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**Interview**  
***Jerome Grossman***  
**December 3, 1996**

*Interview conducted by Nancy Earsy*  
*Videotape length 77 minutes*

**INT:** Tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, and the family values that shaped you growing up?

**JG:** My name is Jerome Grossman. I suppose by profession I can best be described as a manager. I worked in the family business for thirty-five years, sold my interest in that, and then as a result of my participation in the peace movement I accepted a position as the president and national executive director of Council for a Livable world. I was the director of that for twelve years. Then I became the chairman of the organization. The difference is that instead of working at it twenty-four hours a day, I work at it twelve hours a day. In addition, I have become a teacher since I retired from business. I have taught political science at Tufts University. I'm currently teaching Business Management at Tufts University. In addition to that, I do a lot of speaking, and formally I teach at Palm Beach Community College in January, February, and March. In the fall semester I teach here at an RSVP program, which is essentially a lifetime learning institution. Believe it or not, in each of these places I have between two hundred and three hundred students every week. I find that quite gratifying. I find that it's a way of educating myself more than the students. In other words, the voluminous research that I do in preparation I feel greatly adds to my understanding of the issues as well as adding to the store of facts that I have. I think that's why people come to listen to me because it's all preparation. I don't think that I have anything unique to say. But I work at putting it together for them.

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I should say also that I have a wife and I have three children. Unfortunately, the children aren't around here, so I don't get to see them or my grandchildren very often. But I've only had one wife. I'm family oriented. We're together all the time. I wish she were here to participate, but she is not.

**INT:** In terms of your connection with the peace movement, were there family values that led you to your very active involvement in the peace movement?

**JG:** My father was active politically. As I say in my book where I really draw a contrast between my father and myself, he—as the son of immigrants and somebody working their way up from a very poor background—used politics as a vehicle for upward mobility, primarily. I didn't have to do that because by the time I came along we were fairly comfortable. Not rich, but comfortable. I somehow began reading *The Nation* magazine when I was fourteen years old. I've always been an avid reader. They had to throw me out of the library. I got beaten for reading excessively. "It'll burn out your eyes." When I had to go to bed at nine or ten o'clock, if I was in the middle of a story or reading a book, I took a flashlight and put my head under the covers until I was discovered. And then, that's when I got beaten.

There was no history of political activism in the sense that I'm active in my family. However, I made a turn in the family in that my younger sister—I had one brother and a sister, and she was born sixteen years after I was born—and her politics are very close to mine; her children's politics are very close to mine. So I made a departure in my family. How I got that way, I don't know. I like to think that I didn't like to see other kids pushed around. I remember getting in fights to protect other kids. But maybe that's a mixed memory.

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**INT:** Tell us about the Vietnam moratorium movement of 1969. What precipitated it, and what was your role in that?

**JG:** You have to go back to the Eugene McCarthy campaign. I had been working in the peace movement for many years. My motivation was the knowledge of the power of atomic weapons. Anything that might precipitate a war between the countries that had nuclear weapons might wipe out humanity. When I learned about that in the middle 1950's it was the kind of knowledge that spurred me into action. Actually, I only learned about it by being taken to a meeting of the American Friends Service Committee on Brattle Street in Cambridge. I can hear Russell Johnson explaining the whole thing to me. I had three young children. I was a Little League coach and very close to children, whether it was teaching them baseball or teaching them tennis. The idea of the race, the species being eliminated, to say nothing of a Shakespeare, Homer—even Larry Bird—not existing anymore, was something that just spurred me into action.

This in the middle 1950's. And, of course, everybody was still terrified of McCarthyism, unwilling to do anything that appeared to recognize the existence of the Soviet Union and that they had a right to exist. It was interpreted as being against the Cold War. I was against the Cold War and I wanted it resolved. The reason why I wanted it resolved is so that nuclear weapons ought not to be used. So I became involved in National Committee For A Sane Nuclear Policy and various other organizations that were founded virtually every other year in response to various pressures. Of course what we were working on then was the nuclear test ban. We're still working on the nuclear test ban to try to complete it. But I was the one who became quite dissatisfied with the fact that we were essentially talking to each other in church basements and academic meetings, middle class, upper class, highly educated people. We weren't reaching the public.

