

March 23, 2009

## Dear Friends,

*"Thank you for all the help you have provided to our community. Because we like to practice the principle of indigenous reciprocity, we would like to know how we can contribute to the Muste Institute or to another institution that you recommend."*

This came to us in an email message from Comunidad Charrúa Basquadé Inchalá, a Muste Institute grantee that works to build indigenous rights and culture in Uruguay. After reflecting on this offer, we asked the group to spread the word about the Muste Institute's unique programs to their contacts. And we're asking you to do the same.

We can send you extra copies of this newsletter to distribute among your friends and colleagues, and a short message to forward out by email. We now have a page on the social networking website Facebook, where you can become a fan of the Muste Institute and share your enthusiasm for our efforts.

As longtime activist Camilo Viveiros told us: "This is the moment to get the word out to the communities that the Muste Institute has played a key role in supporting, even though many people aren't aware of it. AJMMI's historic work in different social justice efforts should be highlighted to those whose present work owes a debt to these efforts."

The current economic crisis reminds us that our only security for the future is a just and sustainable world. Join us in investing more resources toward that goal.

Sincerely,  
Jeanne Strole and Jane Guskin

*Palestinian, Israeli and international demonstrators march towards the apartheid wall during a protest in the West Bank village of Bil'in on February 6, 2009.*



PHOTO BY: ANNE PAO/ACTIVISTILLS.ORG



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## Defending Indigenous Rights

*In April 2008, Comunidad Charrúa Basquadé Inchalá organized a three-day commemorative march from Montevideo to Salsipuedes, the site of an 1831 genocide against the Charrúa people, the original inhabitants of what is now Uruguay. In an homage to their ancestors, the Charrúa marchers staged dance and drama presentations and held workshops at theaters and rural schools along the route. In 2007 and 2008, the group received grants from the Muste Institute's NOVA Travel Fund for its members to attend gatherings in Central America.*



PHOTO BY AURELIO GONZALEZ

## Nonviolence in Palestine

The wounding of nonviolence activist Tristan Anderson by the Israeli military at a March 13 protest in the West Bank village of Nil'in has drawn major U.S. media attention—because Tristan is a U.S. citizen. In Bil'in, another West Bank village resisting the apartheid wall, nonviolent protests have been held weekly for the past four years. Every week, the Israeli military greets Bil'in's nonviolent demonstrators with a barrage of weapons, including rubber-coated steel bullets, live ammunition

and tear gas—often fired in high-velocity projectiles like the one that tore a hole in Tristan Anderson's skull.

"Most of the people that take part in the demonstrations have been injured," Zuhdia Khatib, a Bil'in resident and mother of five, told the *Palestine Monitor*. "My two oldest sons have both been injured. My son Jaber has been injured twice—once with a rubber coated steel bullet and once with a tear gas canister."

Palestinian nonviolent resistance to the wall and the occupation has swelled over the past four years, organized and supported by Muste Institute grantees like the Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall and the Settlements, Holy Land Trust, International Solidarity Movement, Palestine Solidarity Project and Gush Shalom.

"I am very happy to see my people (the Palestinians), with the help of some internationals and Israeli peacemakers, joining the nonviolent resistance against the occupation," Holy Land Trust

*continued on page 2*

# A Luminous Activist: Karl Bissinger (1914-2008)

We in the peace movement have had our own “greatest generation” to inspire and lead us. As with the World War II warriors so often written about, many of our heroes are no longer with us. We already mourn Dave Dellinger, Grace Paley, Ralph DiGia, Norma Becker (to name just a few) . . . and now long-time *Muste* board member Karl Bissinger.

Karl was blessed with—besides wit, charm, intelligence, and a mighty conscience—the rare ability to make each person who spent time with him feel like a great favorite. He was also able to transcend age, gender, class, race, whatever divides us, in his friendships. Karl was just a pal, albeit a particularly impressive and delightful pal. He brought light and grace into our world and was a joy to know.

In all his years (almost 50) working first for the Greenwich Village Peace Center and then for the War Resisters League, Karl was always willing to do whatever was needed. Be it counseling draftees during the Vietnam War and sending them off on the underground railroad of the day, working for amnesty for resisters and deserters, arranging benefits by artists he knew and spearheading other fundraising activities, producing WRL calendars and mailing out the finished products, photographing demonstrations, getting arrested at them, and staffing the litera-

ture tables, Karl lead the charge or lent a hand. Although choosing not to be a spokesperson for the movement, Karl did not hide his talents. He contributed them proudly to the cause he so strongly believed in. His incisive opinions and steadfast politics kept us all on track or on our toes.

Karl also had a rich and fascinating life outside the peace movement. He was born in Cincinnati to the Bissinger chocolate manufacturing family. He married young and had a child, then moved to New York City, where he lived for more than 40 years with his partner, fabric designer Richard Hanley, until Dick’s sudden death from a heart attack in 1990.

In the 40s and 50s, Karl worked for *Condé Nast* photographing the artists and writers of the day—Marlon Brando, James Baldwin, Truman Capote, Katherine Hepburn, Colette, and many more—for *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Flair*, and other magazines. In 2003 these photos were published in *The Luminous Years: Portraits at Mid-Century*, with an introduction by Gore Vidal.



Karl Bissinger, second from right, participates in a blockade of the Chilean consulate in New York City on March 21, 1985, protesting increased repression and reimposition of a state of siege by the Pinochet regime.

After Karl’s son, David Fechheimer, married and had children, Karl spent many wonderful vacations with them at their home in California and later with his daughter-in-law, Diane, and two grandsons, Zachary and Sam, in Europe. They, along with all the rest of us, will sorely miss him.

