

# PEACE CAUCUS

NEWSLETTER

INTRODUCTORY ISSUE

SPRING 1986

## BEGINNINGS: THE APHA PEACE CAUCUS

There couldn't have been a better beginning. As APHA's 113th Annual Meeting drew to a close in Washington, D.C. last November, a group of members met to begin organizing a Peace Caucus. This meeting followed the Closing General Session which was entitled, "Prevention of Nuclear War as a Public Health Responsibility." The Closing Session was co-chaired by Vic Sidel, then President of APHA, and Lydia Novak, President of the Medical Workers Union of the U.S.S.R. As the culmination of a week of scientific and social exchanges between the two organizations, the Closing Session provided a call to action to promote public health through the prevention of not only the horrendous destruction that any exchange of nuclear weapons would bring, but also the prevention of unnecessary disease and death that result from the massive overspending on military weapons and armed conflict.

Paul Warnke spoke on arms control. He remarked that, "People say that neither side will ever reduce. The fact of the matter is that both sides have in fact eliminated weapons up to the present point in order to stay within the limits of SALT I and SALT II".

Jack Geiger stated, "If we somehow suspended the arms race and expenditures on it for a year, we could, I am confident, pay for every proposal made at every session at this meeting of APHA, the last meeting of APHA, and the meeting of APHA next year still to come, and have money left over for further efforts to prevent death, ease suffering, and save lives throughout the world".

The purpose of the Peace Caucus is to promote peace activities within APHA by:

- organizing sessions at the Annual Meetings on peace issues;
- initiating activities such as petition drives;
- working with other peace organizations;
- working with local APHA affiliates to promote peace activities;
- disseminating information of peace issues.

We need your help. Please let us know if you are interested in working with us on any of these activities. Also, we need financial support if we are to be able to implement many of our plans. So keep those cards, letters and checks coming!

## WHAT THE APHA SAYS ABOUT PEACE

Through its resolution process, APHA formally endorses its positions on a broad range of issues which affect the health and well-being of populations. The resolutions communicate to government officials and the public the positions which the APHA takes on issues, and often recommend specific actions to be taken. A review of past APHA resolutions on peace-related issues shows that the APHA has a history of taking a stand on militarism, weapons, nuclear technology, and armed conflict. American Public Health Association members as a group are concerned with the adverse health effects of preparations for war and of armed conflict. The

Association has urged its members to actively participate in a variety of ways to protect the public's health by preventing the negative effects of militarism and weapons technologies. Following is a summary of the APHA resolutions which promote world peace through various recommendations. The numbering of the resolutions reflects the year in which each was passed. For example, resolution 5408 indicates that the resolution was passed in 1954.

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What the American Public Health Association Says About  
Peace

5408: Civil Defense Responsibilities of Public Health  
Officers

This resolution, passed in 1954, urges that preparations against the medical effects of enemy attack be a part of every community public health program and that public health staffs provide personnel to be responsible for medical Civil Defense.

6006: Defense Against Disaster

This resolution reiterates the responsibility of public health officials to work with other agencies to minimize the adverse health effects of enemy attack and natural disaster.

6108: Fallout Shelter Standards

In this resolution APHA urges federal, state, and local agencies which have the jurisdiction, to develop and enforce standards for fallout shelter construction in consultation with appropriate health agencies in order to ensure that fallout shelters meet appropriate safety standards.

(These three resolutions are of historical interest but are no longer relevant given the growth in the number and destructive power of the world's nuclear arsenal, civil defense as mentioned in preceding resolutions and fallout shelters are no longer adequate measures of protection. The health effects of weapons, armed conflict, and preparations for war, nuclear or other, are addressed in later resolutions. These resolutions address this issue of world safety by emphasizing the need to prevent nuclear exchange rather than prepare for it).

6918: The Vietnam War

In this resolution the APHA urges the President and Congress to withdraw forces from Vietnam and end active US participation in the war.

6901; 7412: Chemical and Biological Methods of Warfare

Both of these resolutions summarize the many serious short- and long term dangers incidental to research, manufacture, storage, transport, and use of chemical and biological weapons. The resolution reiterates APHA's position that war of any form is uncivilized and unconscionable and that the US should join other nations to intensify efforts to avoid war and its consequences. These resolutions further urge: that the US government ratify the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use in war of poison gas and biological weapons; that a committee of citizens neither from Congress nor the military become the nation's monitor of activities related to chemical and biological warfare methods; and that Congress be thoroughly educated on the subject of such warfare methods and maintain meaningful and appropriate surveillance on all relevant activities. Resolution 7412 also urges that a moratorium be placed on all forms of research and development of chemical and biological weapons of warfare.

7909: Nuclear Power

This resolution recognizes that safe methods for creating nuclear power have not been achieved and calls for a moratorium on construction of nuclear power generating facilities until the problems of waste disposal, and safety to workers and the general public can be resolved. It also calls for intensified government commitment to conservation measures, and research of safe, renewable sources of energy.

7913: World Peace and the Military Budget

In this resolution APHA again recognizes the importance of world peace. After stating that the escalation of military budgets are a threat to world peace and take away needed monies from health, education, welfare, and recreation services, and noting that the passage of SALT II has been threatened in Congress, this resolution supports the passage of SALT II. It also supports the passage of an amendment which transfers money from the U.S. military budget to domestic programs. The resolution opposes proposed increases in US military budgets which are based solely on the passage of SALT II, and urges that negotiations for an even stronger SALT III treaty be quickly resumed.