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I was the one who said, you know, we have a political system in this country. Let's use the political system to bring issues and ideas to the people, and as a way of talking to them because we can't reach them any other way. It was exploiting the political system. But I don't feel badly about that, because it's there to be exploited. That's what it's there for. So that was the turn that I took. I think that's also related to the fact that I had had some political experience through my father and through my other local activities. We ran a candidate for the United States Senate, a professor at Harvard by the name of H. Stuart Hughes. That was in 1962. And we were viciously "Red-baited." Ted Kennedy, who is now one of my close friends, was the Democratic candidate. It was the first time that he ran for his brother's seat. There was a Republican in there by the name of George Lodge. George Lodge was the grandson of Henry Cabot Lodge. And Stuart Hughes was the grandson of Charles Evans Hughes who had been the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. So you had these three scions of famous families. It was a fantastic event. We didn't get many votes. We only got two and a half percent. But we made a lot of noise, and we did get the issue out there. We really ran to get the attention of the President, John F. Kennedy. This is 1962. In 1963 there was a partial nuclear test ban signed. So we think we had something do with that.

But more important than that was the fact that people came from all over the country to work in our campaign. That may be a bit of an exaggeration, but the students at Harvard, MIT and B.U. who participated in the campaign, the men and the women, they all went home with this experience under their belts and in their psyches. And they knew the techniques that were used. They knew how we got publicity. This is all brand new. They knew how we broke through the crust of the Cold War to have people not think in stereotypical terms. And they began organizing in their own towns and

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places, wherever they lived. That's the most exciting part of the Hughes campaign. It was a seminal event. And of course Hughes was a wonderful candidate. I saw him in La Jolla just a couple of years ago. He's very frail and fragile now. He's eighty-one, eighty-two, something like that. But he never wavered in his candidacy. Bill Clinton and all these other guys should take lessons from him. And there was pressure put on him to run a campaign like that in the middle of the Cold War.

Okay, after that campaign the three thousand volunteers, many of whom were women, housewives, incidentally—not incidentally—and they were very important in the campaign. They were part of the decision-making apparatus. We all got together; we decided to stay together as an organization. And this brings me to the Vietnam affair. We continued running candidates and agitating on issues.

In 1964 we were very worried about Barry Goldwater because we thought that he was more apt to use nuclear weapons because of his extreme views [than] Lyndon Johnson. I remember being in a picket line going around Fenway Park—a vast picket line around Landsdowne Street, Yawkey Way—all those places. We had thousands of people there. We had organized it. Somebody brought a newspaper—in that year they had an afternoon newspaper—and it had the Tonkin Gulf incident in it. I remember saying to the people, maybe we're picketing the wrong candidate. Massachusetts Political Action for Peace, which was the organization that grew out of the 1962 Hughes campaign, began focusing on the Vietnam War in 1974. We did everything that we could to call attention to it. We worried about it. My worry about the Vietnam War was that it could result in a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union or the United States and China. That was my main motivation. We were working in various ways. Then the presidential election of 1968 was looming. I

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worked with Allard Lowenstein and Curtis Gans to try to find a candidate who would run against Lyndon Johnson for the Democratic nomination on the issue of the Vietnam War. We went to George McGovern and he turned us down. He was Senator then. We went to Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas who was the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and had had very good hearings. He turned us down. We went to Bobby Kennedy and he turned us down. We had nobody. Then one day in August, 1967—I'll never forget it—I got a telephone call out of the blue from this obscure Senator from Minnesota, Eugene J. McCarthy, wanting to talk to me about his running for President. What do you think he said? He asked me all kinds of questions. I said, "You know, I'm thrilled that you called," I said, "but we have to talk about this." He says, "Can you come down to Washington tomorrow?" So I went down there the next day. I took with me people from the Mass PAX organization, the fellow who had been the organizer of the grassroots, Chester Hartman, he came with me; Marty Peretz and his wife, Ann Peretz, I took them down because they were the money people.

So I was bringing organization and I was bringing money. And I'm the political maker of things happening and so forth. We met with Eugene McCarthy at five o'clock in the afternoon in his office. We talked steadily with him for five hours, went out to dinner and so forth. Then we went to the airport and compared notes. We all felt that he didn't know as much as about the Vietnam War situation as we did. We thought that he didn't have the depth of understanding that we did. And, as a matter of fact, he talked mostly about the dangers of the imperial presidency, that Lyndon Johnson personified this. And he thought that was the worst thing for the country. He regarded the Vietnam War as an aspect of the imperial presidency. That was the heart of his objection.

