

THE UNITY PROCESS

A HANDBOOK

1987



sane Committee for a
SANE Nuclear Policy

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Kay Shaw and Rich West, Editors

Dear Friends,

This packet of information and opinion on the FREEZE/SANE Unity Commission proposal is a joint project of Freeze and SANE. It has been sent to all subscribers to the Freeze Local Organizers Mailing and to local organizers of SANE.

Since the Unity Commission began its work last spring, both of our offices have been flooded with letters and phone calls from grassroots activists asking questions and expressing opinions about the merger proposal. We've tried to put together a packet which addresses some of the major issues that we've heard people consistently raising.

- o The article by David Adams places the Unity proposal in an historical context and relates it to past social change movements in the U.S.
- o Jack Odell's essay presents a case for the political need for a dramatic step toward unity in the peace movement.
- o "On the Threshold" describes how and why the Unity Commission came into being.
- o "From the Grassroots" reflects a sampling of the input the commission has been receiving from around the country.
- o The thumbnail sketches of SANE and national Freeze give basic data about the two organizations.
- o The Unity Proposal draft (Program and Credo Summary and Proposed Guiding Principles for Structure) is introduced by Unity Commission co-chairs Nick Carter and Cora Weiss. Nick and Cora have summarized the major reasons why the Commission members believe the idea of a merger deserves serious consideration.

The Unity Proposal itself is where we hope you'll look long and hard. It describes in broad brush strokes what the new organization would look like. The Unity Commission has sent the proposal to local groups where listeners have been seeking input and reactions from the grassroots. The results of the listening process will be incorporated into the final proposal - the version to be voted on by the board of SANE and National Conference of the Freeze. The people charged with the task of coordinating and summarizing the results of the listening process are Pam Baker (617-922-2455) and Gene Carroll (202-544-0880). Your participation in this feedback process is extremely important.

A merger of two of the largest peace organizations in the nation is a dramatic step. You are being asked to help decide if that step should be taken. The papers in this mailing present reasons from a number of perspectives for why a merger should happen. As an active participant in the Freeze or SANE (or possibly both) you know your organization. You understand its strengths and weaknesses, especially as they relate to mobilizing citizens in your community to demand an end to the arms race.

We're asking you to evaluate the Unity proposal and the arguments in favor of merger and help both organizations answer the really important question - Will a merger help us achieve our goal of ending the threat of nuclear war and achieving real peace with justice in our world?

Dotty Burt
Acting Director
Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign

David Cortright
Executive Director
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ABOUT THE FREEZE

The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign is a nationwide grassroots citizens' movement to end the nuclear arms race. It is dedicated to achieving a bilateral, verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons as a first step toward reversing the arms race.

The national office of the Freeze is located in Washington, DC. The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign is a 501(c)(4) organization with a separate corporation, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Education Fund, filling the educational role of a 501(c)(3) entity.

The annual budget of the national Freeze is approximately \$1 million. The staff in the national office include an Executive Director, Director of Membership and Program, Director of Development, Legislative Coordinator, Field and Citizen's Lobby Coordinator, Resource Coordinator, Receptionist, and four administrative and fiscal positions.

The major role of the national office is to coordinate, support, and develop local and state organizations throughout the U.S. Forty-two state and local level Freeze organizations employ approximately 110 staff and have combined budgets of over \$2 million. Over 1800 local groups, the majority of them volunteer-run, participate in Freeze programs and organizational activities.

The major services provided by the national Freeze office include:

- The monthly *Local Organizers Mailing* sent to 800 state and local Freeze leaders.
- Legislative updates and lobbying strategies for local citizen lobby groups.
- Work with members of Congress to develop Freeze related legislation
- Action ideas and information for promoting Freeze program priorities.
- Field organizing assistance to developing state and local groups.
- Development of new resources.
- Membership program development support.
- A quarterly newsletter to members of the Freeze (membership program is in early stages of implementation).
- Coordination of the governing bodies and the annual Freeze national conference.
- Maintenance of personal and telephone contact with Freeze leaders nationwide.

The annual national conference of the Freeze Campaign is the highest decision-making body. It adopts an annual strategic plan. The National Committee, made up of 79 seats, one per state plus others for underrepresented constituencies and supporting national organizations, is empowered to review the strategy proposal to be presented to the national conference, and elects the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee, made up of 14 seats, serves as the corporate board for the Freeze Campaign.

ABOUT SANE

Nearly thirty years ago, *Saturday Review* editor Norman Cousins and Clarence Pickett, executive secretary of American Friends Service Committee, called an ad hoc committee together in New York to discuss ending atmospheric testing. Out of that meeting came the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, formed "to develop public support for a broadly conceived and executed policy which will lead mankind away from war and toward peace and justice." The Committee (soon known as SANE) quickly built an effective national organization. Its work was pivotal in the fight to stop testing, culminating in 1963 with the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty.

