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Maine Statewide News Letter No. 69 (October 1985)

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October 12, 1985

Dear Friends of INVERT,

It is now 6 months since Karen Harlan and I began six projects for INVERT, toward which many of you have pledged your support. We are making slow but sure progress on each of these, and I want to give you an update of what has been done, especially since July, and what we expect to be working on from now until next March when our year is over.

A few of you who pledge financial contributions in installments of 2-4 payments will also receive reminder post cards. Thank you so much for your faith and confidence in us. It is most gratifying, and we hope you will consider our efforts to be time well spent.

While I know you are all quite busy with your own important work, your feedback and suggestions would be much appreciated. Are these projects likely to bear fruit? Could we be doing things differently or better? Are there good resources for us to tap into? All comments and suggestions are most welcome. And here are the summaries of projects--past, present, and future:

Peace Education. I have stayed in touch with the S. Maine Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) over the summer, although they have taken time off. I wrote part of a packet on how to develop a peace education unit or curriculum for classrooms (K-12) which will hopefully be sent out by November. A few of us helped organize materials at the Educational Clearinghouse, part of the Maine Dept. of Education in Augusta. I have made contacts with the State Dept. of Education and the Maine Teachers Association to solicit support.

Plans for the next few months include an organizing (and hopefully follow-up) meeting of Eastern Maine ESR, the mailing to teachers, finding someone to do in-service and workshops on teaching peace education in the classroom, helping with a conference in the spring at USM, and finding local contacts who have used peace education materials and can help other teachers in their area to get started.

Draft Counselors Network. Lee Armen and I have been collecting draft/militarism resources (see blue sheets) and are beginning to accumulate resources for counselors (though they are more expensive, so we may go after some money from several sources). A mailing went out to 40-50 potential counselors asking them if they were interested in being part of a counselors network. About 20 responded, almost all immediately ready to help. Contact was also made with Veterans for Peace, a new group of vets who hopefully will make speaking in schools about their experiences and the military a high priority activity for the group.

A meeting to form a counselor network is scheduled for Dec. 7 (Pearl Harbor Day) at 10am at Lithgow Library in Augusta. A counselor training session is planned for late January/early February. A newsletter will likely be sent out after the Dec. 7 meeting. And school contacts will then be approached to determine their interests in school speakers or helping to get posters or brochures about counseling put up in schools. If you are interested in being part of the counselor network, I hope you can come on Dec. 7 (contact me for carpooling and confirmation).

Alternative United Way. A mailing was sent out in July to about 40 statewide groups asking if they would be interested in participating in an Alternative United Way. About 15 responded, most positively, and some others were silent only because their pace slows in the summer. I attended a 3-day conference in August on Alternative United Ways and learned alot about them. Another letter went out to most of the 40, asking for me to speak at a Board of Directors or policy-making group meeting between October and February. So far, one group has scheduled me with probably quite a few more to come. When we tally up actual groups commitments,

we'll know whether the idea will fly or not.

Nonviolence Awareness. The North Atlantic Nonviolence Networking Conference was held in New Hampshire in July. I helped with its planning and implementation. The reviews, including mine, were mixed. I doubt there will be much follow-up on it. I have prepared a list of INVERT publications on nonviolence and consensus (Karen and I have done several presentations/workshops on it also), and a resource list on simple living, which I hope to push a little harder to peace and justice groups in the future.

I will try to do a similar list and prepare a presentation on both nonviolent civilian defense (if we disarm, we still need to maintain our security and defense) and pacifism (we can't get rid of our weapons until we give up our need to use violence and killing to solve our conflicts). I would be happy to do a program on simple living (and later on those other topics). See below for booking. Public service announcements and posters on nonviolence are also planned for the future.

Nonviolence Training. Since March, 1985, INVERT has continued to serve as a clearinghouse for nonviolent direct action training in central and northern Maine, scheduling training sessions specifically for the Pledge of Resistance. A new consensus resource list was developed as a handout for those training sessions. In August, INVERT helped organize a statewide meeting of nonviolent direct action trainers in Portland where the northern and southern trainers groups exchanged ideas about training methods, brainstormed areas to improve upon, and considered ways to communicate more clearly with the Pledge of Resistance. Out of that meeting a two-day Training for Trainers session is being planned for early 1986. A Maine trainer, Sheila Garrett of Harpswell, was found to serve as a liaison with the New England Trainers Network. She attended a regional meeting in Worcester, Mass in June. Some information on the types of nonviolence training available in Maine has been collected and a flyer will be produced soon. INVERT helped arrange a "Feminism and Nonviolence" workshop to be presented by Sheila Garrett at the Maine N.O.W. Conference in November.

Symbolic Tax Resistance Campaign. An information sheet for the symbolic resister was developed and made available as of May. Articles on symbolic resistance were submitted to, and published by, the Maine N.O.W. Times, the Maine Freeze Campaign newsletter, the Me Clergy and Laity Concerned newsletter, the Me Statewide Newsletter, the Me Central America Newspaper, the Brunswick Peace Center newsletter, and the Citizens Opposing Nuclear Arms (CONA) newsletter. Articles have been submitted to 5 other newsletters, but not yet published. Flyers on symbolic resistance have been disseminated by a mailing to the WTR Resource Center list (about 275) in August, and by distribution to local peace and justice groups. There have been presentations on symbolic resistance made to the Me Freeze Campaign, the Coalition for Peace and Justice in Central America, and the S. Me ESR group. Thus far, 25-30 new people have agreed to do symbolic resistance. The symbolic resistance flyer has been revised to include information on the Maine War Tax Funds for Life.

That's the update for now. I've enclosed several resource sheets with this mailing so you'll have something useful on some of these topics. Let me know if you would like more of any of these sheets. Please get in touch if you have questions or want to get more involved with any of these issues.

For peace and justice,

Larry Dansinger

Larry Dansinger

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