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Educating peace amid accusations of indoctrination: a Dutch peace education curriculum in the polarised political climate of the 1970s

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ABSTRACT

Within the polarised political culture of the 1970s, in which political differences were emphasised instead of being played down, Dutch right-wing politicians frequently accused left-wing politicians and educators of indoctrination in educational settings. In this period of economic stagnation and an ongoing Cold War, peace education – which was vulnerable to accusations of indoctrination – became an optional part of the secondary school curriculum. This article addresses the aims and strategies of the Working Group for Peace Education in implementing the peace education curriculum and relates it to politics, place and pedagogy. The study centres on the content, intentions, and methods of the Working Group's curriculum, especially with regard to topics relating to the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons. The results suggest that the members of the Working Group for Peace Education aspired to educate young people to become citizens who would be actively engaged in global problems. Sensitivity to possible accusations of indoctrination led the Working Group to present these ideals with caution.

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Introduction

In the 1970s, peace education became an optional part of the secondary school curriculum in the Netherlands. It was promoted by progressive Dutch educators who, like several educationalists across the western world,¹ believed that the path to world peace went through educational reform. Like their counterparts from abroad, several Dutch organisations developed experimental educational materials, the most prominent being the Working Group for Peace Education, a collaboration between the Institute of War and Peace Studies of the University of Groningen [*Polemologisch Instituut*] and the Foundation for Peace Building [*Stichting Vredesopbouw*], located in Utrecht. The curriculum this Working Group developed between 1972 and 1976 was intended to incorporate education on global affairs into the secondary school curriculum. It assumed that students should learn to understand the general processes and specific

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¹Karen Egedal Andreasen and Christian Ydesen, "Educating for Peace: The Role and Impact of International Organisations in Interwar and Postwar Danish School Experiments, 1918–1975," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 2, no. 2 (2015): 3–25.

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factors of massive conflicts and Third World problems and to take well-reasoned and critical positions on these issues.²

The implementation of this curriculum did not proceed smoothly, as the polarised political climate of the Netherlands raised a constant threat of accusations of state pedagogy and indoctrination. This all occurred within a context of economic stagnation, exacerbated by two oil crises, an ongoing Cold War, and greater political instability, due to diminishing support for the traditional political parties. Against this backdrop, the orientation of Dutch political culture shifted from consensus to polarisation, emphasising instead of downplaying the existing political and ideological differences.³

Accusations of indoctrination in educational settings were frequently launched from various sides of the political spectrum. Proceeding from the tenets of socialism and favouring social reform, left-wing progressives accused the established order of indoctrinating students into a conventional way of thinking. At the same time, the moderate left-minded progressives accused the more radical left of imposing an ideologically orthodox-left image of society on students, in addition to using undemocratic procedures and actions to achieve their goals. In turn, leftist radicals accused moderates of being too conventional (e.g. by holding on to ideas of authority in the classroom).⁴

The accusations with the most impact, however, were launched by right-wing representatives (mainly conservative liberals) against left-wing educators and politicians. For example, the May 1973 intervention by Neelie Smit-Kroes, a Member of Parliament for the Liberal party, later on well known as a European Commissioner. In the Dutch Parliament, Smit-Kroes confronted the Social Democratic Minister of Education, J.A. van Kemenade, with the following topic of a school test: “Why is today’s liberalism (VVD [Smit-Kroes’s party, HA/JD]) more conservative than liberal?”⁵ Smit-Kroes asked, “Is the Minister not of the opinion that political indoctrination in schools is taking on truly alarming proportions when a stand against such indoctrination is apparently punished with failing the test?”⁶ The two politicians clashed on another topic as well. When Van Kemenade tried to implement comprehensive education to meet the ideal of equal opportunity, because “educational innovation and educational policy need to be considered as political tasks *par excellence*”⁷ Smit-Kroes took to the media to express her opinion. In a newspaper article bearing the headline “Socialist syringe threatens school youth”, she warned the public that the Minister was trying to indoctrinate young children.⁸

²Appendix I to letter 30–6 '75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Course documents, IISH, Archives Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

³K. Gladdish, *Governing from the Centre: Politics and Policy-Making in the Netherlands* (London/The Hague: Hurst/SDU, 1991), 50; Christoffer Green-Pedersen and Kees van Kersbergen, “The Politics of the ‘Third Way’: The Transformation of Social Democracy in Denmark and The Netherlands,” *Party Politics* 8, no. 5 (2002): 512.

⁴Wim de Jong, *Van wie is de burger? Omstreden democratie in Nederland, 1945–1985* (Enschede: Ipskamp Drukkers, 2014), 207, 215.

⁵Appendix of the Report of the Lower House, 1972–1973. Questions 911, 1827. The Lower House together with the Senate constitutes the bi-cameral Dutch Parliament.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Explanatory memorandum national budget 1974, Lower House, 1973–1974, 12, 600, 4.

⁸Hilda T.A. Amsing, Linda Greveling, and Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “The Struggle for Comprehensive Education in the Netherlands: The Representation of Secondary School Innovation in Dutch Newspaper Articles in the 1970s,” *History of Education* 42, no. 4 (2013): 460–85; Edo Brandt and Kees Lunshof, “VVD schrikt van Onderwijsplan,” *De Telegraaf*, September 25, 1973, 5.

Peace education was particularly susceptible to accusations of indoctrination because of the commonly perceived necessity of taking sides in issues of war and peace.⁹ Opponents of peace education argued that schools should transfer knowledge and not force children to take sides in political matters.¹⁰ In this article, we analyse the products and procedures of the Working Group in order to investigate how these Dutch educators dealt with accusations of indoctrination in the period of the Cold War. In doing so, this study explores the relevance of politics, place, and pedagogy – three contextual key factors in debates and practices of peace education, as distinguished by Behr, Megoran, and Carnaffan.¹¹

Our primary sources from archives located in Groningen, Amsterdam, and The Hague include curriculum material and the minutes and correspondence of the Working Group which provide valuable information on the Working Group's operating process.¹² The available curriculum material concentrates on two issues: the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons. Both were at the top of the political agenda at that time, profusely debated in the Dutch media, and controversial in public opinion. The curriculum materials consist of general guidelines for teachers and two textbooks for students (*Violence, the Vietnam War* and *Nuclear Weapons: A Matter of Survival*), along with two handbooks for teachers.

Our analysis reveals that, in addition to providing students with knowledge and developing their critical attitudes by encouraging the exploration of multiple views, the goals of the Working Group also included encouraging students to reveal power mechanisms, to distrust ideological justifications, and to take action. Although not politically neutral, the Working Group did attempt to adopt a balanced approach by joining the pre-World War II tradition of anti-patriotism and anti-war sentiment in the Netherlands. With this strategy, the Working Group formulated a perspective on peace education that was politically tricky, yet educationally rooted in a long tradition of reform.

After an introduction to peace education in the Netherlands and the concept of indoctrination, we address the aims and strategies of the Working Group and provide a detailed description of how the Working Group introduced Dutch students to the two aforementioned topics.

Peace education in the Netherlands

Also before the 1970s, Dutch educationalists had discussed the introduction of war and peace as subjects for the curriculum.¹³ Inspired by the emergence of numerous peace

⁹Barbara A. Peterson, "Holding Teachers Accountable for Indoctrination: A Reexamination of I.A. Snook's Notion of 'Intent,'" *Philosophy of Education Yearbook* (2007), 298–305, 298; Derek Heater, "The History of Citizenship Education in England," *The Curriculum Journal* 12, no. 1 (2001): 104, 116–17; William E. Marsden, "'Poisoned History': A Comparative Study of Nationalism, Propaganda and the Treatment of War and Peace in the Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century School Curriculum," *History of Education* 29, no. 1 (2000): 38; Lennart Vriens, "Peace Education: Cooperative Building of a Human Future," *Pastoral Care in Education* 15, no. 4 (1997): 26.

¹⁰Lennart Vriens, *Tussen visie en kleine stapjes. Opvoeden voor een wereld met toekomst* (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht/Vredesopbouw Utrecht, 1991), 14.

¹¹Hartmut Behr, Nick Megoran, and Jane Carnaffan, "Peace Education, Militarism and Neo-Liberalism: Conceptual Reflections with Empirical Findings from the UK," *Journal of Peace Education* 15, no. 1 (2018): 78.

¹²We thank Bettine Reitsma and Anne Veldkamp, two former master's students, for their efforts in collecting the source material.

