

SUMMER PROJECTS S.D.S.

Mothers for Adequate Welfare (MAW) is an organization of mothers receiving Aid to Dependent Children. At the present time, it is centered in the South End of Boston, but has contacts in Roxbury and other areas of the city. The group includes Negroes, whites, and Puerto Ricans.

Welfare mothers are forced to live in unsatisfactory conditions under the present welfare system. They receive allowances for rent, fuel, and utilities which are significantly below the going rates for the poorest sections of the city. Inadequate allowances force them to spend inadequate sums on food and clothing for their children and themselves. They receive no allowances for transportation or entertainment. Mothers are entirely dependent on their social workers for information about what is available to them. Frequently they never learn that they are entitled to special grants for furniture and major appliances, as well as many other items. Few mothers have any knowledge of their rights. They find the complete dependency on another individual degrading. The welfare department frequently treats recipients as inferiors who know so little that their ideas about the administration of welfare are irrelevant.

Last summer, MAW worked on a campaign to get surplus food for Boston welfare mothers. The city has to request this aid from the Federal government. After this campaign was successfully completed, MAW began to organize a drive for higher allowances for rent. MAW has introduced two bills into the state legislature and has testified in their behalf at hearings on the bills. One bill would raise the rent allowance, the other would authorize the publication of the rules and regulations of the welfare department. In addition, there is another bill in the legislature which would consolidate the local welfare administrations in Massachusetts into a unified state administration. The state would set up local service centers to handle the administration of welfare services. These centers would have advisory boards which would include welfare mothers as members. It seems unlikely that these bills will pass unless we can organize concerned people into action.

This summer MAW will concentrate on several projects. In many cases, individuals have complaints but are too intimidated to complain to the welfare department if they feel they are not backed by an organization. MAW has begun to handle these grievances, trying to get more attention and cooperation from the welfare department. Publication of the organization's newsletter, which goes to all the members, will continue. Some of the mothers would like to contact sympathetic groups about the legislative campaigns which the group is involved in. This would include writing a brochure about the group, and speaking to various groups both in and outside of Boston. If the bill to publish the rules and regulations is defeated, MAW would like to write and publish a simplified version of the rules. Now that rent strikes have been legalized in Massachusetts, MAW is considering moving into this area. The housing situation is especially critical for Puerto Rican mothers, for they are forced to live in the worst of housing.

MAW continued. There will be some student organizers working on some of these projects this summer. They have been asked to support themselves. At least as important, however, is to get some of the mothers ~~organizing~~ working as organizers. Some of them are eager to do this, but they need a small salary to cover costs of babysitting and transportation. MAW has the potential for expanding into other areas of the city, and in new directions, but support from other groups is needed.

FREE UNIVERSITY OF BOSTON.

In the past five or six years the student movement has developed a critique of education which has laid bare the exploitative and constricting nature of the American educational system. Students returning from civil rights activity and community organizing projects found little of relevance in academia to the problems central to their concerns. Educated adults, reawakened to social consciousness by the human rights revolution, found their formal training of limited value. They realized that this system's concept of education, from pre-school to graduate school, narrow and biased. Perhaps most indicative of the severe limits of the university were the numbers of people excluded -- people struggling against the oppression of poverty and racism, increasingly in need of the intellectual tools to deal with their condition. Many Americans had become concerned with the problem of social change; the educational institutions to which they turned were committed to the maintenance of the status quo.

The experience in the Freedom Movement has also demonstrated the ways in which a power structure could manipulate and dominate its subjects -- they saw the educational system with new eyes and began to understand the way in which multivocisties ~~serve~~ a social system they are committed to change. They saw themselves and their friends being trained to serve an inhuman and de-humanizing society. -- a society whose educational system teaches people only to make a living, giving up or ignoring ~~the~~ important human values, instead of encouraging them to discover how to use those values personally and socially. On the one hand, resistance to ~~the~~ domination, and on the other, a deeply aware and ~~sensitive~~ appreciation of what education should be, have led to on-campus rebellions, and widespread apathy to education in the community.