8116: Civilian-Military Contingency Hospital System

The Contingency Hospital System was a military plan for civilian hospitals to care for an unprecedented number of serious casualties in a short period of time from an overseas war, a situation which fits DOD's description of a limited exchange. Noting that the balance of information indicates that a nuclear war cannot be contained to a limited area, cannot be won, and cannot be survived by either side, this resolution urges the US Department of Defense terminate this System and urges all hospitals to refuse to participate.

8117: Nuclear War and Nuclear Weapons:

After noting the unfathomable amount of destructive power of nuclear weapons already in existence, and recognizing that the continuing escalation of development and production of nuclear weapons increases the potential for nuclear war, this resolution vigorously opposes the development of the neutron bomb, and of the deployment in Western Europe of Cruise and Pershing missiles. It also strongly supports a thermonuclear arms freeze and encourages the US government to initiate multilateral talks directed at limitation of nuclear armaments.

8214: Reaction to the Attack on the Nuclear Freeze  
Movement

After discussion of President Reagan's allegation that the Nuclear Disarmament movement has been infiltrated and directed by foreign agents, this resolution reiterates the APHA position that efforts to help prevent nuclear war and promote nuclear disarmament is an urgent responsibility of all public health workers. It condemns the use of unsubstantiated allegations of foreign influence to weaken this movement, and reaffirms APHA support of a mutual, verifiable cessation of the development, production, testing, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

8305: Intervention in Grenada

The October 25, 1983 invasion of Grenada by U.S. military forces resulted in considerable loss of life of Grenadian, U.S. and Cuban citizens. Restrictions on press coverage made it difficult to verify the reasons advanced as justification for the invasion. This resolution urges: that press coverage be maximized in all actions involving U.S. armed forces; that independent efforts be made to ascertain facts leading up to the invasion of Grenada; that military actions be avoided by all nations except when recourse to international law has failed and there is an immediate threat to their national security; and that the US join with other nations in expanding health and economic assistance to all nations in need in order to lessen international tension and to promote health and peace.

**"PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR IS A PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSIBILITY"**

In order to begin activities the Peace Caucus needs your efforts and assistance. Please join the APHA Peace Caucus by filling out this form and sending it with a \$10.00 membership contribution. (If you care to contribute more than \$10, it will, of course, be welcome!) Send form and contributions to:

Checks may be made payable to PEACE CAUCUS.

APHA Peace Caucus  
c/o Gail Gordon, DrPH  
325 West 88<sup>th</sup> St.  
No. 8  
New York, NY 10024

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing courtesy of the Minnesota Public Health Association.

Please address all correspondence to the Peace Caucus c/o Gail Gordon in New York.

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**THE PEACE CAUCUS: WHERE DO WE COME FROM?**

A total of 116 people expressed interest in the Peace Caucus by filling out the form distributed during the Closing General Session, and each of you are receiving a copy of this newsletter. Doubtless, many more people will become interested as the Peace Caucus becomes better known.

Judging from first names, it appears that 61 females and 55 males make up the 116. We also come from 32 States, one Province and one District. The following is a list of these places, with the number of people from each location. Let's work toward active representation from all of these individuals and places, and from all others interested in the Peace Caucus as well.

New York	17	Ohio	3
Maryland	11	Kentucky	2
California	8	Missouri	2
Washington, D.C.	6	New Jersey	2
Connecticut	5	Pennsylvania	2
Minnesota	5	Texas	2
Washington	5	Colorado	1
Illinois	4	Delaware	1
Indiana	4	Maine	1
Massachusetts	4	Nebraska	1
Michigan	4	Oregon	1
North Carolina	4	Tennessee	1
Alaska	3	Vermont	1
Arizona	3	Virginia	1
Georgia	3	West Virginia	1
Louisiana	3	Wisconsin	1
New Mexico	3	Alberta, Canada	1

"The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe".  
Albert Einstein, 1946

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### COME TO PEACE CAUCUS EVENTS IN LAS VEGAS

The Peace Caucus will be sponsoring several events at the APHA Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, September 28 - October 2.

On Monday, September 29th we will be holding our business meeting from 4:00 to 6:00. This will be an important meeting because we will set our agenda for the coming year. Those of you who are interested in organizing a scientific session, sponsoring resolutions, or other activities should be sure to attend.

On Tuesday, September 30th we will have a session on, "ORGANIZING FOR PEACE." The idea is to have a discussion of how public health professionals can organize for peace on national, state, and local levels. The panel will consist of: Vic Sidel, Past President of APHA and President-Elect of Physician's for Social Responsibility (PSR); Judy Treichle from the Nuclear Energy Commission in Nevada; Rosalind Singson

session/social hour where will have a chance to wrap up our work and socialize.

We are also exploring sharing a booth with PSR. In addition, we are looking into the possibility of participating in a demonstration at the nuclear testing site outside of Las Vegas in cooperation with PSR and many others.

BE SURE TO JOIN US!!!

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"War in our time has become an anachronism. Whatever the case in the past, war in the future can serve no useful purpose. A war which became general as any limited action might, could only result in the virtual destruction of mankind."