Since then, key SANE campaigns have included ending U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, fighting the proposed ABM system in 1969, working on economic conversion with the labor movement, leading the fight against the MX, and pushing for the Freeze resolution. SANE's current campaigns focus on disarmament and nonintervention: stopping nuclear testing, ending U.S. intervention in Central America, and pushing for an alternative military budget. Tactics include local organizing, lobbying, electoral work, mass demonstrations, publicity events, and public education.

SANE's membership is currently 140,000, up from 20,000 at the beginning of the Reagan administration. The organization consists of three separate corporations, SANE, Inc., the membership organization; the National SANE Education Fund; and SANE PAC, a political action committee. The combined budget is over \$4 million, of which about 90% is generated by members.

The Board of Directors of SANE, as the highest decision-making body for the organization, sets general policy and program. Thirty members of the Board are elected by the membership to represent regions, and the other half is elected by the Board itself as national members. Marcus Raskin, director of Institute for Policy Studies, and William Wimpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, are the Board co-chairs.

The national staff, based in Washington, DC, numbers 30 people, including 7 field organizers, 4 communications and publications staff, and 2 political/lobbying staff.

SANE's national canvass is also part of its field program, operating in seven cities for the purpose of local organizing, educational outreach, membership recruitment, and fundraising. Canvass offices have been involved in such national and local campaigns as economic conversion work, Central America Initiative.

SANE has 50 chapters around the country whose combined budget is approximately \$600,000. Local groups control their own budgets and programs, although most participate in a national membership renewal program and receive dues-sharing funds from national. The field staff and chapter relations committee of the Board are committed to a chapter policy that meets the needs of locals.

THE PLACE OF THE FREEZE IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN PEACE MOVEMENTS

David Adams

The FREEZE has a special place in the history of American peace movements, and its strategy should be planned with that in mind, including the proposal for merger with SANE. At a time of unparalleled danger and opportunity in world history, the FREEZE has attained the respect of the American people, and thereby it has taken on an historical obligation to transform that respect into effective political action. It is a time of unparalleled danger because of the development of hair-trigger readiness for nuclear war that would mean an end of all civilizations no matter what their ideology or "military preparedness." And it is a time of unparalleled opportunity because on one side, the Soviet Union, has taken unilateral action, the test moratorium, and made concrete proposals to back away from nuclear confrontation and to establish a process towards disarmament.

In its development so far the FREEZE has shared in both the strengths and weaknesses of the American peace movements that have gone before. We need to understand those strengths and weaknesses, build on the strengths and learn from and correct the weaknesses in order to fulfill our historical obligation.

The strength of the FREEZE is its mass involvement of the American people. It has involved millions of Americans, putting it in the category of the Anti-Imperialist League (1898-1902), the People's Council of America (1917-1919), the American League against War and Fascism and the Emergency Peace Campaign (1933-1939), Progressive Citizens of America (1946-1948), and the "Mobes" against the Vietnam War (1966-1970).¹

Mass peace movements do not arise spontaneously and are not "invented" by wise or eminent people, but they develop out of the fear of war and the real suffering caused by war in the general populace. The mass peace movements that responded to the Spanish and Philippine Wars of 1898-1902, World War I, and the Vietnam War grew in response to the returning coffins of American soldiers. And the mass peace movements that responded to the rising threat of fascism in the 1930's and the development of the Cold War after World War II were responses to the threat of war and were linked closely to the economic suffering of the depression and the anti-labor policies after World War II and the labor and civil rights movements that developed in response.

Today's mass peace movement, identified so far with the FREEZE, is no exception in its origins. Although the important contribution of Randall Forsberg in formulating the FREEZE concept is justly recognized, the reason that the FREEZE was taken up by the people was because of the increased threat of war caused by the New Cold War and the massive diversion of federal funds to the military buildup and away from social programs. We may date this from the Senate's failure to ratify SALT II and from Carter's Presidential Directive 59 that laid plans for a first strike, policies that have been continued and expanded by the Reagan administration. Spurred by the warnings of the physician's movement, the people responded. There was an overwhelming vote for the FREEZE in the November 1982 referendums, highest in inner city precincts. Over 20 trade unions internationals endorsed the FREEZE. And the FREEZE continues to enjoy overwhelming support in public opinion polls.

From studying our history, we may conclude that we can succeed only insofar as we mobilize our broad base of support, engaging all classes, including full mobilization of the largest and potentially most

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powerful class -- working people. It was the entrance of American trade unions into the "Mobs" against the Vietnam War that swung the tide to victory. And the failures of the People's Council of America against World War I and the Progressive Citizens of America against Cold War can be traced to the loss of the struggle for trade union loyalty. The full mobilization of labor requires Black/White unity, since Afro-Americans and other national minorities in the U.S. are almost all wage workers and since racism has been used traditionally by the enemies of labor to split its ranks. I know that these facts have been discussed by the National Freeze Campaign over the years, but the resulting actions have not been adequate to the task and a new and successful effort is required.

