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Nuclear Power Threatens Communities

Reactor Relicensing Ignores Green Alternatives to Energy

DEBORAH KATZ

Life under the Bush/Cheney Administration has been an environmental disaster for the United States. Their energy plan puts profit for big corporations before the needs of the people by wasting the environment and shortchanging consumers. It ensures an energy future of increased pollution, price-gouging, wasted taxpayer dollars, environmental racism, and the continuing threat of a nuclear catastrophe with a legacy of deadly nuclear waste. We deserve better. And activist groups like Citizens Awareness Network are working to expose the dangers of nukes and for alternative energy policies.

Our Back Yard is Your Back Yard

In my small, rural community along the Deerfield River in western Massachusetts, people live between two nukes. Both release radioactive waste into the water and air, compromising the health and safety of local residents. We have an epidemic of disease including statistical significance in breast cancer, non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma and Multiple Myeloma, a rare blood cancer. We have a tenfold increase in children with Down Syndrome, high rates of learning disabled and handicapped children, and high rates of immune deficiency and auto immune diseases like Hashimoto’s Disease (thyroid), and Lupus.

My community is not alone. Reactor and waste communities throughout the country suffer the same fate. As long as nuclear reactors operate, local people suffer.

Energy Policies and Power

More than 40% of our energy is produced by coal and an additional 20% is generated by nuclear power, making 60% of present energy created by two polluting industries. The Bush/Cheney energy plan has aggressively worked to increase the production of nuclear power (including relicensing of old reactors and siting of new nukes); sought to expand ecologically devastating oil drilling on public lands; and supported dirty coal technology when alternative technology is available.

The power industry creates more air pollution than any other industry. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council report Breath-taking: Premature Mortality Due to Particulate Air Pollution in 239 American Cities, air pollution kills over 64,000 people a year and makes thousands more sick. This administration’s pandering to coal, oil and nuclear industries supports billions in taxpayer subsidies at a time when the people support a green energy policy for the US.

To create a green energy future insuring energy independence and a clean environment, we need to support energy resources like solar, wind, biomass, small-scale hydro and geothermal. According to Cooperative Life (www.cooplife.com) the combination of conservation and increased usage of renewables could replace nuclear power by 2030.

Marketing a Clean Image

Instead we are squandering our future to line the pockets of energy corporations that helped put Bush into office. Both the nuclear and coal industries have launched major public relations campaigns with user friendly ads proclaiming their support for the environment. These claims are deceptive, and huge taxpayer subsidies are required to enable nuclear and coal to reinvent themselves.

For example, advertisements from the Nuclear Energy Institute claim that nuclear power is nonpolluting “clean technology.”

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Nuclear Power Threatens Communities

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Smith & Harroff, an advertising firm working with NEI, describe their campaign on their website (smithharroff.com) as follows:

Working closely with NEI communications staff S&H crafted print, radio and television advertising both inside the Washington Beltway and in targeted states and Congressional districts designed to make the political/policy case for moving forward with Yucca Mountain. Concurrent with this issue-specific campaign, we helped NEI launch an innovative "nuclear benefits" campaign touting the many benefits of efficient, environmentally clean nuclear power - telling a positive story against which NEI could execute this and future government relations initiatives.

In reality the nuclear fuel cycle is not a clean power but instead is a huge consumer of fossil fuels—from mining to milling to construction and operation. A Friends of the Earth study found that a nuke must operate for 18 years before it can break even in greenhouse gas creation. And this does not account for fuel used in transport and storage of radioactive waste. Nuclear reactors also create deadly wastes that contaminate communities and require high level waste storage for 300,000 years.

The coal industry acknowledges in its advertising—which shows clear skies and soaring eagles—that it will take 20 years of research and development at public expense to become clean. As one print advertisement from the Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Energy states, they "Billions of dollars invested in new technology have made electricity from coal cleaner and more efficient than ever. As the use has nearly tripled in the last 30 years, the rate of emissions by electricity from coal has dropped by more than 50 percent." They do not say, however, that fossil-fueled power plants emit nearly 64% of all sulfur emissions that lead to acid rain and constitute 36% of US greenhouse gas emissions.

