

JOINT COMMITTEE WELG -- SODEPAX

Minutes of the meeting held on February 16, 1971

Chairman: Dr. Marga Bührig

Present: Mrs. Athanassiou, Dr. M. Barot, Miss R. Goldie, Miss B. Bam
Fr. Schütte, Fr. Dunne, Fr. Christophe, Dr. Neehall.

Absent: Miss M. Mealey, Dr. M. Shannon, Miss M. de Lourdes Pintasilgo,
Miss M. Vendrik

Opening

Dr. Bührig welcomed the participants to the meeting. She reviewed the discussion in Rome last year of women's contribution to peace. The main point, she said, was "how can we bring women together from all over the world and discuss with them the subject of peace."

Sodepax Background Information

Father Dunne reviewed the SODEPAX record. Peace, along with development, is one of the main concerns of SODEPAX. Development figured more largely in SODEPAX programmes in the first phase of its existence, but with the Baden Conference of April, 1970, Peace assumed its rightful place. It was at Baden that the idea of a women's conference on Peace which originated within the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group (WELG) was proposed by Mrs. Boulding and approved.

Report of WELG

Miss Bam reported on the WELG meeting in Rome last October. The importance of the peace issued was recognized. It was agreed that a great deal of work can be done through and with regional groups. The theme of peace must be introduced and discussed with women's groups.

Among the opportunities to introduce the subject into agenda are: the African seminars, the CWU conference in the United States in April, the UNILAM seminar in Mexico.

Miss Mealey has written that the National Council of Catholic Women has decided to make peace a major study. Mrs. Athanassiou reported that the YMCA will have a conference on peace in 1972.

The proposal to start with a world conference met with considerable opposition. According to Dr. Neehall this would in fact be a way of escape from the hard facts of the world. He would prefer to start on a regional or national level.

Fr. Schütte mentioned the importance of involving women of other than the Christian faith and also including points of view from the Third World. He recommended Japan and Indonesia as possible places for such a meeting.

Dr. Neehall argued that the important thing was to conscientize people. Dr. Barot emphasized the importance of reaching people on the grass roots level, which means we must start with an education programme. Dr. Dunne pointed out that the important thing is to mobilize and activate the enormous potential of women in the world.

Budget

The Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group has no funds. Fr. Dunne pointed out that, contrary to an impression some have, the available funds of Sodepax are extremely limited. Funds for any program of the kind envisaged would have to be sought. If donor agencies are to be approached for support a definite and detailed programme will have to be prepared making clear what the aims of the programme are, how it is to be carried out, etc.

Administration

Fr. Dunne gave assurances that the SODEPAX staff would agree to take care of the administrative details - letter writing, etc. Dr. Mushakoji will join the staff for one year beginning in late May to take over the direction of the peace concerns of SODEPAX.

Tasks

There was general consensus that it would be a mistake to begin with an international world conference of women. Note was taken of the suggested programme contained the paper prepared by Miss Shannon and Miss Mealey, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. In Phase I task forces in local communities would be organized to experiment in various approaches to peace-building. The findings of these experiments would afterwards be used in planning a world consultation which would be Phase II. A budget for Phase I of some \$30,000 and of Phase II of \$75,000 - \$100,000 was suggested.

Dr. Neehall gave several examples of experiments that might be carried out:

1. Bring together, perhaps in Japan or Indonesia, a group of women of different faiths to elaborate a programme for their own country.
2. Bring together a group of women in an area of conflict (North Ireland, Nigeria-Biafra, Vietnam, Salvador-Honduras, etc), to elaborate a program of anti-hate education for children.
3. Bring together a group of women in an area with a pluralistic population where racial and political discrimination exist (USA, Great Britain) to work on improving relationships.

Father Schütte strongly supported the suggestions by Dr. Neehall of such experimentation.

While no firm decisions were made, there was a general consensus that a programme consisting of the following steps should be tentatively thought of:

1. Inquire of women's organizations what they are presently doing. (Miss Goldie and Miss Bam will send a list of women's organisations to Father Dunne).
2. Bring together a small group (30-40 persons) of specialists to make suggestions to women's organizations for local and national programmes.