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So when we got to the airport we talked. Chester Hartman says, “This guy is not left enough for me.” Marty Peretz and Ann Peretz, who later became his bosom companions felt that well, he was all right, but he was the best that we had; let's go with him. And so I listened. I felt there was enough there. I came back and I called a meeting of all of our thousands of supporters. And I got up on a table and I described McCarthy and how low key he was, and how he had a gray pallor and he wears gray suits and a gray tie and gray hair and a gray personality. I said, “But he's ours, and he's going to do it.”

Well, everybody went crazy. It was a focus, right? And we worked very hard in the campaign. As you know, the prime issue was the Vietnam War. We propelled Bobby Kennedy into the race. Then, of course, Nixon was elected. So, in answer to your question about the Vietnam moratorium—after, when Nixon was elected, he said that he had a plan for ending the war. We waited for something to happen, and nothing was happening. Then we met in April of 1969; I called a meeting of Mass PAX—that's Massachusetts Political Action for Peace, that's the nickname for it—and representatives of other organizations, [to] see what we could do about pushing him on the promise that he had made to the American people in the election. It was just about the only thing that he said of any consequence.

We sat around the room throwing out ideas. Then I got the inspiration for the Moratorium. Originally what I suggested was not the Moratorium; it was a national strike. Everybody fell off their chairs. Here I was, a businessman; I run a factory; I run a large organization. I said that what we ought to do is to give him a certain number of months in order to deliver on his promise. Until eventually the country is shut down unless we stop this murder. I approached it like a business problem. You have to research it;

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you have to test it. You have to make sure you're going to be supported. So we called people all over the country to see what their reaction would be to the idea. Everybody liked the idea, but some very good people said, "I teach at Berkeley, and the people at Berkeley aren't fighting the war; I don't want to strike against them." Or: "My employer is not in league with the bad forces, so I don't want to do it that way." So the idea of the strike, the super militancy was taken out of it, because there weren't enough of our people, because most of our people were not working class. Most of our people were middle class people who didn't want to do this kind of thing. So that was the story of the Moratorium.

There was another twist that I put in it and that was, instead of going to Washington and spending a hundred bucks—which is what it takes you—that you save the hundred dollars and put it into local activity. On October 15, instead of going to Washington, everybody would go door to door in their own home town where people knew them, where people trusted them, where they weren't faceless figures on a television screen that could be screamed at as disloyal or whatever, where you would be the person who coached the Little League team, you're the person who helps them burn the leaves—all that kind of thing—that you work in your own town.

As a matter of fact on October 15 we had George McGovern as the speaker. He flew in and I met him at the airport. Then we went to City Hall where there were some ceremonies, and then we were driving to Boston Common. There were over a hundred thousand people there. And I said, "George, let me off at the subway stop at Arlington Street." He said, "What do you mean? Aren't you going to introduce me?" I said, "No. I'm going back to my home town of Waban"—that's a village of Newton—I said, "I'm going to stay in front of the supermarket all day handing out literature, because that's what I think ought to be done. I've had it with these large



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demonstrations. I think that they are relatively ineffective.” So you asked a simple question, you got a long answer.

**INT:** Well you’ve really described grassroots organizing a little bit. Moving back a step, in terms of the McCarthy campaign, how do you think grassroots organizing helped or limited that campaign?

**JG:** Well, the McCarthy campaign took off like a firestorm, particularly after the Tet offensive. It released all the latent resentment through the figure of McCarthy. He was the way where people were expressing themselves—whether they didn't want to go to Vietnam or they didn't want their children to go to Vietnam, or they thought that the Vietnam experience was tearing the country apart, whether they thought it was the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time—you know, for whatever reasons.

One of the major aspects of the Moratorium was that we structured it in such a way that you could participate without having a particular view. There was no line. Anybody who opposed the war for any reason, even if you didn't want to pay the taxes for it, even if you thought we should be fighting the Soviet Union instead of the Viet Cong. So it was wide open. Everybody could participate, and they did. Even Cardinal Cushing participated. The Republican Governor, Frank Sargent, participated.

All of a sudden everybody saw this was just crazy and vicious and wrong. Well, not everybody thought it was vicious, but I did, anyway. And that’s another reason why the Vietnam Moratorium took off, was its openness—that there was no line. Of course, at that time in the sixties there was severe criticism of U.S. social and economic institutions. And people were spelling “Amerika” with a “K.” Not in my movement, no. In the first place I don’t think America has a “K” anyway. In other words, I don’t believe that. Not only that, I thought it wasn't effective for mass advertising. But in addition to that, I just didn’t believe it. And I think history has

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proved us correct. We didn't stop the war. And of course Nixon and Agnew insulted us. But I think that we pushed the process along, and I think it also helped to develop political institutions at that time.