¹³Tecla M. Blankendaal, *Vredesbeweging en vredesopvoeding Nederland 1870–1940. Deel 1: Vredesonderwijs en geschiedenisonderwijs* (Haren: Polemologisch Instituut, 1980).

movements around 1900, the first Nobel Peace Prize award in 1901, and the First (1899) and Second (1907) The Hague Peace Conferences,¹⁴ Dutch pedagogues started a debate on war and peace during World War I.¹⁵ Dutch neutrality, made possible because Germany attacked France by invading Belgium without crossing the Dutch border, made it more feasible for Dutch teachers than for their counterparts in belligerent countries to try to make students resistant to warlike attitudes. In countries at war, schools tried to instil in students a spirit of militarised patriotism, using history education to this end.¹⁶ In contrast, Dutch teachers, like their Scandinavian colleagues¹⁷ were able to follow the official Dutch foreign policy of neutrality.¹⁸ Dutch pedagogues perceived patriotism as one of the main causes of war,¹⁹ and agreed on the need to teach their students about the horrible character of war and to promote anti-war sentiment.²⁰ After the devastating Great War, peace education attracted more attention in other countries as well. In belligerent countries such as France and Germany, however, textbooks initially reflected great interpretive distance in narratives of the conflict, fed by celebration (France) and bitterness (Germany).²¹

However, as a result of the outbreak of World War II, peace education disappeared from the agenda. Patriotism and nationalist propaganda became dominant in almost all countries.²² The primary aim of such propaganda was to homogenise the population through education by creating a sense of uniqueness and togetherness.²³ This changed after World War II. Vivid memories of war atrocities re-sensitised European educators to notions of tolerance and peace.²⁴ In addition, in 1950, UNESCO emphasised the importance of preaching tolerance in textbooks, which were regarded as “the binoculars” through which students viewed the world and which could produce either international hostilities or international understanding, depending on their quality.²⁵

The renewed Dutch interest in peace education in the 1970s was embedded within UNESCO’s plea in the 1950s for “education for international

¹⁴Bengt Thelin, “Early Tendencies of Peace Education in Sweden,” *Peabody Journal of Education* 71, no. 3 (1996): 98; Marsden, “Poisoned History,” 36.

¹⁵See the account of the 1915 International Congress of Women, initiated by the Dutch feminist Aletta Jacobs: Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch, and Alice Hamilton, *Women at The Hague: The International Congress of Women and its Results* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

¹⁶Ken Osborn, “Creating the ‘International Mind’: The League of Nations Attempts to Reform History Teaching, 1920–1939,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 56, no. 2 (2016): 216; Vincent Stolk, *Tussen autonomie en humaniteit. De geschiedenis van levensbeschouwelijk humanisme in relatie tot opvoeding en onderwijs tussen 1850-1970* (Utrecht: Humanistisch historisch centrum, 2015), 185.

¹⁷Hendrik sröm Elmersjö and Daniel Lindmark, “Nationalism, Peace Education, and History Textbook Revision in Scandinavia, 1886–1940,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 2, no. 2 (2010): 63.

¹⁸Vincent Stolk, Willeke Los, and Sjoerd Karsten, “Education as Cultural Mobilisation: The Great War and its Effects on Moral Education in the Netherlands,” *Paedagogica Historica* 50, no. 5 (2014): 690–6; Mona Siegel and Kirsten Harjes, “Disarming Hatred: History Education, National Memories, and Franco-German Reconciliation from World War I to the Cold War,” *History of Education Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (2012): 375.

¹⁹Stolk, Los, and Karsten, “Education as Cultural Mobilization,” 690–6.

²⁰Stolk, *Tussen autonomie en humaniteit*, 181, 185–6, 190, 245–6; Vriens, *Tussen visie*, 14, 15.

²¹Heater, “The History of Citizenship Education,” 115–17; Thelin, “Early Tendencies,” 98; Marsden, “Poisoned History,” 35–6; Siegel and Harjes, “Disarming Hatred,” 376–83; Mona Siegel, “History is the Opposite of Forgetting: The Limits of Memory and the Lessons of History in Interwar France,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 74, no. 4 (2002): 790.

²²Marsden, “Poisoned History,” 37–8.

²³Zvi Bekerman and Michalinos Zembylas, *Teaching Contested Narratives. Identity, Memory and Reconciliation in Peace Education and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 30.

²⁴Sigal R. Ben Porath, “War and Peace Education: Review Article,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 37, no. 3 (2003): 525.

²⁵Marsden, “Poisoned History”, 47.

understanding”,²⁶ and it was guided by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had also inspired Scandinavian educators.²⁷ It was rooted in the Dutch educational reform movement that had preached pacifism prior to the War as well, and that was also part of a broader call for political education and greater democracy in the Netherlands starting in the mid-1960s.²⁸ Inspired by ethics concerning solidarity and general human love this political education also covered Third World problems.²⁹

After World War II, peace research and peaceful conflict-solving started to become institutionalised. This process gave rise to academic conferences that could function as “trading spaces” for the formulation of ideas on education for peace,³⁰ including the 1965 conference of the International Peace Research Association in the Dutch city of Groningen, and the 1967 Conference on Cooperation and Conflict in the Dutch city of Amersfoort, hosted by the Dutch section of the New Education Fellowship (NEF). This section was an educational reform movement with a socialist orientation. Since the early 1950s, the movement had been arguing that students should be confronted with societal dilemmas and issues.³¹

The 1965 conference addressed the challenging international political problems of the Cold War. Despite the dominance of anti-communist sentiments in the Netherlands, the choice between East and West became more difficult, particularly during the Vietnam War. Although Marxist ideas became appealing to actors even outside the small Communist Party,³² mainstream political parties strongly rejected communism, and continued to support Atlantic and NATO foreign policy.³³ This nevertheless did not prevent pacifism from regaining popularity. During the 1967 conference the Dutch Working Group for Peace Education’s initiative to introduce peace education in schools was a prominent topic of discussion.³⁴ The conference revealed the existence of a link between educational reform and pacifism in the Netherlands, as was also the case in France.³⁵

Both radical and moderate left-wing thinking was represented within the peace-education movement. Radical thinking propagated political education from a Marxist point of view and encouraged students to stand up to the established order. This

²⁶Confirmed in the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation regarding Education for International Understanding. H.B. Gerritsma, “Een concept van vredesonderwijs: terugblik op een project,” in *Vredesonderwijs. Opvattingen en ervaringen*, ed. H.B. Gerritsma (Utrecht: Vredesopbouw Utrecht, 1985).

²⁷Heater, “The History of Citizenship Education,” 116. Peace educator S.C. Derksen plead for the introduction of a specific school subject on peace, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations: S.C. Derksen *Vredes- en veiligheidsonderwijs in Nederland* (Atlantische commissie: Atlantische studie nr. 3, 1980), 10–14.

²⁸De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?* 216, 217, 220, 229.

²⁹Thelin, “Early Tendencies,” 96; De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?* 224–5.

³⁰Egedal Andreasen and Ydesen, “Educating for Peace,” 2.

³¹Documents concerning these conferences are located in the Archives of the International Institute of Social History (IISH), Archives of the Werkgemeenschap voor Vernieuwing van Opvoeding en Onderwijs (WVO), Box II 36.

³²Kim Christiaens, Frank Gerits, Idesbald Goddeens, and Giles Scott-Smith, “The Low Countries and Eastern Europe during the Cold War: Introduction,” *Dutch Crossing. Journal of Low Countries Studies* 39, no. 3 (2015): 191–2; Kim Christiaens, Frank Gerits, Idesbald Goddeens, and Giles Scott-Smith, “The Benelux and the Cold War: Re-interpreting West-West Relations,” *Dutch Crossing. Journal of Low Countries Studies* 40, no. 1 (2016): 3.

³³Christiaens and others, “The Low Countries,” 191–2.

³⁴L. van Gelder, “Een inleidende opmerking,” *Samenwerking en conflict, conferentie 16, 17 en 18 November 1967 in het “Evert Kupersoord” Amersfoort* [Cooperation and Conflict conference booklet], 1–2, IISH, Archives of the WVO, Box II, 36.

