

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014

December 28, 1977

TO ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

The attached report on the Mobilization for Survival convention held in Chicago, December 2-4, was prepared by Arnold Weissberg, who attended the convention. The report is for the information of comrades and should particularly be brought to the attention of comrades involved in antinuclear work.

Comradely,

Doug Jenness

Doug Jenness
National Office

REPORT ON MOBILIZATION FOR SURVIVAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

by Arnold Weissberg, December 16, 1977

The Mobilization for Survival (MFS) held its first national convention in Chicago over the December 2-4 weekend. The MFS is of interest to us because it has begun a national intervention into the antinuclear power movement.

The MFS was founded last spring. Its central leadership is made up of individuals such as Sid Lens, Norma Becker, Sid Peck, and others of the radical pacifist milieu. A big number of national, regional, and local organizations have affiliated with MFS. Affiliation seems to mean only agreement with all or most of the Mobilization's programmatic points. MFS has a very loose structure and can be called perhaps a national coordinating committee.

The MFS has four programmatic points: zero nuclear weapons, end the arms race, fund human needs, and no nuclear power. This last point was not in the original organizing call, but was added later after last spring's occupation of the Seabrook, New Hampshire, nuclear power plant site by 2,000 people.

MFS has a national office in Philadelphia, staffed on a full-time basis. Much of the staff appears to come from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). MFS local offices are located in AFSC offices.

Some 400 people attended the convention. There were almost no members of oppressed nationalities, the few exceptions being AFSC members. About 75 percent of the convention came from the traditional pacifist-peace movement and from various socially oriented religious groups. MFS has a "religious task force."

The convention agreed that MFS should involve itself in the following actions:

- 1) A "mass demonstration" at the United Nations next spring, called to coincide with a UN special session on disarmament. The action will apparently call for world disarmament. Convention participants saw the UN special session as a "historic opportunity" to advance world disarmament. Dave McReynolds, a longtime leader of the pacifist War Resisters League, told a plenary session he thought the demonstration could attract 25,000-50,000 people. Given the loose structure of MFS and the general lack of sharp interest in disarmament, I consider this estimate exaggerated.

- 2) "Save our Communities" week, early next year. The aim of this project is to demand that the government use money allocated for arms on human needs instead. No details were discussed.

- 3) An occupation at Seabrook June 24, sponsored by the Clamshell Alliance.

- 4) A demonstration at Rocky Flats, Colorado, against the

(over)

facility there that makes the plutonium "triggers" for hydrogen bombs. There will be workshops on Saturday, April 29, including nonviolence training sessions, a mass demonstration on Sunday, and "symbolic" civil disobedience on Monday. This action was called by the Rocky Flats Action Group.

5) A demonstration at the Barnwell, South Carolina, site of a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant that is expected to go into operation shortly. This action is on the same dates and has the same schedule as Rocky Flats. It was called by the Palmetto Alliance, a South Carolina antinuclear power coalition.

The projected mass actions at Rocky Flats and Barnwell, particularly, are activities we will want to become involved in.

It was clear from informal discussion (there was no formal, organized discussion on this question) that most of the conference participants--including the central MFS leadership--were not too interested in nuclear power, but their main concern is disarmament. This led to a camouflaged attempt to postpone the Barnwell action by claiming that the Rocky Flats action should be national in scope and that the Barnwell action would subtract from its impact. This notion has been rejected by the Palmetto Alliance.

The idea that two actions on the same day would have less impact than one is, of course, totally wrong. The antinuclear power movement is not nearly strong enough to pull off a single action national in scope. The two actions can only reinforce each other. It would be even better if there were more actions.

MFS has an almost religious commitment to civil disobedience as a strategy for building the movement. The longest debate of the weekend took place over whether to have civil disobedience at the UN or not--not whether to have it, but where. One side wanted it at the UN. The other side argued such action might be interpreted as anti-UN. Nobody questioned whether civil disobedience was useful. That took up forty minutes.

