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Pressing the Limits of Action
An Interview with Grace Paley

MEREDITH SMITH AND KAREN KAHN

A founding member of Resist, Grace Paley has been a committed pacifist and feminist for many years. Grace’s stubbornness, optimism, sense of humor and understanding have been a great inspiration to us and to many women now active in the feminist and anti-militarist movements. We asked her to share some of her experiences, as well as her thoughts on nonviolence and feminism, knowing that Grace’s history would provide us with many insights into present struggles within the anti-war and feminist movements. Our discussion ranged from Grace’s thoughts on nonviolent civil disobedience to armed struggle, including the way in which feminism has affected her understanding of militarism, and her thoughts on racism.

When did you first get involved in civil disobedience actions? Can you tell us some stories about early actions that you were involved in and then how you got involved in the peace movement?

If you consider the important actions If you consider the important actions of the Civil Rights movements I don’t think I’ve done so much. There aren’t a lot of experiences that seem striking or interesting, but it does seem that my general disposition has been disobedient, civilly or otherwise. Years ago
we did have some kinds of local success. We were adamant about keeping the buses out of the park [Washington Square]. We were adamant about not letting the park be cut into for real estate interests. One of the things I learned was stubbornness. And I've thought more and more that that's the real meaning of nonviolent civil disobedience—to be utterly and absolutely stubborn.

Another example—although no one was arrested—they would not allow any music in the same park, which is hard to believe right now. But they wouldn't allow any guitars or singing, flutes or oboes, anything. And we finally simply sat down together in the fountain circle with the children and we just sat and played guitars and recorders and fiddles. The police came from another precinct; they didn't dare send the 6th. They went after us, knocking people around a little, but we were stubborn. Then we won. Now it's so noisy you can hardly stand it. It seems if you have these early successes, no matter how small, they seem to form hopeful expectations.

Also there was one action that seemed to wake us up in New York, and probably Boston too. That was around the civil defense shelter drills. Dorothy Day was the only person in New York who, for a couple of years, refused publicly to take shelter. Then one year there were fifteen women and men. Then we were hundreds who stood in the open of City Hall park. Those actions were simple because the drills were idiotic. Disobedience began to occur everywhere. People were arrested. The drills ended.

I don't think the thing for me has been civil disobedience so much as the importance of not asking permission. For instance, we had kids in our public school who had trouble reading or writing. A few of us just got together and said we'd better go ahead and help out. We suspected that the principal wouldn't want us around. So we simply went into the school and scattered ourselves among the teachers and began to work with the kids. It's true that three months later we were kicked out, but we got a lot done and methods and forms were created so parents could come back and be useful. People will say to this day, "How did you women do that? Who did you talk to?" We didn't talk to anyone. We just did it. So I can't say that was civil disobedience. It was just an effort to make change by making change. We talk a lot about living in a free and democratic country but we're always asking permission to do very simple things.

Another fact, I came out of a socialist background as a kid and my meeting with pacifists was an extraordinary experience. I met people in the American Friends and the War Resisters League, people like that, totally unfamiliar to me. I had a normal socialist childhood.

What's a normal socialist childhood?
Well, you know, on May Day you wear a red tie. I was a Falcon (Communist children were Pioneers). Then you sometimes took a course in Marxism when you were twelve or thirteen, something like that. I always worked as a kid in the Student Unions and in groups like that. The idea of nonviolence or pacifism may have been abroad in the land but it was not abroad in my head at all. It never entered my mind. In those years—I'm talking about the forties—political positions shifted and changed and you really couldn't hold your course in them because so much depended on what the Soviet Union said or did and whether you were for or against it. On either side you were often steered by that.

So my meeting in the early 60's, very early, maybe even '59, with what I later discovered were Friends, was a real breakthrough. The whole idea, the simple sentence "speak truth to power" really shook me. Meanwhile I was writing more and more [stories] and thinking about the truth of art and the truth of politics and going further—Act truth to power. Circumvention and manipulation in the movements of my youth had begun so to disgust me—that was one of the reasons I got into so much local work—I had really just had it with the grown up men and the big picture without quite realizing it.