**INT:** Moving on to some new entrants into the peace movement, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War—would you tell us about the Vietnam Veterans Against the War?

**JG:** I can tell you that my first experience with a Vietnam veteran was in 1969 after the moratorium. We decided that we wanted to elect a member of the House of Representatives who was against the Vietnam War. We had one—been there for twenty-six years, a person of great power by the name of Philip Philbin. He was the Vice Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and he was a hawk. Nice man, but a hawk. And you couldn't do anything with him. Newton, where I live, had just become part of his district. In 1968 there were two candidates who ran against him for the Democratic nomination and they got fifty-one percent of the vote. He got forty-nine, and they got fifty-one between them. So we said, hey, we can beat this guy. And it's also an opportunity to run a peace campaign, an anti-Vietnam War campaign. We were flushed with the success of the Moratorium and the impact that we had made with the Eugene McCarthy campaign. So we furthered our activities against the Vietnam War by using the most Democratic tactics, by bringing in all of the two thousand anti-Vietnam War activists in the fourth Congressional district; bringing them all into a school for an all-day session and selecting a candidate from people who ran. I was a candidate, and I was the likely candidate, until I found a Jesuit priest, Father Robert F. Drinan, the Dean of the Boston College Law School. I had met him once or twice, had a very good experience with him.

On October 15, Moratorium Day, I spoke that evening at Boston College. To show you how broad the movement had become by then, the Jesuit priest

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who was the President of Boston College invited me, the Newton radical, to be guest of honor at a dinner with all the faculty. But there were other speakers on there including a young Vietnamese man—he must have been eighteen, nineteen, twenty—whose father was in jail in Vietnam under very difficult circumstances. I saw Father Drinan talking to him, I heard him talking to him. I was very impressed with his concern about the boy, and about his father, and about the Vietnamese people. And I said, “There’s a real guy.” Okay. So when I heard that Drinan, a well known priest, the Dean of the Boston College Law School, might be interested in running, I called him up immediately and said, “I’m dropping my candidacy; I will work for you.” So we nominated him at the caucus, and we elected him. And electing him was part of the process.

While this was going on I got a telephone call from somebody I had never heard of. I was still working at Massachusetts Envelope Company. This fellow calls me up and he says, “You don't know me, but I have a brother who is a natural politician, and he’s over in Vietnam now. He’s coming back. And he wants to run in the caucus that you are organizing.” And I said, “I already have a candidate.” He says, “Yes, but my brother is special.” I said, “Who’s your brother?” He says, “John Kerry.” This was Cameron Kerry who at the time was a junior at Harvard College. He interested me so I said, “Get over here.” He hopped a bus and he came over in his sweater and everything. And we talked. John Kerry did run in that caucus and did very, very well in the caucus. I was hard pressed to beat him. But John Kerry, after he lost, he stood up and he said, “I’m going to respect the wishes of the caucus. I’m not going to run in the primary. I will dedicate the rest of the campaign to working for Father Drinan.” And that’s why I have been a supporter of John Kerry every since.

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So then our Mass PAX office was in Cambridge. Jean Rubenstein told me that there had been a number of Vietnam veterans who were hanging around the office and looking for ways to organize themselves. She said, "What can we do for them?" So I said, "Well, what do you want to do for them?" That's the kind of an executive I am. She's on the scene. I'm not on the scene. So what is her suggestion? She said, "Well, you know, we could give them some space, and we could give them materials. We could give them telephones. We could give them organizing assistance, and we could show them how to do things politically and for organizing. What do you think?" I said, "Sounds good to me; let me come over and meet these guys." I went over there, and I sat down with them.

It was hard for me to relate to them directly. I'm, you know, shirt and tie, president, CEO of a company, and they were in what I would call duds, and maybe unkempt, maybe unshaven. They weren't ready for job interviews and so forth. Also, there was a generational gap. How old was I then? Let's see. I guess I was fifty. I didn't think of myself as old, but I knew that they did. Also the fact that even though I was running a peace organization, I maybe represented the people that got them into this mess, or got the country into this mess. So I played it cool by listening and tried not to be too paternal. I wasn't paternal at all. I let Jean handle most of it and give them all the help that I could. Having seen these guys recently, I'm surprised they even remembered me. But they did. They had a get-together at John Kerry's house, and they told Chris Gregory to invite me. I said, "Are you sure?" Because I didn't think that I was that tied to the thing. They said, "No, no." Anyway, it worked. So we did for them whatever they needed done that was within our power to do.

