

Global Peace Services USA

...an idea whose time has come

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Peace Studies Programs Lead To Peace Service Careers

Central to the vision of Global Peace Services USA is the mainstreaming of professional education and training for peace service. The following two programs demonstrate a very hopeful trend in that direction.

Peacemakers of the Community (P.O.T.C.) at Saint Thomas University, Miami, began as an experiment in cooperative, holistic peace education in 1985. P.O.T.C. is designed to educate persons in cooperative, nonviolent means of resolving conflict. Today P.O.T.C. is a fifteen-credit program at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. There are four required courses and a practicum. Students in both undergraduate and graduate degree programs can choose P.O.T.C. as their area of concentration. The program aims to give individuals from all disciplines the skills to analyze conflict and social systems, evaluate peaceful alternatives, decide to act in a nonviolent way, and reflect on these actions, thus forming a cycle of nonviolent response to conflict.

I spoke with Dr. Constance Popp, a graduate of P.O.T.C. at the M.A. level, who later taught undergraduate P.O.T.C. courses at St. Thomas University. Currently Dr. Popp works in campus ministry as director of the Newman Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She also teaches a course on conflict resolution at the university. I asked her how her work in P.O.T.C. influenced her, both personally and professionally.

She explained that P.O.T.C. was just beginning when she began her graduate studies, and had recruited some nationally known people in peace and conflict studies as guest faculty. "It totally changed my direction professionally," she said. "Originally I had decided to concentrate in campus and young adult ministry but knew I needed to understand what was going on in the world for the sake of that ministry, so I entered P.O.T.C. I also wanted to become more adept at handling conflict in my own life." She soon discovered that P.O.T.C. was high on integration. "The teachers were wonderful. Professors were always asking, 'What are you going to do with this knowledge, with this skill' "?

Dr. Popp has found her studies in peace invaluable in her current work as a campus minister. Many students come to

her with problems involving conflicts of various kinds. "Through my peace studies I have a wealth of experience and academic background with which to help them," she said. "I can help them see possibilities and commonalities instead of writing people off or turning them into enemies. I also see the personal benefit of my peace studies. I no longer have to separate myself from people or say one is wrong and the other is right. I have learned cooperative ways of dealing with problems."

Dr. Popp has just completed a doctorate in education. She wrote her dissertation evaluating the initial ten years of the peace studies program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This summer she will teach a graduate course on peace education for teachers at Mt. Mary College in Milwaukee. She hopes that learning "peace" skills will inspire these teachers to integrate peace into their own teaching both in how they teach and the materials they choose to share with their students.

At Tufts University in Boston, the undergraduate program in Peace and Justice Studies (PJS) focuses on analyses of problems facing the world community and on attempts, both globally and locally, to organize for social change. PJS has both a major and a certificate program. To fulfill the requirements for the major, students must complete ten courses. The certificate requires eight courses, including four core courses, and is noted on the student's transcript. Four overlapping areas are emphasized:

- the study of the causes of war, the techniques of war prevention, and the conditions and structures of a just peace;
- the origins, strategies, and visions of social movements seeking justice and ecological sustainability;
- the theory and practice of conflict resolution along a continuum from individual disputes to international diplomacy;
- the study of peace culture, particularly the contributions

from education and literature in developing the traditions of nonviolence and ethical social behavior.

Both the major and the certificate require an internship in a social change organization and an integrative seminar in peace, justice, and global change. The internship includes a weekly two-hour discussion group meeting, readings, and written reports. The integrative seminar includes the guided development of a senior research project.

Student involvement is crucial to PJS. Students help shape the curricula and activities of the program by serving on the executive board of PJS. They also form, together with a faculty advisor, self-study groups on topics of their own interest, for credit or not, and they have opportunity to teach Explorations courses in the Experimental College. Interaction among faculty, students and staff, both formal and informal, helps create and sustain a community engaged in conversation about learning and action for a just global peace.

PJS graduates go into many different careers in nonprofit and for-profit areas. These include: organizer, teaching, public interest law, socially responsible investment advisor, environmental scientist, domestic violence protection advocate, and researcher.

Both P.O.T.C. and the JPC programs augur well for the widespread development of peace service programs as a regular offering in colleges and universities throughout the country.

The next issue of our newsletter will describe some European programs in peace service outside the traditional university structure.

Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND

Department of Peace Bill Introduced in Congress

With 48 co-sponsors, Congressman Kucinich introduced in the 108th Congress on April 8, **HR 1673: To Establish a Department of Peace**. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Government Reform, and also to the following committees: International Relations, Judiciary, Education and the Workforce.

A vigorous citizen-lobbying effort is now in place to move the bill forward. The Global Renaissance Alliance (GRA) is taking an active part in promoting this lobbying effort. Its website, www.dopcampaign.org provides the text of HR 1673 and up-to-date information on the progress of the legislative effort. The GRA also can provide material for informational flyers, postcards for people to send to their members of congress, buttons and bumper stickers, a list of co-sponsors, lists of organizational and individual supporters of the legislation, suggestions for lobbying members of congress who have yet to co-sponsor the bill, and for effective ways to meet with a member of congress when s/he is in the district.