The first action I took that could be described in formal terms as C.D. was during the Armed Forces Day Parade in the 60's. Somebody said, "You want to do that with us?" And I said, "Oh sure." So we sat down in front of the parade, sat down and threw flowers at the tanks, etc. And the good thing about that is that I got six days in jail. I've never spent more than that at any one time. I learned a lot. I learned that it was interesting. I mean when you're in jail, it's not as if you're no place. You're in another place. You're SOMEPLACE. It is not as if you're not among people. You're among women and they're interesting, not frightening. Whoever they are, the people, the prisoners, those women can educate you. And the whole experience is one that, well, you are suddenly in an American colony. You can think of that vast prison population that way. You have to go into it from time to time. This is how the colonized live. Prison is not a metaphor.

How does your commitment to nonviolence affect the kind of political work that you do?
Well first of all, I think most people are nonviolent. I think there's an awful lot of junk written about the naturalness of competition and revenge—survivalism. Which is not to say there aren't certain cultures where people go out and kill each other and kill each other back. But for me, when I say nonviolence, it only means I will be nonviolent as long as I possibly can. I...
can’t think that armed struggle is the only way to change the world or the neighborhood. And, it’s just words. I know this view will anger people—even some who are dear to me—but most of the people in the United States who use the term so frequently have no idea of what killing and war and death are. They have no feeling for the suffering. "Armed struggle" is two words in a pamphlet, repeated many times in a book. So you can see I hate the cheap use of that term. Still, nonviolence does not mean personal safety. Pacifism is not passive-ism. If it means that it’s useless. So I will try with others to make change in this world as stubbornly as I possibly can without inflicting pain or death but without dodging conflict confrontations—even initiating it—as at Greenham, Seneca, Livermore, Griffiss, all the wonderful Ploughshares actions.

All of this is related of course to what I said about not asking permission to move through my time in this world. It relates also closely to the idea, the Quaker idea again, that there is a light in every human being and that light has to be addressed first before anything else. And that doesn’t mean that I don’t get angry. I’ve elbowed a few cops in my time for getting too close for my comfort or, in certain cases, my children’s. But it does mean that your first approach to another human being is with the assumption that that woman or man is human and you can at least begin to talk—approach without hatred.

Then you say “How do you feel about the Nicaraguans—El Salvador?” Well, first I don’t judge them. I don’t judge other people, other nations that our government and their own have pressed beyond bearing. In the second place, how can I judge them in the position they’re in when I myself, without such experience of oppression, have lived with all the abstractions of war in my own head. As a little girl growing up—as any little girl growing up in my generation—we really looked to that little boy image of energy no matter how lively we were ourselves. People assume it’s a natural progression—the only forward. It took me a long time to think in other ways. Our histories are written in chapters of war and violence. Where are the long histories of non-violent lives and actions? In fact we here in the U.S. have infinite possibilities for nonviolent actions. There are people who talk a lot about armed struggle and there are many passive-ists who say they can’t possibly withhold taxes, they’d get in touch with the IRS.

**How did you become a feminist?**

It’s a long process. It begins in childhood, doesn’t it? I’ve always had a lot of girlfriends—women friends and always circles of friends. I’ve never been far from the lives of women. But I liked men a lot too. I think it was called boycrazy once. During the second world war, I lived in army camps for a couple of years with my husband. In those days all the boys I knew were in the Pacific or Europe. At war. I still have a lot of feeling for soldiers. At Seneca—the Women’s Peace Encampment—I saw those kids and they meant something to me. We don’t think about those young fellows enough. But your question: After my kids were a couple of years old, I began to write stories that were really mostly about women’s lives. That was because I was pained by the peculiar life of the women my age—in their twenties and thirties, a lot of them with kids and a lot of them alone already, objects of considerable contempt but kind of tough, ironic, becoming angry. I didn’t think of myself as a feminist writing those stories, but I would say I’d begun to educate myself without knowing it. I was learning from myself, among others.