The real political differences came out during the debate over structure. The MFS national coordinating committee submitted a complex structure proposal, the aim of which was apparently to bring various national organizations into the leadership. Slots were allotted at the national leadership level for the antinuke groups, the Eastern Federation of Nuclear Opponents and Safe Energy Proponents, and Critical Mass, a monthly journal started by Ralph Nader. The plenary session recessed to allow regional caucuses to discuss the proposal. Since there had been no other place for such discussion, much of the regional caucus discussion centered on just what MFS was and what it was trying to do.

For example, the original proposal called for two national coordinators--Norma Becker and an MFS staffer on loan from AFSC. Many regions wanted to change that--by adding an antinuke person, more women, a Black, etc.

The debate revealed considerable tension between what most conference participants called "the energy people"--the antinuke activists--and the rest of the groups.

It was clear that MFS would rather not touch the antinuke issue. In fact, it appears that MFS can't touch it, since of the various questions MFS proposes to take up, only nuclear power has a real movement opposing it. Most of the antinuke activists see no reason to dissolve their organizations or to defer their battles in favor of some other issue. This tension was not resolved.

In my opinion, the antinuke activists came because they were seeking to expand their movement and try to go national. They thought MFS might be a previously built structure that would allow them to do that. But they were wrong.

The CP, a national endorser of MFS, also had people present. Sylvia Kushner, a prominent Chicago Stalinist, was at the convention. Gil Green, a national CP leader, was scheduled to lead a workshop. As far as I can tell, there are no CP members in the top MFS leadership, although I might be wrong.

New American Movement also apparently has an orientation to MFS. Richard Healey, NAM national secretary, led a workshop on "energy and jobs." (The workshop failed completely to come up with a response to the charge that nuclear energy means jobs. Healey spent a good deal of time describing various legislative schemes.)

The Guardian published a report on the convention that was extremely friendly and almost completely uncritical. This is not surprising since the Guardian blocked with most of the same people in the antiwar movement.

Our intervention was entirely literary. The Chicago comrades sold about \$50 worth of Pathfinder literature and a small number of Militants and subs.

One last point I'd like to make, which is a bit speculative. There were a couple of jarring notes struck, especially by Sid Lens. He went out of his way a couple of times to attack SWPers (not during sessions, but face-to-face). He called one comrade "the enemy." He also accused our people of not paying the convention registration fees and not paying for our table--both of which were false. In the course of a speech, Lens, discussing the dangers of plutonium, noted that Israel had stolen enough from the U.S. to make a dozen or so atomic bombs, and then went on to ask: "Who will be next? The PLO? The IRA?" This was an obvious concession to the reactionary ruling class attack on "terrorism." The real danger of plutonium is precisely the imperialists' nuclear weapons.

During a report from the religious task force, the reporter suggested --in all seriousness--approaching anti-abortion religious groups to endorse cutting the arms budget because they are "pro-life."

These last points indicate the lack of broad support that the MFS has and the degree to which it is inclined to adapt to obtain supporters.

A CALL TO ACTION:

MOBILIZATION FOR SURVIVAL • 1213 RACE STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19107

Dear Friend,

The proliferation of nuclear weaponry and nuclear energy is the central, gravest threat to the human race today. In the belief that massive public action is the only counter to the mad momentum of the arms race, 118 people representing 49 organizations* in 14 states met on April 23 of this year in Philadelphia to form the *MOBILIZATION FOR SURVIVAL*.

Our purpose is take up once again the struggle for a nuclear policy which accords with the requirements of sanity and survival. While our cities decay, while the environment deteriorates, while the plight of the unemployed, the old, the young, the poor and the sick is forgotten, money which could be devoted to genuine needs goes instead to the development of more "efficient", more elaborate, and more murderous weapons systems—which are deployed in numbers almost beyond comprehension.

The *MOBILIZATION* intends to build upon and expand the efforts already started by numerous groups across the country. It aims to:

- reawaken public awareness of the scale of the threat which faces us all in our times;
- channel this awareness into dramatic and effective actions;
- take the initiative from those with a vested interest in the arms race;
- build a truly massive movement which can change the policies and direction of the nation;
- and achieve a transformation of consciousness on the international level, in cooperation with groups active in Europe, Asia and the Third World.

