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It’s Our Community and Our Rights
Youth Activists Organize in South Philadelphia and Chinatown

LIN XU

On May 21, 2003, a pan-Asian group of 12 working class youth sat together with two middle class adults to figure out what to do. After working for over three years for social justice in our communities, the board of the organization we had been a part of (made up of all middle class adults) decided to “transition” all the youth’s community organizing work out of its offices. Suddenly and without prior notice, we found ourselves without any material resources, with no office or meeting place or notebooks, much less a computer. We decided that the Community Youth Organizing Campaign (CYOC) needed to establish itself as an activist force in our communities and continue to work for social justice.

Since then, CYOC has grown from a group of people struggling to build infrastructure and stability to a mass-based organization, engaging in strategic planning about our place and work in the community, with consistent organizers and a broad base of volunteers. We secured an office and space for youth and adult meetings, and have set up a workspace in which we have computer and internet access. We have also re-established our constituent database.

Our mission is to organize working class people of color who are most directly affected by institutionalized forms of oppression and state violence to fight for their right to self-determination and social justice. We believe in the fundamental ability of indigenous leadership to organize and challenge the power structure in those communities and in larger society.

Building a Youth-Led Movement

CYOC consists of two programs: the South Philadelphia program, which primarily works with the Southeast Asian community on immigration and gentrification issues; and the Chinatown program, which works on labor and housing issues.

All of the youth members in CYOC are recent immigrants or refugees, living and organizing in Chinatown or South Philadelphia. One of our lead organizers had this to say about his community and his work:

“We want to organize recent immigrant Chinatown residents and workers who work mostly in the restaurants and garment shops. I do this work because I’m of this community and my friends and family will always be a part of the community. Some people ask me why I don’t try and ‘climb out’. But where else could I go?”

In the beginning it was hard to be a youth in the community doing this work, especially doing house visits. I didn’t want to go and was afraid to talk with adults. (I never was able to communicate well with adults in my family, much less strangers!) I was afraid that people would ignore us because they saw us as little kids, and they would just close the door in our faces. But the more I do this work, the more I find that workers really welcome us. I feel it’s because ordinarily, they don’t have any place to talk about the issues that we talk about. No one else wants to listen to them.

Now the youth conduct house visits several times a week to dialogue and build trust with adult workers, as well as communicate the goals and mission of CYOC. While there has been an increased level of fear in the community around immigration

continued on page two
issues, youth have been moderately successful in establishing new relationships in addition to deepening existing ones.

**Making Links to Address Problems**

In the community, workers have the same problems—but often do not make the connections. For example, there is a link between the three construction workers who fell off the scaffolding because it was not built to code, the restaurant worker who cut off the end of his finger and couldn’t go to the hospital until his shift ended, and the garment shop worker who has been working 80 hours per week but hasn’t been paid in three months. They all concern workers’ rights, but people think of it as only affecting themselves. CYCO helps people understand that we have all of these problems together as a community and society—not just as individuals.

Youth in our communities are suited to do this work. Most adults are too busy, whereas some of us have a little more time to go out and find things out for ourselves. Youth also speak many different languages and have the opportunity to be outside of the community. We can be in both cultures and bring our understanding of the larger society and how it affects our community back into the community.

**Challenges for Immigrant Workers**

Since the economy went bad more people from other places, like New York, have come to Philadelphia to find work. Even with the extremely low-wage work, the competition for jobs has become more and more fierce. That makes people who have jobs really concerned about protecting them—they don’t want to “make” or “have” trouble. And the people who cannot find jobs often leave for jobs in other states, which makes them hard to organize because they are not stable in one place.

In addition, since 9/11 it has been hard any time new immigrants go to do anything with the government. Youth organizers have met with several community members who have had difficulties obtaining drivers’ licenses and state identification cards with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation offices because of their immigrant status. Mostly asylees, these individuals are technically allowed by law to obtain these important forms of ID. However, because of the continuing scapegoating of and backlash against immigrants, even people who are documented get hassled.

Immigrants, especially people who have problems with their status, are much more afraid. People see how their friends, families, and neighbors are being treated and deported and detained and become afraid that it’s going to happen to them too. So that makes our work even more difficult.

