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ABSTRACT

The project group "Preparedness for Peace" at the Lund University Malmo School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interests in competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed. This publication explores the views of Haim Gordon from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, and Christoph Wulf from Freie Universitat, Berlin, Germany. Haim Gordon has worked with Jews and Arabs on education for peace in accordance with the philosophy of Martin Buber. Christoph Wulf is one of the founders of the Peace Education Commission and the editor of early handbooks on peace education in German and English (1973-74). (Author)

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**PEACE EDUCATION:  
PERSPECTIVES FROM  
GERMANY AND ISRAEL**

Haim Gordon  
Christoph Wulf  
and  
The Project "Preparedness for Peace"

The project group "Preparedness for Peace" at the Malmö School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interest and competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed.

This publication explores the views of Haim Gordon from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel and Christoph Wulf from Freie Universität, Berlin. Haim Gordon has worked with Jews and Arabs on education for peace in accordance with the philosophy of Martin Buber. Christoph Wulf is one of the founders of the Peace Education Commission (IPRA) and the editor of early handbooks on peace education in German and English (1973-74). – Interviewer: Åke Bjerstedt.

**PEACE EDUCATION:  
A CONVERSATION WITH HAIM GORDON, ISRAEL**

1.

*ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?*

*HG: My real work in peace education began when somebody said to me: You are teaching about Martin Buber, but you are not trying to educate people to live according to the spirit of Buber. I said: That's a good idea. So I wrote up a proposal on what should be done. Some representatives from a foundation in Bavaria came to our university and promised money if somebody would give a good proposal. Then I took my proposal out of my drawer. The foundation liked it because Germany was interested in peace education, and especially a dialogue between Jews and Arabs. So they gave me a quarter of a million DM, and I was suddenly Cinderella.*

I worked on that project for three years and I educated about 200 and something Jews and Arabs, to teach them to relate dialogically in the spirit of Buber. I connected them with Egyptian people too. That's how I got involved in peace education. Since then my main interest in peace education has been really more from the spiritual level, studying what philosophers have said related to this problem area. I haven't been working on peace education regularly; I have been doing philosophy and then I have come back to peace education from time to time.

*ÅB: What about your present work?*

*HG: Right now I am not doing anything in peace education, but in the future I might because our new minister of education is a friend of mine. I might add that in my teaching I deal with education for democracy at times, which may be seen as a related field.*

*ÅB: Could you say a few more words about what this dialogue project with Arabs and Jews involved more concretely?*

*HG: Well, I developed the method described in my book "Dance, Dialogue, and Despair". What I did was first of all to teach people the philosophy of Martin Buber, and then to show them how it can be lived. It is difficult to say how well we succeeded – perhaps in 20 or 30 percent of the cases we arrived at a real learning of dialogue. We had two kinds of people in that project. We had university students from Ben Gurion University, maybe about 60 % or a little more, but we always made sure that we had an additional group "from the street", a bus driver, a bank clerk, etc., people who were willing to take it just for the experience.*

2.

*ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?*

*HG: My first feeling is that peace education always has to be tied to developing a sense of justice, and that means that it really is tied to a certain kind of character education. Peace education cannot just be a discussion of conflicts and how they can be resolved. It has to go much deeper, it has to develop a sense of justice and deal with how to educate a child. That is what I think of first when I hear the words "peace education".*

3.

*ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?*

*HG: No. Maybe a little bit, in the sense that this was a socialistic period when one thought about liberating all the people of the world, and when one pictured a future where there were no wars. But there was no real peace education as I see it.*

*ÅB: Were there some influences that you would say represented the opposite of peace education?*

*HG: There was a lot of jingoism in our education, a lot of nationalism and patriotism – with some respect for human rights. There was some very fierce Zionism. So there were things that would be against peace education. It was very important what you did in the army. If you were a real fighter, you were respected. You were educated to go to the dangerous units. I went to the front-line units, and I have been involved in four wars.*

4.

*ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?*

*HG: No. Not at all. Now this could change with the new Minister of Education. I should perhaps mention that there are some private programs which some schools participate in that do try to educate for peace between Jews and Arabs – they deal with that particular aspect, but not with the whole concept of peace education. So there are some private endeavours. But in general, if you take a kid in an average public school in Israel, the chances are very limited that he or she will somehow get an education for peace.*

Maybe this will interest you. I did a study about how to take the program I did among adults and work with it in the high schools. The Minister of Education allowed me to go into the high schools. But then when I wrote to them and said OK, here are the results of the program, now let's do

something about it, they just didn't answer my letters. As long as you are doing research that's fine, but there was no interest in any practical follow-up.

5.

*ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?*

*HG: Well, very possible if they do what I suggested before – start educating for justice and doing character education. And steps and measures to be taken would be to start educating teachers about the importance of this whole concept of peace education and education for justice and its linkage to character formation. That would take some time, but that would be the first steps.*

*ÅB: If you think of steps and measures within the classroom that would mean some peace education, how would you picture a teacher working ideally?*

*HG: Initially it would be quite simple. I would have the teacher get involved in encounters. If it is a Jewish teacher with Jewish students, they would meet with Arabs and get to know each other under non-threatening circumstances – and vice versa. That would be one of the easier ways to begin. Then the task would be to try to generalize from that experience to other experiences, dealing with world-wide threats and social justice in the global society.*

6.

*ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?*

*HG: In Israel, the younger the student is, the easier it is to eliminate the hatred and the mistrust and the fear. So my general approach would be to start as early as possible, even in the kindergarten, stressing the importance of arranging meetings between children of different backgrounds. Later one should go on with the older children and give them a much more intellectual basis for that, teaching them the literature of other peoples as well as other peoples' geography and history. What is interesting in the Israeli high school, for instance, is that our Arab students learn the Bible, but only the Arabs learn the Koran. Something like that I would like to change, giving all students some appreciation of the cultural heritage of other peoples.*

7.

*ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particularly familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?*

*HG: In literature, I would teach literature of the other peoples; in history, I would teach history of the other peoples. In the sciences it would be more difficult. In the sciences you can develop a respect for truth and for what might be called the precision of truth, which is often very important in evaluating situations, so that could be used. But it is much easier to use humanistic study or social science for peace education.*

8.

*ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?*

*HG: I think we have to link these terms to justice. I don't think we should just talk about disarmament education. I think one has to talk not only about a world order, but about a *just world order*. I think that justice has always to be at the head of our concerns when we are dealing with peace education. I would stress *education for peace and justice*.*

*ÅB: What terms are used in Israel if they are doing something that you think of as peace education. Would they call it peace education?*

*HG: Yes, they would call it that or perhaps *education for dialogue*. – In Israel, there has been too little concern in the past, when dealing with peace education, about the global perspectives, and that's one of things that we are speaking out against. In Israel, there has been an emphasis on the importance of developing a strong nuclear program because of Iraq and Iran, and this is dealt with in the press again and again. So that is very far from peace education. As far as my wife and I have covered the press, which isn't that well because we have been out of the country for some time, nobody seems to have written against these tendencies. We should talk about nuclear disarmament, we should educate the world for nuclear disarmament, but nobody seems to have said that.*

9.

*ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace*

*education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?*

*HG:* Most parents, even some left-wing parents, would say: Until we are ensured of Israel's right to exist, we are unwilling to endorse in any meaningful fashion what you call peace education. First comes our survival. They do have a point there about the security of the country. What I would answer – and what I have answered several times in my writings – is that the only way to live securely would be in peace.

What has happened lately might be an indication that a number of people in Israel are tired of the old Government's way of handling these problems. They do want some sort of opening for peace, and hence there could be a change.

But at present peace education in our country is limited to particular environments. It might be some progressive public schools, where the principals are progressive and take some risks. Parents who do not want their children to undergo that kind of thing would simply choose another public school. Things like that happen, but there is not much being done.

10.

*AB:* *What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?*

*HG:* I think I have touched upon that before. The training should promote encounters. The teacher training institutes, for instance, are separate in Israel for Jews and for Arabs, and there is no need for that. I would unite them. Even though students would learn different languages, they would at least have to live together and meet each other.

11.

*AB:* *Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?*

*HG:* I think this is important to bring out. However, I don't like the term global survival; I don't like the emphasis on survival. I think that what we should do is learn to live in justice, and that includes that there is no destruction of the globe for future generations. That would be totally unjust. But I think that in Israel there is not at all enough discussion in schools or in



the universities of the terrible risks of nuclear war or the terrible risks of the destruction of the environment that are going on right now.

In dealing with environmental education, I would start with our native country. There has been a success in Israel in that field. For instance, about 15 years ago flowers almost disappeared from the Israeli countryside. Then a law was passed against picking flowers, and all teachers were instructed from kindergarten to instruct the pupils not to pick flowers from the countryside. Now the countryside is again full of flowers. So there has been some success in that field because of the emphasis upon "this is our only country". So that's where I would really start in the schools. Then I would at a certain level begin to explore global perspectives. I would explain that there are multi-national corporations using their power to destroy the environment and, in general, I would give them a much broader perspective.

12.