³⁵Tomás Irish, “Peace through History? The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s Inquiry into European Schoolbooks, 1921–1924,” *History of Education*, 45, no. 1 (2016): 46.

strategy was consistent with the notions of participatory democracy propagated by the international New Left movement. It was influential within the main Dutch left-wing social-democratic political party PvdA and the small pacifist socialist party PSP, as well as within Dutch student movements. In the early 1970s, while New Left movements were losing much of their appeal in most European countries, this approach remained alive and well in the Netherlands, due to its link with left-wing political parties. In this more radical approach, political education was seen as a remedy for the “sick democracy”. This political education urged teachers to take a political position in the classroom, identifying power mechanisms in daily life and encouraging people to undertake action. In contrast, the moderate left-wing view did not depart from a specific political world view but propagated tolerance and respect for people with different beliefs, combined with a critical formation of judgment based on the consideration of multiple views. From this perspective, teachers should not expose or force students into a specific world view, but should allow students to make up their own minds. The more radical and moderate visions could collide,³⁶ but the Dutch Working Group tried to reconcile both visions. We begin our study of the aims and strategies of the Working Group in relation to the concerns regarding indoctrination by exploring the notion of indoctrination in contemporary philosophical debates. This provides a better understanding of what constitutes indoctrination (a key concept in our analysis) and identifies the critical elements in curriculum development regarding indoctrination. We use the results of this exploration to analyse the curriculum materials, minutes, and correspondence of the Working Group.

The concept of indoctrination

The concept of “indoctrination” has been the subject of considerable intellectual debate. At least three criteria can be distinguished, treating indoctrination as (1) a matter of content or doctrines, (2) a matter of intention, and (3) a matter of methods.³⁷ Tasos Kazepides argues that only the first criterion – commitment to doctrinal belief – is a necessary and sufficient condition for indoctrination. To Kazepides, commitment to doctrines (understood as “unfalsifiable beliefs beyond any criticism”)³⁸ is the only relevant criterion, as any intention to indoctrinate would be impossible without doctrines. When educators use methods that fail to provide relevant evidence and arguments, or when they apply them incorrectly (criterion 3), indoctrination does not occur, but “just” miseducation (or propaganda).³⁹ According to Kazepides education should be built on the foundations of rationality. For this reason, we should allow no space for doctrines in our educational institutions.⁴⁰

³⁶As demonstrated by Germany’s tough struggle on *politische Bildung* in the early 1970s: De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?* 198–227.

³⁷Harvey Siegel, “Indoctrination and Education,” in *Freedom and Indoctrination in Education: International Perspectives*, ed. Ben Spiecker and Roger Straughan (London: Cassell Educational, 1991), 30.

³⁸Ben Spiecker, “Indoctrination: The Suppression of Critical Dispositions,” in *Freedom and Indoctrination in Education: International Perspectives*, ed. Ben Spiecker and Roger Straughan (London: Cassell Educational, 1991), 10.

³⁹Tasos Kazepides, “Religious Indoctrination and Freedom,” in *Freedom and Indoctrination in Education: International Perspectives*, ed. Ben Spiecker and Roger Straughan (London: Cassell Educational), 5–15.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 6.

Ben Spiecker agrees with the emphasis on doctrines in the definition of indoctrination, arguing that “indoctrination begins when we try to stop the growth in our children of the capacity to think for themselves”.⁴¹ In contrast to Kazepides, however, Spiecker is of the opinion that the first criterion (i.e. content/doctrines) is necessary but not sufficient. According to this line of reasoning, the definition of indoctrination requires the addition of the second criterion (i.e. about intentions). According to Spiecker, indoctrination never occurs unintentionally.⁴² When teachers impose their own values on students, it could be perceived as indoctrination, but also as cultural transmission, which is one of the most important aspects of education.⁴³ The difference is a matter of intention. According to Spiecker, teachers could educate their students about various social rules and values, as long as these rules and values are left open to debate.⁴⁴

Other authors (e.g. Willis Moore, John Wilson, R.G. Woods, and Thomas Green) emphasise the third criterion: methods. They argue that indoctrination should be defined as the employment of non-rational teaching methods.⁴⁵ Green regards indoctrination as a pedagogy that is not identified by the content of what is taught but by the way in which that content is taught, with the aim of creating a non-evidential style of belief.⁴⁶ If one is using a method that allows for divergent perspectives, no indoctrination is taking place.

These different perspectives suggest three distinct critical elements in curricula and curriculum development that could have made the efforts of the Working Group vulnerable to accusations of indoctrination: content, intentions, and methods. To explain how the Working Group dealt with the vulnerability of their curriculum in terms of indoctrination, we identify the aims and strategies of the Working Group by analysing the content of the textbooks, the intentions of the Working Group, and the teaching methods they proposed.

The Working Group for Peace Education at work

As stated before, the Working Group for Peace Education was a collaboration between the Institute of War and Peace Studies and the Foundation for Peace Building. The Institute of War and Peace Studies was a multidisciplinary research institute, founded in 1962 by Bernard Röling (1906–1985).⁴⁷ It brought together several academic disciplines, including sociology, political science, economy, history, psychology, pedagogy, and science.⁴⁸ In the

⁴¹Spiecker, “Indoctrination: The Suppression,” 17.

⁴²Ibid., 22–4.

⁴³I.A. Snook, *Indoctrination and education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 45. On cultural transmission see W. A.J. Meijer, “Cultural Transmission and the Balance Between Tradition and Enlightenment: The Example of Islam,” in *Religious Education in a World of Religious Diversity*, ed. W.A.J. Meijer, S. Miedema, and A. Lanser-van der Velde (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2009), 185; J.J.H. Dekker, “Cultural Transmission and Inter-generational Interaction,” *International Review of Education*, 47, no. 1 (2001): 77–95.

⁴⁴Spiecker, “Indoctrination,” 22–4.

⁴⁵As is analysed in Peterson, “Holding Teachers Accountable,” 198–299.

⁴⁶Thomas F. Green, “Indoctrination and Beliefs,” in *Concepts of Indoctrination*, ed. I.A. Snook (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 36.

⁴⁷Röling was a professor of law, a former judge at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in 1946, and a former member of the Dutch delegation to the United Nations: C.G. Roelofsen, “Röling, Bernardus Victor Aloysius (1906–1985),” in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn4/roeling> (accessed February 14, 2019).

⁴⁸Supplementary memorandum on the Institute of War and Peace studies, Archives of the University of Groningen, 1331; Nota 7 April 1977 [memorandum 7 April 1977], Archives of the University of Groningen; B.V.A. Röling, *De*

Netherlands, the science of peace and war, which was understood as an applied science intended to influence society,⁴⁹ never functioned as opposite to peace education, as was the case with the science of war in the United States prior to World War I. In line with the “science of peace” (as developed in the 1950s in such countries as the United States, Great Britain, and Norway),⁵⁰ Röling aimed for a gradual shift towards a better society. It was therefore necessary to make people aware of the fact that they were living in an interdependent world in which they needed particular competences. These included the ability to understand the different circumstances in which people live, how these circumstances could spark conflicts, and to understand various types of conflict solution.⁵¹ He was inclined to “positive peace”, which could be reached by decreasing social injustice and inequality and by promoting prosperity for all people.⁵²

The Foundation for Peace Building was founded by Anton Gerrit Dake (1887–1979), a successful entrepreneur and Christian philanthropist. Dake’s intention was to replace the Cold War manner of thinking in terms of two opposing power blocks with another mindset: embracing the ideal of peace. In a study on citizenship education, Wim de Jong depicts Dake’s Foundation as progressive, with its focus on loving one’s fellow humans, solidarity with the “Third World”, and combating prejudice.⁵³

The Working Group focused on a variety of activities: preparing teaching syllabuses, carrying out experiments with teaching materials in the field, publishing teaching materials, promoting the integration of global education into the secondary school curriculum, and organising conferences.⁵⁴ According to its members, their work was part of the shift that occurred in the relationship between schools and society in the 1970s, with schools being opened up to the political, social, and economic problems of society. While applauding this change, they also criticised the non-reflective treatment of these issues. According to them, the aim of peace-education was to teach children to accept the responsibility of humans towards shaping a better future for the world, by confronting children with a wide range of themes,⁵⁵ including the major issues of environmental problems, war and peace, and social inequality.⁵⁶ Although the Working Group initially chose “peace education” [*vredesonderwijs*] as a label to identify their work, it would later be referred to as “global education”, expressing the underlying idea of education for world citizenship, in which teachers tried to stimulate a global identity and awareness of global problems.⁵⁷ The material that the Working Group intended to produce – 1,500 copies of textbooks for students aged 14 to 16 years, on a

universiteit en het probleem van oorlog en vrede (Groningen: Het Polemologisch Instituut van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1984), 3.

⁴⁹Hylke Tromp, “Over doel en methode van de polemologie,” in *Vredeswetenschap: doelstellingen, methoden, maatschappelijke relevantie*, eds. B.V.A. Röling et al. (Groningen: Polemologisch Instituut, 1972).

⁵⁰Harris, “History of Peace Education,” 14.

⁵¹Röling, *De universiteit*, 24.

⁵²De Jong, *Van wie is de burger*, 224; Ian M. Harris, “Peace Education Theory,” *Journal of Peace Education* 1, no. 1 (2004): 12.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 224–5.