Sacrifice Communities

For nuclear reactors to operate, they have to routinely release waste into the community's air and water. This poisonous waste compromises the health and well-being of the areas where they are located, known as nuclear communities. Many residents do not know that their air and rivers are contaminated because the invisibility of nuclear waste allows people to deny its effects. As financial contributions by nuclear corporations silence and intimidate opposition in poor disadvantaged communities, reactor communities live with enormous suffering.

Because there is no scientifically sound or environmentally just solution to the nuclear industry's high level waste problem, waste is accumulating and fuel pools have reached capacity. The industry's solution is to target poor, rural, people of color and Native America communities for waste dumping. In Nevada, New Mexico and Utah, This not-in-my-backyard mentality is not a solution; it is environmental racism.

Terrorism Adds to Nuclear Threat

Post-9/11 terrorism threats force regions to address their increased vulnerability. The Office of Homeland Security theorized that Al Qaeda might attempt to fly cargo planes into reactors, targeting the toxic fuel stored on-site in pools. Located outside of containment, they are stored in industrial structures and filled with millions of curies of deadly nuclear waste. A medium-sized reactor like Vermont Yankee has over 35 million curies of cesium in a pool suspended 70 feet in the air. By way of comparison, the Hiroshima bomb had 2,000 curies of cesium; a typical hospital uses 3-5 curies per year to perform all of its medical treatments. A successful attack on Vermont Yankee nuclear plant would leave 25,000 square miles uninhabitable for decades—that’s the entire land mass of Vermont, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Citizens Awareness Network, a grassroots activist group opposing nuclear contamination in all communities, organized a coalition of national, regional, and local environmental, public interest, and nuclear watchdog organizations. The coalition attempted to force the NRC to address this issue and hold emergency enforcement hearings on the structural vulnerability of reactors to terrorism existing at 32 US nuclear reactors located in 15 states. CAN coauthored the petition with the Institute for Resource and Security Studies, Public Citizen, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Union of Concerned Scientists, and Greenpeace to address the specific vulnerabilities of GE boiling water reactors. Over 45 groups in reactor communities and public interest groups signed the petition.

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Meltdown in Democracy

While threats of terrorism expand nuclear power from being a local problem to a regional one, the local problem remains tragic and unethical. The response of the industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to this threat is not increased safety standards but public relations and a meltdown in democracy.

Both the NRC and the industry claim that reactors are not vulnerable to terrorism, but citizens cannot access any of the documentation to substantiate that claim because of "national security" concerns. The NRC refuses to require nuclear corporations to defend themselves from a post 9/11 attack while they suspend security checks, reduce inspections and eviscerate public participation. The NRC is shutting out the public at a point when citizen participation is essential to stop relicensing old nukes and siting new nukes in order to change the course of energy production in the US.

This is a pivotal time for nuclear power and for the communities immediately affected. Our actions over the next few years can change history—we can end nuclear power production in the US. For nuclear power to reinvent itself, it must relicense its old nukes to usher in a second generation. Relicensing provides an opportunity for public opposition to nuclear power. The industry is counting on the fact that most of us will sleep right through it.

At this time NRC ended public hearings for people in reactor and waste communities with a new rule on hearings. Citizens are no longer entitled to a hearing on relicensing, new nukes or clean up of reactor sites. Now all hearings are at the discretion of the NRC. This new rule stifles public participation and shields nuclear corporations from critically needed scrutiny. This is a pivotal time for dismantling of the NRC's hearing process since it coincides with the nuclear industry's applications for relicensing aged reactors and building of new reactors. It streamlines the process for nuclear corporations and enables them to ignore and nullify local concerns.

Putting on the Pressure

Citizens Awareness Network took NRC to court—specifically the Appellate Court in Boston—in February 2004 to preserve the hearing rights of reactor and waste communities throughout the country. CAN was joined by Public Citizen, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, and the National Whistleblowers Center as interveners. Through our organizing work in the Northeast and with organizers throughout the country, the Massachusetts Attorney General, supported by Attorneys General in Connecticut, California, New York and New Hampshire, filed amicus briefs in our case against the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

Additionally, CAN has organized demonstrations to protest Vermont Yankee's continued operation in Massachusetts and Vermont. We organize events to educate people about the real price of nuclear power in our communities and confront the public relations campaigns of the NRC and the industry. Both are attempting to put a "happy face" on nuclear power and the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 in order to aid their resurgent campaign. CAN held events in reactor communities as did over 30 groups across the country to protest this revision of history and educate people on the issues.