3. Publish a booklet containing these suggestions as guide-lines for such local and national meetings.
4. Organize regional conferences.
5. Finally a World Conference.

It was agreed that no further decisions should be made until the next meeting of this committee which Dr. Mushakoji will attend. It was agreed to hold this meeting in Vienna on June 19 immediately following the meeting of the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group in that city.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

APPENDIX

The following paragraphs taken from the paper prepared by Miss Margaret Shannon and Miss Mealey set forth their two-phase programme suggestions:

I. Launching the programme

Through the organization represented on WBLG and through "action-study" projects in as many countries of the world as are possible, propose that task forces in local communities select one of a number of approaches to understanding the peace-building skills; that they develop some action in their own community which would help analyze the issue; that after they had discovered the matter for themselves, they develop some scheme that would sell it to their neighbours, or the power structures in their city or country. Task force reports method, leaders discovered, results either successful attempt or those which failed.

Some suggestive targets for Task Forces:

1. Developing community-models (or neighborhood-models) of peace-building issues. Discovering what schemes made the issue something which many people want to talk about.
2. The local consumer and World Trade
3. Social and cultural hang-ups in reconciling peoples
4. Skills in handling alienated people; how to negotiate
5. Creating climate of a "Global Village" (where there is less pity and piety, and fuss, and nit-picking and more practice of generous efforts which make for peace).
6. Value of human beings over things or national pride in international situation. (What human is behind headline?)
7. Encourage authentic expression of disadvantaged persons
8. Turning the mass media into an instrument of peace
9. Facing the facts of life in every neighborhood and nation: quality education and health available for all to assure freedom of expressions.
10. Peace-making patterns for civic and international living (new structures or revised structures)
11. Supporting communities around the "pioneers" in social justice and peace makers
12. Explore-units centering on some special "sorespot": where inflammatory action and violence seem unavoidable i.e., China, South Africa, military-industrial complex, etc.
13. Citizen Action on how to pressure peace making policies of governments or U.N.
14. Women's Liberating Movements - and what they could contribute to peace-building. Peace-building vocations for women - middle technology; negotiation; economic development

This phase of the programme would be encouraged by means of a peace-building newsheet in which the task forces shared their ideas - or choice of a project - and brought up their questions and experience to provoke any international exchange.

The findings would guide the committee planning the consultation on agenda and bring out some of the younger creative leaders.

A Guide for women leaders going into communities should be prepared.

Tentative Budget:

Administration: some equipment, travel, stationery, plus salary of administrator and secretary	\$ 15,000
Committees in Europe, USA, and steering committees for consultation	\$ 3,000
Cultivation: Newsletter among projects; seed money for action projects	\$ 10,000
Special assignments (like raising money for Phase 2 or interchange of consultants, etc.	\$ 2,000
(tentative budget \$35,000)	TOTAL
	\$ 30,000

II. A World Consultation

Its purpose would be to evaluate and select those issues which seem most necessary if we are to have a "People peace". The Conference might even write "peace-treaty" guidelines for people everywhere which it is felt to women of the world had developed or could work on.

Some strategy for follow up with international organizations should be made and to appropriate individual nations.

Some recommendations or blueprints of plans to be carried into the regions of the world to broaden the base of participation in peace building ... and to make the peace movement more contagious.

The consultation should be long enough to create these things -- about two weeks. It should require only leaders who know how to pull things into action form...

It could be a large conference of 100 people to have a key in many countries on returning home. It could be a small conference of 40 or 50 whose actual experience gave them a more creative role in developing plans for others.

It would have in addition a selected group of persons who could act as channels into the forward moving women's organizations anywhere in the world. Tentative budget depending on size \$75,000-100,000.

III. Follow up in regions

- 1) Film trips and other materials on issues selected in consultation
- 2) Regional conferences, etc.