⁵⁴C.H.M. Bartelds, H.B. Gerritsma, and B.J.Th. ter Veer. *Final Report of the Peace Education Working-Party* (Haren: Polemologisch Instituut, 1980), 1.

⁵⁵Behr, Megoran, and Carnaffan, “Peace Education,” 78.

⁵⁶Vriens, *Tussen visie*, 21, 24.

⁵⁷B.V.A. Röling, “Ontwikkeling en stand van de polemologie in Nederland,” in *Vredeswetenschap: doelstellingen, methoden, maatschappelijke relevantie*, ed. B.V.A. Röling et al. (Groningen: Polemologisch Instituut, 1972), 1–18, 3; Röling, *De universiteit*, 3; Harris, “Peace Education Theory,” 10.

non-commercial basis⁵⁸ – was subsidised by a number of organisations, including the Dutch Ministry of Social Welfare, the Dutch Institute for Peace Issues (*Nederlands Instituut voor Vredesvraagstukken*, NIVV), the National Commission for Counselling and Awareness of Development Aid (*Nationale Commissie Voorlichting en Bewustwording Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*; NCvbO or NCO), the University of Groningen, and Dake's Foundation for Peace Building.⁵⁹ With its materials, the Working Group tried to influence the current school curriculum in order to incorporate peace education and global development into existing courses, especially history and geography.⁶⁰

The Working Group was composed of two divisions: a steering committee and an editorial board. In the steering committee, the two founding institutions (the Institute of War and Peace Studies and the Foundation for Peace Building) were represented by four and three members, respectively.⁶¹ The editorial board consisted of 10–15 members recruited from the Institute of War and Peace Studies and the education sector.⁶² The members included a history teacher, a geography teacher, an educationalist working at a research institute of the University of Groningen (RION), an historian and a psychologist working for the NIVV, and an economist from the Institute of War and Peace Studies of Groningen.⁶³ All of the Working Group members we were able to trace were in favour of promoting awareness in matters of war and peace in order to bring about peaceful international relations. Some but not all expressed explicit opposition to nuclear warfare and they were involved in national and international debates on education and peace.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Appendix I to letter 30–6 '75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Course documents, 3 December 1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

⁵⁹ Letter to the president of the NC(vb)O, 14 November 1974, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix I letter 30–6 '75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Course documents, 3 December 1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix 6, request for financial aid, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Letter from the staff of the National Commission for Counseling and Awareness of Development Aid, 25 November 1977, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 173.

⁶⁰ Appendix I to letter 30–6 '75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix 2a to Letter to the board/teachers of geography and history May 1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

⁶¹ From the Institute of War and Peace Studies: Prof. mr. P.J. Teunissen (polemologist/sociologist, expert on international affairs, critical towards Soviet Union with regard to human rights), drs. B.J.Th. ter Veer (Institute of War and Peace Studies, president of Christian Peace Community [Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad], contacts with peace activists in Eastern Europe, nuanced ideas about nuclear weapons and war violence, project leader), Prof. dr. P. Boskma (1974–1976, philosopher, proponent of NATO, but critical towards nuclear weapons as a means to keep peace), H.B. Gerritsma (successor to Boskma, former teacher of geography), and H.J.T.M. Brouwer (secretary). From the Foundation for Peace Building: Prof. dr. J. M.W. Milatz (till 1975) (nuclear physics), N. van Gelder, G.A. Bootsma (no background information available) and mr. G. Zoon (jurist, expert in international affairs, secretary-treasurer).

⁶² Composition of the editorial board in 1976: H.J.T.M. Brouwer (secretary of the project, Institute of War and Peace Studies), P.A. Dijkstra (history teacher), drs. H.B. Gerritsma (former teacher of geography), dr. Th. J.G. van den Hoogen (economist, expert in international politics and social economic problems in developing countries), dr. N. Rodenburg (psychologist, linked to the Dutch Institute of Peace Issues), drs. M.J. van Steenvoorn (educationalist at the Research Institute of Education at the University of Groningen), drs. C.J. Visser (historian, Dutch Institute for Peace Studies), mr. P.J. Teunissen, drs. B.J. Th. Ter Veer, mr. G. Zoon, J. Olivier (educationalist), C.H.M. Bartelds (conscientious objector, adult education, researcher at the Research Institute of Education at the University of Groningen), N. Schrijver (student, later professor of international law), K. Altena (psychologist), drs. G. ten Berge (conscientious objector, no further information), Plas (historian), D. Begeman (student), P. van Dellen (student), F. le Roux (student), L. Beets (student).

⁶³ Appendix 2 [Peace Education curriculum planning, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

⁶⁴ E.g. at a 1974 symposium organised in collaboration with Pax Christi, and at the 1974 "Education for Peace" World Conference at Keele University in the United Kingdom. WVOS/1974/12. Report of symposium, 22 November 1974, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

During the four-year developmental phase (1972–1976), materials were tested and evaluated by both teachers and students,⁶⁵ in line with the then-popular concept of action research.⁶⁶ Groups of teachers were formed to discuss the material, and pilot programmes were organised to test it.⁶⁷ According to the final report of the project, most of the teachers involved (in the majority teaching either history or geography) held progressive political views, had already addressed political subjects in class, and were socially engaged.⁶⁸

The Working Group regularly discussed the content of the materials with the Committee on the Reform of History Education and Political Sciences (CMLGS), the Education Department of the Royal Geography Association (KNAG), the Association of Dutch History Teachers (VGN), and the school inspectorate.⁶⁹ These contacts were important, because, in the words of the Working Group, “it cannot be said that the climate is all too favourable for the project”.⁷⁰ For example, several years earlier, the Association of Dutch History Teachers had been very critical about a research project on the reform of history education at the University of Groningen. The project, known as “LEDO”, was supervised by Leon van Gelder, a professor of educational studies, who also had chaired the above-mentioned Conference on Cooperation and Conflict of 1967. The goals of the LEDO project appeared somewhat similar to those of the Working Group, in that it encouraged students to analyse social problems and consider solutions.⁷¹ Opponents of the LEDO project, e.g. Hans Ulrich, president of the Association of Dutch History Teachers, claimed that it was using schools for political ends and that it was thus indoctrinating children.⁷² The debate on this project even led to questions in Parliament.⁷³ LEDO suffered from many internal struggles, as well as from criticism from historians and history teachers.⁷⁴ From this history of the LEDO project the Working Group learned that it had to proceed with caution, all the more because some members of the Working Group had connections to people from LEDO.⁷⁵

⁶⁵The materials were tested by at least 60 teachers. Decisions of 8th meeting, Working Group, 20 October 1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix I to letter 30–6 '75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix 2a to Letter to the board/teachers of geography and history May 1975, May 1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix 2c on teacher groups, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix 2d Planning, IISH, Archives of *Stichting Vredesopbouw*, 171; Bartelds, Gerritsma and Ter Veer, *Final Report*, 4.

⁶⁶Bridget Somekh, “The Collaborative Action Research Network: 30 years of agency in developing educational action research”, *Educational Action Research*, 18, no.1 (2010), 103–121, DOI: 10.1080/09650790903484566.

⁶⁷Appendix 2a to Letter to the board/teachers of geography and history, May 1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

⁶⁸Bartelds, Gerritsma, and Ter Veer, *Final Report*, 4.

⁶⁹Appendix I to Letter 30–6-1975, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹Jan Bank and Jaap Proemstra, *Sociale wereldoriëntatie in het LEDO-project* (Groningen: Instituut voor Onderwijskunde Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1972); Alexander Albicher, *Heimwee naar het heden. Betrokkenheid en distantie in het Nederlandse geschiedenisonderwijs (1945–1985)* (Leuven: KU Leuven, 2012), 358–69.

⁷²Ton Elias, “Gronings Project Leren door doen fel omstreden. Prof. Dr. I Schöffer: Geschiedenis wordt hutspot,” *De Tijd: Dagblad voor Nederland*, 12–8, 1972, 5.

⁷³Appendix to the Report of the Senate, 1971–1972, 357.

⁷⁴Albicher, *Heimwee*, 363–6.

⁷⁵Chris Bartelds and Albert van de Berg, Decisions of meetings of the Working Group. IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171. Furthermore, M.J. van Steenvoorn, educationalist at RION, the Research Institute founded by L. van Gelder, was a member of the editing committee. Bijlage I. Ontwikkeling van een curriculum voor vredesonderwijs. IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 172.