**INT:** And what did they do with that support that you gave them?

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**JG:** I don't think that I'm qualified to go into any detail. My impression was that they were seeking to organize other veterans into a coherent group that could have some political muscle. I also was under the impression that they were trying to help each other in the winding down from their Vietnam experience—that they were trying to help each other comes to terms with their experience, and come to terms with the new world that was out there that they were facing, and come to terms with their new responsibilities. I felt that they knew that they had responsibilities to tell their story, number one. Number two, to make sure that the war ended. And number three, to make the country a better place. To that extent, I thought that our interests and our reactions dovetailed; and that even though they're not going to do it the way I was going to do it they deserved support. I think it turned out right.

**INT:** What was the reaction of the other peace groups to the Vietnam Veterans Against the War?

**JG:** I'm not aware of any negative reaction. The only thing I can say is that we were the closest to them. But I think that's because we were the most open-hearted and open-minded. We just let them do their thing. I'm a believer in that. Most people are going to turn out fine if you give them the space and the opportunity to do what they want to do.

**INT:** What I'd like to do now is to move on to the Lexington anti-war protest Memorial Day weekend of 1971, and I'm not sure how much connection or how much memory you have of this event. But I'd like you to share any thoughts you have.

**JG:** I really don't. If I did know, I don't remember it. It's the kind of thing that if it's Lexington, I'm sure that Jean Rubenstein and Emily

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Frankovich<sup>1</sup> must have been in it up to their ears. They didn't involve me, to my memory. Although I was going out and doing a lot of these things. But I don't remember that one.

**INT:** What it was essentially was a phased march backwards along the Paul Revere trail, only it was backward from Concord to Lexington to Bunker Hill and ending up on Boston Common. It was scheduled for Monday, Memorial Day, so that they ended up sleeping in Lexington on Saturday night and many people got arrested—probably some of the people you knew, because Emily did.

**JG:** It's out of mind.

**INT:** Okay. Looking back, do you think that the anti-war protests of the veterans or other antiwar protests had any long-term impact?

**JG:** I think that the peace movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement liberated a great many Americans from stereotyped attitudes toward their government and toward politics, and forced them to think of new ways of participation. Looking back it seems to have dominated my entire life. It seems to have dominated the way people think of me. And it seems to have dominated the way I think of myself primarily, as a peace movement person, even in politics. How broad the effect was—I think it had a very broad effect in doing this, to a lot of people. A lot of people had to look at the things that were being done in their name and recognize that they had some responsibility for it, and that that responsibility forced them into protest. It was their element of responsibility in it that forced them into protest. Things were being done in their name. It's not that somebody else was doing these things. We were doing these things.

So the process was of dissociation and then of trying to stop the activity. I think it made a lot of us more independent politically than we were. I think

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<sup>1</sup> Both Jean Rubenstein and Emily Frankovich were Lexington residents. Emily Frankovich was interviewed by LOHP.

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also it helped us to analyze some of the sources of power in the country. It was a dominant experience, but an experience that continues for me. I've dedicated the rest of my life to the prevention of nuclear war.

I'm not a pacifist. I'm not a Quaker. I don't come out of that tradition. And I would fight, although I never have. I've never fired a gun in fun or in anger. I just never had occasion to. But I think that the very existence of nuclear weapons keeps the world in perpetual crisis, and now I've become an abolitionist in the sense that it's not enough just to stop making them. They have to be eliminated totally. Is it going to be difficult? Yes, it's going to be very difficult. Was it difficult to stop the Vietnam War? Yes. Did it look as though it was going to go on forever? Yes. When you're in the middle of that fight, it looked as though it would never end. You couldn't conceive of it ending. But it did. A bunch of ragtag students, middle class housewives, renegade businessmen like me, lawyers, academics, who didn't have power were able to affect the unstoppable military machine. And not just the United States, but everywhere.

**INT:** Did you think that citizens would protest over any issue today the way they did in the 1970's?

**JG:** They're not doing it now. I told one of my classes last week, in talking about the way our country, the richest country in the world, is not guaranteeing to its citizens the essentials of life: food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and how to me that boggles the mind. I said, "When is the last time that there was an uproar from below? It's when things got very, very bad." So if you want these things to happen, do you have to wish for catastrophe? Is that the only way that we can put ourselves together and feed and clothe and house and educate and take care of the people? The small response to the evils of today—which are major; the evils are major—and the response is so minuscule that you have to think that maybe

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it's the imminence of a crisis that propels us into action. In the same way that the Vietnam War was a crisis for a whole generation because they were being sacrificed into the Moloch of a deadly war—that was a crisis, and that triggered it. That's the best answer that I can give you. It's a very unsatisfactory answer for somebody like me who is a rational person, believes in reason, believes in planning, and believes that you can work these things out. We haven't been able to work them out except in the face of a crisis.