In response, CYOC has been organizing community members to collaborate with the HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia (www.hiaspa.org) in order to exert pressure on the immigration arm of the Bureau of Homeland Security to change its local practices with stamping asylees’ passports. In May 2004, the CYOC organized a community forum to bring the issue to the attention of the wider community and engage greater numbers of people in action to make change.

If we don’t do this work, who will? We may not be able to see the results right away, but we will in the future. We know because we’ve seen how in other places, organized communities live better lives, and unorganized communities only get more and more devastated.

Lin Xu is an organizer with the Community Youth Organizing Campaign. CYOC received a grant from RESIST last year. For more information, contact CYOC, 229 West Mt Pleasant Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119; cyoc@critpath.org.

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**A Note from the Editor**

The 2004 election is now history: George W. Bush scored an underwhelming victory over an uninspiring John Kerry. Despite the thin margin—in both the popular vote and the Electoral College—the potential impact is enormous:

* Ravaged wilderness and seas;
* The disappearance of civil liberties, human rights, and dissent;
* Rightwing judges appointed at all levels to legitimize the conservative agenda;
* Ever increasing dominance of corporate interests;
* Obscene concentrations of wealth;
* The replacement of public dialogue with fundamentalist intolerance;
* And the list goes on . . .

Regardless of the election results, we all knew that the essential work of progressive grassroots activists would remain about the same. Now we know the outcome, and we see the need for even greater resistance.

As a movement organization, RESIST is committed to funding groups engaged in radical and progressive organizing for social justice, economic fairness, environmental sustainability, and peace. We are proud of the achievements of our grantees, proud of our committed donors, and proud to link the two.

In the years ahead, with the promise of ever greater challenges, RESIST will be there—with your help—making a difference in the nuts-and-bolts organizing that sustains us all.
ID Students Link with Farmworkers

ARIELLE ANDERSON

After nearly two decades of struggle by farmworkers, students and nonprofits, Idaho farmworkers were covered by minimum wage two years ago. During the long organizing campaign leading to this victory, the Idaho State Legislature tried to ignore the thunderous voices of students from all over the state, including the Idaho Progressive Student Alliance (IPSA).

IPSA, a student group founded in Boise in 1998, successfully opened chapters at colleges in Pocatello, Moscow, Caldwell, and in several high schools as well. Students identified the issue as important because many have been farmworkers, and because they understood that the issue extended beyond minimum wages to include child labor, rights to an education, women’s issues, racism and economic justice. As the movement for farmworker rights heated up, one could not go anywhere in the state without hearing about the farmworkers’ demand for minimum wage.

The lessons learned from the campaign for farmworker minimum wage rights can help us carry on in the next struggles.

Farmworker Wages and Beyond

Though the awareness and education of farmworker wages grew, the Legislature remained stagnant. After numerous committee hearings, letters, and individual meetings with state representatives, some students at Boise State University who were active in IPSA knew something more radical was needed to get the attention of those who sit in the comfort of the Big White House. I was one of those students.

In January 2001, seven BSU students shutdown Senate business, amidst the thunderous voices of the farmworkers. Two students locked themselves to the Gallery, while two others locked arms and sat directly in front of the Speaker of the House on the Senate floor. Other members distributed handbills with information on why we were there and what could be done for farmworkers. Ironically, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups were there to learn first-hand how the legislature did "democracy." What a great way to learn about how democracy truly works!

For those who suggested that this action only set "the Cause" back (many state senators suggested this), they were very wrong. Two weeks later a bill passed covering 95% of Farmworkers in Idaho.

Keeping Up the Pressure

Currently, the Idaho Progressive Student Alliance has been recruiting new members to join the boycott against Taco Bell and their parent company, YUM! Brands. [See “Student Activists Say ‘Boot the Bell,’” Resist Newsletter, October 2003.] The two are guilty of human rights violations in Florida, where farmworkers receive no benefits of any kind: over 20 years of stagnant wages, no right to organize without fear of retaliation, no right to overtime pay, no health insurance, no sick leave or pension.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) called for a boycott of Taco Bell in 2001, and student groups across the country responded by organizing on their campuses. CIW is demanding a fair wage for their work in the fields picking tomatoes for Taco Bell/YUM! Brands (see www.CIW-online for more information on the boycott.)