People can affect the direction and outcome of our energy problems. By demanding clean and renewable sources of electricity, customers can encourage power marketers to offer "green energy" generated through wind, solar or other environmentally-friendly sources. Several states, as part of deregulation, require generators to produce an increasing percentage of their power from new renewable sources.

For example, New York State Public Service Commission voted for an historic renewable portfolio standard, under which at least 25-percent of the electricity sold in the state will come from renewable sources like wind, solar, fuel cells, hydropower and biomass by 2013. A movement is underway to educate consumers about where their power comes from and how they can identify, and purchase, power from renewable sources.

We can all practice conservation and we can all get involved. Toxic nuclear waste is not a legacy that we want to leave to the next generation. We must create a green energy future. People are already engaged in developing and utilizing resources that are nonpolluting and renewable. We must believe that it is possible and that we can do it.

Deborah Katz is the founder and director of Citizens Awareness Network, a multi-year RESIST grantee. For more information, contact CAN, PO Box 83, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; www.nukebusters.org.

Give the Gift that Gives Hope

If you want to buy gifts for progressive friends or family, consider giving a subscription to the RESIST Newsletter. Here are three reasons to do so:

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Please Remember Us

Activists Confront Toxic Dumping

JANET GREENWALD

I am writing to you from the Pojuaque Ceremonial Grounds in Northern New Mexico on the third day of the annual Gathering for Mother Earth sponsored by Tewa Women United. The Ceremonial Grounds are on a plateau where chamisa, sage, rabbit bush and wild grasses grow. As I am writing, seated between the two doors of my tent, I can hear indigenous music, including drums. To my right [west], are the beautiful Jemez Mountains where Los Alamos National Laboratories houses the research and production of nuclear weapons. To my left [east] are the equally beautiful Sangre de Cristo Mountains where our organization, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, and another New Mexico group, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, have helped rural communities downwind from Los Alamos establish air monitoring systems. Both mountain ranges are banked with clouds this morning, carrying the precious moisture that is always welcome in our high desert home.

The members of Tewa Women United [a former RESIST grantee], who come from the pueblos surrounding Los Alamos, have gathered us here to join them in protecting the earth and the future generations who will live on it. We are members of groups fighting nuclear bomb production and irresponsible nuclear waste dumping. We are individuals interested in moving toward a more sustainable future. We are Indigenous, Chicano, Asian, White and Black. We are a representative group of the people of the southwestern United States.

The Tewa women remind us that the earth gives us everything that we have and that we need to unite in order to protect her, not for her sake, but for our own. We have been talking about the preciousness of clean water and how, when water is poisoned in one place, the ocean and the ocean plants and animals eventually absorb that poison and carry it back to us when we eat them. We also speak about the cancers and birth defects that are the result of exposure to radioactivity, and how that has affected us and our brothers and sisters who live on indigenous lands where uranium has been mined. We speak of radioactivity and its many dangers.

New Mexico is a popular site for nuclear projects. We have inactive leaking uranium mines, proposed uranium mines and a proposed uranium enrichment facility. We have a bomb-making lab, Los Alamos, the largest cache of nuclear bombs in the world at Kirtland Airforce Base in Albuquerque and the United States' first permanent Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in the southeastern portion of our state. We are fourth in cancer mortality and first in child poverty. It is in the face of these challenges that CARD works to educate and mobilize New Mexicans to oppose radioactive contamination.

History and Work of CARD

Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping (CARD) was founded in 1978 by Chicano activists and community members from southeastern New Mexico who were concerned about the threat to their communities' health and welfare posed by the proposed WIPP, a waste dump for plutonium-contaminated waste from bomb making. In the 1980s, CARD expanded its mission to protecting the people and land of New Mexico from radioactive contamination. In the 1990s, CARD became involved with Coalição Binacional contra Tiraderos Tóxicos y Radioactivos, a coalition whose mission encompasses halting the widespread practice of dumping toxic and radioactive waste along the US/Mexico border.