**INT:** So is that the point at which citizens are justified in their protest?

**JG:** Oh, I think they're always justified in their protest. Always. If that's what you mean.

**INT:** When is protest a useful vehicle? Perhaps that's a better way to think.

**JG:** The traditional answer may be correct; that the first thing you do is to use existing institutions. If existing institutions are blocked or they don't work, then you begin to develop new methods of change. And that's what protest is—one of them.

**INT:** You've said that in thinking of yourself you think of your career in the peace movement, really. What kind of shape is the peace movement in today?

**JG:** The peace movement today has a strong and active bureaucracy, meaning a number of organizations in Washington who do very good work along traditional lines. Where they're weak is in the development of grassroots constituencies and outreach to new constituencies, particularly younger people and poorer people.

**INT:** What would be effective approaches for the peace movement to persuade decision makers and voters that peace issues are important?



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**JG:** One part of the peace movement tried to mobilize the powerful who agree with them to get things done. But side by side with that there ought to be an attempt to educate the people at lower class levels to realize and act on the information that many of the things that are being denied them are being denied them because of the enormous military budget. Of course, [now] is a tremendous opportunity to do that because the United States does not have a rival or a threat.

**INT:** If that's the case, why is the military budget so difficult to come to grips with and divert monies?

**JG:** There are a number of reasons. The primary reason is that it has become a jobs program where the interests of the workers and corporations meet. Even though it's Orwellian in the sense that the material is never used, which means it's virtually thrown away, it gives subsistence to people. That's the main reason why it persists. Of course there are other reasons, too. That is that it confers prestige on our country. Since our country has de facto become the policeman of the world, the fact that we have a military budget that's almost as large as the military budgets of all the other countries in the world put together, makes them hesitate to do things that we don't like. So it has that effect also. And when they are afraid to do things that we don't like then there are our business interests and other interests who get special favors around the world because of our military might; whether we use it or not, that's the way it works. That's the way clever people operate. You give me a hard time, I'll have the U. S. Ambassador call you. Well, he'll call, right? And of course nobody could be without the United States markets to sell, so it all makes a picture of dynamic power and is resulting in the Americanization of the world to some extent.

**INT:** We've at this point really covered a lot of ground. I wonder if there are things that you would like to comment on that you haven't so far, in

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terms of the peace movement, anti-war activities, and people today learning about these—what happened in the 1960's and 70's?

**JG:** I think that it came out in my stories. Because you know they weren't linear stories. They were interrupted with opinions and sidelights and my insights—if they are insights—and so forth. So I think you have it.

**INT:** If it's all right with you, the people who have been sitting here so quietly might have a question or two. Is that all right?

**JG:** Sure, yes.

**INT2:** I was curious about Massachusetts. You make it seem so rational, and it does seem rational here. But in the rest of America people were being hit on the head with clubs and brutalized—at the 1968 Convention, for example. How are we exceptional in some way?

**JG:** I didn't think it was easy here. There was trouble here. There were a number of incidents here. During the sixties there were some draft evaders who burned their cards. They were taken into the police station in South Boston. Gangs followed them in. And while the police were there they watched them beat them up. At that time I was on the Board of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. The Executive Director, Luther McNair, said we couldn't allow that. We have to protest that. So we went into South Boston. There were about a hundred of us, clergymen, a few businessmen like me. We marched from South Boston all the way to the Boston Common. And we had to have a thousand policemen protecting us. There were threats. I don't know how to answer you other than that. But look, we didn't have a Kent State here, if that's what you mean. And if my wife were here, she would tell you that it made her life miserable, what I was doing. She felt that we were—I was going to say socially outcast. But she said, "I can't go anywhere with you, because everybody picks on you." They come up to you and they bait you. I said, "I don't mind that." I said,

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“I’ll just talk to them.” But a lot of it was rough. My kids felt it to some extent.

**INT:** Noam Chomsky said—we have an interview with him—that the Lexington arrest was a piece of cake compared to any other arrest he’d been in. I was wondering whether it did seem as if we were more orderly, we—Massachusetts. But I think it’s important that you go on record telling about this thousand policemen protection. Because people otherwise might think that there's something the matter when real troubles come.