The Boise State University administration made a unilateral decision in June, 2004 to sell the name of the student pavilion to our local Taco Bell franchisee to the tune of $4 million dollars distributed over 15 years. This relationship between Taco Bell and BSU trivializes the long struggle of getting Idaho Farmworkers recognized as being a vital part in the Idaho Agricultural sector. It essentially is showing our Latino/Latina and Chicano populations—who make up 98% of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Idaho—that they don’t matter. BSU’s administration has shown that it is willing to sell-out to a corporation that is linked to horrendous labor practices, and has bastardized the Latino culture with their insensitive and vile marketing ploys (remember “Yo Quiero Taco Bell?”).

IPSA recently invited the CIW to come to BSU to give classroom presentations and put on an event in our Special Events Center to inform the campus community of the boycott and mobilize students to work to severe this contract. More than 120 people came to the evening presentation. The movement in opposition to the renaming of the pavilion is growing. For example, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution demanding that the administration severe the contract with Taco Bell.

Our efforts for the last two months have created a surge of involvement from students, and it will only continue to grow. IPSA has received over 300 signatures from students denouncing the contract and has mobilized students and faculty to pressure the university. We must remember that throughout history student involvement had been vital—if not compulsory—for fundamental change to rear its head.

Arielle Anderson is President of the Idaho Progressive Student Alliance. IPSA received a grant from RESIST last year. For more information, contact IPSA, 1412 W Idaho St #100, Boise, ID 83702; www.idahopsa.org.
Youth Lead Conservation Movement
Alaska Youth for Environmental Action Develops Environmental Leaders

POLLY CARR

One day in 1998, I was sitting with some teens brainstorming how they could plug into the conservation movement. They wanted something more than volunteering two hours on a weekend planting trees or licking envelopes. A quick burst of energy filled the room, and suddenly I found myself among the founders of a new program: Alaska Youth for Environmental Action. Within minutes their mission was born: to inspire, educate and take action on environmental issues facing our communities. On that day I witnessed youth activism in its simplest form: young people identifying a problem, facing it head-on, and coming up with their own solution.

What started out as the pipe dream of six teens is now a thriving statewide program of the National Wildlife Federation. Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) has three regional chapters with high school members from 22 communities. AYEA has trained 650 teenagers in leadership, civic engagement, and community action planning while yielding youth action at the local, state, and national level.

AYEA members have implemented progressive pesticide policies at their schools, published a statewide recycling curriculum, pioneered solid waste solutions in rural and urban communities, and even helped pass legislation on cruise ship pollution. In six years, AYEA has garnered 23 awards.

“Successful” youth activism is measured not only by how many young people are empowered to make a difference. We also have to look at how these young people are strengthening and building a larger movement. AYEA’s success relies upon four major strategies: (1) Training youth to lead locally, (2) Providing direct civic engagement experiences, (3) Connecting youth to organizations and opportunities, and (4) Building a diverse network of activists.

Training Youth to Lead Locally
Youth need training to become a formidable presence in their communities. AYEA has conducted leadership training for hundreds of teens in which they learn about the environment and develop skills in everything from running effective meetings to public speaking. A major component of our trainings is community action planning, through which teens learn how to survey their community, identify environmental issues, propose solutions, and develop an action plan for addressing a priority issue through a school or community project.

By tackling local issues, youth become proactive leaders who have firsthand knowledge about the problems they are addressing, and this helps build support and credibility for their projects.

Training youth to lead includes giving them opportunities to be decision-makers. In AYEA, teens help plan and facilitate our trainings, they run our local chapters, and they sit on our Statewide Advisory Group. If a young person is really passionate about a particular issue, we provide resources to get that youth onto the board of a local organization. We have placed youth onto the boards of several environmental organizations including Alaska Conservation Voters, Sierra Club, and Alaska Marine Conservation Council.