The following actions, projected for the coming year, are the beginning of a long-range effort to stop the descent toward planetary destruction:

<p>AUGUST 6-9 Hiroshima/Nagasaki Local Actions— Joint U.S./Japan Press Conference</p>	<p>OCTOBER 15- DECEMBER 15 Nationwide Teach-Ins and Speak-Outs on Campus and in Communities</p>	<p>MARCH 26- APRIL 2, 1978 Nationwide Week to Save Our Communities</p>	<p>MAY/JUNE, 1978 Internationally coordinated Maus Demonstrations at the time of the U.N. Special Assembly on Disarmament, in New York City and other major cities</p>
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These aims can be accomplished only with the active participation and commitment of the broadest possible spectrum of political, labor, social, cultural and religious groups. The *MOBILIZATION* is a campaign; it offers resources and coordination. But the strength of the movement will have to come from individuals and from organizations at the grass roots—from all of us who are threatened by the proliferation of nuclear fuel and nuclear weapons and the escalating arms race.

The damage being done in the present and the grave dangers in the immediate future require that the structure of militarism be attacked root and branch and the arms race be stopped, with massive and well-organized pressure for total and universal disarmament. This goal, so long a utopian dream, has now become a necessity if the human race is to survive.

Please fill out and return the attached **REPLY FORM** as soon as possible. Mobilizing for the actions scheduled for the coming year must proceed **NOW**. This requires staff, educational/promotional materials, travel, in a word, **money**. Please let your contribution reflect your stake in the *MOBILIZATION FOR SURVIVAL*.

With Hope, In Struggle.

Norma Becker
Norma Becker

Rick Boardman
Rick Boardman

Pat Conway
Pat Conway

Daniel Ellsberg
Daniel Ellsberg

Dorothy Jones
Dorothy Jones

Sidney Lens
Sidney Lens

Dorothy Maas
Dorothy Maas

Dave McReynolds
Dave McReynolds

Sidney Peck
Sidney Peck

Grace Paley
Grace Paley

Terry Provanca
Terry Provanca

Ron Young
Ron Young

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT APRIL 23rd PHILADELPHIA MEETING
American Friends Service Committee
Institute for Policy Studies
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Womens International League for Peace and Freedom
War Resisters League
Inter-University Committee to Stop War and Militarism
Women Strike for Peace

Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy
Clergy and Laity Concerned
Another Mother for Peace
Committee for a Non-Nuclear Future
Connecticut Peace Action Coalition
Disarm Education Fund
Pacem in Terris
Westchester Peoples Action Coalition
American Civil Liberties Union
Coalition for International Cooperation

South Jersey Peace Center
Movement for a New Society
Jonah House
Disarmament Working Group
Stop the B-1 Bomber Campaign
Catholic Peace Fellowship
Gray Panthers
Committee for Creative Non-Violence
Center for a Just Society
Friends Peace Committee
Syracuse Peace Center

Promoting Enduring Peace
Stockholm Peace Appeal Campaign
Committee for Non-Violent Action
Sane
Public International Law Center
Citizen Soldier
Little Flagg Theater
July 4th Coalition
NARMIC
United Electrical Workers
Brooklyne Alternative Fund

Packard Manse Project
Committee for a Nuclear Overkill Moratorium
LEPOCC
CNPC
N.Y. Council of Peace Organizations
Friendship House
Wellington U.C.C. Church
BEGIN
International Peace Bureau
Catholic Worker

Zero Nuclear Weapons

Tens of thousands of nuclear bombs, which can destroy the world many times over, are stockpiled and ready for use. Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the danger of total nuclear war has steadily increased. The people of America, the U.S.S.R., and the world have been lulled into a silent acceptance of the existence of nuclear weapons. Despite detente, despite nuclear test ban treaties, despite the continuing SALT talks, and despite President Carter's call for a total test ban and zero nuclear weapons, there has still not been a single nuclear weapon eliminated by negotiated agreement. It is clear to us that only through the efforts of people in this country and throughout the world will real action be taken to abolish nuclear weapons. Our objective is the end of all production, testing, and possession of nuclear weapons by any nation. Zero nuclear weapons.