Beyond this direct protest, and in addition to student pressure for university reform, the concern for socially and personally relevant education has resulted in a wide variety of experiments under the rubric of "free university". These probing expeditions have been an effort not simply to make a "better" institution for ~~the~~ higher education, but to establish a community for learning. We believe that beginning such an experiment in Boston will provide a unique situation in which social action and thought ~~is~~ may be integrated, and ~~where~~ where the development of a radical intellectual community will be possible.

Such a community might include programs aimed at filling the needs of various groups, ~~among~~ among them: students and organizers seeking both the theoretical and empirical bases for ideology;

people in community organizations who want to learn organizing skills, participate in political discussion, and gain or regain some aspects of general education; suburban opponents of the war who will want information as well as tools and perspective for organizing in middle class neighborhoods; professionals who are trying to redefine their roles in terms of social objectives; teachers and students dissatisfied with the content of their previous educational experience, as well as by the university's approach to learning and to the social relevance of intellectual activity; artists, writers, and actors who seek to explore new dimensions in their work, or to relate their work to the movement.

"Free university" is an inadequate label for the kind of experiment which is called for. Education should be a total and dynamic process: total, because it is not simply training for some future productive role, but a creative and immediately rewarding endeavor involving all of the student's ~~xxxxxx~~ faculties in social and personal discovery; dynamic, because it is not just the accumulation of information, but an exploratory relation between people. Institutional structure as well as curricula must be designed to maximize opportunity for creative innovation, while ensuring continued commitment to its goals.

The difficult task of building such a "community for learning" calls for a wide variety of talents, concerns, and experience in an effort which we hope will interest you. If the Free University is to begin operation in September as we hope, working groups must be established immediately to plan both structure and program. Committees should be established to deal with three fundamental areas of concern.

First, the general conception of the experiment in learning is not fully developed. It is necessary that a working group attempt to set out the conditions under which creative involvement in learning may be possible, and to suggest the institutional framework within which those conditions can be met. This group would be expected to develop more fully the vision and purpose of the community for learning through discussion about the areas of study to be included and the groups to be involved. It would further be expected to present a structural design suitable for meeting the needs of a highly diversified constituency.

A central problem which must be dealt with is the technique of decision-making. It has been suggested that those people prepared to make a major commitment to the experiment and who wish to participate in general policy formation constitute a cooperative with responsibility for building and maintaining the community. A second working group should develop guidelines for such a body. This group would work out and specify the relation between the free university as a whole and the cooperative.

Finally, committees must be set up to plan programming. While it is clear that a total program to meet all the needs and interests suggested earlier will not emerge fullblown at the end of the summer, working groups should be established to begin to consider a variety of programs, to find out what potential students want, and to develop seminar descriptions. One of the results of the summer's work should be courses which have been defined and are ready to go in the fall.

Making a free university for Boston will be a ~~major~~ major undertaking, and an important one. The project is new, the ideas are still being formed, the approach is exploratory and innovative. There will be a working meeting for people who are seriously interested and able to work on organizing the free university this summer on June 7, at 7:30 P.M. at 317 Memorial Drive, Cambridge. If you are interested, call Chuck Levenstein, 445-3893.

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION IN THE EIGHTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

This summer we must begin to bridge the gap between our analysis of American society and the strategy by which we attempt to change it. Despite the fact that even an analysis as profound and perceptive as Carl Oglesby's "World Revolution and American Containment" leaves many important questions unanswered, we know enough now to see that the war in Vietnam can best be understood as an attempt to preserve the international status quo and protect the boundaries of a world in which United States interests are free to trade and invest on their own terms. From this analysis it follows that the dismantling and destruction of the economic and military foundations of American imperialism is the prerequisite for peace. But there is little connection at the present time between our perceptions as to how peace must come and our concrete efforts to achieve it.