Megan McBride illustrates AYEA’s impact on her activist development: “Attending this [AYEA] training was the start of a great path in my life: environmental action. I became more active in my high school’s recycling program and later helped bring high schools together to tackle the issue of recycling within the Anchorage School District.” Megan later worked at Trustees for Alaska, an environmental law firm, when she was 19 years old. She is currently studying politics and the environment at Lewis and Clark College.

Civic Engagement
Civic engagement is not just about volunteering for a community clean up—it’s about understanding the decision-making processes that affect our communities, and participating directly in those processes. AYEA hosts an annual Civics and Conservation Summit during which teens learn how our legislature works. They analyze legislation affecting their communities and speak about these issues with their state representatives. Through the summit, participants have addressed fish farming, pesticide tracking, coal bed methane development, and cruise ship pollution.

The Summit has been a huge success because youth participation is direct, immediate, and real. Young people don’t want to learn about political processes from a textbook, and they don’t want to invest themselves in problems that are theoretical. Youth walk away from the summit with skills they can transfer to any issue they care about.

“At first it was just a trip, but after I went there I was just amazed at how involved I can get, and what a difference I can make,” said Verner Wilson, a Yup’ik Alaska Native from Dillingham. After his Summit experience, Verner became a dedicated advocate for environmental and cultural preservation, and served as a youth trainer for AYEA. One month into school at Brown University, he campaigned tirelessly in swing states for presidential candidate John Kerry.

Connecting Young People
Each year, AYEA members tackle a wide array of problems ranging from vehicle emissions to habitat restoration. For each

continued on page five
issue our youth choose to address, the National Wildlife Foundation connects them with local resources. When our teens wanted to put together a recycling curriculum (*Alaska Youth Reach Out and Recycle*), they did so with assistance from Green Star and Alaska Center for the Environment. They joined forces with Alaska Community Action on Toxics to pass a school pesticide policy. By building partnerships with other organizations, youth become a part of something bigger than themselves. Building coalitions is something all activists must learn to maximize resources.

Many AYEA members, like Verner Wilson, have been plugged into political and public education campaigns, because they bring advanced skills, local credibility, and a ton of energy to any effort.

### Building a Diverse Network

Alaska has a long history of division between the conservation community and many other sectors of our state, and AYEA is working to change that. We bring youth from vastly different communities together to learn about one another’s culture, economy, geography, and unique environmental challenges.

“If you can work with a wide range of people and not limit yourself, then you will gain a much broader perspective and accomplish much more,” says Anne Barker, an AYEA graduate from Healy, Alaska. Because of our emphasis on cross-cultural understanding, AYEA has developed a membership that is almost 40% rural and Alaska Native youth.

The networking between AYEA’s activists is in some ways more significant than the projects they undertake. Teens socialize, recreate, problem-solve, and learn from one another.

AYEA founder Mekaela Mahoney cites cross-community support as one reason she keeps on going, “...the people involved in AYEA are incredible and you can learn so much from each other. When I am working on an issue and I get frustrated, it always helps to think about those people and remember that I am not alone.” Mekaela is now studying to become an environmental lawyer.

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**Polly Carr is Program Manager of Alaska Youth for Environmental Action. AYEA received a grant from RESIST this year. For more information, contact AYEA, 750 West 2nd St Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99501; carrp@nwf.org.**

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**Young Activists Often Unheard**

*The Political Realities of Young People Registering Voters in Nevada*

**INGER MCDOWELL**

Youth people in Nevada and throughout the nation had a lot at stake in the recent election. We are a constituency too often overlooked by political officials running for local, state, and national office. Much of this year’s campaigns courted the middle-class, women, and seniors, rarely even mentioning the millions of young people being registered throughout the nation by groups like the New Voter’s Project, National Hip Hop Convention, and local organizations such as Nevada Young Activist Project (NYAP).

The process was challenging, because young people are often fearful of talking about politics with friends or foes. As the election neared, it became more obvious that our nation is in a political tug-of-war about dictating the rights of same-sex couples, access to abortion, national security, and the war in Iraq. Politicians spared no expense with their slam campaigns and endless mail propaganda, while millions of people have taken to the streets with their bumper stickers and t-shirts.

