



Institute for Global Education

DISARMAMENT EDUCATOR

25 SHELDON S.E. GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503 (616) 454-1642

October/November, 1982

Voter Education Needed

Canvassing Campaign Gets Underway

"It's you and me kid." We are the ones who have made and must continue to make disarmament an issue and a reality. And that means hitting the streets in ones and twos, spreading the word of real security -- disarmament, and an economy based on services and production for the living!

Like many, I am skeptical of the voting booth's ability to accomplish change. As Utah Phillips put it, "if voting could change this system it would be against the law."

Yet I feel a unique opportunity with Proposal E, the Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze, on November 2, 1982. As our numbers grow, one by one, a public count will serve to display that growth to us, to the unaware and to those in power who continue to ignore us. It's hard to feel the growth in our numbers and our potential collective power. I need the victory on November 2. I'm not alone!

We have taken to the streets. Many of us began canvassing for the Freeze in late September, briefly talking with folks about nuclear warfare, gaining new volunteers and accepting contributions. Throughout October, we will walk in pairs through neighborhoods, knocking on doors:

Monday-Friday

5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

*We realize that some of you may not be able to be here right at five, but please come anyway and join in. We will start as soon after five as possible.

Saturdays

9:00 a.m. till noon

1:00 p.m. till 4:00 p.m.

We have put together a wonderful brochure that helps break down the fear of a Russian takeover (our largest disarmament obstacle) and draws the links between the arms race and our devastated economy. We need you to help get this brochure in the hands of your neighbors! Please help us canvass!

We are holding one hour training sessions:

Monday and Wednesday nights

7:00 p.m. till 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays

9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

These sessions, which are designed to help you develop a comfortable approach to canvassing, will be held at the IGE office on the 3rd floor of the YWCA, 25 Sheldon, SE.

Here is someplace you can really help! If you haven't heard from me yet, please call the IGE office, 454-1642 (after 1:00, weekdays) or at home, 243-7929 (mornings).

-by Sue Hartman.



FREEZE

Vote Yes Proposal E

Questions And Answers On The Freeze

Congratulations to us! The Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze is now on the ballot (proposal E) and we have the chance to use it as a tool in disarmament education. We will be talking to all kinds of people, some of whom think nuclear arms reduction is impossible. Or unwise. Here are some issues I have heard raised, and various replies I or others have given to them.

WE CAN'T TRUST THE RUSSIANS!

(A) I agree absolutely! I am sick and tired of trusting them to have computer systems that can tell wild geese flying from Minutemen incoming, and on less than 12 minutes warning. I am sick of trusting them to keep all their hothead generals under control. I am sick of trusting them not to spread their missiles to their satellites. If I have to trust them at all, I want to do it in a way that can be checked up on. That's why we need a mutual, verifiable, nuclear weapons freeze and why I encourage you to vote "Yes" on Proposal E, the freeze proposal.

(B) Of course we have all learned not to trust governments too far. However, there are fourteen existing arms limitation treaties involving the United States and the Soviet Union which have been signed beginning with the Partial Test Ban treaty in 1963. All of them have been kept by both sides. (Source: The Defense Monitor, Vol. IX, 1980). That indicates that each country will keep treaties when doing so is in its self interest, and that's why we need the mutual ...

WE MUST NEGOTIATE FROM STRENGTH!

Both of us indeed have "strength" -- we can destroy the world and nobody can stop us. Wouldn't a greater strength be in taking the first steps not to destroy it? It might also be true that negotiating "from strength" on issues on which agreement is essential will simply make the other side more stubborn, less likely to agree. In any case, improving our weapons systems threatens them--but threatens us as well, since it puts their rockets on a hair-trigger and we are back to trusting the Russians to have the patience and judgment we say they don't have!

OUR LEADERS KNOW BEST.

(A) Many of the people most important in developing American nuclear weapons policy have come out in favor of proposals ranging from supporting the freeze to much more serious actions such as cutting our nuclear arsenal by half. These include such people as former Secretary of Defense McNamara, the "father of the nuclear navy," Admiral Rickover, the "author of containment policy," George F. Kennan, and many others.

(B) This is a democracy, and we have our lives at stake. So it is our right and duty to make the politicians attend to this very important issue. That's why we encourage you to vote Yes on Proposal E for a mutual, ...

THE RUSSIANS ARE AHEAD OF US!

That is simply propaganda to get us to spend more on the military. The Department of Defense FY82 report concluded that "the United States and the Soviet Union are roughly equal in strategic nuclear power." Both sides can make the rubble bounce and bounce and bounce. What if one side can make it bounce more?

I JUST HATE TO THINK ABOUT IT.

I really agree with you. I don't like to think about it myself. But I would rather think about it than have it happen, and if we the people don't use our rights as citizens to work for a bilateral...

