

A PROGRAM MEMO FROM NATIONAL SANE

APRIL PEACE MOBILIZATION

National SANE is now beginning to plan details of a nationwide demonstration at Eastertime. Easter this year falls on Sunday, April 2nd, and the mobilization will take place during the week of March 26th, probably culminating on Saturday, April 1st.

The theme: "Security Through World Disarmament."

The place: In every community across the U.S. where there are SANE supporters. (There will not, therefore, be one national point of focus).

The purpose: To mobilize popular support for inspected disarmament and a nuclear test ban treaty.

BACKGROUND

The Aldermaston marches in 1958, 1959, and 1960 captured popular imagination in Great Britain and had a significant effect on both the British Government and the opposition British Labor Party. For months SANE has been discussing with other American organizations the possibility of finding an American counterpart to Aldermaston. We are not yet satisfied that we have found the formula. However, we do know that if a broadly-representative mobilization for peace is to be undertaken in America, it will probably have to be sparked by SANE, with the participation of local church, labor, youth, and peace organizations as well as thousands of interested individuals.

GENERAL PLAN

We propose that every local SANE committee mobilize for unusual activity during the week of March 26th, culminating in some special demonstration on Saturday, April 1st.

We strongly suggest--below--that you plan a march or some other demonstration, involving large numbers of people. To insure unity of purpose, National SANE will supply key slogans for use on your signs. We do not want simply to say "peace" or "ban the bomb." Our plea and thus our slogans must be more sophisticated. We are now beginning to work out the kind of slogans which we feel may have maximum effect on the people in your community. (Send us your suggestions). We will send you recommended slogans in subsequent memoranda.

There should be at least one large public meeting or demonstration in your community the week before Easter, perhaps as a culmination of a march. The site, indoors or outside, should be selected for symbolic value and for practicality as a meeting place. A ceremony or silent prayer might be made part of the meeting. If you need speakers, the National SANE Speakers Bureau will try to help.

H-BOMB PERIMETER MARCH

We recommend for your consideration a march using as a focus the damage to your city that a ten-megaton H-bomb would make. The radius of nine miles represents the area of severe blast damage that would result from a surface burst of such a bomb. You could arrange marches or motorcades from a number of points on the perimeter nine miles from a central point in your city. You can dramatize the devastation through advance publicity and through the demonstration itself.

If your committee feels that a nine-mile march is too long or too time-consuming, you can plan a series of motorcades. As much as possible, secure the services of prominent leaders in your community to head the demonstration. Don't expect these leaders to walk nine miles, but they could head a motorcade and walk the final mile.

If enough local SANE committees decide to adopt this plan of an H-Bomb Perimeter March, National SANE will try to print identical posters with the basic message of the nationwide mobilization. Space would be left for local committees to imprint the H-bomb perimeter superimposed on a map of the local area along with the lines of march and the location of the assembling points. These posters could be widely distributed throughout your community. Please let the National Office know if your committee will adopt the plan of this March or a variation thereof.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

If there are several SANE committees in your metropolitan area, join ranks and plan to converge on the largest city in your area as the focal point of the demonstration. Constantly find new media for a visual message, such as helium balloons (small ones in large quantities or one or two huge ones), parade floats, etc. Hold public rallies in neighborhoods during the week or two preceding your large demonstration and as a prelude to it. Get the cooperation of churches and synagogues and many other organized groups.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER PEACE GROUPS

In many communities, SANE will be the only peace organization sponsoring an April mobilization. In some areas, however, other groups including the American Friends Service Committee will be sponsoring similar activities.

National SANE explored at the national level the possibility of joint demonstrations in April with the AFSC and other groups, but the conclusion was to try to coordinate the separate activities on a local level wherever practicable. If you can find a basis for cooperation with AFSC and other groups, try to do so. But here are several cautions:

1. SANE stands for negotiated and inspected multilateral disarmament. AFSC may stress unilateral disarmament.
2. SANE is a secular, non-pacifist organization, with members from many religious faiths and denominations. Some are religious pacifists and others are not. AFSC may stress a prayer vigil and other activities about which some members of SANE, as well as broader segments of the community, may feel uncomfortable.
3. SANE does not endorse civil disobedience. Some of the April demonstrations by other organizations will emphasize this motif.
4. SANE believes that one-day vigils at military establishments may have very limited value in reaching the public. This activity may prove satisfying to the participants, but it makes a frontal attack on the idea of security with weapons without providing an adequate presentation of the alternatives. This approach might initially provoke more antagonism than goodwill. On the other hand, a sustained vigil, combined with community education -- as conducted in front of the germ warfare center at Fort Detrick, Maryland -- is of a different magnitude.

If there are parallel activities in your community, and your SANE group is unable to find a common, unifying formula, we hope that your local SANE group will conduct its own activity. There can be multiple demonstrations in one community. The more peace activity, the better, as long as there is consultation between responsible organizations. Under these conditions, we need not fear the effect on the public of separate demonstrations. There is no need to hide the fact that there are different approaches to peace.

PLAN NOW

We hope that you will rally the widest possible participation in an April peace mobilization in your community. Make special efforts to involve the previously uncommitted. Eastertime 1961 could mark the most significant mobilization for disarmament and against nuclear tests that the U.S. has ever witnessed. We will send you additional program suggestions for the Mobilization. Let us hear from you. If you adopt the H-Bomb Perimeter March concept, let us know if you want special materials.