

Association Adopts Nuclear Freeze Resolution

At its annual business meeting on December 29, 1982, the association considered and passed a resolution relating to arms control and nuclear weapons, which had been presented to the meeting by members in accordance with our constitution and bylaws, prior to the December 15 deadline. The resolution was vigorously discussed, pro and con, by a meeting which substantially surpassed our quorum and was adopted by a very large majority. It reads:

WHEREAS, as professional historians we feel compelled to warn our fellow citizens that in modern history all large scale accumulations of weapons by rival powers have invariably led to the worsening of their relations, and usually to war;

AND WHEREAS, the development and production of new nuclear weapons systems for the stated purpose of negotiating the reduction of nuclear weapons stockpiles have led rather to retaining those weapons in a further escalation of the nuclear arms race;

AND WHEREAS, in our judgment any escalation of that race under present circumstances undermines the possibility of improving United States-Soviet relations and brings nearer the ultimate consequence of war;

BE IT RESOLVED that the American Historical Association goes on record to support the objective of negotiated nuclear arms reductions with the Soviet Union and other states, and to that end opposes the production of any new nuclear weapons systems at this time as a policy prejudicial to our national security and to the pursuit of peace; and authorizes the Executive Committee of the American Historical Association to make known this resolution to the president of the United States, other appropriate officers of the Government and our fellow citizens.

Under the constitution of the association (article VII) resolutions adopted by the business meeting go to the Council for acceptance, nonconcurrency (which leads to a mail ballot of the membership) or veto (for unconstitutional or

illegal measures). After a vigorous debate at its meeting December 30, the Council accepted the resolution, which is accordingly binding on the association.

The principal item of concern raised in the Council's discussion of the resolution, related to its whereas clauses. Many of the Council members expressed concern that by adopting the resolution the association puts itself in the position of endorsing a particular interpretation of history as *the correct*

interpretation. It was clear that most of the Council members accept the relativism of historical interpretation although a large majority of the Council favored the operative portion of the resolution.

The association is implementing the resolution by communicating its operative provisions to the president, the vice-president, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the secretary of state, and the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, as well as to the media.