

REMARKS OF BETTY REARDON DURING THE SYMPOSIUM
ON "EDUCATION FOR PEACE" SPONSORED BY THE
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE, VIENNA, JUNE 1974

Dr. Wulf has opened our discussions by giving us a good deal to think about. Among his points, there are three crucial questions. First, is the substantive content in terms of the levels of conflict which he outlined for us, an appropriate one for us to discuss? If there is indeed a situation of structural violence in the schools, is change in the schools and school reform of any significance to peace education? And finally, are his suggested criteria for curriculum material on peace suitable to all of our countries?

Our present discussion is not so productive as it might be. It recalls one of the major problems we now face in peace education in the U.S. We find that many people are coming into the field from areas of distinct specialization. So, we are struggling to find some common grounds, some general framework into which we can integrate all these varied perspectives, and very different manifestations of common underlying values, among them the value of positive peace. I think it is instructive to reflect upon the current tension in the educational field between those who believe that we must emphasize the immediate situation, the structural violence that students experience in schools and the oppressed people in our own local communities, and those who believe that peace education should concentrate on global structures and the problems of changing the major systems. I hope our discussions will make some contributions toward reducing those tensions.

Could we not begin to explore the possibilities for some general framework which we could all share? We should note that the conclusion of the education commission at last January's meeting of IPRA at Varanasi, was that there was a need to identify some general patterns, an overall conceptual framework. We need not all apply the framework in the same way but at least it would provide some common parameters for our work.

The Institute for World Order has devised one possible framework for a global perspective on peace education. The framework is based upon 5 basic values we believe to be the minimum essentials for a peaceful world. We would look toward the construction of a world system in which people could share equally in those values, which are: peace or limiting violence; social justice, doing away with forms of repression and the various indignities that many people must suffer; economic well-being, all the peoples of the world having access to the necessities of life; ecological balance, the physical preservation of this planet we share; and the one that to me is the most significant of all, political participation of as many persons as possible in making the policies that will bring those values into being. This framework is one that we have worked on primarily at the global level, so I feel particularly the tension between the community and the global emphases. At the moment I am working in a community situation in New York City, a very complex community. In order to encourage people to discuss these values from the global perspective, we have to make

communal transfers. We have to understand how the values actually operate in New York and how different people experience them, or suffer from the lack of them in their own daily lives. We have literature to describe the framework which can be sent to anyone who wants it.

Another thing that I am concerned about is that in the course of our discussions we did not ever come to an articulated statement on the purposes of peace education. I would like to state my position on the purpose of peace education so that you can understand where my remarks come from. I see the purposes of peace education as giving to learners the necessary skills and capacities to build a decent community on the planet. We are at a social frontier. We must learn to live together under very restricted circumstances. Of course, much of what we have talked about is relevant, but none of it has been definitive. This lack of definition may be partly responsible for our differences over the role of the issue of arms policy in peace education. But, I think it is one of the most crucial issues. If we are going to build a community it means we have to solve common problems. One of our common problems is the problem of security. How can we be secure and pursue justice as well? It is a dilemma for the emerging global community. Will we face this problem through arms control and disarmament, or through non-violent means of resistance? This is a question which should be in a curriculum for peace education.

Still another factor which inhibits our discussion is that we make our contributions from the perspectives of our individual nations. We seem to see ourselves here in an "international" setting - that is, we speak more as representatives of our nations, than as professionals or as educators or as members of the human species. I do not think that "international education" is peace education. I think peace education must be "transnational". We have to transcend our national identities and reach out to our human identity to work together on those common problems. The Institute of World Order is engaged in a variety of transnational curriculum and peace education projects about which we can also send you information.

Recently I went to Canada for discussions on peace education. These Canadian educators were eager to deal with the issue of arms policy. They want to raise this question in Canadian schools: Should Canada have an army? I think that is a question which could be raised in the United States and in other countries as well. I know it is a controversial question but we have to cope with controversy - the achievement of peace will involve controversy and probably conflict. As Prof. Kon says, we have to have the means, we have to plan the activities. Perhaps we could work transnationally toward means and activities to raise the issue of arms policy in a responsible way so that it can be properly studied as a subject for peace education.

I would like to suggest that not only should these areas be subject to further discussion during our time together, but, that we look carefully at Mr. Hohendorf's points about the political nature of

education for peace. Many of us who have been working in the area are indeed in complete agreement on the general principle that peace education is a form of political education. This, I think, raises very important questions about what kind of political skills the schools should be developing to enable students to be agents for achieving peace. If we could agree on some objectives in skill development, we might then spell them out very specifically. By looking at the specifics of general points we can come to understand where we actually agree and where we may disagree. Points of agreement and disagreement need to be clarified among peace educators.

I believe that it is essential to the cause of peace that educators continue transnational discussions on the subject of peace education to clarify differences and to reach common agreements as to how education can contribute to peace.