And then when in response to nuclear testing, and the Vietnam War, the Greenwich Village Peace Center was formed, we tried to form a Women’s task force. But Women’s Strike for Peace had gathered itself together within that year and they seemed to fill peace-women’s needs for more autonomous action. I was more interested in local work then and in fact, many of us in the Peace Center came out of PTA’s, Park work, tenant organizations—we had lived in the community’s life. There were very strong women at the Center and we didn’t suffer too much the experiences you’ve probably heard about from women who worked in mixed (men and women) anti-war groups. Also we were on home turf, not at meetings far away. Still I had enough discontent to join an early consciousness raising group. And I thought of myself more and more as a feminist. But when several women left Resist, I didn’t do that, I didn’t think we should all leave. At the time I thought we should (we women) have gotten together and decided in some common way who should remain—who should go. It seemed important for feminists to continue to work inside groups like Resist that were offering support and funding to women. The war was still going on, there were also resistance groups that had to be supported—in and out of the army. (Maybe that was the central committee of my youth still talking.)

It was in early consciousness raising groups that I began to think of myself as a feminist and also see that I had been one for some years in argument and concern. But it was really later that I decided that was the way I wanted to work. I had to go through some years of the anti-nuke movement first, really, before I decided I wanted to work in autonomous women’s groups.

**What was it about your experiences in the anti-nuke movement that lead you to make that decision?**

The split over the Seabrook actions. Both sides infuriated me. That’s wrong, there were at least three positions, when Clamshell on a moment and a half’s notice decided not to do the planned CD at Seabrook, and then the other side’s male bossy leadership wanted to take over the place (unnaturally disgusted but with the same macho thoughtless muscle making). These were, by the way, mostly Boston people—(I was working and living in Vermont at the time). So I’d begun to say words like that—rural, urban—and also see the differences.

Continued on next page...
When you said you had to go through the whole anti-nuke movement, did you see that as being separate from the feminist movement? Did you see them as being two different things?

Well of course they were. There were some women’s affinity groups. In Vermont and New Hampshire, we were part of a general coalition (Upper Valley Energy Coalition) that became so big we had to decentralize, geographically and ideologically, into affinity groups. Bob and I worked with an affinity group that is still in pretty strong business and also I was associated with the women’s affinity group—WAND—which produced an important little book, *Handbook for Women on the Nuclear Mentality* (I was not involved in its production).

**What is your definition of feminism?**

Any definition has got to use the word patriarchy. If you’re a feminist it means that you’ve noticed that male ownership of the direction of female lives has been the order of the day for a few thousand years, and it isn’t natural. That it’s an unnatural way of organizing life on this earth. Feminism’s not about ranking priorities and oppressions, but it’s about demanding changes on an even vaster scale—placing the lives of women as close to the center as class and race have been for most radicals and of course exposing the connections.

N.Y. Women’s Pentagon Action is having a public meeting with El Salvadoran women about “What does a revolution have to be for women to be liberated?” We’ve been talking informally with them for several weeks. They are feminists—that is they’re not simply a support group for male organizations. And talking to them you begin to see how hard it is. It means—for them—that you are responsible for your country’s freedom, women, men, children. It means—for them—the hard act of not accepting the authority of men every step of the way. It means keeping the quarrel going, not relinquishing it at all, and still working and fighting alongside the men, because the woman-consciousness must be woven into the means if it is to be the fabric of the revolutionary end. They know the experience of Algerian women who were returned to the veil. They have no intention of repeating it.

**Can you talk about some of the divisions in the feminist movement—racism for example? Why is the women’s movement practically all white?**

The feminist movement is not all white. There are large groups within the movement that are. But the big wide movement? No. There are very many women of color who are feminists. They’re organizing without white wisdom or presence. They don’t need white women to organize for them. We live in different situations. It seems there must be ways for us all to work together finally. And I think we’re coming to that. But before working together, you clarify, you empower yourselves, you establish trust and love, then you’re strong enough. It’s a process. The process is a powerful feminist statement.