Ban Nuclear Power

Nuclear power and nuclear weapons are linked. They are linked because the by-products of nuclear power plants provide the necessary ingredients for producing nuclear bombs. American corporations tell us they are selling the developing nations cheap power. They are also

selling those nations the equipment, the know-how, and the explosive materials for countless more Hiroshimas. Nuclear weapons and nuclear power are linked because they represent the invasion of human society by a technology we do not know how to control. Nuclear power plants produce enough radioactive materials to endanger the physical and environmental well-being of the human species into perpetuity. Even in the smallest quantities radioactive materials can cause incalculable human and environmental damage. The medical and social hazards of radioactive materials produced in the normal operation of nuclear reactors and in the course of the nuclear fuel cycle include cancer, especially in children, genetic damage, and environmental catastrophes, as well as the risks of proliferation. We are faced with a nuclear industry whose whole purpose is to spread nuclear technology and nuclear materials across the country and across the face of the planet.

Stop the Arms Race

Abolishing nuclear weapons is one step. The United States and the Soviet Union have other weapons at their disposal. Many of these "conventional" weapons overlap with some nuclear weapons in terms of their destructive ability. Many people think of World War II as the last "great war" because forty million lives were lost. But between 1945 and today more than forty million persons have been killed in "small" wars, "police actions," and "conflicts" around the world. These conflicts were heavily nourished by American weapons manufacturers — the U.S. today is the world's biggest arms merchant. The arms race has taken on a deadly momentum of its own. The

Great Powers now can alter weather, release biological, bacteriological and chemical weapons. The planet Earth is now a time bomb, a doomsday machine. And time is running out. Unless there is massive popular intervention by people everywhere on the planet, directed against the military machine of every nation, the inevitable outcome will be *unthinkable*.

Fund Human Needs

Many people think of the arms race as something that might explode into war tomorrow. They forget that the arms race is killing us now. In our own nation, and throughout the world, death comes each day to the sick, the hungry and the poor of all

ages. It comes because money that should have provided health care has built nuclear warheads. Money that might have transported grain has carried ammunition. Money that might have reconstructed our cities has financed our bombers. Americans think all the bombs in the Indochina war fell ten thousand miles away. Walk through our slums and you will see where else the bombs fell. Burned out blocks of buildings. Look at the victims — old people searching garbage cans for food. Children already brutalized by poverty. Unemployed youth hooked on drugs, crime, prostitution and alcohol. These are our casualties. Think what is happening in nations that are desperately poor, where most people are hungry most of the time, where almost everyone needs medical care and cannot afford it. Think of what could be done with the billions spent on arms. The arms race is a criminal attack on the peoples of the world.

Statement of Purpose

We have come together to form a movement of individuals and organizations known as the *Mobilization for Survival*. We do this because the survival of people everywhere is threatened by the production of nuclear weapons, by the international arms race, and by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

While we build new and more costly weapons, the needs of millions of people go unmet. Only the defense contractors profit from the billions of dollars we waste on more armaments. These dollars are needed to bring about real security — the security of adequate health care, a good education, decent housing, enough to eat, liveable cities, and alternate energy sources. Using our money for these needs would also help to create more jobs and reduce inflation.

While we build more nuclear reactors, we ignore the connection between nuclear weapons and nuclear energy. We forget that the production of nuclear weapons throughout the world is made possible by the increasing availability of nuclear material supposedly meant for "peaceful" use.

ALARMED that the production, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons threatens the survival of people everywhere; and

OPPOSING the increasing commitment of governments and of private corporations to nuclear energy, which threatens the natural and working environments; and

AFFIRMING that the real security of our people would be best promoted by a transfer of funds and conversion of production to health care, education, housing, and other basic human needs and by a decrease in military spending; we are

DETERMINED to create a nonviolent movement of individuals and organizations whose purpose is to make people aware of the threat to human survival posed by nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors, and the international arms race, and to channel that awareness into massive public action against these threats.

We call upon people everywhere to join in this **MOBILIZATION FOR SURVIVAL**.