**JG:** Yes. Of course, another thing is that, even though I was fifty years old, I would confer with the students—Harvard, MIT—and a lot of them wanted to do trashing. I spoke against it. I didn’t participate in that kind of thing, and encouraged people not to. Because I thought it would make it difficult for the Sargents and the Cushings and so forth to join us. It didn’t seem to be an effective way of protesting, and it also seemed immoral. I didn’t hesitate to tell the kids that. But I didn’t do it. So maybe I did things, and the people that I was with did that kind of protesting. Well, even the Vietnam veterans. They didn’t do any trashing or rough stuff. Is that right?

**INT2:** Not until they were infiltrated by the FBI.

**JG:** Yes, yes. We were always looking for that. But anyway, I don’t know how to answer your question other than that.

**INT3:** I’d like to know what kind of political activity your father was involved in.

**JG:** Well, the traditional supporting [of] candidates for public office as a financial contributor. And then he got himself appointed to a number of positions. After I got out of Harvard in 1938 there was a fellow by the name of Thomas Elliot who was a distinguished lawyer, rather a liberal Brahmin. He was running for Congress. And [he] got other people to make contributions. As a result of that process my father went to Washington to

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work with Kenneth Galbraith in the Office of Price Administration. He was a dollar a year man. We still have the dollar. When he came back he supported James Michael Curley. James Michael Curley appointed him to be the Commissioner of Penal Institutions for the City of Boston, Suffolk County. Then he supported Governor Paul Dever of Cambridge. And when Dever was elected—you have to pick winners; you can't support losers the way I do who get two and a half percent of the vote, and raise issues—and then Dever made him the Commissioner of all of the jails in Massachusetts. My father took that because he had served on a recess commission studying this once. He thought it would be fun. And he also served on the Boston Finance Commission.

By this time he had left the business. When I was twenty-four he gave me the keys, and says, “You run it.” So that’s what he did. So he was known as a capable, effective, well-respected political person. I’m known as the Massachusetts liberal. Not radical—liberal. Although a lot of people think I’m radical—I’m more radical than they think. But my activities have been along those lines.

**INT:** You mentioned at an early age reading *The Nation*. What are your main sources of information? How do you stay...or to put it differently, how do people stay informed progressives in the world of media that we have today?

**JG:** You want to know what I read? Well, I read *The Globe* for the local news. I read *The New York Times* every day. I read *The Investors Business Daily*. I get *The Washington Post* weekly. They have a weekly magazine that is fabulous. I get *The Nation*. I get the *New Republic*. I get *The New Yorker*. I get *Dollars and Sense*; that’s another magazine put out by little enclaves of academics with various specialties. I get the *Political Hotline* that comes out every single day and that has summaries of everything that

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has gone on politically all over the country, what newspapers are saying, what individuals are saying, and so forth. In addition to that, I go to Washington for three days every month. Last time I was there, I saw a few Senators, a few members of the House of Representatives. And I also went in the Pentagon because the Pentagon is now doing another bottom-up review before they put their budget in. Because their budget now is based on fighting two regional wars simultaneously. So they're going through the motions—well, I'm being unfair. They're re-studying it, all right. While I was there I went in to see if I could have some input. I have had input. When Les Aspin was Secretary of Defense he actually solicited my opinions. He didn't do what I said. You look for any crevice. Well, the Congress, one of the Senators that I know put in a bill requiring that this be done, and that also there'd be nine people from outside the Pentagon who would present another plan. I found out about that and I'm nominating a couple of people on our board like Kosta Tsipis [MIT professor]. Do you know Kosta Tsipis? And George Ratkins, and William Kaufman—authentic experts. See, we're trying to get them on the alternate one.

Then I got to the State Department, too. And the Pentagon is doing some good things. There are some good people there doing good things. Because some of the humanitarian functions have been passed off onto the Pentagon. And then the State Department—wow, there are some [people] there—they want to see the Chemical Weapons Treaty pass. It hasn't been ratified. And [Senator Jesse] Helms won't bring it up. So, I conspire with them.

The point is that I get...and people are calling me all day, and I'm calling people all day to find out what goes on. In addition to that I read a lot of technical journals like the material put out by the Arms Control Association, and a whole bunch of it. Of course, the best thing to read is the *New York Review of Books* anyway. I hope you read that.

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**INT:** It's a very demanding read.