Ironically enough, the peace movement is weak today at a time when the tenor of public opinion suggests that it could and should be strong. Today the polls indicate that the majority of Americans would endorse steps by the President like negotiating with the NLF which go directly contrary to current Administration policy; and many of those who advocate more drastic military measures such as full-scale bombing of North Vietnam or China do so with the mistaken belief that this could bring a speedy end to the war. But public opinion in this sense is politically ineffective, because it is disorganized (he means unorganized -- ed.), and because only a minority of those who are for peace question the ends which make the war necessary. Worse still, outside the campus community even those who understand the issues involved in Vietnam tend to be inactive politically, and may become apathetic and demoralized now that petitions, demonstrations, and ads directed at the government have proven themselves to be a waste of time and money. Working to elect a Congressional candidate who has both an established position in the two-party framework and a somewhat better stand on the issue of peace in Vietnam offers an escape from apathy. But without a strong constituency for peace there is little to hold him to his promises, or intimations, or polite nods of the head, as the case might be, after the election. Immersing oneself in a political campaign, even a successful one, does not, unfortunately, build the constituency necessary for peace. Under these circumstances to campaign is to ignore the fact that Congress is already crawling with men who were "concerned about Vietnam", and who are willing to listen politely to a well-behaved peace delegation from the suburbs. But how can they demand that their Congressmen do what they have not done -- undertake political action which challenges the very foundations of the empire?

Working for a peace candidate is another possibility fraught with pitfalls. In principle a peace campaign can provide the voters with an alternative to present war policies. In practice a campaign

which begins 6 to 9 months before the election can do little but provide an alternative for those who are already convinced or who can be reached easily. Good public relations can improve the picture somewhat, but in the absence of a well-developed political organization much of the support generated will drift away after the election, demoralized if the campaign has been a bad one. Lack of preparation compounds the difficulties inherent in a single issue campaign. The candidate whose only concern is peace in Vietnam is put in the position either of providing simple answers for what is in fact a complex question, involving as it does fundamental considerations on the nature of our society, or continually raising a painful question for which he has no answers. When faced with public incomprehension the candidate will be tempted to moderate his approach in a way which will make it more acceptable to the general public, at the expense of the educational value the campaign might otherwise have. Furthermore, lack of an overall analysis and program not only prevents the peace candidate from challenging the prevailing world view, but it prevents him from linking his concerns to the concerns of constituencies whose ideals and interests are also stifled by the Johnson consensus.

When it comes to community organizing in the ghettos, the gap is as ~~xxx~~ wide between our analysis of society and how to attempt to change it. A movement which does not have the perspective of taking power even within the limits of the ghetto can offer poor people few opportunities to participate in the decisions which affect their lives. A movement which does not offer an analysis of society and a political program which bears some relation to it will remain a prisoner of the middle class politics which it seeks to combat. There is reason now ~~xxx~~ to believe that ~~x~~ there are in fact few opportunities for white people to participate meaningfully and constructively in the political life of black communities. As the success of the PLP has made imperialism painful for most if not all elements in American society, perhaps a series of Watts rebellions ~~xxxx~~ led by black people will have the same effect on the domestic scene. But without an analysis which relates poverty and racism to the other excrescences of American capitalism, and an effective radical political ~~xf~~ organization which can make the connections real, the ghetto rebellions are likely to be drowned in blood, and ghetto life continue on in isolated misery.

If this critique of our present strategy is correct ~~ix~~ it suggests that SDS must strengthen its efforts to develop both a radical analysis of the present American system, and in general terms at least ~~may~~ an alternative to it. It suggests furthermore that we must strive in every way possible to relate this analysis of the present and vision of the future to our day to day political work, on the campus and in the community. Where the radical constituency is weak the strategy chosen ~~xx~~ will of necessity reflect certain compromises which will ultimately limit the effectiveness of the approach; but where the radical constituency is relatively strong there is no reason to accept these limitations. The experience of the Committee for Independent Political Action in New York City provides an interesting and relevant example of a new approach. In principle the CIP's organizing effort reflects the belief that radical politics to be serious must attempt to deal with the fundamental issue of American corporate power. In terms of strategy CIP's is an attempt to build an independent political movement,

independent in the sense that it is controlled by the people and not by the power structure, and independent in the sense that it attempts to challenge the ideological and material basis of American corporate power. In terms of political tactics CIPA reflects a synthesis of electoral and community organizing techniques which seems to offer greater possibilities for community mobilization around a radical program than one or the other used separately.

