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## UMass Peacemakers Records

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Although the precise origins of UMass Peacemakers are murky, by 1982, the group was an active presence on the UMass Amherst campus organizing opposition to militarism and the nuclear arms race and providing support for the nuclear freeze movement. Organizing vigils, demonstrations, informational workshops, and providing civil disobedience training, the Peacemakers were the most visible pacifist group on the UMass Amherst campus in the 1980s.

The UMass Peacemakers Records focus on the activities of the student group between 1983 and 1990, documenting their role in confronting the aggressive international expansionism of the Reagan administration and its "Star Wars" program, while also engaging at the local and national level by organizing rallies, lectures, poetry readings, and film screenings. At UMass, Peacemakers was part of the larger Progressive Student Network, and worked alongside other student organizations including the Radical Student Union.

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## Background on UMass Peacemakers

Although the precise origins of UMass Peacemakers are murky, by 1982, the group was an active presence on the UMass Amherst campus organizing opposition to militarism and providing support for the nuclear freeze movement. Originally called Students Against Militarism, and once affiliated with the United Christian Fellowship, UMass Peacemakers set an agenda of organizing vigils, demonstrations, informational workshops, and providing civil disobedience training, and they maintained resource and reference files for use by the membership.

Responding to the "nuclear crisis" brought on by the acceleration of the arms race under the Reagan administration, UMass Peacemakers were important partners in the student referendum during the Spring 1982 in which the student body voted overwhelmingly in favor of a nuclear weapons freeze. Peacemakers went on to organize a UMass contingent for the World Peace March in 1982 and for the anti-arms race march in Washington in 1984, and its members fed the mid-1980s protests at Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant and protests responding to the Euromissile crisis. Beyond the nuclear crisis, Peacemakers were active in peace and antiwar movements more generally, and in other areas of social justice. As members of the Progressive Student Network, they were active in opposing U.S. intervention in Central America, leading a contingent to the Four Days in April protests of 1986.

Despite the uncertainty of the origins of UMass Peacemakers, it seems likely that they aligned themselves with the pacifist organization Peacemakers, which was founded after the assassination of Mohandas Gandhi in July 1948. Two of the



Peacemakers at the Four Days in April protest, Washington, D.C., April 1985

founders of that organization, Juanita and Wally Nelson, settled at Woolman Hill in Deerfield, Mass., and were integral members of the peace community in Western Massachusetts. Dedicated to non-violent resistance to war and the draft, Peacemakers was one of the first non-sectarian groups to advocate for war tax resistance. They built their membership from the grassroots, organizing as local "cells" with no national office or central administration.

## Scope of collection

The UMass Peacemakers Records focus on the activities of the student group between 1983 and 1990, documenting their role in confronting the aggressive international expansionism of the Reagan administration and its "Star Wars" program, while also engaging at the local and national level by organizing rallies, lectures, poetry readings, and film screenings. At UMass, Peacemakers was part of the larger Progressive Student Network, and worked alongside other student organizations including the Radical Student Union. They were responsible for bringing a number of people of national importance to campus, including Senator Edward Kennedy, Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg, Helen M. Caldicott, Nuclear Freeze advocate Randall Forsberg, and singer-songwriter James Taylor.

The Peacemakers collection offers a glance into the student activism spawned by the international peace movement and through an extensive series of newsletters, press releases, news clippings, on-campus event flyers, memorabilia, and publications released by local known peace activist group such as the Traprock Peace Center, the War Resisters League, and Greenpeace. The group also maintained extensive subject files on nuclear disarmament, militarism, peace, and related topics.

## Series descriptions

### Series 1. Administrative Records

1978-1990

6 boxes

Series 1 contains two sub-series. First, the administrative sub-series contains internal records kept by the Peacemakers to document its activities, including leaflets, advertising group meetings, contact sheets and directories for members and local activist groups, meeting notes and agendas, and documents relating to procedures and lists of office duties. The sub-series also contain newsletters and publications for distribution, publicity for speaker and film events, catalogues, and strategy ideas for mobilizing more members and direct actions.

The Peacemaker's financial records consist primarily of monthly and yearly reports submitted to the Student Government Association to account for expenditures, budget petitions, and materials used in grant writing.