**Youth Voter Efforts**

The Nevada Young Activist Project began working on a citywide voter registration and mobilization effort in early 2004.

As young people registering young people, we wanted to know how the job market, rising health costs, and astronomical gas and tuition prices affected us. We went into classrooms, onto college campuses, and into coffeehouse, diners, and libraries to engage young people in the electoral process.

In this polarized context, NYAP set out to register 1,000 young people 18-24 for the election on November 2. Because of our efforts with national organizations such as the League of Young Voters, National Voice and many others who reached out to youth voters, we were able to reach our goal. We never went out with an unrealistic goal of registering thousands of students; we did what we could with 15 members. We hosted a “Rock the Vote” event that was attended by more than 200 young people on our college campus. We hosted local candidates running for offices and invited local entertainers to perform at our events to reach out to a broader audience.

**Educating and Mobilizing**

Our most important goal was to educate the young people of our state on the issues that affect us right here at home including minimum wage, tort reform, and tuition costs.

In an effort to reach a broader audience, NYAP co-hosted with Nevada Students for Peace and Solidarity a “Realities of War” tour on our college campus. The tour focused much of its effort on discussing the devastating realities of the war in Iraq and the conditions on the ground for our troops, the Iraqi people, as well as the impact of military recruitment and the “poverty draft” in high schools around the county. These are the real issues at stake for young people in our country and around the world.

continued on page six

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Vol. 13, #10 RESIST Newsletter Page 5
Young Activists Often Unheard

continued from page five

about the truth concerning the war and the poverty draft that are affecting youth of color throughout our nation. As social justice activists and organizers, we have to protect our communities of color because no one else will.

As a result of intensive organizing, approximately 24 million young people are reported to have voted on November 2. That is an increase from 2000 of nearly 4 million young people throughout the country. These numbers fell far below what many who organized the youth vote expected. We all need to go back to the drawing board and figure out a better strategic plan for future work. If we are to be successful—in 2008, and in challenges between now and then—we must engage young people in the system and be inclusive of all. Our movement depends on it.

Many are disappointed by the outcome of the election, but as activists and organizers we realize that our work will go on in our own communities and states around the country. On that note, it is imperative to continue the momentum fueled by the election and to keep people engaged in the movement. NYAP plans to work at the legislature this coming session to help advocate on behalf of thousands of young people in our school systems, on college campuses, and to educate folks in our community of the importance of raising the minimum wage. NYAP will continue to build upon the political and social connections created over the last several months. We need to continue to work, meet, and share as this is so important to the social justice movement. Only then can we begin to build a more just world for everyone. In the end, we all have a part in changing our realities not only for ourselves but for the people around us.

Inger McDowell is coordinator of the Nevada Young Activist Project. NYAP received a grant from RESIST this year. For more information, contact NYAP: 1101 Riverside Drive, Reno, NV 89503; www.planevada.org.

Youth Targets of Military Recruitment

National Counter-Recruitment Movement Enters a New Stage

RICK JAHNKOW

Over 100 activists were present in Philadelphia the weekend of June 25-27, 2004 to officially christen the new National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY). Born from a proposal made at the “Stopping War Where It Begins” counter-recruitment conference held a year earlier in Philadelphia, NNOMY is an effort to bring together the growing number of organizations and activists who are working against the militarization of young people in communities across the country. Participating in this first NNOMY conference were people from California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

Most of the conference participants represented organizations that have officially become network members or are considering doing so. Approximately 30 local, regional and national groups have joined so far, including: Veterans for Peace, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Youth Activists/Youth Allies (NY City), Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Pax Christi USA, CHOICES (D.C.), Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (San Diego), American Friends Service Committee, Madison Area Peace Coalition, Teen Peace in Port Townsend (WA), Los Angeles Coa-

Youth break up into small groups in Philadelphia to discuss countering military recruitment. Photo by Kevin Ramirez

lition Opposed to Militarism in Our Schools, Not in Our Name, Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz (CA), and Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft. Additional memberships are pending from various other organizations.