At the center of the CIPA approach is a series of explicit programmatic demands first formulated by the organizers but subject to revision by the organization once it is constituted, demands which link the issues together and provide a common basis for membership. Though some of the demands are bound to be more utopian than others, ideally the program should be radical in the sense that it challenges the present system and reveals its nature, real in the sense that it provides for important improvements in the lives of the people living in the community, and reasonable in the sense that in part it represents concessions which could be extracted from the present system in the foreseeable future. Electoral politics at the local, state, and federal levels is a means for realizing at least part of the program as well as for building an organization around it. Independent electoral politics as conceived of by CIPA is inherently radical because it seeks to exploit the contradiction in bourgeois politics between formal democracy and concrete powerlessness. Electoral politics is an accepted means by which people from different groups come together for a common effort around common programs embodying general as well as particular concerns, and electoral politics holds out the prospect of meaningful if limited power, which is in itself an important incentive for undertaking political action of any kind.

From community organizing CIPA takes the idea of a political organization organized from the ground up which functions on a year-round basis to serve the needs of its community. Thus issues like rents, urban renewal, police brutality, and retail prices which cannot be handled effectively through the electoral process by a local political organization should be attacked by demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts. Thus CIPA as a form of struggle attempts to deal with the limits of the electoral process as well as its uses. Ideally, the ideals of participatory democracy which were central to the concerns of the two experiments should be at the core of the CIPA projects as well. Though formally the New York CIPA is organized around a congressional district, in fact the power resides with the neighborhood locals, where the activities and programs are debated and decided upon. It is debated like those which will decide whether radical politics can provide a meaningful alternative to the present system.

This summer is in any respect an ideal time to begin laying the foundation for independent political action in the 6th Congressional District in Massachusetts, which encompasses Dorchester, Cambridge, Brookline, and three wards of Boston. Over the last two years SDS has built up a substantial base in the Boston area schools. Activity on the part of peace organizations has created substantial sentiment against the war in Brookline and in the academic and professional communities of Cambridge. Urban renewal is a big issue throughout the greater Boston area, and in Cambridge the Inner Belt highway threatens to displace 1500 working class families. Activities envisaged for the summer are primarily programmatic research and getting to know the district well. By the fall we hope to have a tentative program as well as contacts in every important community in the district so that serious door-to-door organizing can begin immediately after the elections.

SUMMER WORK WITH HOSPITAL WORKERS' UNION

On Monday, April 11, two Boston hospital workers called the New England Regional Office and requested that students in SDS help them in their attempt to organize Jewish Memorial Hospital in Roxbury. SDS began immediately to give whatever aid it could; we ran off petitions and leaflets, had union cards printed up, started contacting doctors, ministers and civil rights organizations for support for the workers, and made ourselves available for picketing at the hospital.

Our decision to help out the Hospital Workers' and Patients' Betterment Association, which is what the union was called, was based on two reasons. First of all, the workers' demands - for recognition of the Association, Blue-cross and Blue-~~Shield~~ benefits, a minimum wage of \$1.65/hour to be raised up to \$2.00/hour after a year, training programs, consultation in determining the food policy of the hospital, time-and-a-half for overtime, and protection for workers who engaged in union activities - were clearly just. The workers needed all the support they could get. And SDS was particularly well-equipped in terms of contacts in the liberal community and facilities for mimeographing etc. to give assistance. We were concerned, however, that SDS not be the only outside group that got involved, since a picket line of only white, college students alongside the hospital workers could have negative effects on other workers. In the past two months a number of civil rights groups, and particularly CORE, have also been sending people to hospital worker meetings, picket lines, and meetings with trustees of the hospital and other contacts.

Our second reason for committing ourselves to getting a lot of people to work during the rest of the school year and during the summer has to do with the kind of a union the HWPBA is and can become. Most students now working on the hospital have been members of the Boston SDS Labor Committee, and have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate aspects of the American labor movement. While it is impossible to generalize about all unions, our work in the Labor Committee has indicated that most unions are highly undemocratic and have a very narrow view of what their responsibilities toward their members are. Many in the grand tradition of pragmatic, "business" unionism consider themselves as "business agents" for their "clients," the organized workers. The unions collect dues; in return the workers get paid a little better than unorganized workers in the same jobs and have regular contracts with grievance procedures, seniority provisions etc. Many unions, because of their "dollars and cents" orientation, have been unwilling to organize hospital workers, because they are too poorly paid to pay the union high dues, and they are not covered by the NLRB, and this makes organizing them more difficult and more costly.

