

PRINCETON CENTER FOR PEACE
RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ACTION:
A NOTE WITH SOME PROPOSALS

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During the last few weeks some people in the Princeton area have been discussing in a very preliminary way the idea of trying to establish a Princeton Center for peace research, education and action. The purpose of this very short note is to try to identify some of the dimensions of the discussions so far.

About the urgency of the matter there is no doubt. With "star wars" very quickly changing even in the U.S. mind from a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) to a Strategic Offense Initiative (SOI) signaling the high probability of a qualitatively new stage in the arms race (laser rays, X-ray beams, nuclear power pumped, reflected through mirrors in space and with enormous capacity for burning anything inflammable on earth coupled with the incalitrance of the present Washington administration, the situation is just as or more dangerous than ever. At the same time it is also clear that the Department of Politics seems to be thinking more in the direction of national security studies than peace studies for the near future, probably sensing that this is more in agreement with the "market."

This raises the fundamental question of whether a center of that type should be located inside or outside Princeton University. One possible answer to that question would be both-and: having a self-appointed interdepartmental committee to organize interdisciplinary courses on peace studies on campus, in other words bringing Princeton University up-to-date with what is happening in so many other universities in the United States and abroad, while at the same time having a center outside the university, for in-

stance with the name suggested (not very acronymical, though). The advantage of having the center inside would be the expenses that are covered, the advantage of having it outside would be autonomy. A center completely inside would take on the general character of Princeton University; a center completely outside would not address itself sufficiently to the concerns of students and professors for peace.

What a center of this type would need as soon as possible would be one room somewhere with a telephone, a P.O. Box, an administrative assistant (who could also do typing but at the same time be responsible for a number of administered questions) and a peace researcher who might be a graduate student. To start with one could think in terms of either or both working any fraction of full time just to get going.

The tasks to be undertaken could be classified under peace research, peace education and peace action.

The peace research part should have as an outcome a series of small monographs reflecting the research interests of the people participating. One should aim at very high quality, the experience being that the best propaganda for peace research is to do good peace research. What should be attempted would be holistic (interdisciplinary) and global (international) perspectives on current peace problems, and one would probably very soon discover that quite a number of people attached to Princeton University and in the

neighborhood ("Princeton" in the name of the center should stand for Princeton in the broader sense of that word) are in fact doing research that with some minor changes in focus would be fine contributions to the field.

The peace education part could be divided into two sections: the effort already mentioned to organize disciplinary courses at the University, going through the usual process of having them recognized as a part of the University offering for the students, then for credit, then as a focus for junior papers and senior theses and one day, perhaps, even for Ph.D. theses. The second part would be courses organized for the general public, including students and faculty at Princeton University--such courses are already being planned for the coming academic year.

When it comes to peace action beyond organizing peace research and peace education the most appropriate role the Princeton Center could play might be to serve some of the needs of the peace action groups in the area, such as "High technology professionals for peace," the various professional groups for social responsibility, the anti-nuclear coalition, and so on. More particularly, if that one room gradually could build up a library and serve as a documentation center it would of course be very useful. Thus, the Princeton Center would probably not itself organize demonstrations of other forms of action, but try to be useful for those who do, within limits. In doing so the Princeton Center would have to make its activities known to the public at large, and the best way of

doing that is probably through a one sheet newsletter.

The question of funding necessarily arises. Most of the work would be for free, with the exception of the peace researcher and the administrative assistant; they should at least after a possible initial period of volunteerism be in a position to have a regular compensation for their work. I find it difficult to believe that in the Princeton area it should not be possible to achieve funding to the tune of, say, \$50,000 or \$25,000 a year for activities of this type. One possibility might be a minor contribution from the fund set aside by the New Jersey Legislature for peace education purposes; another possibility would be simply to organize a fund-raising campaign in the area (or outside for that matter).

Organizationally the Princeton Center should probably have a board of something like a dozen people that could be constituted into three committees: a working group of no more than three persons with whom the peace researcher and the administrative assistant could consult, a committee on peace research and a committee on peace education--the latter also being in a position to launch such courses within the framework of Princeton University. On each of the three committees peace activists should be present, and attention should be paid to adequate age, gender, and ethnic representation. A number of excellent people have already been mentioned in these highly preliminary talks, the human capital being almost unlimited in the area, as opposed to finance capital.