Identifying Resistance Groups

To promote more effective networking and organizing, caucuses were formed at the conference around issue and identity themes, such as women in the military, Latinos, draft-related issues, rural organizing, people of color, youth of color and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning). To broaden representation in decision-making, caucuses were invited to apply for membership status that is equal to regular commit-

tees, and some were included in a NNOMY steering committee.

Ten organizations and six caucuses were unanimously approved to form the steering committee, which will make decisions between meetings that are subject to review by the voting network members. Also adopted was a proposal from the youth caucus to have at least two steering committee members younger than 25, and to pursue the goal of majority representation of youth and people of color.

NNOMY will continue to grow and develop plans, but an immediate course was set at the conference to pursue two goals: facilitating further development of organizing and educational resources, and promoting regional training of counter-recruitment organizers. For the near future, conference participants volunteered to collaborate on some specific resource development projects, and regional caucuses met to discuss what they could do to carry out networking and training in their geographical areas. Progress in these and other areas will depend on additional post-conference communication, so the contact information for participants will be incorporated into
continued from page six

the Stopping War listserv that was established after the national conference held in 2003. Caucuses will have their own communications networks and will, hopefully, continue to work on the special issues that brought them together.

Violence of Militarism

One important facet of NNOMY is its commitment to including and supporting the various communities that are especially affected by military recruiting and the violence of militarism, including people who are victims of the military’s homophobia. Since the conference dates overlapped with gay pride celebrations nationally, special materials were given to attendees on issues relating to militarism and sexual identity. An exciting music/spoken word event was also organized and hosted by the Attic Youth Center in Philadelphia, one of the few Queer youth centers in the country.

The NNOMY conference itself was co-hosted in Philadelphia by the American Friends Service Committee and Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors. Conference planning and other tasks were shared by a number of groups that had served as an ad hoc steering committee, but the AFSC Youth and Militarism Program office provided the bulk of the on-site resources and logistical support, including the Friends Center where the conference was held.

It was especially appropriate that the founding meeting of this network occurred in a city where some of the most important revolutionary events occurred in US history and within days of the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. While some of the decisions that went into the formation of the US government over 200 years ago were tragically inconsistent with the ideals of liberty and justice for all, one thing that many of the country’s founders got right was their perception that the growth and influence of a large military establishment would undermine civil society and progress toward democracy. Over the last 60 years, this lesson has been largely forgotten, and the traditional controls over the military that were once seen as necessary and even taken for granted have greatly eroded.

In addition to the Pentagon’s considerable influence over government decisions (including economic ones), our most important institutions of socialization—the public schools—are being overrun by people in uniform teaching military values. Popular culture is being saturated with messages that popularize soldiering and war. We are approaching a point where the long-term effects of militarization will be extremely difficult to reverse. A massive effort is needed to turn the trend around, and NNOMY is a crucial step in that direction.

The conference in Philadelphia left us with an important opening to build a movement that speaks to the needs of constituencies that have traditionally not been reached very well by the US peace movement. And because it focuses on interrupting the flow of human resources and challenging the mechanisms of propaganda that are needed to wage war, it is an effort that also offers people an effective way to move from war protest to war resistance, while at the same time working for long-term social transformation.

Rick Jahnkow directs Project on Youth and Non-military Opportunities and the Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft. Both groups are RESIST grantees. This article is reprinted with permission from DraftNOTices (http://www.comdsd.org/). For more information, contact COMD, PO Box 15195, San Diego, CA 92175; www.comdsd.org.

Youth Activism Resources

The following is a short list of resources for youth activists. For more information, contact them directly at the addresses below.

Active Element Foundation
532 La Guardia Place, #510, New York, NY 10012; www.activeelement.org
Provides funds, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to youth-led, grassroots and community groups.

American Friends Service Committee-National Youth and Militarism Project
15 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102; www.afsc.org/youthmil/
Works to reduce the impacts of war and military institutions on young people’s lives.

FIERCE (Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment)
437 West 16th Street, Lower Level, New York, NY 10011
Empowers youth to address multiple types of marginalization and exclusion—particularly, racism, heterosexism/homophobia, sexism, gender oppression/transphobia, classism and ageism.

Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing
c/o Jewish Fund for Justice, 260 5th Avenue, #701, New York, NY 10001; www.fcyo.org
Works to increase the philanthropic investment in and strengthen the organizational capacities of youth organizing groups across the country.

Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities
PO Box 230157, Encinitas, CA 92023; www.projectyano.org
Provides young people with an alternative point of view about military enlistment.

Ruckus Society
369 15th Street, Oakland, CA 94612; www.ruckus.org
Provides environmental, human rights, and social justice organizers with tools, training, and support.

Student Environmental Action Coalition
PO Box 31909, Philadelphia, PA 19104; www.seac.org
Grassroots coalition of student and youth environmental groups working together to protect our planet and our future.

Third Wave Foundation
511 W. 25th Street, #301, New York, NY 10001; www.thirdwavefoundation.org
Helps support and strengthen young women and their allies working for gender, racial, social, and economic justice.
There are a few exciting changes to RESIST’s grantmaking program that will begin on January 1, 2005.

New! General Support Grant Awards

In order to enable grantees to build infrastructure and capacity while engaged in on-going social justice activism, all RESIST grants will be provided as general support.

RESIST has been awarding a portion of its funds as general support grants for many years and has significantly increased the number of these grants over the last three years. In 2003 alone, 88 of 142 grants (62%) were for general support.

The decision to shift all RESIST funding to general support will help organizations focus on strengthening their movement-building and cross-issue organizing capacity. Project funding sometimes causes grantees to jump through hoops to appeal to funders. General support, which is reliable and flexible, enables grantees to effectively carry out their missions and respond to new challenges and opportunities.

As RESIST grantee Linda Meric of 9 to 5 Colorado notes:

We try to apply for general support whenever we can. But we often feel that smaller funders, particularly, are pressing us to come up with projects. Wow—it’s nice to get this level of support for on-going organizing. It gives us the flexibility to put money where we need it and to respond to opportunities or challenges that come up.

When Laura Olah from Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger in Merrimac, Wisconsin heard about this change she said: “You guys are so cool. Thanks.”

Providing general support grants also helps to level the power imbalance between funders and grantees.

New! Technical Assistance Grants

Many groups that apply to RESIST for funding also need other forms of assistance. Groups often require technical assistance to help with the nuts and bolts of starting, maintaining, and developing progressive organizations.

In keeping with RESIST’s goal of building movement infrastructure and capacity, RESIST will also provide small grants up to $500 to enable existing grantees to participate in technical assistance opportunities.

Some of the areas that grantees will be able to get assistance in include: board and staff development, fundraising, fiscal management, computer and software training, Internet activism, strategic planning and basic organizing skills.

These funds will be available for grantees who have been funded at least twice within the last five years. Funds will be available quarterly and will be dispersed on a first-come first-serve basis.

RESIST has developed “A Guide to Technical Assistance,” to help locate training opportunities. It is posted on our web page at www.resistinc.org. This guide is a continually evolving work-in-progress, and not the last word on technical assistance.

Other Resist Grantmaking Efforts

RESIST will maintain and expand (as possible) all other forms of our grantmaking program, including:

Multi-Year Grants: Grantees who have been funded by RESIST at least two times during the preceding five years may apply for a multi-year general support grant.

Accessibility Grants: To support projects that enable all people to participate in the movement for social justice, RESIST will fund the additional costs of projects or events which will make them accessible to people with disabilities (e.g. signers for events, or wheelchair accessible venues) for amounts up to $3,000.

Emergency Grants: Emergency grants of up to $300 are available on an “as-needed” basis. These grants are designed to help groups respond quickly to unexpected organizing needs due to a political crisis.

Loans: A revolving loan fund is available for groups that are planning direct mailings, fund raising events, subscription campaigns and other projects that are intended to raise money. Groups can also apply for advance payments on bus rentals to transport members to marches or rallies.

Funding Cycles:

RESIST will maintain its quick turn-around time for grantmaking. Proposal deadlines occur every eight weeks and funding decisions are made eight weeks thereafter.

Further information about RESIST’s grant program can be found on our web site at www.resistinc.org.