneous political and economic action, international educational policy can hardly be effective.

The evolution of this broadening concept of peaceful relationships is fairly clear. The peace treaties of 1919 dealt first and chiefly with matters of national and international government. Questions of national boundaries, minority rights, international courts, and other international legal machinery occupied the center of attention. The elaborate representative machinery of the League of Nations was invented and set in motion. Later on, most of the countries of the world formally "renounced the use of war as an instrument of national policy."

Now, in the midst of a Second World War, we can see that political or governmental procedures, while important, were not enough. Today, an emphasis is rightly being placed upon the economic causes of war. An active search for appropriate economic countermeasures is under way.

We are concerned with international trade, equal access to raw materials, and many other economic problems. That is good. But it is still not enough. All mankind's hopes will come crashing down again if we fail once more to add certain educational factors to the support of peaceful organization of the world.

It is good to strengthen international, political, and legal organizations. It is decent and wise to help provide a growing measure of economic security and prosperity for all men and all nations. But economic fair play and political organization together are insufficient, however essential. War will not be brought under control merely by providing men with legal codes and enough to eat. Knowledge and attitudes that are conducive to peace are developed by education. So are the knowledge and attitudes that contain the seeds of war. By appropriate educational measures an intelligent desire for peace, with an understanding of the conditions necessary for maintaining it, must be fostered among all the people in every part of the world.

No nation can wisely and safely conduct such education unless all nations do so. Some provisions for the international planning and organization of education must be included in any postwar planning that seeks to accomplish reasonably lasting results.

This statement of educational policy attempts to deal with the future. It is therefore necessary to make certain assumptions about the future, and it is desirable to be clear as to what these are. Four such assumptions are involved in this document.

First, it assumes that the complete military defeat of the Axis nations will be accomplished within a few years. As the document is being written, the events of battle on land, on the seas, and in the air bring this event nearer day by day.
Second, and equally important, this document assumes that a just peace will be established and preserved thru appropriate collective action—political, economic, and military. With such a peace there should be associated certain educational programs, domestic and international, implemented by new organizations and new procedures.

Third, it assumes that during a transitional period after the fighting stops, the United Nations, either individually or in concert, will be obliged to exercise or supervise many of the functions of civil government in the Axis nations, in some of their satellite and occupied territories, and perhaps in other parts of the world as well. This will be done to preserve order, to relieve famine, to check the ravages of disease, to lay the basis for physical and cultural reconstruction, and to assist in the reestablishment of educational and social services.

Fourth, this document assumes that the United Nations will remain united in victory. The nature of the bonds between them will change, to be sure, in the new situation. The purposes to be served by unity will not, however, be greatly different. These nations will remain united, we assume, because that will be the only way in which they can realize for their people the full fruits of the military victory.

It is not necessary for our purposes to forecast in any detail the nature of the new world organization. It may or may not resemble the League of Nations; it may or may not involve regional as well as national units. It may spring into being as a relatively complete structure, or it may be the result of a long and gradual evolution. Its powers may be broad or specific, its structure simple or complex, its membership limited or inclusive. In any case, the functions of government retained by the several nations will almost certainly be very extensive. But limitless, unconditional, and irresponsible national sovereignty, we assume, is finished. The idea that every nation is free to act as it wishes, regardless of the rights and interests of others, has been so clearly and painfully proved impractical on two separate occasions during the present century, that it seems impossible that the people of the United States or of any other country will fail to insist upon the creation of some form of world organization.

To outline the above assumptions does not mean that if any one of them fails to materialize, the possibility of international planning and action in education is thereby completely thwarted, tho such planning and action would certainly be rendered extremely difficult.

8.

With these conditions as a general framework, it is the purpose of this document to propose the conscious and systematic use of organized education to help establish and maintain the people's peace after the people's war. Specifically, this will require three definite steps:

1. It is necessary to develop in the United States an informed and aroused public opinion with reference to the issues of peace and international organization. This educational program should be related to similar programs in the other United Nations.
2. It is necessary to create soon a council on education for the United Nations. This council should be related to other aspects of United Nations policy.
3. It is necessary that a permanent international agency for education be established soon after the war ends. This agency should be related to other parts of the emergent world organization.