The Group pre-emptively and firmly rejects any accusation of indoctrination, as is shown in one of the teacher guides.⁷⁶ Consultation with experts was explicitly advanced as a safeguard against indoctrination,⁷⁷ although the Working Group also stated that the only true guarantees against indoctrination were located in the classroom, more specifically in the behaviour of teachers and the attitudes and skills of their students.⁷⁸ Teachers should be transparent about the people behind the opinions they were voicing; they should be open to new information, and they should make room for their students' own explorations. Moreover, they should have a non-authoritarian relationship with their students and allowing them to express their own points of view freely.⁷⁹ A purely factual approach was therefore rejected and multiple interpretations on the part of students promoted.⁸⁰ In this, we can recognise the safeguards against indoctrination, as advanced by scholars like Kazepides and Spiecker in their definitions of the concept of indoctrination.

The final project report – written in English – included translated quotations from teachers, in order to illustrate how they had addressed accusations of indoctrination. These quotations clearly demonstrate that the teachers were indeed reproached for indoctrination: “Sooner or later students realise that such a project is not done at other schools. There, they say, lessons are ‘normal’. Therefore they will ask why.”⁸¹ Concerns were especially likely to be expressed by parents:

Reproaches that we should be indoctrinating are mainly expressed by a small group of parents. They are afraid either of a confrontation between their own choice and that made by the school, or they say that the school is of a left-wing political stature and therefore single-minded.⁸²

The printed (and again translated into English) response of one interviewee included an account of how he had coped with these problems. This account was obviously supported by the Working Group, as it was prominently incorporated into the report:

One then tries to explain how we perceive our job as teachers. That we do not believe that there is a thing like education without standards. And so on [...] Hence in talks with the students we refer to ‘human rights’.⁸³

In this example, we see teachers feeling the need to explain that it was not possible for them to teach without having in mind a set of norms and values – for them the generally accepted notion of “human rights” – when complicated issues are being discussed. In the next section, we examine the curriculum as such and demonstrate

⁷⁶C.H.M. Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], Haags gemeentearchief (GA), Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01), 228: 35.

⁷⁷Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], GA [Local Archives of The Hague], Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01), 22.

⁷⁸B.J.Th. ter Veer, *Handleiding. Kernwapens – een kwestie van overleven* [Teacher's guide. Nuclear weapons, a matter of survival] (Haren: Werkgroep Vredesonderwijs, [1979]), 10 registered in: GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01).

⁷⁹Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01), 35.

⁸⁰Report of Meeting 6-11-1978. IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 174.

⁸¹Bartelds, Gerritsma, and Ter Veer, *Final Report*, 31.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

that the Working Group explicitly adopted these generally accepted human rights as their frame of reference.

A curriculum on peace education

According to the handbook for teachers, the curriculum had three objectives: (1) to impart knowledge and understanding concerning the development of major conflicts and socio-economic inequalities; (2) to encourage students to take a well-reasoned position regarding these conflicts and contrasts, and to think about possible solutions; and (3) to provide insight into the involvement of the Netherlands in these historical developments and to encourage students to envision possible solutions of major conflicts and to raise awareness of their significance for Dutch society as a whole and for individual students in particular.⁸⁴ These aims were realised by a thematic approach, with an emphasis on contemporary history and a broad diversity of didactical materials that allowed for a critical exploration of the topics.

These aims and the didactical approach chosen fit within the context of developments in history education in Dutch secondary schools at the time and the shift towards a more child-centred approach in education, with greater attention to dialogical methods. Based on his research on the postwar history of Dutch history education, Albicher concludes that, in the first years after World War II, secondary school history textbooks in the Netherlands began to show more interest in contemporary history, with the present regarded as being the result of an impressive progression of civilisation. This focus included such themes as the struggle for freedom and democracy, as well as the development of the notion of peace.⁸⁵ From the mid-1950s, the interest in contemporary history was sometimes combined with a sense of alienation from the present, with some authors no longer seeing the present as a comfortable intermediate stage towards a bright future, but as a period of anxiety. Textbooks began to address drawbacks as well, particularly with regard to the nuclear bomb and the arms race, with Russia explicitly mentioned as the main source of anxiety.⁸⁶ By the late 1960s, these developments had led to the dominance of a thematic approach. Until then, history education had been characterised by continuity, dominated by a chronological approach. Another development involved the incorporation of issues from the rapidly advancing social sciences within history education beginning in the mid-1970s – the same period in which the curriculum of the Working Group was developed.⁸⁷

The changes in the late 1960s were accompanied by a trend in which greater emphasis was placed on coaching students to develop particular skills such as critical reading of written texts, evaluating persons or developments, and asking and solving historical questions, with less emphasis on the memorisation of historical facts. As was the case in other countries where during interwar and postwar periods school experiments were conducted by educators associated with

⁸⁴Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01), 15.

⁸⁵Albicher, *Heimwee*, 223.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 226, 234, 236, 253–5.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 318, 346, 396.

the international progressive education movement,⁸⁸ these changes were consistent with the greater attention paid to a child-centred approach in education and a greater emphasis on dialogical methods in this period. These two developments were part of the postwar educational reform movement, with close links to the concept of democracy. According to adherents of this movement, education should stimulate democratic values, a critical attitude, personal development, social equality, and social responsibility. This shared framework of values was reflected in various trends, including the rejection of whole-class teaching and a top-down manner of transferring worldviews and the 1968 implementation of civics as part of the Dutch secondary school curriculum.⁸⁹ The acquisition of detailed historical knowledge was considered less important than understanding human actors in the past and using imagination along with different types of historical sources in order to create personal understanding of history. In what in England was referred to as “New History”, pupils had to understand the significance and limitations of historical evidence, the balance between change and continuity, and the problems of causation. Moreover, they had to try to understand the acts and thoughts of people in the past on an emotional level.⁹⁰ This fits the notion of teaching critical thinking as “reflective scepticism” in which both cognitive and affective aspects of the issues at stake have to be taken into account and in which teachers not only introduce students into procedures, knowledge and skills, but also into dispositions and propensities.⁹¹ To reach this, various didactical methods were applied involving games, simulations, and drama, with teachers in the role of stimulating understanding, instead of transmitting information.⁹²

The Working Group embraced these reformist notions, by distinguishing 11 themes corresponding to the two main problems facing the adherents of education on world affairs: the issue of war and peace, and the issue of underdevelopment, including issues of poverty, injustice, and dependency. The 11 themes therefore covered a wide variety of global topics, ranging from the transfer of production to Third World countries and its resulting poor working conditions (by examining the case of the Dutch textile industry) to the conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinians.⁹³

The Working Group developed a variety of curriculum materials: textbooks for students and manuals for teachers, along with other materials like games, audio tapes, films, photographs, and fictional texts.⁹⁴ This diversity of the curriculum materials should make it possible for students to immerse themselves in the situations that were discussed. The materials were aimed at engagement, meaning that students were expected to develop an understanding of the role of Western countries in global

⁸⁸Egedal Andreassen and Ydesen, “Educating for Peace,” 4.

⁸⁹Stolk, *Tussen autonomie en humaniteit*, 291–303; Vincent Stolk, Bert Gasenbeek, and Wiel Veugelers, “The Secularisation of Religious Education: Humanism, Religion and Worldview Education in the Netherlands in the 1960s,” *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 37, no. 2 (2016): 188.

⁹⁰David Cannadine, Jenny Keating, and Nicola Sheldon, *The Right Kind of History: Teaching the Past in Twentieth-century England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 156–66.

⁹¹John E. McPeck, *Critical Thinking and Education* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), 17–19.

⁹²Cannadine, Keating, and Sheldon, *The Right Kind of History*, 156–66.

⁹³Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher’s Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 3, 5, 12.

⁹⁴Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher’s Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 11–13.

problems (including the students' own personal interests and the significance of moral responsibility), while also developing empathy with the victims, with the explicit goal of changing mentalities.⁹⁵ Proceeding from the assumption that "treating changing mentalities as a purely intellectual process is doomed to failure",⁹⁶ the materials supplemented facts and analysis with travel reports, commentaries by journalists, interviews, passages from novels and poems, didactical drawings in the form of political cartoons, and photographs.⁹⁷

In this approach, "the pedagogical climate" of the classroom was considered crucial, as it was expected to "make a fertile breeding place for adolescents, featuring self-consciousness, responsibility and sound judgement".⁹⁸ Students were encouraged to explore "real dilemmas".⁹⁹ In line with this aim, the guidelines for authors of the materials stated that authors were not to write any essays

in which they expose their opinions about the topic in an elaborated argument, as putting on paper years of study and deliberate consideration. Experts must be willing to project themselves into the position of the novice, the student, who wants to penetrate the topic but who possesses only pieces of information, with little insight into the subject matter [...] Experts should see it as their duty to develop courses that allow students to go on an exploratory expedition.¹⁰⁰

These guidelines are consistent with both the moderate view on peace education that teachers (in this case, textbook authors) should refrain from expressing their personal views, and the child-centred approach to education, which had been gaining attention at the time and which favoured dialogical methods and encouraged children to think for themselves.