*AB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education? For example, in your Kyoto paper you reported a study on the attitudes of Tel Aviv professors. You are quite critical in that paper. Could you comment on that? Do you see any implications for peace education?*

*HG: Yes, definitely. I think that peace education is character education as I mentioned, and what is important here is that many times that means that the attitude of the teacher towards what is going on around him is very significant in educating the pupils for peace education or not. Tel Aviv University is probably the best – or perhaps the second best – university in Israel. This is the elite of the teachers of the next generation of Israelis. If they do not have attitudes that respect justice and human rights, then peace education in Israel is indeed in bad shape. Education for democracy is indeed in bad shape, because these professors are teaching a whole generation of scientists and teachers. These are the elite teachers, and they convey certain attitudes – even if they are teaching biology or geology etc. – related to education for peace. That's why I think it's so important.*

*AB: Do you see any way to improve this situation?*

*HG: I think that the university system in Israel is much too small and that has created a sort of inbreeding. Ideas that challenge the system are not allowed to grow. In the United States, for example, again and again people come out with ideas to challenge the system and that makes the intellectual climate very different. What has happened in Israel is that certain people in charge do not allow other views. I am one of the few people who do bring up*

matters of principle that challenge the ideas of the academic community in Israel, and that's why I am an outsider. One way to change the situation might be to set up an independent commission outside the university to make recommendations on the use of public money. It should not just be peer groups that decide. The universities should be accountable to the public.

### Some Notes on the Interviewee

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Ph.D. 1975, George Peabody College for Teachers (now Vanderbilt University). Foundations of Education. Thesis: Realizing Martin Buber's educational philosophy: An examination of Buber's educational thought and its relation to Kibbutz education.

1975-81 Lecturer, Department of Education, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

1981-present, Senior Lecturer, Department of Education, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

1991-92 Visiting Fellow, The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, USA.

#### *Examples of publications:*

Did Martin Buber realize his educational thought? *Teacher, College Record*, 1980, 81, 385-394.

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*Research grants:*

1. 1979 - Hans Seidel Stiftung: Haim Gordon, "Education for peace in accordance with the philosophy of Martin Buber", 3 years and 3 months.
2. 1981 - Ford Foundation: Haim Gordon, "Training Arab leaders for Buberian groups", 1 year.
3. Krieger Foundation: Haim Gordon, "Developing a peace curriculum in Israeli high schools", approx. 2 1/2 years.

**PEACE EDUCATION:  
AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPH WULF, BERLIN**

1.

*ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?*

*CW:* My first encounter with questions of peace education was in the United States in 1970. At that time I was looking at the new Social Studies Education movement. My aim was to make a careful collection and analysis of various efforts within the program of social studies education in the United States. In this connection I met up with questions of peace education. An introductory seminar, to which I had been invited by Betty Reardon and J. Metcalf of the Institute for World Order, made a particularly deep impression on me. Inspired by that seminar, I decided to start something in this field in Germany. Through Saul Mendlovitz I made the acquaintance of Johan Galtung and Dieter Senghaas. At the congress of the International Peace Research Association in Bled in what was then Yugoslavia, we joined together to found the Peace Education Commission. With the help of the German Association for Peace and Conflict Research, which had just been formed, I drafted the program for a first congress of Critical Peace Education in Europe. This congress took place in Bad Nauheim in 1972. It was attended by about 350 delegates from 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the United States, Africa and Asia. The largest group of delegates was made up of teachers and social scientists from the Federal Republic of Germany who were concerned with these questions.

There is no doubt that from that point in time one could speak of a Critical Peace Education activity in Germany. Major themes were: the East-West conflict, the North-South conflict, and environmental pollution.

2.

*ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?*

*CW:* It is my opinion that these constellations of conflict are still central matters of concern in peace education. As I see it, peace education includes both the work with a negative peace concept and the efforts to realize a positive peace concept. To this should be added the efforts within society to bring social justice into being. This also involves tolerant socializing with other people in such a way as to respect their own individual differences while avoiding subjecting these differences to one's own frame of reference and interpretation. Seen in this way, peace education is also education for

tolerance and acceptance in one's dealings with the other person.

3.

*ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?*

*CW: In my schooldays, which I finished in 1963, questions of peace education, of the East-West conflict, of the North-South conflict or of environmental protection were not yet being considered. It was not until the students' movement of 1968 that any great interest in these problems developed.*

4.

*ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?*

*CW: The extent to which schools in the Federal Republic of Germany contribute to peace education depends on the teachers working in those schools. For many, questions of peace education are still important. Themes given a central position in schools include particularly the problems of environmental protection and the difficulties in co-existence with minority groups.*

5.

*ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?*

*CW: In my view, peace education in schools is possible and necessary. For one thing, it can be a teaching principle that is important in all school subjects, containing as it does perspectives and criteria, to the realization of which the total educational activity in schools must contribute. Peace education can also bear fruit through intensive work on attitudes and values and by providing basic knowledge in the relevant areas. Finally, if the structures of violence found in the school itself are turned into themes for discussion this may help to clarify the experiences of school and to enrich the lives of the students.*

6.

*ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?*

*CW: Up to the end of the 1980s the peace movement and its green*

counterpart gained more and more importance in the Federal Republic of Germany. One aspect of these two movements that has influenced the attitudes of school students is the way in which the movements have gained in importance in society at large, outside school. At present, questions of disarmament have receded into the background. Environmental pollution, by contrast, is a matter of grave concern for people in general and it attracts the attention of children and school students. Within society, increasing attention is being demanded by the conflicts and acts of violence that are coming to the fore in the wake of the aimlessness of many young people after the collapse of the German Democratic Republic.

7.

*ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particularly familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?*

*CW: In my view, questions of violence, social justice and peace can play a central role in almost all school subjects. One notes, however, that both teachers and students often fail to realize the full value of these themes. In my opinion, peace education is a central dimension of every kind of education and has lost nothing of its urgency.*

8.

*ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?*

*CW: The concept of "education for disarmament" is too narrow for me. Peace education covers more than arms reduction. By contrast to this, I prize the concepts of "global education" and "international education". The concept of "global education" indicates the common task of all nations in maintaining and forming the world. A similar thought is found in the concept of "international education". This concept, which has been chiefly propagated by Unesco, focusses on the need for international understanding and international co-operation. What appeals to me in the concept of peace education is its critical dimension, which is chiefly provided by reference to a positive concept of peace with the aim of producing social justice in all human concerns.*

9.

*ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?*

*CW: It is also the case in Germany that the concepts of "peace education" and "education for disarmament" have met with much emotional resistance. For this reason it may be more fruitful to find some other conceptualization of the themes and aims subsumed under this concept. What is decisive is not which concept we select in detail, but that we communicate the goals and contents, the values and standards of peace education. In the Federal Republic of Germany many problems which attract attention under the concept of peace education may be treated in the sphere of political education. Seen in this way, political education is peace education.*

10.

*ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?*

*CW: Many teachers of history and social studies need to be given a much deeper acquaintance with the themes, contents, methods and aims treated under the concept of peace education. In addition, much is to be said for bringing themes of peace education into the training of teachers within the general area of educational sciences and treating them there. Here, much more should be done than at present.*

11.

*ÅB: In many schools, the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?*

*CW: In multicultural school student groups, there is no doubt of the importance of questions concerning the other person: acceptance of differences, and awareness of the non-understandability of the stranger, are important themes for education. An appropriate response to the stranger can only be brought about by reflecting over the limited understandability of the other person and of one's own culture. In this, values such as social justice, non-violence and tolerance play an important role. In Europe, the process of rubbing shoulders with strangers and with representatives of other cultures*

will play an increasingly important role – all the more so as the migratory movements gather force.

12.

*ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?*

*CW: As already suggested, it appears to me that the consideration of the problem of environmental pollution is a task of education in general. It cannot be restricted to individual subjects but belongs to the educational mandate of schools today. Nonetheless, the questions covering the contents of this theme, concerned with the future of world society and of the planet, have their place in many fields of the curriculum. Failure to treat these in school would represent a neglect of an important educational task.*

13.

*ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?*

*CW: The concept of "peace education" may be expressed in various themes: each of these has its aims, contents, and experiences which are relevant to action, and as I see it these should form part of present-day education both inside school and outside it. However, for these themes to be treated and to gain their effect it is not necessary to keep on subsuming them all under the concept of "peace education". The greatest effect of peace education is obtained when its aims and values influence all spheres of education.*

*Note: A German version of this interview (which is the original one) is presented in: Wulf, C. & Projekt Friedensbereitschaft. Friedenserziehung: Ein Interview. *Didakmetrie und Soziometrie* (Malmö, Schweden: Lehrerhochschule), Nr 39, 1993.*



### Some Notes on the Interviewee

*Christoph Wulf*, born 1944 in Berlin. Studied education, philosophy, history and literature in Berlin, Marburg, Paris and the United States. MA, Freie Universität Berlin, 1968; Dr. phil., Philipps Universität, Marburg, 1973; Dr. habil., 1975.

Senior Researcher, German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt, 1970-1975.

Professor of Education, Universität/Gesamthochschule Siegen, 1975-1979.

Professor of General and Comparative Education, Freie Universität Berlin, from 1980; co-director of the Research Centre for Historical Anthropology from 1988.

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