A statement from Mr. Kucinich's office explains the purpose and urgency of a cabinet-level peace department:

Citizens across the United States are now uniting in a great cause to establish a Department of Peace, seeking nothing less

than the transformation of our society, to make nonviolence an organizing principle, to make war archaic through creating a paradigm shift in our culture for human development, for economic and political justice, and for violence control. Its work in violence control will be to support disarmament treaties, peaceful coexistence and peaceful consensus building. Its focus on economic and political justice will examine and enhance resource distribution, human and economic rights, and strengthen democratic values.

The Department of Peace will focus on both individual and group responsibilities for establishing nonviolence as an organizing principle in society. The Department of Peace will:

- hold peace as an organizing principle in our society;
- strengthen nonmilitary means of peacemaking;
- submit to the President recommendations for reductions in weapons of mass destruction;
- facilitate the development of peace summits at which parties to a conflict may gather under carefully prepared conditions to promote nonviolent communication and mutually beneficial solutions;

provide for the training of all United States personnel

who administer post-conflict reconstruction and demobilization in war-torn societies;

- develop new programs that relate to the societal challenges of school violence, guns, racial or ethnic violence, violence against gays and lesbians, and police community relations disputes.

Peace Education and Training

We are particularly pleased that HR 1673 calls for the establishment of an **Office of Peace Education and Training** to be headed by an **Assistant Secretary for Peace Education and Training**. This Assistant Secretary will carry out functions relating to the creation, encouragement, and impact of peace education and training at the elementary, secondary, university, and postgraduate levels, including the development of a National Peace Academy.

The bill also calls for the creation of a Community Peace Block Grant program under which grants shall be provided to not-for-profit community and nongovernmental organizations for the purposes of developing creative, innovative neighborhood programs for nonviolent conflict resolution and local peace-building initiatives.

There is also provision in the legislation for an **Office of International Peace Activities** to be headed by an **Assistant Secretary for International Peace Activities**. Among the responsibilities of this Secretary and Office will be the advocacy of a multinational nonviolent peace force, and provision for exchanges between individuals in the United States and other nations who are trying to develop domestic and international peace-based initiatives.

No one who has followed closely earlier legislative efforts to create a National Peace Academy will expect this current bill to be adopted without substantial modifications. This is all the more reason for those interested in its overall purpose to study it carefully with a view to specific recommendations for its amendment and further development. Like those before us who labored for years for the abolition of slavery, for women's suffrage, for the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, we need to keep our eye on the prize with patience and perseverance. We recognize that this legislation responds to a crying need of our generation.

The Assisi Decalogue for Peace

More than 200 leaders of the world's major religions met in Assisi at the end of last year in an effort to find a way to work together for peace. They issued a ten commitment statement they called The Assisi Decalogue for Peace. Pope John Paul II, who was present for the meeting, later sent a copy of the Decalogue to all the world's heads of state. We need not be a head of state or a religious leader to find in this remarkable document food for prayer, reflection, and action. Members of GPS can provide a peace service by sharing The Assisi Decalogue for Peace with others.

1. We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion, and as we condemn every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or of religion, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism.
2. We commit ourselves to educating people to mutual respect and esteem, in order to help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures, and religions.
3. We commit ourselves to fostering the culture of dialogue, so that there will be an increase of understanding and mutual trust between individuals, and among people, for these are the premise of authentic peace.
4. We commit ourselves to defending the right of everyone to live a decent life in accordance with his own cultural identity, and to form freely a family of his own.
5. We commit ourselves to frank and patient dialogue, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable barrier, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding.
6. We commit ourselves to forgiving one another for past and present errors and prejudices, and to supporting one

another in a common effort both to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that peace without justice is no true peace.

7. We commit ourselves to taking the side of the poor and the helpless, to speaking out for those who have no voice, and to working effectively to change these situations, out of the conviction that no one can be happy alone.
8. We commit ourselves to taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to violence and evil, and to make every effort possible to offer the men and women of our time real hope for justice and peace.
9. We commit ourselves to encouraging all efforts to promote
10. We commit ourselves to urging leaders of nations to make every effort to create and consolidate, on the national and international levels, a world of solidarity and peace based upon justice.

friendship between peoples, for we are convinced that, in the absence of solidarity and understanding between peoples, technological progress exposes the world to a growing risk of destruction and death.

GPS Board Elections

GPS is seeking nominations for the board of Directors. Three of the ten Board positions are open for election this year. Please send names, contact information, and brief statements in support of your nominees to GPS, postmarked by July 30. The election results will be announced at the annual GPS General Membership Meeting in the fall.

To be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors the member shall be of voting age, committed to the purposes of GPS USA, and be involved in some activity of GPS USA.

Global Peace Services USA

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The newsletter of Global Peace Services USA is published quarterly. GPS USA is incorporated in the District of Columbia and is tax-exempt. Current board members are: Mehdi Aminrazavi, Clara Doyle, John Eriksson, Mary Evelyn Jegen, Jean Martensen, Aura Martinez, Cecil Monroe, Irfan Omar, and Harry Yeide. We welcome contributions and comments. To contact us:

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