CARD is a mostly volunteer organization. Our projects include research into WIPP's geological instability; legal suits against the Department of Energy and their contractors emphasizing DOE's use of false science and concealed science while siting WIPP and WIPP's contractors' unsafe practices; a teaching unit for middle and high school students, including a presentation on "The Nuclear Industry in Our World" focusing on New Mexico; an outreach project to share resources with communities in our region dealing with nuclear threats; a program to work with and empower youth; partnership with the Albuquerque for Peace and Justice to conduct research and disseminate information on radioactive contamination and air monitoring at Sandia National Laboratories; and direct action, which is currently focused on WIPP trucks coming through Albuquerque.

Politics and Nuclear Waste

Traditionally, New Mexico's political representatives, instead of protecting us from dangerous nuclear projects, cut deals under the table with the industry that result in more money for their business interests and jobs for their friends and families. An example of this was the siting of the WIPP in New Mexico. Former Governor Bruce King, along with selected business people from the southeastern part of the state, cut a deal with the old Atomic Energy Commission behind closed doors. Today, twenty-five years later, those business people still get much of the spin off business from WIPP and Bruce King's son, Gary King, is a highly paid lawyer employed by the Department of Energy.

An exception to that has been Governor Bill Richardson's stand against high-level waste at WIPP. For 25 years, the Department of Energy promised that WIPP would only accept transuranic wastes [plutonium-contaminated materials from bomb making]. Recently, however, DOE made a move to rename wastes at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation that have always been considered high level waste so they could be shipped to WIPP. In question are nearly two hundred gigantic tanks of liquid waste, the byproduct of processing nuclear reactor fuel rods.

In a rare display of environmentally continued on page five

A truck carries three containers of waste to the WIPP (pictured in the background). Photo courtesy of the Department of Energy.
minded policy making, Governor Bill Richardson has proposed to make no high level waste at WIPP a part of the law. The Department of Energy has countered the governor’s initiative with a weaker proposal full of loopholes that would allow high-level waste disposal at WIPP in the future. A coalition of anti-nuclear and environmental groups, including CARD, mobilized New Mexican citizens to send hundreds of postcards to the New Mexico State Environment Department asking the state to hold DOE to their word. The Environment Department will make a decision concerning this proposed modification in November.

What Goes Around Comes Around

In July 2004, an independent scientific report by two New Mexico citizens groups, Rio Bravos and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, concluded that contaminants from Los Alamos National Laboratory had reached the Rio Grande. Meanwhile, the city government of Albuquerque has decided to use the Rio Grande for drinking water. CARD, along with the coalition of groups previously mentioned, will be supporting more stringent clean air and water standards in the upcoming New Mexico legislative session to begin dealing with this potentially dangerous health issue. This coalition is also beginning a media campaign to persuade the public to hold the labs to a higher standard of environmental protection and clean up.

Another tragedy in the making is the lack of adequate monitoring at WIPP, leading to worker illnesses and possible deaths. Inadequate monitoring was revealed during the discovery phase of CARD’s public nuisance suit against WIPP contractors, Washington TRU Solutions and CAST Trucking. Underground monitors at WIPP are clogged with salt and salt water, making deadly low level plutonium contamination impossible to detect. The Federal Court recently dismissed CARD’s lawsuits, but CARD is prepared to appeal to the Supreme Court, if necessary.

Meanwhile, in northern New Mexico, the Department of Energy is talking about dismantling community air monitors even though Los Alamos, directly upwind from this area, has violated clean air emission standards in the past. Rural communities downwind from Los Alamos have formed the Embudo Valley Environmental Monitoring Group [EVEMG] to mobilize community members to keep monitors in place.