WHY DON'T YOU DO THIS IN MOSCOW! THAT'S WHERE THE TROUBLE IS.

In fact, there have been some big demonstrations and talks in the Soviet Union on the nuclear weapons problem. Premier Brezhnev's personal doctor spent an hour on TV describing the disaster of nuclear suicide to about 100,000,000 Soviet citizens. But in any case we are not responsible for the Soviet system, but we are for our own government. Also, the USSR has announced at the UN that it is in favor of a Freeze. Let's make them live by their words. That's why we need you to vote for Proposal E, the bilateral...

A FREEZE ISN'T ENOUGH, WE NEED TO REDUCE ARMS AS PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS PROPOSED.

We certainly agree that we need to reduce nuclear arms, but Mr. Reagan's plan seems to us to increase our nuclear stockpiles while we negotiate to reduce them. And since the negotiations for Salt I took 7 years without any reductions in arms, I am not optimistic. It's like a speeding train, first you have to stop it. That's why...

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION, IT'S THE OTHER COUNTRIES.

Exactly. You might be aware that more than a hundred nations said that they would not develop nuclear weapons of their own if the superpowers got their nuclear weapons under control. That was 10 years ago. A lot of countries on the nuclear edge are getting impatient. That's why...

Questions And Answers On The Freeze

WE NEED THE JOBS.

We surely do, but we won't get them with nuclear spending. Every county in Michigan except Muskegon paid more as its share of the Pentagon budget than it got back in military spending or jobs. The loss to our state is more than 10 billion dollars! This kind of military spending is like burning money in the streets, except it is less entertaining. That's why we need Proposal E, for a mutual...

THE RUSSIANS COULD CHEAT ON US.

William Colby, the former deputy director of the CIA, has testified to Congress that our satellites are good enough to pick up any cheating. And much of the point of Proposal E is that it is verifiable. That's why we need Proposal E for...

P.S. We can't deeply educate every citizen on nuclear issues during the short time we have with him or her. When you are talking to a real dolt, cut it short. When you have a communicator, take your time.

P.P.S. Don't oversell. If we dump a whole batch of arguments on someone and he rejects one, he may reject the whole freeze proposal.

P.P.P.S. Actions follow from actions, that's why getting people to do anything is so important. The early steps are the hardest. Hope all this has not been too chatty for you.



Peace,

Earl Heuer

STOP NUCLEAR WAR: A HANDBOOK

by Judith Eve Lipton & David P. Barash
Grove Press, 396 pp. incl. appendices.
cloth: \$22.50; paper: \$7.95.

Review

- by Richard Chandler

As a Handbook for organizing, this work does not live up to its title. It is, however, a good guide to the issues surrounding nuclear war.

The authors of this book urge us to action, one of their basic themes being: of what importance are all our other activities if our lives are likely to be lost (whether literally or figuratively) in a nuclear war in the near future? The book covers history of nuclear weaponry, our current situation, what we can do individually and as a nation, the probable immediate and long term effects of nuclear war, facts and myths about the "balance of terror," our security in general and psychological aspects of dealing with the threat of nuclear war.

In the chronicle of the history of nuclear weapons buildup, one sees in a bombshell (a nutshell won't hold them all) the mistakes, miscommunications, and dis-information that have allowed/encouraged this buildup. The Cuban missile crisis is likened to teenage boys playing "chicken" - driving cars toward each other to see who will be first to swerve out of the way. As we know, Russia swerved - fortunately for the world! The authors state: "The major lesson of the Cuban missile crisis was never learned; it is not that the Soviets will back down if we rattle our weapons, but rather, that when they perceive a strategic imbalance, they will seek to correct it."

In seeking to limit nuclear weaponry, the authors tell how Kennedy, in June 1963, praising the Russians and expressing optimism about being able to work out differences, announced the unilateral halting by the U.S. of atmospheric testing. Russia was highly impressed, and two months later signed the Partial Test-Ban Treaty, which stopped all atmospheric testing. The authors spell out several serious disadvantages of negotiating for nuclear weapons control, but having shown that the process can work, they ultimately support it, saying: "But we have little choice."

They present a frightening list of serious known alerts and nuclear accidents, mostly U.S. Though we know little about the Russian counterparts, in exploding the myth of Russian military superiority and giving us a "tour" of the Russian perspective, they argue convincingly that Russian powers-that-be probably have button-fingers at least as tense and unsteady as "ours." Following with the extent of nuclear weapons proliferation, they lead the reader to an inescapable conclusion: either we stop and reverse the present trend, or it is just a matter of time before nuclear war becomes a reality.

The authors argue that there can be no limited, nor "winnable" nuclear war. Thus they are saying that, if nuclear war occurs at all, it will be total, destroying civilization as we know it, and perhaps all of human life.

I am not persuaded, which does not significantly alter my commitment to work to abolish nuclear as well as other weapons, but it points up a perspective that lessens

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