### Series 2. Subject Files

1965-1988

4 boxes

Series 2 contains a collection of gather resources and published materials the Peacemakers received during their tenure. Included in these files is documentation of events planned by the Peacemakers or those in which they participated in, as well as materials from disparate sources relating to topics of pressing relevancy at the time (e.g. 1984/1988 U.S. Presidential Elections, Contra Aid/Central America, Gulf Oil, etc.).

### Series 3. Peace Groups

1971-1989

2 boxes

Series 3 contains a collection of anti-nuclear and peace activist organizations articles and publications about the negative impacts of nuclear arms and advocacy for peace. This series includes newsletters, brochures, flyers, and articles.

### Series 4. Peace Publications

1975-1988

3 boxes

Series 4 contains organizational publications on anti-nuclear, anti-war, and peace activist organizations and their newsletters, magazines, journals, and flyers.

### Series 5. Handouts

1975-1986

1 box

Series 5 includes photocopies, reprints, and brochures distributed by the Peacemakers.

### Series 6. Audiovisual materials

1983-1986

1 box

Series 6 contains audio and video tapes of nuclear disarmament and peace films and television specials.

#### Series 7. Artifacts

undated

3 boxes

Series 7 contains memorabilia kept from the tenure of the student organization, includes handmade t-shirts, bumper stickers, buttons, and flags.

## Inventory

### Series 1. Administrative Records

1987-1990

#### Audio-visual Resources

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1981-1987

Box 1: 2

Brochures, leaflets, posters, ads about Peacemakers

1983-1985

Box 1: 3

Calendar

undated

Box 1: 4

Correspondence

1984-1987

Box 1: 5

Five-College Faculty and Staff for Peace in Central America

1985-1986

Box 1: 6

Five-College Peace Network and PAWSS

1985-1986

Box 1: 7

Flipchart cards

1982

Box 1: 8

Forms, blank

undated

Box 1: 9

Fundraising

1984-1988

Box 1: 10

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1983

Box 1: 11

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1984-1988

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undated

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undated

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1985

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1990

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1989

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undated

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undated

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Box 15: 311

Articles, various

1975-1987

Box 15: 312

Series 5. Handouts

1975-1986

Photocopies, reprints and other 8 1/2 x 11 sheets

undated

Box 16: 313

Brochures

1975-1986

Box 16: 314

Series 6. Audiovisual materials

1983-1986

Atomic Cafe

undated

Box 17: Videos

Citizen's Summit (Satellite-linked discussion between US and Soviet audiences. Phil Donahue)

1985

Box 17:

Fire Unleashed (ABC Nightline)

1985

Box 17:

Living Double Lives: Peacemakers in Charlottesville, VA./Walter Cronkite: Hiroshima plus 40 years

undated

Box 17:

Nuclear Legacy

undated

Box 17:

The Peace Film: An American Event

undated

Box 17:

Space-Bridge US/USSR: Beyond War

undated

Box 17:

Star Wars

1986

Box 17:

Bowman, Robert. Star Wars talk. UMass.

1986

Box 17: Audios

Caldicott, Helen

undated

Box 17:

ICBM/Down the Road Aways

undated

Box 17:

Songs for Future Generations (Pat Scanlon and The Black Water String Band)

1983

Box 17:

unidentified tape

undated

Box 17:

Series 7. Artifacts

undated

T-Shirts, Bumper Stickers, Buttons, Seal Stamps

undated

Box 18:

Flags, Mugs, Donation can

undated

Box 19:

Cardboard signs, Flags

undated

Box 20:

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Peacemakers through Peter Sakura, May 1991.

### Digitized content

Selected images in this collection have been digitized and are available for viewing online through SCUA's digital repository, Credo.

### Processing Information

Processed by Ethan Bakuli, Aug. 2017.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

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## Search terms

### Subjects

American Friends Service Committee

Antinuclear movements--Massachusetts

Central America--Foreign relations--United States

Disarmament--Massachusetts

Peace movements--Massachusetts

Student movements--Massachusetts

United States--Foreign relations--Central America

University of Massachusetts Amherst--Students

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Protest movements--Massachusetts

### Contributors

UMass Peacemakers [\[main entry\]](#)

### Genres and formats

Photographs

### Link to similar SCUA collections

Antinuclear

Central and South American

Massachusetts (West)

Peade

Political activism

UMass students

Vietnam War



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