They do suffer some divisions similar to white feminists but even more painful. Some groups say, “Well we can’t be liberated until our brothers are also liberated.” And they say “Our brothers are really very oppressed and treated with contempt.” But then there’s another group that says “Yes, that’s true, but they’re oppressors themselves and we don’t want to live like that. It’s they, our brothers, who should be making common cause with us.” I’ve talked to Latinas and black women who feel that way. So it’s a matter of time and white attention to problems of racism, before we all come closer together. Of course it’s something I long for, and since I’m an optimist I see it coming.

Other divisions are between women who think the issues of violence and war are not feminist issues. They are exactly that. Isn’t the violence against women and the violence of our insane interventions and nuclear buildups part of the same upbringing of boys—warriors in the playground, at home, on the job, at war? Another division: between heterosexual women and lesbians, an awful painful division. Some of it is due to plain well-known homophobia, a historical sickness. I work in a group, the Women’s Pentagon Action, that includes a high percentage of lesbians. Great numbers of lesbians are putting their time, their energy into anti-militarist work—they’re important in almost any anti-war or anti-militarist or anti-racist action that’s happened in the last couple of years. Not to see that power and its usefulness to the world is a willful blindness.

But we were just talking about civil disobedience. Some people think it’s an elite act because some of us have privileges of white skin or maybe jobs we won’t lose the minute we are arrested. Well it’s true that people of color are treated worse in prison than white women. They are. (Of course the great civil disobedience movements—King, Gandhi—were not exactly white). When white women (or men) use the argument—therefore nobody should do it—I don’t understand them. It seems to me that privilege is obligation, that if it’s easier to go to jail, so to speak, or more possible, then direct actions that may lead to arrest are exactly what we ought to undertake when that is what’s called for.

It’s sort of like having democratic rights and not using them. It’s a totally different subject but people will always come to you when you’re giving out leaflets and say “You wouldn’t be able to do that in Russia.” So therefore you shouldn’t do it here? Well, of course you have an obligation to push the privileges of democracy, to push and extend them everywhere. And people who can should do so. We also have to be willing to divide up the work without feeling that some folks are being snotty about it or braver. They’re not braver. For instance when my children were babies I was a lot more cautious. We must investigate, imagine, press the limits of non-violent action.

Some of this will probably seem naive to some people. It’s a naivety it’s taken me a lot of time and thinking to get to.

Karen Kahn is an anthropologist writing her thesis on the women’s peace movement. Her last article in Resist was “Culture Clash in Seneca County,” #160, October 1983. Meredith Smith is a Resist Staffperson.
Towards A Unified Struggle:

The U.S. Peace Movement and the Middle East

MARGUERITE A. BROWNING
ROBERT VITALIS

On June 12, 1982, while over half a million people marched in New York to register their fear of war and the growing potential for nuclear destruction, the Israeli Defense Forces stood on the outskirts of Beirut, the main target of the "Peace for Galilee" invasion launched 6 days earlier. None of the impassioned speakers who addressed us from the stage at the New York demonstration mentioned the invasion, even though U.S. ships of the sixth fleet, some armed with tactical nuclear weapons, were poised off the coast of Lebanon. In the Beqaa valley, Israeli planes and artillery battered Syrian units, some accompanied by Soviet advisors. Thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians had already been killed and wounded during the first days of this invasion which had been armed, funded and approved in advance by the U.S. government. In the months to follow, the Soviet Union would replace and upgrade the weapons lost by Syria, move in personnel to operate an advanced missile defense system around Damascus, and increase the number of Soviet advisors accompanying the Syrian army.

