

Spring, 1989



Newsletter

THE PROGRESSIVE FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 2658

MADISON, WI 53701

Resistance from behind prison bars

WITH ITS TWO staff members convicted of trespassing at nuclear missile silos, Nukewatch this spring prepared to continue its peace-and-justice work from behind prison walls.

Bonnie Lee Urfer, co-director since 1986, is serving a 25-month sentence at the federal women's prison in Lexington, Kentucky, following her conviction for cutting fence locks and entering three missile silos in Missouri last August.

Sam Day, co-director and Nukewatch staff member since 1981, turned himself in to federal authorities at Kansas City in late March to begin serving a sentence of up to six months for his part in the Missouri missile silo action. Day and three others were found guilty after a one-day trial in January.

The two Nukewatch staffers, both from Madison, Wisconsin, were among 15 Midwesterners who entered the fenced enclosures above the underground silos to call attention to the missile launch sites, each of which holds a nuclear warhead a hundred times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. The nonviolent occupation was called "Missouri Peace Planting '88," symbolizing a reclaiming of the land for peaceful purposes.

Eleven of the 15 have been charged and convicted. Sentenced in addition to Urfer have been Dorothy Eber, Chicago social activist and, at 63, the oldest of the group, 26 months in prison; Jerry Zawada, Milwaukee, a Catholic priest, 25 months; Ariel Glenn, Milwaukee Catholic Worker house staff member, 19 months; Kathy Kelly, Chicago teacher, one year; Duane Bean, Chicago lay minister, one year, and Gail Beyer, Madison, mother of two young children, three years on probation. To be sentenced this spring are Day and three Chicagoans, Michael Stanek, Catherine Feit, and Sam Guardino.

As part of their work in raising public consciousness about the missile silos in Missouri and other Midwestern and Great Plains states, Nukewatch staff members took an active part in the Missouri peace planting project since its inception more than a year ago.

The simultaneous entry into ten missile silos on August 15, followed by repeated entries later in the month, raised the scale



Sam Day and Bonnie Urfer: a temporary change of venue

of civil disobedience in the U.S. missile silo fields. Scores of others, many from the Kansas City area, played supporting roles as observers, drivers, and logistical helpers.

When the prosecutions got underway last fall, and after judges began sentencing at close to the maximum levels, Nukewatch began preparing to continue operations from behind prison bars. The office was moved temporarily into Sam Day's home in Madison, where mailings and other administrative work will continue uninterrupted.

Susan B. Nelson of Brodhead, Wisconsin, a Nukewatch volunteer for many years, began work March 1 as acting director of Nukewatch. With assistance from Urfer and Day in prison, she will coordinate Nukewatch's campaigns focusing public attention on nuclear missile silos and on the transportation of nuclear bombs and warheads by unmarked convoys of the U.S. Department of Energy. (Ericka Ann Overgard, who joined the Nukewatch staff in August, resigned December 31 to prepare for full-time study at the University of Wisconsin. She remains a Nukewatch volunteer.)

As in the past, much of Nukewatch's work will continue to be done by volunteers in the Madison area and through grass roots peace-and-justice organizations elsewhere in the country.

We've Moved

Nukewatch has moved.

Our new address is P.O. Box 2658, Madison, WI 53701. Our telephone number remains the same: 608/256-4146.

Make a note of the new address and use it to order merchandise, make a contribution, report the sighting of an H-Bomb convoy, learn about the next missile silo demonstration, conduct other Nukewatch business, or get a card or letter forwarded to Bonnie Urfer or Sam Day in prison.