In the classroom, however, it was as a matter of fact not possible for teachers to be completely neutral. According to the Working Group, the education of children was never value-free, and this was certainly the case with peace education.¹⁰¹ The Working Group argued that peace education "cannot be free of value judgments, since we cannot treat certain phenomena or opinions, like discrimination according to race ... as neutral".¹⁰² The framework of values embraced by the Working Group consisted primarily of United Nations documents, among them the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Working Group argued the necessity of educating students to accept these norms and values:

Not by forcing them upon students or by drilling them, but by showing them that the world [as represented by the United Nations, HA/JD] has succeeded in reaching some

⁹⁵Ibid., 24.

⁹⁶WVOS/1974/12.Report symposium 22 November 1974, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

⁹⁷Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01), 12.

⁹⁸Bartelds, Gerritsma, and Ter Veer, *Final Report*, 59.

⁹⁹Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-01), 22.

¹⁰⁰RWVO1. Guidelines for authors, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171. The use of "he" and "his" results from the literal translation of the quote, in which, as was common at the time, the masculine form was used.

¹⁰¹Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher's Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428-0), 21.

¹⁰²Ibid., 20.

consensus on essential values, missions, and principles, albeit still fragile and mostly ‘verbal’.¹⁰³

According to the Working Group, the United Nations values should not be regarded as a fixed normative framework, but as a set of values developing over time.¹⁰⁴

The curriculum was explicitly aimed at engagement and relating global problems to one’s own life. As stated in the third goal that was formulated for teachers, it was aimed at understanding the significance of such problems to Dutch society as a whole and to the student in particular. It was also aimed at promoting an activist attitude. The Working Group was aware of the innovative character of the curriculum in this respect. By emphasising that “[y]oung people who have also developed confidence that changes are possible and that they can play a role in the process of change”,¹⁰⁵ the Working Group claimed to “anticipate” the developing curriculum innovations.¹⁰⁶

This more radical perspective on peace education is explicitly reflected in two additional goals mentioned in the appendix to a letter from the Working Group to the National Commission on Counselling and Awareness Development Aid (NCvBO).¹⁰⁷ The first of these two goals was

[t]o be able to change one’s own attitude and behaviour based on an awareness of: a) the causal relations existing between one’s personal environment [...] and violent situations in the outside world; b) the analogy between situations of inequality in one’s own personal living circumstances and situations on a macro level; and c) processes of societal change and possible ways of stimulating change.

The second additional goal concerned the “[d]evelopment of communication and organizational skills in order to participate in the development of collective opinions and behaviours”.¹⁰⁸ These goals were directed at revealing power mechanisms and promoting action – two missions of the more radical view of peace education. This radical perspective is also reflected in an explicitly formulated belief that teachers who engaged their students in intensive discussions of problems of war and underdevelopment would discover that these problems “will put dynamite under our own society and its educational system”.¹⁰⁹

Teachers who had taken a political stand were applauded. The Group argued that students needed to understand the issues of war and underdevelopment as consequences of improper socio-economic structures like unjust trade structures and unequal power structures, which were maintained by social institutions, including political

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Appendix I to letter 30–6 ’75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Appendix 2. Peace Education curriculum planning, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; RWV01. Guidelines for authors, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education. Teacher’s Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 20.

¹⁰⁵Bartelds, Gerritsma, and Ter Veer, *Final Report*, 59.

¹⁰⁶Appendix I to letter 30–6 ’75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Course documents, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

¹⁰⁷This Commission was set up in 1974 by the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, of the left-centrist Den Uyl Government, and which aimed to create support for cooperative efforts in international development.

¹⁰⁸Appendix I to letter 30–6 ’75, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171; Course documents, IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 171.

¹⁰⁹Appendix Annual Report Institute of War and Peace Studies 1975–1976 III 273, 781, Archives of the University of Groningen, 1331.

parties, churches, educational institutions, and trade unions. The new curriculum aimed to make students aware of “the necessity of *changing structures* [emphasis in original]”.¹¹⁰ This guide shows that peace education was seen as a form of political education.¹¹¹

These documents on the curriculum reveal a mixture of more radical and more moderate approaches to peace education. It stimulated an activist attitude stemming from a rather Marxist view on society, but at the same time, the basic framework of the values that the Working Group embraced (i.e. those of the United Nations) were generally accepted in society and could be regarded as the foundations of democratic societies. Furthermore, the Group applauded efforts to encourage students to explore multiple perspectives and dialogue as a basic didactical tool.

A subsequent question concerns whether the mixture of more radical and more moderate perspectives reflected in the goals and the intentions underlying the curriculum were also evident in the actual curriculum materials. In the following section, we analyse two textbooks, one about wartime violence as illustrated by the case of the Vietnam War, and the other on nuclear weapons. Of the 11 themes, these textbooks were the only ones still kept in the Municipal Archives of The Hague.

The textbook on wartime violence: the case of the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was controversial in the Netherlands too. As in many other European countries that were at a distance from this war, which was not based on decisions by the UN, NATO, or other international organisations, many people protested against the involvement of the USA, and a critical debate was held on this issue.¹¹² It is therefore not surprising that the Working Group, in its aim to open students to political and social problems, chose this war as a case study for one of its 11 themes, namely wartime violence.

According to the handbook for teachers, the textbook aimed at transferring knowledge about the course of the Vietnam War and about various forms of wartime violence and their consequences and justifications in order to de-romanticise the use of violence and to make students distrust the ideological justifications of war.¹¹³ It demonstrated what war means to both those who use violence and those who suffer from it,¹¹⁴ in order to stimulate the formation of pupils’

¹¹⁰Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education: Teacher’s Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 17.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 16–17.

¹¹²P.A.J. Caljé and J.C. den Hollander, *De nieuwste geschiedenis* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 196), 465–9; R.R. Palmer, Joel Colton, and Lloyd Kramer, *A History of the Modern World* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 1002–6; Chris McNab, Andy Wiest, and Piet Hein Geurink, *De geschiedenis van de Vietnam Oorlog* (Oosterhout: Deltas, 2004); H.W. von der Dunk, *De verdwijnende hemel. Over de cultuur van Europa in de twintigste eeuw, deel 2* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2000), 381; D. Bosscher, “Nederland in de Koude Oorlog,” in Yvan Van den Berghe and Doeko Bosscher, *De Koude Oorlog: Een nieuwe geschiedenis (1917–1991)* (Leuven: Acco, 2008), 473.

¹¹³Bartelds, *Vredesonderwijs. Docentenboek* [Peace Education: Teacher’s Guide], GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 5–6.

¹¹⁴D. Begemann and N. Rodenburg. *Onderwijsleerpakket over problemen van oorlog en onderontwikkeling, nummer 3. Geweld – de oorlog in Vietnam* (Haren: Werkgroep Vredesonderwijs, 1977) [Course document on problems of war and underdevelopment], Registered in GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228, 3.

opinions. It thus reflected the Working Group's rejection of a non-reflective treatment of issues.¹¹⁵

The first chapter of the textbook for students, written in 1977, started with a description of the war of independence from French colonial oppression, followed by an explanation of the motives of the various groups in the time leading up to the war: the motives of the Vietminh in their struggle for independence, those of France in its attempt to retain its colonial territories, and the primary motive of the United States, the fear of communism.¹¹⁶ In discussing the actual conflict, the dictatorial regime of South Vietnam, personified in its president Ngo Dinh Diem, was advanced as an important breeding ground for the War. This obviously shed a relatively critical light on the United States, which was perceived to be supporting a dubious ruler. The textbook further explained how the USA violated the Paris Peace Accords of 1973 by continuing to provide weapons to South Vietnam.¹¹⁷ In discussing the actual conflict, the textbook depicted the perspectives of the various parties involved. This was in keeping with the moderate view on peace education, which aimed at the critical formation of judgment based on the consideration of multiple views. The text explained that followers of the regime in South Vietnam had been eager to maintain the status quo in order to retain political power and privileges, while the Liberation Front of South Vietnam had wanted to change society in order to enhance the living conditions of the majority of the people. The North Vietnamese leaders were described as defenders of their country. Finally, the textbook described the motives of the USA both as idealistic for aspiring to protect the people of South Vietnam from "the evils of communism" and as an example of power policy in light of the USA's desire to maintain its grip on Southeast Asia.¹¹⁸