The three chapters which follow will deal successively with these necessities. A concluding chapter will then consider the possible objections to these plans, and summarize.
Men have for centuries sought to eliminate the catastrophe of war, or at least to limit its frequency and curb its violence. Thus far we have failed. But the struggle to build a peaceful earth will go on until such a world is achieved or until all civilization perishes in some future war of unthinkable ferocity.

If there ever was a cause, if there ever can be a cause, worthy to call forth all the effort, devotion, and intelligence of men, it is the cause of peace. Organized education, we are convinced, has a significant contribution to make to that cause. The possibility of such a contribution has not been clearly seen by the leaders of the nations. This powerful force of education must be fully and wisely used in mankind's next, and perhaps last, chance to build a peaceful world.

II

OUR TASK BEGINS AT HOME

Now that we are on the march toward ultimate victory, there is an important job of education to be done so that the tragedy of war will not come again.—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, February 20, 1943

War under modern conditions is perhaps the greatest curse of humanity. It destroys life, depletes resources, impoverishes the people, and sets aside many of the ethical ideals toward which humanity should strive. Liberty and fraternity are incompatible with the conduct of it, and equality in war soon comes to mean only an equal liability to suffer and sacrifice.

The American people in their fortunate possession of a rich and varied country have always wanted peace. They have not had either the need or the desire to engage with other nations in large-scale wars of conquest.

Yet, in spite of that strong desire for peace, they have repeatedly found themselves at war. Evidently something more than wishing, even very sincerely, for peace is necessary. It is the policies and actions of nations, as well as their desires, which lead them into either war or peace. If these policies and actions are unwise, war comes, no matter what the people want.

In the United States, policies and actions are determined by public opinion. What public opinion demands will be done. If public opinion on any issue is active, sound, and well informed, the resulting action will be wholesome. If public opinion is indifferent, narrow, or uninformed, it may support actions that will, in the long run, produce unfortunate results.
Public opinion in this democracy is as potent in matters of international policy as it is in domestic concerns. Since the United States is great and powerful among nations, public opinion in this country and the actions which flow from it produce reactions all around the globe.

11.

Any program to educate for active and enlightened public opinion in this country must now begin with the all-absorbing fact of war. It must rest upon an understanding of what the American people think the war is being fought to achieve. Such an understanding is not easy to obtain, because public opinion is still somewhat variable, fluid, and even confused on this subject.

To begin with, our purposes in the war have been constantly broadened. When Japan struck at us in December 1941, our typical and automatic reaction was a defensive one. People wanted, quite simply, to survive, to prevent the soldiers of a foreign nation from occupying their land and killing them. For many people, this defense reaction was mixed with a rather strong desire for retribution and vengeance.

As the war progressed, the mere defense of land and life broadened. We came to feel that we are really fighting, not just to keep our territory, but also to keep our social and political ideals and customs, our "way of life," from destruction. This still remains a defensive attitude, even if one adds to it the idea of defending ethical or moral principles as well as social ideals and political institutions.

Still more recently, we have come to see that this war cannot remain merely defensive; that there must and can be military offensives and that these must and can be paralleled by bold advances in our social and economic planning. Public opinion on war aims seems now to have developed to the point where it expects to achieve, with victory, something more than mere survival or passive defense or mere security against the possibility of future attack. Slowly we are beginning to see the possibility of achieving a far greater result—a desirable outcome, not alone for Americans, but for all people.

Vaguely as yet, but with growing clarity, we are beginning to see that we can achieve a growing measure of freedom and fair play for all men. The whole purpose of the struggle, for us, is changing from a defensive to a creative basis. We intend not only that our free way of life shall survive, but also that it shall spread and flourish.

12.

We are not yet clear and unanimous as to what the free way of life means. But we see some of the principles upon which it rests. We see that recognition of these principles is essential in order that our broader war aims may be attained.

One of these is the principle of earned security, the principle that all men and women should have an opportunity, thru their own exertions, to achieve mental and economic security for themselves and their children. This security is not given as charity from one person to another. It is something to be achieved. It is the opportunity to achieve it that must be universal, equitable, unalienable, and genuine.

Another is the principle of peaceful change. Warfare has hitherto been one of the great means of bringing about changes, sometimes highly desirable changes, in human relations. Since we propose to try to end war, we must provide some other means of bringing about constant and necessary changes thru cooperative, orderly, peaceful procedures. The only method of peaceful change that has been reasonably successful has been the method of open, cooperative discussion and action. Hence, it will be necessary
to accompany any proposed peace plan with plans for the extension of freedom of discussion and teaching and for the provision of universal education.