The HWPBA, in contrast, was organized by the workers themselves, independent of any affiliation with a national union. It is demanding, in addition to union recognition and better wages and working condition that the administration treat the workers decently - so that employees will no longer be singled out and intimidated by the director and head of nursing, or bribed by flattery and nickle pay-raises to keep out of the union. The Association wants to help workers in the community as well. The President of the Association has put forward a number of long-range plans, including a credit union, training programs, and various types of community programs. The members of the Association are desirous of helping all hospital workers in Boston to get organized, so that their fight will become city-wide and they will all gain in strength by joining up together.

In addition, many members of the Association have had experience in the Civil Rights movement and are interested in having the HWPB eventually get involved in community issues.

At the outset the Association was led almost entirely by the President, who was fired for union activities from his job as an x-ray technician. But recently many of the other workers have taken a more active part in making decisions and planning strategy, and this has led to more effective organizing work within the hospital, where over a majority of the workers are now members of the Association. The hospital workers still realize, though, that they are far short of having attained the level of organization and participation necessary to win. Some of the members do not attend meetings, and some have never even walked the picket lines. And internally, the Association is not as efficient and well-organized as it could be. But the hospital workers are determined to get the Association recognized and to back up their demands by collective action. They have attracted the support of many organizations in the Boston area, and pressure on the hospital to recognize the Association is building up.

Student help is still needed, especially over the summer months. Contact Hal Benenson or Emily Perkins through the Regional Office, or Hal Benenson at Adams B-46, Harvard, Cambridge 88, Mass. (868-5048) until June 7.

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The Boston SDS Seminar Program will be continuing over the Summer under the auspices of the Boston Summer Project. Topics for research and weekly reading assignments will include: Studies in Radical Social Movements, Recent European Marxist Theory, Power in American Society, Problems and Organizations in the New Left. The actual format will be decided on at the planning meeting on Saturday, June 4, 1:00, at Adams B-46. Call Debbie Levenson at 854-1207 for further information.

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The Radical Education Project

Two working groups are being constituted in Cambridge this summer under the auspices of the REP. One will be doing research on the relationship between business and government, and how this relationship affects military and foreign policy; the other, will be exploring the relationship between participatory democracy and socialism. Research work is needed in many other areas as well, particularly those related to our practical efforts such as the relationship between the present organization of American medicine and adequate standards of health care for the population at large and decent work conditions in medical institutions.

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JUNE NATIONAL COUNCIL WILL BE IN ANN ARBOR. Preceding it, also in Ann Arbor, a workshop on the relevance of electoral politics (theory) June 15-17. N.C. is June 18-19. Following it a week-long, expenses-paid (including travel to the NC) conference on electoral politics skills. Many of the ones covered (Door to door visiting, fund-raising) may be of general interest as well. Contact the summer office, 2076 Mass. Ave.

THE BOSTON SUMMER PROJECT

The Boston area appears to be a logical site for a major SDS organizing effort this summer. The Boston area is in many respects the focus for the political and economic life of New England. Because of the many schools here, and because the Boston area has been a center for peace activity for many years, SDS has potentially at least substantial manpower ~~and~~ and financial resources available. Over the last two years SDS has been able to develop at least the beginnings of a base in certain middle class and poor communities in the Boston area, and more recently among working people. While this does not mean that all SDS activities in New England should be concentrated in the Boston area, it does ~~suggest~~ suggest that SDS people who desire to remain active this summer, and lack the resources or the experience to undertake projects in their own communities, should consider seriously coming here to join in our efforts. (PAX is willing to provide financial and other assistance for local peace organizing outside of Boston. See their prospectus enclosed) While financial resources are very limited at this time, there will be enough money available to provide a subsistence for at least some of those working on the project. Those who have some means of their own should come prepared to bear their share of the burden. All should come prepared to work very, very hard.

Activities under discussion are as follows: helping to organize and support a hospital workers' union; working with a welfare mothers' union in Roxbury and the South End; organizing for SDS on summer school campuses; helping to organize professional, trade ~~and~~ union, and youth committees for peace; laying the foundation for an independent political organization in the 8th Congressional District (Cambridge, Brookline, Somerville, and 3 wards in Boston); research work connected with the Radical Education Project; and helping to set up a community elementary school in Roxbury and a Free University in Boston which will open in the fall. As we see it now the core of the project itself will be small discussion groups where people engaged in different activities will discuss their experiences and criticize their work. With these discussions as a foundation everyone active on the project will come together ~~to~~ to attempt to formulate an over-all strategy for the project and allocate its resources in relation to that strategy. In addition, we envisage a series of seminars where people on the project come together to study and discuss ~~the~~ topics relevant to their political work.