In addition to the introductions, students were assigned to work with various documents and materials and participate in various kinds of assignments, ranging from playing games to writing an essay on the topic. The materials emphasised the student's own exploration of the topic, as well as personal emotions and motives. This approach that fitted the reformist ideas of "New History" and of critical thinking suited the increasing emphasis placed on a child-centred approach at that time and acknowledged the importance of reaching children at an emotional level. For example, the materials confronted students with relatively lengthy texts by the American journalist Jonathan Schell. As a young man, Schell had found himself in the Vietnamese farming village of Ben Suc. The journalist provided a colourful account of the daily lives of people before the war and how that changed dramatically during the war. Schell's blunt observations were published in the *New Yorker* magazine and as a book, and they caused a stir in the USA.¹¹⁹ In the passages to be read by Dutch students, Schell explained how the Liberation Front ruled the villages, and persuaded the inhabitants to reject the South-Vietnamese regime and despise the Americans. Schell further explained the misconceptions of American soldiers, who were kept ignorant of actual

¹¹⁵D. Begemann, *Handleiding. Geweld – De oorlog in Vietnam* (Haren: Werkgroep Vredesonderwijs, 1977) [Teacher's Guide, Violence: The Vietnam War], 10–11. Registered in GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 8–9.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 8–10.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹⁹Jonathan Schell, *The Village of Ben Suc* (New York: A. Knopf, 1967); Jonathan Schell, "A Reporter at Large: The Village of Ben Suc," *The New Yorker*, July 15, 1967, 28.

political circumstances. According to this account, the soldiers, assuming that Ben Suc had always had a Vietcong mindset, completely destroyed the village. This encouraged the students to develop an understanding for the position of the soldiers. The textbook copied a passage from Schell, in which he described how a man, described as either a farmer or a Vietcong soldier, had tried to flee but was killed by an American soldier. The soldier was depicted as if he had been in shock. Schell also depicted another soldier as being shocked by the incident, saying: “The military engineer slowly looked up, as somebody who discovered something really strange.” Reflecting on his emotions and trying to make sense of the situation, however, he continued, “It does not bother me. You see, I never saw a dead one before and I don’t feel miserable ... Actually I am happy. I am happy that we shot that little Vietcong guy.”¹²⁰ Students were assigned to discuss texts like this, based on questions provided by the teacher that encouraged a critical attitude, like the following: “How can you judge violence while being at some distance from it? How can you figure out what actually happened and why?”¹²¹

The Working Group’s stance of embracing pacifism is evidenced in the explicit manner in which the suffering of the Vietnamese people was shown to the students through photographs portraying the horror of the war and the consequences of US actions.¹²² It was also demonstrated through written sources, including a fragment of a letter written by a woman from South Vietnam, published in a Dutch newspaper and incorporated into the textbook. In this letter, the woman wrote about how she had seen another woman running from a heavy offensive with her three children. The eldest, a girl, was mortally wounded, and the mother had to leave her behind. She took the other two children in her arms, but they were too heavy, so the eldest boy had to run by himself. He was hit in the legs and could not run any more. She also had to leave him behind, while he called after her that he was not dead yet.¹²³ Such passages helped students develop an understanding of the horrors of war.

But the information in the curriculum materials was also presented in a relatively factual manner, for example in the form of tables or lists, as in the following example on the use of napalm:

The most commonly used firebomb is a bomb containing napalm. When this bomb is dropped on a densely populated area, the consequences are:

- The sudden death of many people by burning or suffocation
- The destruction by fire of houses made of inflammable material
- Severe burns to people, which are hard to heal¹²⁴

Consistent with the approach of embracing the rapidly advancing social sciences in explaining historical events, the materials also presented psychological concepts to explain how people could do such terrible things. For example, they mentioned to students the theory of the French psychologist Klineberg concerning the influence of

¹²⁰D. Begemann, *Handleiding. Geweld – De oorlog in Vietnam* (Haren: Werkgroep Vredesonderwijs, 1977) [Teacher’s Guide, *Violence: The Vietnam War*], 10–11. Registered in GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 16–17.

¹²¹Begemann. *Handleiding Geweld* [Teacher’s Guide, *Violence*], 15, GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228.

¹²²Begemann and Rodenburg. *Onderwijsleerpakket* [Course document], 29, GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), GA, 228.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 30.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 25.

modern weapons and the dehumanisation of modern warfare.¹²⁵ Cognitive dissonance theory was included in the explanation in order to help students understand how individuals justify their actions in times of war. According to this theory, people rationalise their actions (including acts of violence and war) in order to come to terms with them. Students were asked to read war propaganda and engage in role-playing in order to experience this psychological mechanism. Students were triggered to consider their own positions – as was the intention of this peace education material.¹²⁶

The textbook on violence was intended to help students develop a critical attitude on war violence. As stated in the handbook for teachers, the primary goal of the material was to de-romanticise the use of violence and stimulate distrust of any ideological justifications for war. In pursuing this goal, the book stimulated critical formation of judgement based on multiple views and allowing space for students to make up their own minds. In addition to being confronted with information, students were exposed to emotionally loaded materials intended to stimulate personal engagement. Within the context of the polarised political climate of that time, this was a risky choice, as the spectre of accusations of indoctrination was never far away.

The textbook on nuclear weapons

Not surprisingly, the Dutch Working Group adopted a critical stance against nuclear weapons. The textbook *Nuclear Weapons: A Matter of Survival*, published in 1979, was popular as orders for the textbook had been received even before it was published.¹²⁷ The title suggests that the Working Group was convinced of the need for a balance in nuclear weapons in order to keep world peace. This content of the textbook, however, makes clear that the Working Group was critical towards the nuclear weapons arms race, and of the opinion that nuclear weapons constituted a problem that needed to be solved.¹²⁸

The authors of these materials intended to impart both knowledge and understanding, in addition to changing attitudes. They felt that students needed to acquire knowledge about such aspects as the effects of nuclear weapons, based on the examples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as about the arms race, its causes, and the changes occurring in international politics since 1945 due to nuclear weapons. In addition, they were expected to develop a “reflective attitude” towards the problem, i.e. “a willingness to think about the world we live in, where peace is based on the deterrence of nuclear weapons”, and “to be willing to be sensitive towards the images of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki”.¹²⁹ The authors, rejecting a solely cognitive approach, acknowledged and even aimed for the possibility that such longing for a reflective attitude could elicit strong moral and emotional responses on the part of the students.¹³⁰

¹²⁵Ibid., 26.

¹²⁶Begemann. *Handleiding. Geweld*, [Teacher’s Guide. Violence] 8, GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01).

¹²⁷Report on meeting of the Working Group, 15 November 1978 [...] IISH, Archives of Stichting Vredesopbouw, 174.

¹²⁸Ter Veer, *Handleiding. Kernwapens* [Teacher’s guide. Nuclear weapon], 6, 21. GA Archives of Haags Vredesplatform.

¹²⁹Ibid., 10–11, 13.

¹³⁰Ter Veer, *Handleiding. Kernwapens* [Teacher’s guide. Nuclear weapons], 11. GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228.

The emphasis on involving students in this theme was related to the quest for participatory democracy, in which people should be involved in all decisions that truly concern them.¹³¹ Although not stated explicitly, the authors seemed to believe that the public could have a decisive influence on the arms race, as “nuclear strategies have more support when citizens are less aware of the consequences”.¹³² Evidence of this belief can also be found in the manual for teachers, who were advised that the mobilisation of large groups of people could change attitudes and mechanisms regarding nuclear arms.¹³³ The authors’ belief in the power of the public could also explain the emphasis that the curriculum materials placed on the need for students to understand the force of public opinion, to formulate their own opinions, and to reflect on their own personal responsibility. The position that the textbook adopted about nuclear weapons, namely a problem to be solved, and the emphasis that it placed on the suffering caused by these weapons suggests that the authors longed for a decrease in or even the abolition of nuclear weapons. But they also stated that the issue was complex and often involved a choice between two evils, which students should evaluate through personal, comparative assessment of political aims. Here this peace education curriculum was understood as a form of political education, fitting the reformist view of the 1970s, which regarded education as an institution within which to discuss the political, social, and economic problems of society.¹³⁴

The textbook for students for this course was made up of 12 chapters, the first four and the last two about the history of nuclear weapons. They discussed the decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the consequences of this action, as well as the political effort needed to abolish nuclear weapons. Chapters 5 to 10 dealt with the nuclear arms race, its causes, the political use of nuclear weapons for the balance of power and arms control, the relationship with nuclear power, and, finally, the Dutch position regarding nuclear weapons. As a member of NATO, the Dutch government agreed to the storage of nuclear weapons and accepted NATO’s nuclear strategy, although it also argued for reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international politics.¹³⁵

While the authors did have a specific outcome in mind for this course, the didactical approach allowed space for the student’s own understanding of the problem. Teachers were strongly advised against following the teacher’s manual mechanically, as doing so would not be sufficiently attuned to the specific group of students in class. According to the manual, teachers should start by focusing on the interests and questions of the students.¹³⁶ To meet the needs of their students, teachers were also encouraged to consult other sources of information, including experts.¹³⁷ Students were invited to study the topic by consulting popular media and interviewing people ranging from army spokesmen to individuals who were active in the peace movement, ultimately leading to their own interpretations.¹³⁸ The primary task for the teacher was to guard

¹³¹Ibid., 6.