A third principle requires the full use of science and technology in the production of wholesome goods and services. If we limit the term "essential" merely to the minimal provisions of food and shelter, there is no longer any need for scarcity of the essentials of life. But if we include in the term "essential" the various refinements of living—of food, of clothing, of shelter, of cultural life—then scarcity will never be removed, because the capacities of people to want and use goods and services are all but unlimited. Every new invention satisfies some needs and creates others.

A fourth principle relates to intellectual and religious freedom. People have a right to think and believe as they please, subject to the one, but crucial, condition that their opinions and beliefs shall not lead them to actions which destroy the liberties of other people. In practice, this principle means free access to knowledge, untrammeled teaching, and the universal availability of educational opportunity.

In accepting some such principles as war aims, the American people would act partly from humanitarian motives and partly from self-interest. They would wish others to observe these principles, partly because it will be good for them to do so, and equally because we Americans cannot have freedom, economic well-being, security, and peace for ourselves unless other people have them too.

While these objectives are being defined, a war is being fought. Those at home have to work harder, limit their purchases, turn over a growing portion of their income to the government, lower their living standards, submit to many annoying restrictions, inconveniences, and even hardships, and suffer anxiety and grief. Meanwhile, their sons in uniform are acquainted with loneliness, sickness, wounds, hunger, cold, and death. The demands of war mount each day in a crescendo of sacrifice.

If all this sorrow and suffering are not to be utterly futile and if the great aims of this war are to be realized, the American people must prepare themselves to adopt and act upon the international policies that will be most likely to attain and keep the desired results from their coming victory. They must be prepared to take advantage of the unconditional surrender which they have said shall be exacted from the Axis enemies. So prepared, they need not again unwittingly break faith with those who died.

The decisions to be made involve a great many complex issues, but by sweeping aside questions of detail and procedure, the basic choice is seen to lie among one of three different routes:

*American isolation*—an attempt to withdraw from any significant kind of participation in world affairs

*American imperialism*—an attempt to use American resources to control the economy of large parts of the earth for our benefit

*American cooperation*—an attempt to apply the principles of discussion, education, and fair play to the community of nations, with full support to the international use of force in controlling possible future aggression.

The defects of the policy of isolation have been so fully, frequently, and recently exposed that one might suppose it should hardly be included in the list of possibilities. It is, in fact, all but certain that the American people will...
absolutely reject the policy of isolation *under that name.* Will they know and reject the policy if it assumes again some other name and some flattering disguise? That will depend on how thoroughly they have educated themselves to recognize basic issues beneath the coating of words and arguments.

The probability, however, is that the real choice will not lie between isolation and participation, but between two kinds of participation—imperialism and cooperation. America is apparently the most powerful economic and political force in the world today. Will it dignify and exalt that strength by becoming also the most powerful moral and educational force? Even assuming that isolation as an American policy is definitely rejected, shall the American people attempt to direct and control for their own advantage various sections of the earth? Or shall we attempt, with that degree of leadership which our national wealth, fortunate location, and history make appropriate, to share in a worldwide program of international cooperation to promote the general welfare?

Having chosen our course of action among these three, and perhaps other possibilities, we must also devise and select the various suitable ways and means of pursuing the adopted objective. There is also the possibility of choosing different procedures in different fields. We might, for instance, assume the cooperative role in connection with an international police force, an imperialistic role in matters of international trade, and an isolationist role in international cultural relations. Such a mixed policy would be confusing and relatively ineffective, yet we might adopt it as the result of public confusion and inertia, inept leadership, or unwise compromises.

To deal with issues of such scope, difficulty, and importance would be a sobering task, even in relatively normal times. But these times are not normal, nor is it likely that the days to follow the unconditional surrender will be more so.

There will be a great reaction against the confusion that Europe and Asia will present; there will be a profound weariness about "foreign" affairs; we shall want to "get the boys home again," and the boys will second the motion. There will be a lack of information concerning what actually happened during the war, because much of what happened will have been suppressed for military reasons. There will be, no doubt, the usual proportion of irrational slogans, and most of them will be unsound in direct proportion to their plausibility. Americans will be suspected, and probably cordially hated, in many parts of the world. Tho we be kindly in our intentions, lavish in our aid to the stricken, and wise in our methods, yet many distraught people will blame us for all their ills, just as they did in 1919 and after.