EVEMG and Albuquerque’s City Council have been asking to see evacuation plans for their areas in case of an accident, but have yet to see one. During forest fires that roared through the Los Alamos Labs several years ago, northern New Mexico’s downwind communities were unable to get information as to whether or not they should evacuate. Ensuing government tests showed radioactive contamination of fruits and garden produce in these areas. In the middle of Albuquerque, Kirkland Air Force Base stores up to 2,000 nuclear bombs, many with outdated safety devices, according to The Albuquerque Tribune. Community groups in both areas, including EVEMG, Stop the War Machine and CARD will not rest until these evacuation plans are produced and widely disseminated.

As the Bush administration lays other plans to initiate a new nuclear age, New Mexico’s plight as a national sacrifice area remains hidden and undiscussed in national arenas. When your friends and government officials talk about the need for nukes, please remember us.

When it was time to say goodbye to Tewa women and their supporters, we promised to return again next year. As we walked down the dirt road toward our van and the Jemez Mountains, now dark against a turquoise sky, I thought about the many challenges the individuals and groups that came together here would face in the coming year. And I gave thanks for the sense of community that sustains us.

Janet Greenwald is an organizer at Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping. CARD is a RESIST multi-year grantee. For more information, contact CARD, 144 Harvard SE, Albuquerque NM 87106; www.cardnm.org.
Oil and Democracy Don’t Mix
Policies Guarantee a Constant Flow, No Matter What the Human Cost
FRIDA BERRIGAN

At a 1996 energy conference in New Orleans, Dick Cheney, then CEO of Halliburton said, “The problem is that the good Lord didn’t see fit to put oil and gas reserves where there are democratic governments.”

Laying the blame on the divine is a stretch, but it seems that the vice president is right: democracy and oil do not mix. Just look at the United States’ top 10 oil suppliers. Algeria, Angola, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia are repressive regimes with deplorable human rights records. Mexico and Venezuela, while democracies, are marked by instability, inequality and civil strife. Iraq remains at war and under occupation. Only Norway, Canada and the United Kingdom are fully functioning democracies.

Why don’t oil and democracy mix? At least part of the answer can be found in Washington’s policy of providing military aid and training to leaders who guarantee an uninterrupted flow of oil, defending it against all threats—even those coming from their own citizens.

Oil, Terrorism and “Seeing no Evil”
Since the beginning of the war on terrorism in 2001, the United States’ top 10 sources of oil imports have experienced a 350 percent increase in US military aid and training. In 2003, the United States planned to provide these countries with $58 million in military assistance. In fiscal year 2001, their military assistance totaled $12.2 million.

A large part of the increase is explained by Washington’s rewarding of regimes like Algeria and Nigeria for their ability to cloak domestic repression in the rhetoric of the “war on terrorism.” As the United States looks ahead to a never ending war on terrorism and growing dependence on foreign oil, this dynamic will become increasingly common.

Africa accounts for 16 percent of US oil imports, and the National Intelligence Council predicts an increase to 25 percent by 2015. Hunger for this oil, combined with the need to collect allies in the war on terrorism, led the Bush administration to adopt a “see no evil” position toward human rights problems and inequality in the continent’s oil-rich nations.

This policy is so entrenched that William Burns, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and North African affairs, remarked with admiration while on a 2002 trip there, “Washington has much to learn from Algeria on ways to fight terrorism.” Burns must not have read his own State Department 2002 Human Rights Report, which notes that Algerian “security forces committed extra-judicial killings, tortured, beat or otherwise abused detainees.” Algeria has proven oil reserves of more than 9.2 billion barrels and is considered underdeveloped in terms of production, representing a golden opportunity for US companies.

African Countries Trade Oil for Arms
And so, in spite of persistent human rights abuses, relations between Washington and Algiers are warming. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has visited the White House twice and officials are discussing establishment of an American military base in Algeria. Emboldened by this, Algerian generals are pushing for access to previously denied lethal technology like combat aircraft.

Nigeria is the fifth largest exporter of oil to the United States, and with the discovery of new deep-water oil reserves right off the coast US strategic interest is growing.

In July 2003, as President Bush departed for Africa, Gen. James Jones, the US commander responsible for African operations, announced that Washington was negotiating long-term use of a “family” of military bases across Africa and predicted a much bigger role for US military in the Gulf of Guinea, right off the Nigerian coast.