What follows is a series of prospecti on different areas of political work. While many of these activities are well underway, what happens in relation to each of them will depend in large measure on the skills and interests of those who are willing to work, and the decisions of the project itself. The first meeting of the project will be Thursday, June 2, at 7:30 PM at the Phillips Brooks House at Harvard. We have an office for the summer at 2076 Mass Ave., Cambridge; phone 547-5457. If no answer there, call John Maher, 491-2837.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Roxbury Work-Study Project is now hiring college men to participate in the Boston Redevelopment Authority Rehabilitation Program now in progress in the Washington Park urban renewal area of Roxbury.

The Project runs for 9 weeks beginning June 18; students will receive \$300 for the summer, in addition to free room and board.

Work will consist of painting and other non-professional repairs on Roxbury homes, and some recreation work with neighborhood children.

The program will include group discussions, and meetings with community and city leaders.

For information, call Susan Himmelfarb at 427-2430.

There are openings for half-time and full-time jobs (good pay) as field survey workers for a new poverty program in a Boston suburb. Your employer would be a non-profit community organization. A graduate student with experience in community organizing could be considered for the director's job: full time with high salary. If interested, call 224-4700, ext. 224.

The American Friends Service Committee is changing its focus in the New England region from one of mainly counseling conscientious objectors to one of providing draft information for all young men regardless of their beliefs. It will involve co-operative effort on the part of many different organizations this summer to distribute the knowledge of the Draft Information Service to people who have not heard about it through previously existing channels.

There will be a series of new pamphlets forthcoming on relating Viet Nam and the draft and a poster campaign of "If you have a 1-A and don't want it, call us up." In order to deal with the persons who do get in touch with us, we need adequate counseling. If you want to volunteer as a counselor and receive a packet of information, write to the American Friends Service Committee, Box 247, Cambridge. If you can help us in distributing the posters or the pamphlets, also contact us. We need all your support on this pilot project.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

If you want to receive the New England Regional Newsletter, Dirt and Flowers, this summer, please fill out and return the form below. There will be at least two issues during the summer, covering both SDS projects and news of the movement in New England generally. Summer issues are free -- but if you want to get it we must have your address.

NAME _____

SCHOOL OR HOME ADDRESS NEXT FALL
(if different)

SUMMER ADDRESS _____

Mail to: Larry Gordon, 10 Brookford St, Dorchester Mass. 02125

MASS. PAX OFFERS EMPLOYMENT

Mass. PAX is interested in hiring one or two teams of two students each during the summer for a grass-roots peace education project. The rationale of the project is as follows:

People who live in the metropolitan areas of Massachusetts have already access to information about the war in Vietnam, speakers on peace issues, and the services of organizations working for peace. Such resources rarely, however, reach the small towns and rural areas. Local papers tend to ignore international news to a large extent. The few people in smaller towns concerned with peace often have no means of converting their concern into effective action. In short, there are many people outside the major metropolitan areas who need information about the war and direct contact with the anti-war movement.

PAX proposes sending one or two teams of two students to travel around the Commonwealth during the summer, concentrating exclusively on the smaller communities. In each town they would distribute large quantities of literature prepared by PAX. They would also organize public meetings in many towns, drawing on local speakers if possible, or on people drawn from a speakers bureau in the Boston area. Valuable contacts could be made or strengthened with local ministers or civic leaders; a story about the students and their purpose would be placed in the local press. In the end the students should leave behind a better-informed community and the beginnings of an effective local organization to continue the effort.

PAX is interested in hiring students who are hard workers, good speakers, and who have a talent for organization. They would, of course, be expected to express the PAX viewpoint, which, however, is similar in many respects to that of SDS. Each worker will receive a small salary plus all expenses for the period tentatively extending from June through early September.

Those interested should contact PAX, 44 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, tel. (617) 491-0650.