The June 1982 invasion demonstrated once more that the superpowers—via their proxies—are inextricably caught up in the conflicts of the region. References to "local" conflicts make no sense save to indicate that so far U.S. and Soviet troops have not fought one another directly. (The Reagan regime, steeled by a re-election victory, may make even that distinction obsolete.) The lesson for the peace/nuclear freeze movement is clear: the movement undermined its own cause as long as it refused to take up the question of intervention and especially to challenge U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Events since June 1982 have heightened the contradictions in the positions of freeze, peace and disarmament groups (as they mirror mainstream liberal opinion on the Middle East). Reagan's military adventures have included the invasion of Grenada and the landing of U.S. marines in Beirut, both actions designed to install and/or consolidate the power of truculent, rightist allies. The Grenada invasion, along with U.S. military and diplomatic actions in Latin America (arming the contras and launching covert operations against the government of Nicaragua, support for the "death squad" regime of El-Salvador) faced qualified opposition in the U.S. domestic political arena. While Congress challenged Reagan on Latin America, it acquiesced to the invasion of Beirut—the largest show of U.S. military strength and the greatest number of American casualties since the Vietnam War. The progressive movement was complicit by its silence.

In campaigning for the 1984 Federal elections, various Democratic candidates have courted the freeze movement, some receiving the blessings of its leadership. Cranston addressed the delegates to the December 1983 National Conference of the Freeze in Saint Louis. Randall Forsberg appeared at the side of Edward Markey as he declared his candidacy in the race for the seat of Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas. Despite their apparent commitment to the progressive values which inspire the freeze movement, these same leading Democratic liberals underwrite the militarization of the Middle East through their uncritical support of Israeli territorial aggrandizement and state terrorism directed against the Palestinian national movement and through their less enthusiastic support of U.S. arms sales to "moderate" (read: client) Arab countries.

Paradoxically, by making the contradictions in the liberal response to Reaganism so plain, this period may be the catalyst to a more coherent and thus more effective opposition to U.S. policy. The Freeze signaled its willingness to expand the scope of its organizing action by adopting a resolution at this year's national conference to take up the question of U.S. intervention. Equally important was the Reagan administration's demonstration of the deadly logic behind U.S. policy in the Middle East and its bankruptcy in terms of a U.S. "peacekeeping" role. The starting point of a progressive opposition consists in the development both within movement circles and the general public of the understanding that pursuit of U.S. interests in the Middle East is not different in motivation, means or effect on local populations from U.S. behavior elsewhere in the Third World; and that the militarization of the Middle East creates the danger of global war.

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Towards a Campaign for Peace with Justice in the Middle East

A shared belief in the necessity for a plan of collective action based on this perception of U.S. policy in the Middle East provided the impetus for initial discussions among three Cambridge-based activist groups. Members of the American Friends Service Committee, the Lebanon Emergency Committee and Mobilization for Survival met throughout the summer of 1983 with the purpose of negotiating principles around which a viable coalition could be built. The coalition would in turn seek to build a broad-based movement to speak out against U.S. military involvement in the Middle East and to expose both the underlying logic and the devastating consequences of this country’s unchecked pursuit of “vital interests” in the region. They had mapped out a strategy for the organizing phase of The Campaign for Peace with Justice in the Middle East by early fall when Catholic Connection joined as a fourth sponsoring organization. Other groups, including New Jewish Agenda and Citizens for Participation in Political Action (CPPAX), began to send observers to meetings of the steering committee.

The First Step: Constituency Building (and Consciousness Raising)

As a practical first goal, the campaign hopes to move the Middle East higher on the agenda of the peace movement. The coalition agreed to direct its energies to drawing as broad a range of organizations as possible into coordinated work around the principles and goals of the campaign. At the same time, it would facilitate the process of internal education that would take place as various elements of the peace movement begin to integrate Middle East issues into their own work.