The wars and war threats that trigger mass peace movements are rooted deeply in economic causes. The economic roots that have caused today's revival of the Cold War are similar to those that have caused previous wars and war threats, although, if anything, they have developed even further and become even more deeply rooted today:

- 1) The cyclical crises of overproduction and unemployment;
- 2) The exploitation of poorer neo-colonial countries by richer imperialist countries;
- 3) The economic rivalry of the imperialist powers for foreign markets and investment areas;
- 4) The attempt by the imperialist powers to stop the shrinkage of the sphere of the world that is "free" for unlimited capital investment and exploitation; and
- 5) The most recent and most dangerous development of the immensely profitable and risk-free business of the military-industrial complex.

These economic roots of war are absent, or, at least, much less powerful in the socialist countries.²

From the economic analysis of the roots of war, we may draw two very important conclusions. 1) Because the economic causes of war, and especially the recent rise of the military-industrial complex, are so deeply rooted, we must expect that the war danger can only be overcome by a sustained effort involving a full mobilization of all people. 2) Because the economic roots of war are not as compelling in the socialist countries, we may expect that the recent peace initiatives of the socialist countries, especially the proposals of Gorbachev, are not a transitory propaganda ploy, but a permanent peace program with which we must engage.

The most important trend of development of 20th Century peace movements has been their increasingly international, worldwide character. As war and war threats have engulfed more and more of the world, the response has required a more global mobilization. The Anti-Imperialist League failed to stop the war in the Philippines where half a million Philippines were killed and the country was subjugated, but the anti-Vietnam War movement was successful; the difference was the worldwide support for the latter. The American peace movements of the 1930's against fascism and of the 1940's against the rise of the Cold War were part of worldwide movements, but the latter failed when it was effectively isolated from the peace movements of the rest of the world.

We may conclude that today's peace movement in general, and the FREEZE in particular, will succeed only to the extent that it links up with the worldwide movements for peace and justice. Opportunities are at hand: the Soviet's unilateral test moratorium and the Gorbachev initiative for disarmament by the year 2000, the Peoples Peace Appeal, the Five Continent Peace Initiative, the International Year of Peace and its World Congress in Copenhagen, the Contadora Initiative, the initiatives of the non-aligned movement, etc. The American people

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expect leadership to engage them directly in these campaigns.

Finally, success of the peace movement in general and of the Freeze in particular depends upon overcoming the anti-communism that has been used traditionally to divide and destroy our historical predecessors. In thinking of a merger with SANE, we should discuss and overcome the historical failure of SANE to lead opposition to the Vietnam War because of their anti-communism that led them to refuse to take part with the Left in peace marches and rallies.³ And it was used to split the anti-fascist movement of the 30's into two competing national organizations. Today, once again, there are attempts to divide our movement with anti-communism, attempts that must be exposed and resisted if we are to build and maintain the unity that is needed.

In summary, the FREEZE has a unique historical obligation because of its leadership of the American peace movement at a time of unparalleled danger and opportunity. We must learn from our past: *base our work in the masses of the people, including all classes, rather than trying to cater to any "elite"; base our strategy on a full understanding of the economic roots of war; engage directly in the international initiatives for peace; and avoid the quagmire of anti-communism.* If a merger with SANE can be arranged that commits us all to these goals and helps accomplish them, let us do it with optimism and enthusiasm!

David Adams is a member of the Hartford Freeze and Professor of Psychology at Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT.

FOOTNOTES

¹The history of these mass peace movements and an analysis of the economic roots of the wars and war threats that caused them are outlined and documented in, *The American Peace Movements: History, Root Causes and Future*, David Adams, Department of Psychology, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT 06457.

²Among the fruits of anti-communism has been our woeful ignorance of the economics of socialist countries. Even sophisticated FREEZE activists, who know that socialism does not have cyclical overproduction and unemployment and does not allow private profit from economic production, whether military or otherwise, still believe that the Soviet Union is an "imperialist" power. This is not true. In the lead article of the November 29, 1985 issue of *Science*, the dean of Rand Corporation's graduate school, a Pentagon think-tank, points out that the net flow of wealth is from the Soviet Union to the smaller socialist countries and the Third World, in contrast to the U.S. and other imperialist countries who profit from their foreign economic relations. The author asks what are the benefits of Soviet foreign economic relations? He answers that they are "prestige, political prominence, Russian national pride, and justification for the sacrifices (sic) imposed on the Soviet populace by the Soviet system." None of these correspond to the classical Hobson definition of imperialism which is the use of government machinery to secure economic gains abroad.

³The failure of SANE to take leadership because they refused to take part in mass demonstrations against the Vietnam War since they would have to work with communists in order to do so (actually, it seems that they were troubled most by the Students for a Democratic Society) is documented by Zaroulis and Sullivan in their history of the anti-Vietnam War movement (*Who Spoke Up*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984).