Washington’s desire for Nigerian oil and territory triggered deeper military relationships. During the reign of Gen. Sani Abacha military ties were frozen. But since his death in 1999, the thaw has been quick. That year, Nigeria purchased $74,000 in US weaponry. By 2001, the United States delivered thousands of times that—a total of $3.1 million. Military aid also skyrocketed, from $90,000 in 1999 to more than $4 million for 2003.

How increased military aid will improve human rights and efforts toward democratization is unclear. The State Department’s Human Rights Report found that the Nigerian “military and security forces committed extrajudicial killings.”

Former Soviet Republics Role Growing
Military aid is also increasing in areas that do not supply the United States with oil—yet. The seven countries that make up the Caspian region—Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—are rich in oil, but the West is still trying to figure out how to extract and transport it. In the meantime, the region became strategically important for other reasons—its proximity to Afghanistan and its eagerness to aid in the war on terrorism.

Uzbekistan granted the US permission to establish a “semi-permanent” military base in its territory, other countries offered “fly-over rights,” troops, intelligence and rhetorical support for the war on terrorism. In exchange, the handful of dictators, generals and presidents-for-life that rule the Caspian nations were granted reprise from their international pariah status. Tens of millions in US military aid quickly followed.

Collectively, these countries are slated to receive almost $40 million in US military aid in 2004. In 2001, Azerbaijan and

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Tajikistan were under US sanctions and received no military aid. The other five nations received a collective total of $12.3 million in military aid. In other words, military aid from the United States will increase more than 200 percent in just three years—not including Congress’ $70 million Special Supplemental for Caspian countries in 2002.

In the Caspian, and in most of the other countries where US military aid and training markedly increased in the past three years, the weapons are not being used to defend borders from impending invasions. Rather, military resources are used to squash indigenous movements for self-determination, undermine campaigns for human rights, punish those who call for democracy and government accountability, and protect leaders who came to power illegitimately.

There are a few exceptions to the “oil and democracy don’t mix” maxim, and they are instructive. Norway, the United Kingdom and Canada are major oil suppliers to the United States, but were established democracies with diversified economies before getting into oil exploration. Replicating these successes in other oil-rich countries will require a radical revision of US military and energy policy. Now would be a good time to start.

Frida Berrigan is a senior research associate with the Arms Trade Resource Center, a project of the World Policy Institute. This article appeared in In These Times (February 4, 2004) and is reprinted with permission. For more information, contact In These Times, www.inthesetimes.com.

Stopping Mountaintop Removal in TN

TIFFANY HARTUNG

On Saturday July 24, 2004 a fleet of small boats arrived in downtown Nashville and pulled into the dock below Titan Stadium with a message for Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen. The arrival was the culmination of the 400 mile river trip from the coal fields of Tennessee to call on the Governor to help stop the spread of mountaintop removal.

Mountaintop removal coal mining is threatening to forever alter the landscape in East Tennessee, in the process polluting streams and destroying the mountain heritage. A dedicated organization of concerned citizens embarked on a 16-day journey to show that what affects the mountains in Tennessee’s coal fields will also affect those who live downstream.

With the converging boats as a backdrop, Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOMC) held a news conference at noon on the East Bank Greenway. SOMC, a grassroots organization that has worked on coal issues since 1972, launched the river trip on July 8 at Leatherwood Ford in the Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area. Most of the area that could be impacted by mountaintop removal is in the Cumberland River watershed and many of the threatened streams drain into the Big South Fork. Weathering violent storms, volunteers paddlers carried a jug of water polluted by mine runoff to Nashville the same way the pollution from mountaintop removal would travel, by water.

“We launched this river journey 16 days ago to show that the mountaintop mining that is destroying the mountains in our home community also pollutes the water that runs through the capital,” said Bobby Clark from distant Sequatchie County, “and we came to Nashville to ask the Governor to use the authority given to the state government by Tennessee’s water quality law to limit the spread of mountaintop removal mining.”