Taking the 1983 “Deadly Connection” Conference as a model, the coalition began in November to prepare for an organizing conference which was held over the weekend of February 25-26 at MIT. Invitations went out to hundreds of political groups in the New England region and approximately 250 community and religious activists participated. Mel King, a founder of Boston’s Rainbow Coalition and its recent mayoral candidate, welcomed the representatives. Major speakers at the plenary sessions included Noam Chomsky, Eqbal Ahmad, Munir Fasheh (the former Dean of Students at Bir Zeit University in the Occupied West Bank), Carlotta Scott (Administrative Assistant to Representative Ron Dellums), Irene Gendzier (Professor of History at Boston University) and Ur Shlonsky (a member of the Israeli Committee Against the War in Lebanon and an editor of the Berkeley-based Palestine Focus).

An important facet of the political process surrounding the conference was the cooperation—primarily as workshop leaders—of individuals belonging to groups which could not publicly endorse specific principles and/or demands of the campaign. They include those most directly involved on one side or the other of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (i.e. Arab and Jewish Americans, pro- and anti-Zionist groups) for whom recent events in the Middle East have provoked intense debates, within both specific organizations and the communities of which they form a part.

While the more “progressive elements among American Zionists will acknowledge the right of Palestinian self-determination, they are much more ambiguous about practical steps towards hastening its realization. The threat of limiting U.S. aid to Israel seems one potentially effective way to pressure the Israeli state to end its illegal and repressive occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. While the coalition will press this demand in the campaign, no Zionist group is as yet ready to endorse it and thus risk (in their eyes) total isolation from the Zionist mainstream.

The Palestinian community is in the midst of an internal debate which reflects in part the current political struggle waged by the different factions of the Palestinian Resistance Movement. The setback suffered by the PLO in the 1982 war with Israel has made it difficult for groups to take independent initiatives because they could be construed as divisive. They rightly fear to weaken the resistance movement at a time when the U.S.-Israeli alliance seems particularly hostile to the Palestinian cause. While a two-state formula remains the only practical solution to the competing nationalist claims of Israeli and Palestinians, no Palestinian group in the U.S. will adopt this principle unless the PLO leadership first publicly endorses it.

From the start, the coalition stressed the need to make the movement aware of the political difficulties faced by supporters in the Zionist and Palestinian/Arab communities working within their own constituencies. Special attention was paid to structuring more informal cooperative channels with these individuals. Throughout the conference, plenary speakers and workshop leaders stressed the need for mutual respect and support among all the participants, no matter at what stage they were in their individual understanding of the issues. A great deal of time was devoted to discussion of the personal and emotional difficulties which hinder progress towards
a critical understanding of U.S. mideast policy.

The success of the February conference (which the organizers hope will serve as a model for similar efforts in other parts of the country) depends on the level of subsequent activity by those organizations which sent representatives. While the steering group of the campaign continues to plan specific actions, its primary role will eventually be to serve as a coordinating and resource center to support the activities of its regional constituents. These activities are likely to include a) internal education and debate, b) decentralized public education and outreach in home communities, c) lobbying, petition and letter writing campaigns targeted at various governmental levels and d) other more visible public actions, including vigils, demonstrations and civil disobedience.

At present, the Campaign emphasizes educational activities which will allow individuals to make the connection between concern for such ideals as peace, justice and human dignity, and the reality of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Implicit in this educational process is a challenge to peace activists to examine their own prejudices concerning the people of the region and to utilize the same concepts and categories which they employ when dealing with other parts of the world. As people of conscience organizing in opposition to U.S. interventionism, we must identify allies among the progressive forces in the region—both Jewish and Arab; distinguish between states and the people living within them; soberly analyze the political and economic interests which guide state actions; examine the ideologies employed by various state elites; focus particular attention on the nature of the "strategic relationship" between Israel and the United States. In general, we must leave behind the biased assumptions that lead to choosing sides among racial, ethnic or national groups, a practice easily rejected for its racist and reactionary character when considering other areas of the world.

Certain common values motivate and sustain the work of the disarmament movement, the women's movement, the anti-interventionist movement, the committees working in solidarity with popular struggles around the world, and the forces working for social change here at home. We share a collective dedication to peace, justice and dignity for all peoples; we stand together in a collective opposition to governance by force and coercion; and we wage a collective struggle against all forms of violence, oppression, sexism and racism in society. We have begun to identify practices that will ultimately allow us to unify our struggles.