—Susan Kent Cakars

## Nonviolence

(continued from page 1)

activist Elias Deis wrote in January 2008. “The number of participants is increasing, and the idea of resisting the occupier in a nonviolent way is becoming steadily more popular.

“Since January 2007, Holy Land Trust has organized weekly nonviolent demonstrations against the Israeli occupation and the building of the apartheid wall over Palestinian land

and farms. Yet I can’t remember even one time that Israel has used a nonviolent way to try to stop us! The armed soldiers, it seems, are always ready to shoot, or use wooden sticks and tear gas.

“Our calls for peace are considered dangerous for Israel. I feel like I am going insane because I don’t understand what we should do to end the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Throwing stones did not work and suicide bombs definitely did not work. Now Palestinians use the nonviolence method, but the Israeli occupiers seem to perceive even that as aggressive. I feel they don’t want us to be peaceful, but I believe that if peace is going to prevail, nonviolence is the only way we can solve our problems.”

That so many Palestinians remain committed to nonviolence in the face of daily repression is a testament to their resilience. But in order to succeed, nonviolence needs broad support. Maybe it’s time for the rest of the world to ask: what can we do to ensure the success of nonviolence in Palestine?

PHOTO BY OREN ZIVI/ACTIVISTILLS.ORG



Palestinian and Israeli demonstrators run away from tear gas shot by Israeli soldiers during a protest in Bil’in on January 30, 2009.

### A.J. Muste Memorial Institute

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## New Grants, December 2008

*In 30 years of our general grantmaking program, the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute has provided critical support to hundreds of grassroots groups engaged in nonviolent education and action for social justice. Unfortunately, because of financial concerns we had to reduce grant amounts for our October and December 2008 cycles and temporarily suspend this grantmaking program for 2009. If supporting social justice activism is important to you, please donate now to help us restore this program.*

### BETHE MEDIA

Los Angeles, CA: \$1,000

This project was sparked by the creators of Arlington West Film and Speakers

Program, which uses the Arlington West documentary film as a tool to get young people talking about alternatives to war. This grant goes to provide inner-city at-risk youth with creative tools to examine the media and tell their own stories.

### COLOMBIA SUPPORT NETWORK

Madison, WI: \$800

Colombia Support Network has worked since 1986 to support nonviolent efforts for justice in Colombia. This grant goes for workshops on autonomous community development and active nonviolence with the Emberá Chamí community in the Lower Putumayo region of Colombia.

### EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION NETWORK

New York, NY: \$1,500

Education for Liberation Network was founded in 1999 as a national coalition of teachers, community activists, youth, researchers and parents using education to challenge injustice. This grant goes for "How Did They Do That?", a project encouraging social justice groups to share and replicate innovative social justice education projects.

### SNAKE RIVER ALLIANCE

Boise, ID: \$700

Snake River Alliance was founded in 1979 to build public pressure to stop the Idaho National Laboratory's spewing of hazardous and radioactive waste into the Snake River Aquifer. This grant goes to challenge new nuclear projects, advocate for responsible solutions to nuclear waste and contamination, and promote safe and sustainable energy alternatives.

### WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

New York, NY: \$2,000

War Resisters League has worked since 1923 to end war and defeat injustice. This grant goes for the GI Rights and Resistance project, providing military service members and veterans with information about their rights and distributing educational resources to help soldiers, veterans, their families and civilian supporters speak out about the realities of war.

## New Travel Grants

In its December 2008 grant cycle, the NOVA Travel Fund made four grants totaling \$5,600 to grassroots groups in Brazil, Canada and Guyana to attend international gatherings in Brazil, Mexico and London. In the February 2009 cycle, the Fund made three grants totaling \$1,262.24 to Nicaraguan women's groups to attend a feminist gathering in Mexico City. About 10 more grants from the February cycle are awaiting final confirmation. See the web version of *Muste Notes* for details.

The NOVA Travel Fund helps grassroots activists from Latin America, the Caribbean and indigenous territories throughout the hemisphere to participate in regional meetings. The next deadlines are April 1 and June 1, 2009. Guidelines are on our website.

## Counter-Recruitment Grants, December 2008

*The Muste Institute's Counter Recruitment Fund makes small grants for grassroots efforts to inform young people about the realities of military service, help them protect their privacy from recruiters and refer them to non-military education and employment options. Our next deadline for proposals is April 20, 2009. Guidelines are on our website at [www.ajmuste.org/counter-recruit.htm](http://www.ajmuste.org/counter-recruit.htm).*

**Arlington West Film and Speakers Project**, Los Angeles, CA: \$1,500 to continue and expand a program of

screenings and discussions, as well as distribution of free DVD copies of the film "Arlington West."

**BAY-Peace**, Oakland, CA: \$1,500 to train and support up to 25 Bay Area youth organizers who will provide peer counseling and information to youth in heavily targeted geographic and demographic populations.

**Salinas Action League**, Salinas, CA: \$1,500 to distribute literature in Salinas and Monterey County high schools about the realities of military service and civilian alternatives.

## NOVA Fund 2008 Grants

*Demonstrators from Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ) Costa Rica and other groups stage a sit-in outside the president's offices in San José, Costa Rica, in early March 2009 to demand passage of a law recognizing the right to indigenous autonomy. These and other nonviolent efforts for justice in Latin America are supported by grants from the Muste Institute's NOVA Fund, which in 2008 distributed \$96,366.43 among 11 organizations, including SERPAJ Costa Rica. For details see the web version of Muste Notes.*



PHOTO BY SERPAJ COSTA RICA

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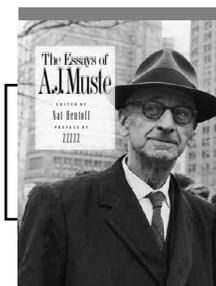
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translation of *Loving Your Enemies, Letter from a Birmingham Jail and Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam*.

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