**JG:** Very demanding. And you fall behind, you know.

**INT:** You come across very strongly as someone who believes in government. This moment that we're talking about was a time when people were going against the government. Today a lot of young people apparently don't believe in government. I was wondering if you were just going to go on record as saying something about the value of the system, how you see it working? You believe in it. It's impressive to me.

**JG:** I'm a follower of Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican, in a whole series of debates that he had with Woodrow Wilson in 1912 when he was the Bull Moose candidate, he said that corporations in America have become so big and so strong that there needs to be a countervailing power to control them, and that the only possible power big enough to control them was the federal government. Wilson didn't believe that. Wilson said, "Let's cut corporate America down to size." Theodore Roosevelt said, "That's impossible." The dynamics of the modern world under capitalism tend toward the growth of large corporations with semi-monopoly positions. That's my basis for supporting a big government, is to control big corporations.

At the same time I lived through all the provocations of J. Edgar Hoover. I know about wiretapping. I know about agents who infiltrate. I know how bad government can be. So at the same time that you want big government you have to put a string on big government, too, to control them. And you have to worry about their carrying their power too far. So it's very hard to be the kind of a liberal that I am. Because you want a big government to control economic power. But at the same time you want to put checks on government to make sure that civil liberties are maintained. So to be a civil libertarian liberal is very difficult. It looks as though you're going in two

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directions at the same time. I thought that was a good answer. I got to remember it.

**INT:** If you say so yourself! [Laughter.] It's in the same vein as what you were just talking about in terms of balance.

**JG:** One more thing. Wilson had an Undersecretary of the Navy by the name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. And he was with Wilson. Of course, you know Wilson won the election but he lost the debate. Twenty years later Franklin Delano Roosevelt put Theodore Roosevelt's ideas into operation.

**INT:** I just have a fogginess in my mind about how, in a system as complex, with these complex balances of power at the citizen level, how the citizen deciphers when it's time to dissent. In a democratic system like this where you have to interact with it, where does the dissent aspect from the grassroots citizen level fit into this?

**JG:** You mean, how do they know when to protest?

**INT:** And how does the system of democracy that we have with its large forces of corporate and government force and military forces, media forces, too—it just seems to me that there's a real squelching of dissent opportunities for citizens. It's tied in partly with the jobs program that the military is. So where does dissent fit into 1990's and 2000 democracy?

**JG:** In the last decade the role of dissent has been made more difficult and has in fact been muted as a direct result of the transference of political power to money, and the technological change in campaigning. It used to be much easier for people in former days to become political activists and have a greater effect on the candidates by getting a hundred people together and saying, we're going to work for you because of your position of A and B. They don't even want you anymore. If they're going to send out a mailing they're going to give it to a mailing house, where they're going to use

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Phillipsburg inserting machines. And then they're going to a station where they're going to print it right on there, too. And they don't want you to make phone calls either. All they want to do is to get on television. And so that has made it more difficult.

Now Council for a Livable World is playing the money game which is another reason why I didn't even want to be associated with Council for a Livable World. Because I consider myself an organizer and a person with ideas to throw into the pot. That's what we do. We try to find obscure people who would make good Senators or Representatives and early on try to give them the initial funding. Now we can't compete with the big money. We only raise a million and a half each election cycle. But that's a million and a half that has no cost to them. Because we get in early, and because it's tied to issues, seems to have some kind of an effect. Then if we elect somebody they're eternally grateful. Then we go and we are able to get a hearing.

George Mitchell who's going to be Secretary of State—when he ran for Senator in Maine the first time, he was against a very popular member of the House of Representatives in Maine, a Republican by the name of Emory, Robert Emory. Was it Robert? Well, Emory. And Mitchell had run for Governor and run for Representative before. He had lost both times. He was considered a terrible politician. He had been a Federal Judge briefly. And he was considered a basket case. He was thirty-six points behind. We raised fifty, sixty thousand dollars for him. He never stops telling that story. Now it so happens he's a good guy anyway. But in time he was majority leader of the United States Senate. And we could walk in any time and tell him what we wanted. We even got him to oppose the President on the B2 bomber and so forth.



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Well, naturally, he's in that direction. But he's that kind of a person anyway, otherwise we wouldn't have backed him. But it gives us entrée to make our case. That's the way we're working on it. I'm not saying that's the only way, but that's what I happen to be doing now. That's not what I did before. I was in plenty of picket lines, plenty of protests, and so forth. But this is what I'm stuck with now.

END OF INTERVIEW