Mountain Top Removal Blasts Off

Mountaintop removal is a coal mining practice that blasts apart the peaks of mountains to remove coal. The mine operators then either attempt to pile mine spoil back up to approximate the original shape of a mountain or dump it into the upper portions of adjacent valleys. Mountaintop removal has already devastated the mountains in eastern Kentucky and West Virginia.

A draft study by four federal agencies that was released last summer found that mountaintop removal has already buried over 700 miles of mountain streams and if unchecked will eliminate 2,200 square miles of Appalachian forests. Now Tennesseans are organizing to make sure that the same destruction that has happened in neighboring states does not spread further in Tennessee.

In Tennessee the federal government is in charge of regulating the actual mining of coal through the federal Office of Surface Mining. In addition, the state government is charged with insuring that mining activities do not impact Tennessee’s water.

When the final team of paddlers arrived in Nashville on Saturday they were joined by other SOMC members, volunteers from Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, and other concerned citizens. This fleet of boats covered the final mile and a half to downtown Nashville, providing a backdrop for the news conference where SOMC outlined how the Governor can use the State water quality law to protect Tennessee from mountaintop removal and asked for his help.

Tiffany Hartung is an organizer with Save our Cumberland Mountains. For more information, contact SOMC, PO Box 479, Lake City, TN 37769; www.socm.org.
RESIST awards grants six times a year to groups throughout the United States engaged in activism for peace, social and economic justice. In this issue of the newsletter we list a few grant recipients from our October 2004 allocation cycle. For information, contact the groups at the addresses below.

**US Women and Cuba Collaboration**

PO Box 15202, Seattle, WA 98115
www.womenandcuba.org

The US Women and Cuba Collaboration was founded three years ago with the mission of building a demographically and geographically diverse US women’s movement to end the 44-year-old blockade against Cuba and to normalize relations between the two countries. The Collaboration is a network of more than 30 organizations representing women’s rights, racial and economic justice, labor, Cuba solidarity, peace and media groups across the US. The Collaboration is also working with women in Latin America.

A $2,000 grant from RESIST will provide general support.

**Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice (MAPJ)**

PO Box 1561, Manhattan, KS 66505
www.mapj.org

MAPJ grew out of a Central American solidarity group which was formed in 1984. MAPJ now focuses on a range of progressive issues connected to US domestic and foreign policy, including living wage campaigns, opposition to militarization and the war in Iraq, international labor solidarity with organizers in Mexico and a sister city program in El Salvador.

A grant of $2,000 from RESIST will fund a campaign to promote student activism at Kansas State University by helping students strengthen existing progressive campus organizations and create new opportunities for students to engage in social action.

**Bitterroot Human Rights Alliance**

PO Box 915, Hamilton, MT 59840

In response to the movement of white supremacists into Montana, the Bitterroot Human Rights Alliance formed in the spring of 1994. The organization’s activities gained a new focus with the arrival of the radical right-wing “militia” movement in 1995. BHRA was instrumental in rallying opposition to the often-violent threat to the community.

A RESIST grant of $3,000 will provide multi-year general support to challenge the intolerance in the Bitterroot Valley.

**Dairy Farmers of Vermont**

7 Court Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Vermont dairy farmers are now being paid, in real dollars, the same amount for their milk as they received in the 1980s (yet the price to consumers continues to rise). It costs New England farmers $1.40 to produce a gallon of milk, although they are being paid about $1.00 for it, while supermarkets make a profit of $1.40 for each gallon of milk sold. In November of 2002 several dairy farmers decided it was time to organize farmers to give them control over the processing of their milk and to advocate for state and federal policy changes that will alter the power structure currently dominating Vermont’s agricultural sector and rural communities.

A $2,000 grant from RESIST will enable dairy farmers to organize and advocate for agricultural policy reform.

**Arab Women’s Gathering Organizing Collective**

1265 Harrison Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

AWGOC grew out of an informal meeting among Arab and Arab-American women at the INCITE Women of Color Against Violence conference in March 2002. The INCITE conference stimulated a conversation among women who attended about the intersections between interpersonal violence within families, the violence of colonial expansionism in their homelands, and state violence perpetrated against Arabs in the United States.

A $3,000 general support grant will help to develop a broad-based movement for justice rooted in the perspective of Arab and Arab-American women and girls.