We are convinced of the necessity and importance of the work of coalitions like the Campaign for Peace with Justice in the Middle East. While we are painfully aware of the struggle that is ahead of us, we are heartened and sustained by the belief that the convergence of ideals, purpose, and commitment to collective action represented by the campaign opens the way to new possibilities.

Marguerite Browning, a member of the MIT Committee on the Middle East and Robert Vitalis, a member of the Lebanon Emergency Committee, are both doctoral candidates at MIT in, respectively, the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Political Science. For more information on the Campaign contact Mobilization for Survival (617) 354-0008 or AFSC (617) 661-6130.

Militarism Resource Project, PO Box 13416, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

The Militarism Resource Project (formerly Project STP) is a national clearinghouse for community activists who work on military service issues. The project has a special focus on reaching and assisting young men and women from low income, black and third world communities. The project is a service organization, and resource center, not a membership organization. The services they provide include: training of counselors and organizers; producing network mailings and publications; over the phone consultation about organizing and counseling matters; and access to comprehensive library and clippings files. In the past year organizers from the Militarism Resource Project have trained about 1700 counselors from 17 states in pre-enlistment counseling and organizing and military and draft counseling. In addition, the staff conducts workshops on racism and military service, sexual harassment in the military, the Solomon amendments, life in the military and racism and the draft. Literature available from the MRP includes packets on the poverty draft, selective service law and regulations and draft resistance. They also have pamphlets available on subjects such as: draft counseling; poverty draft; recruitment and enlistment; draft resistance; GI assistance; US foreign and military policy and veterans issues. With Resist’s support and the support of some of Resist’s friends, the Military Resource Project was able to purchase a letter quality printer/word processor.

Plutonium Players, 1600 Woolsey #7, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Recently we received a grant proposal from the Plutonium Players, a Berkeley based theater group that invented the infamous “Ladies Against Women” or L.A.W. The idea of L.A.W. caught fire nationwide in response to appearances by notorious anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly and other pro-Reagan notables. L.A.W. characters include Virginia Cholesterol who chants the slogan “We want nukes, we want war, we think oil’s worth fighting for.” L.A.W. also began the Reagan for Shah Committee, a coalition whose members include the Peace Resisters League, Mutants for a Radioactive Environment, Science in the Corporate Interest, Union of Concerned Capitalists and the National Grenade Owners Association (hand grenades for hunting, fishing and personal use only). The Plutonium Players began as the “street theater collective” of San Francisco People Against Nuclear Power and gradually became involved in the many related struggles of the anti-nuke movement, from native peoples struggles against uranium mining to weapons proliferation. They also try to challenge audiences with sensitive issues. One skit they developed portrayed divisive in-fighting in an organizing meeting. This skit has brought laughter and standing ovations to several “stormy conferences.” Other material includes savage jabs at white racism. Resist’s recent grant to the Plutonium Players will help them purchase a 16mm sound projector.

Boston Ladies Against Women at “Missile Makers” convention ©Ellen Shub

Other 1984 Grants

People’s Test Ban National Clearinghouse, PO Box 42430, Portland, OR 97242.

Black and Proud Liberation Elementary School, PO Box 11235, 535 Erie St., Jackson, MS 39231.

Campaign Against Military Intervention in the Philippines, c/o CALC, 198 Broadway, NY, NY 10038.

Committee on Native American Struggles, National Lawyers Guild, 1935 SE Washington, Milwaukie, OR 97222.

Black Vets for Social Justice, 1119 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY 11238.

Address Correction: In the last newsletter we reported on a grant we made to the Boston Comite de Apoyo Pro-Alfabetizacion (CAPA). The correct address for CAPA is 1151 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. You can reach CAPA by telephone at 617/442-6689.

May/June 1984