Against such difficulties we must marshal our resources. Amid them, we must press forward. Our international policy must be thoughtfully reviewed, openly debated, and plainly formulated.

Probably the most urgent single need is a variety of additional printed and other teaching materials. These materials should greatly encourage and clarify the necessary public discussion.

The more we can accomplish during the war by way of adult education, the more our postwar tasks can be reduced to manageable dimensions.
16.

The American people have to learn to understand unerringly that the real goal of this war, and the only goal worthy of its sacrifices, is the establishment of a just peace. We must learn our way around among the various principles and types of international organization that have been tried or suggested. We must develop a strong feeling of responsibility for world order. We must consider the limits to which we are prepared to go in joint international commitments which involve the delegation of some elements of national sovereignty. We must achieve mutual friendship, appreciation, and confidence with the people of the other United Nations. We must emerge from this war a stronger and more purposeful democracy than we were when it began. We must develop an understanding of international issues too strong to be shaken by specious slogans. Only education can strengthen in our adult population this sense of civic responsibility and help it to reach intelligent decisions; only education can prepare the oncoming generation of youth to approve and carry out these decisions.

In this enormous task all forms of organized and informal educational services should be mobilized into a powerful army of liberation. The press, radio, cinema, theater, churches, youth organizations, civic and cultural organizations, professional associations, labor unions, business organizations, women's clubs, and farm groups, as well as schools, colleges, and libraries, have a part in the great task.

We require the interest and effort of the entire nation to win the war. We shall require the informed interest and intelligent effort of the entire nation to win the peace. War and postwar are parts of one great effort; there can be no slackers in either part. The task is great; the time is short; the stakes are the future well-being and happiness of the human race. Let every responsible citizen be enlisted in this campaign of enlightenment.

For as surely as the earth turns, force and violence shall be the law; and wars of cataclysmic destruction shall be the penalty; and blood and tears shall be the inheritance of that people who neglect to learn and to teach that the earth has grown smaller, that all men on it are fundamentally alike, that no human being need now lack food or shelter, and that science has made it necessary for men to live at peace if they want to live at all.
It is clear that a more systematic organization of the United Nations is necessary if their fighting force is to achieve maximum efficiency.—Third Report of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace

Effective prosecution of the war and intelligent planning for the peace would be greatly aided by the prompt formulation of a constructive educational policy by and for the United Nations. Preliminary conferences and investigations looking to this end should be inaugurated at once. The first steps might well be taken by private agencies, representative of the teaching profession, rather than by government agencies as such. Any steps taken by private organizations should, however, be taken after full consultation with government agencies.

The problems to be handled in creating a United Nations agency to propose joint policies in education are highly complex and delicate. Private action is therefore suggested in order to avoid the necessity for governmental commitments and yet to permit full and frank discussion of the issues and needs. The nonofficial status of these efforts will thus be an advantage at the outset.

Activity by the governments concerned ought to follow as soon thereafter as practical.

The responsibility for taking initiative in this matter clearly rests with the organized teaching profession of the United States. This country has made an unusually extensive use of organized education; it has made advanced education for all its people widely available, it has an extended experience with the instrument of universal education as a safeguard of free institutions, it is carrying large responsibilities in the prosecution of the people's war, and its educational facilities have been less impaired by the war than those of any other major member of the United Nations. For all these reasons the role of the United States in the formation of a United Nations educational policy should be one of vigorous, democratic leadership.

The convocation of representatives of education from all the United Nations, even of unofficial representatives, is extremely difficult at present. However, a private agency, much better than a government office, can proceed on a less inclusive basis. We propose that the first conferences on this subject be held between representatives of education from Great Britain and the United States and then on a more inclusive basis. These preliminary and unofficial efforts should result in the establishment of a United Nations council on educational policy.

If a general and continuing conference of the United Nations should be arranged in the near future, the council on educational policy might well operate as a part of such a general conference.

The functions which could be performed by such a council and by its forerunners would be numerous and useful.

Its first function should be to make a thoroughgoing advance study of the whole educational problem in the enemy and enemy-occupied countries. Only a representative, technically-competent agency can do this. The task of offsetting the poison that has been poured into the intel-