¹³²Ibid., 7.

¹³³Ibid., 6.

¹³⁴Ibid., 8–9.

¹³⁵J. de Jong and B.J.Th. ter Veer, *Kernwapens – een kwestie van overleven* (Haren: Werkgroep Vredesonderwijs, 1979) [Nuclear Weapons: A Matter of Survival]. Registered in GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228.

¹³⁶B.J.Th. ter Veer. *Handleiding. Kernwapens* [Teacher’s Guide: Nuclear Weapons], 3, 14, 27–8. GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228, 3, 14, 27–8.

¹³⁷Ibid., 14.

¹³⁸Ibid., 27, 38, 39, 42.

against the simplification of the problem and to avoid being satisfied with “mono-causal explanations”.¹³⁹

The material for this topic offered a variety of possibilities for attaining the stated three goals: obtaining knowledge, analysing the problem, and changing attitudes. For obtaining knowledge and in order to analyse the problem, written explanations were offered. Examples included information on e.g. the number of victims and the consequences of being exposed to radiation, and explanations given by historians about the political decision to use nuclear weapons. Factual information was also provided in the form of charts and tables. For example, the book included a table on the scope of the deadly and destructive effect of a nuclear bomb of one megaton, expressed in effects according to pressure and radiation,¹⁴⁰ as well as a table comparing state spending on the military to state spending in other areas, such as education and healthcare.¹⁴¹ In providing this information, the Working Group obviously did not want to take a specific political position. For example, the following was included when explaining that, after the bombing, pregnant women were more likely to give birth to children with congenital defects: “There is no indication, however, that children affected by radiation before birth were more likely to develop leukemia.”¹⁴² Also the disagreement among experts about the number of people who would be killed in a nuclear attack on the Netherlands was presented to the students.¹⁴³ Although the authors did advocate an end to the arms race, they also depicted the complex position of the Dutch government and demonstrated their understanding for the policy favouring allies to keep nuclear weapons. In explaining the American rejection of the Soviet Union’s “Gromyko Plan” (named after the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs), which was intended to limit the number of nuclear weapons, the authors stated, “The Russian plan was unacceptable to the Americans, because it meant that they would need to destroy their nuclear weapons without any certainty of gaining anything in return”.¹⁴⁴ The Russian rejection of the American Baruch plan was explained in the same way: “This proposal would provide the US with a monopoly on nuclear bombs ... That was unacceptable to the Soviet Union.”¹⁴⁵

In addition to a balanced explanation of facts, the textbook contained content that appealed to emotions and moral judgment through various kinds of reports, including an interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Advisor from 1977 to 1981, and an eyewitness report from the Japanese Noguçi Kingo, who had experienced the bombing of Nagasaki as a child. Years after the bombing, he related what he had seen as a child: “People were crawling around with their skin burst open. There were many bodies of people with their heads in a barrel of water, trying to drink as they were dying.” He also recounted how many people, including his mother, brother, and little sister, had died later when spots appeared on their skin.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁹Ibid., 40.

¹⁴⁰De Jong and Ter Veer, *Kernwapens* [Nuclear Weapons], 10, GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 31.

¹⁴²Ibid., 17.

¹⁴³Ibid., 18.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 27.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 11–13, 42.

The curriculum also appealed to personal engagement by offering film and visual material in the form of photographs or by means of didactical approaches such as role-play, e.g. in the form of a public hearing.¹⁴⁷ Taken together, these materials provided an understanding of the physical, social, and psychological effects of attacks by nuclear weapons. As a whole, the curriculum intended to create a critical attitude towards nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁸

Like the textbook on Vietnam, the textbook on nuclear weapons rejected a solely cognitive approach. The materials were aimed at developing a reflective attitude and engagement. Involving students in this major political debate was consistent with the notion of participatory democracy, embraced relatively broadly in the Netherlands by political parties on the left, although it also fit within reformist ideas on education.

Conclusion

This article addresses the aims and strategies of the Dutch Working Group for Peace Education in its implementation of peace education in schools within the period of the Cold War. Because of the Dutch polarised political climate within this period and the frequently launched accusations of indoctrination, we analysed the work of the Group according to three critical elements that could make education vulnerable to accusations of indoctrination: doctrines, intentions, and teaching methods.

With regard to the content and existence of doctrines, we conclude that the Working Group aimed to provide knowledge, multiple views, and stimulate exploration, while also revealing power mechanisms, distrusting ideological justifications, and stimulating action by emphasising the need to consider the individual positions and responsibility of students. At the same time, the Working Group did their best to avoid “unfalsifiable beliefs beyond any criticism”. . Within the Cold War context of communism versus capitalism, the authors of the materials were told to opt for a balanced approach. In the case of Vietnam, the textbook made an effort to depict the various perspectives within the conflict. In the textbook on nuclear weapons, the Working Group adopted a critical stance towards the arms race, but stressed that the issue was very complex, depicting it as a dilemma requiring a choice between two evils.

With regard to the intentions of the Working Group, our analysis reveals that the members of the Working Group were aware of their vulnerability to accusations of indoctrination. They therefore took measures to reduce this risk and, probably due to experiences with the rather unsuccessful LEDO project, they invited various organisations, including the Association of Dutch History Teachers, to join in the development of the curriculum, thereby hoping to rally support for their work. While the Working Group considered value-free peace education impossible, they embraced the broadly accepted international values of the United Nations.

With regard to the methods applied in the classroom, a critical and evidence-directed teaching style was considered crucial to avoid fuelling accusations of indoctrination. By allowing divergent perspectives, the curriculum required teachers to be open minded, to have a clear understanding of whose opinions they were voicing, to provide room for

¹⁴⁷Ter Veer, *Handleiding*, 15, appendix 4 [Teacher's guide] GA, Archives of Haags Vredesplatform (1428–01), 228.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 23.

exploration by the students themselves, and to engage in a non-authoritarian relationship with their students. Students were provided with various kinds of materials that allowed them to penetrate the topics and to develop a personal understanding, on both a cognitive and an emotional level.

In conclusion, within the Cold War context the members of the Working Group for Peace Education were well aware of the possibility of accusations of indoctrination, as were other educators who at the time propagated peace education.¹⁴⁹ But they had a mission, as they saw education as a means to both stimulate peace at home and prevent war between nations. While strongly motivated to change the world, they wanted to enhance social engagement among students by encouraging them to take a well-reasoned position on the complicated global issues of war and peace. Within the Netherlands this was a risky mission, because of the polarised Dutch political climate of the 1970s, itself in large part a manifestation of the Cold War. The aims of the Working Group could easily provoke accusations of indoctrination. Yet, their mission fitted within the Dutch tradition of rejecting patriotism and promoting anti-war sentiment which was firmly rooted in the Dutch foreign policy of neutrality prior to World War II

The Working Group's strategy was to adopt a cautious and balanced approach in presenting the themes and to stress that students should be free to make up their own minds. Through this approach, the Working Group promoted the dialogical method and capitalised on rationality, also advanced by various philosophers as a safeguard against indoctrination. This approach, which also had political connotations, blended with ideas on pedagogy. It was embedded within the educational reform movement in the Netherlands, which had traditionally maintained close ties to pacifism since the period of World War I. It was also consistent with the contemporary and international reforms in history education, which were characterised by the dominance of a thematic approach, an emphasis on contemporary history, a high appraisal of social issues, and emphasis on the importance of emotion and of critical reflection. These aspects probably made the Group's work appealing to history teachers, especially the more progressive ones. This case study therefore shows that the three key factors for the development of peace education brought forward by Behr, Megeran, and Carnaffan, namely place, politics and pedagogy, can also be used to explain the Dutch case of peace education debates and practices. This case study furthermore shows the entanglement of these factors.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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¹⁴⁹Vriens, *Tussen visie*, 6–7.

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