

May 28, 2008

Dear Friends,

Many people are excited about this year's presidential campaign, but here at the Muste Institute we are not convinced that change in the White House will bring an end to the war. The forces that profit from war are powerful, and people across the country will need to keep demonstrating and organizing in their communities to get the U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

There is also no reason to believe that a new U.S. president will do anything to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine; that task will continue to be in the hands of nonviolence activists in Palestine and Israel like those described in the enclosed letter from Rebekah Wolf.

All over the world, grassroots activism for social justice will be just as important over the next four years as it has been for the past eight years—as it always has been. And we intend to keep supporting it, with your help.

Please continue your commitment by sending in a contribution today.

Sincerely,

Murray Rosenblith
Executive Director

instructed in following orders without question, we get a basic course in "racism" (who we need to hate in this war) and the usual super-patriotism motivations. Somehow all this is incorporated into an alleged adherence to the 10 Commandments.

In our classroom visits, we often talk to
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Veterans Speak Out in NY Schools

By Jim Murphy, NY Veterans Speak Out/
Veterans For Peace

In 2004, as a new generation of recruits started returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of us from Veterans for Peace NY started looking for ways to educate more young people about the reality of war. We formed NY Veterans Speak Out, a network linking anti-war veterans from Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and Veterans for Peace (VFP). The project offers New York area teachers an opportunity for veterans to speak in their classrooms about war and the military.

At first, we were happy to get an occasional invitation from a local school. Now we have a list of more than 150 teachers, and our speaking program is available in at least 80 New York City and Hudson Valley high schools.

Anyone can do this kind of classroom visit, although it's often easier for veterans to gain access to the education system, since as "primary sources" we are considered more credible. Who better to talk about war than veterans and civilians who have been directly affected by wars? Each speaker has a personal story to tell, and the experience and understanding of what a young person feels when "put in harm's way."

How to get started? The process is the same everywhere. All you have to do is make a list of every educational facility that serves 16-22 year-olds in your area. What are your priorities? Gifted kids are not going to join the military, and higher-income students will most likely go to college. So who is recruited? In urban areas, Latino males are the primary target. Black families are more skeptical now. In rural areas, where parents are more likely to have served in the military, every student is a target,

and Army and Marine Corps recruiters have easy access to most schools.

In early May we debated Army recruiters at Columbus High School in the Bronx, a 4,000-student school now split into four smaller schools. The next day we went to a small rural high school tucked away in the Catskills. What do these two schools have in common? They are both heavily recruited.

One of our handouts is the IVAW flyer, "The 10 Lies Told By Recruiters." The students in both schools smiled as they read the flyer and then started recounting the lies they had been told. This discussion prompted students to question the "psych" factor of the lies told by recruiters versus the reality of basic training. Always, the students without a plan for the future are asking for alternatives. We have some but we need many more to address the needs of this generation.

Recruiters try to say things are different now than they were during earlier wars like Vietnam. But the experiences we had as recruits are the same as those of today's recruits. We are all



A class at West Side High School in Manhattan listens to Veterans for Peace member Mary Reynolds Powell, who served as a captain in the Army Nurse Corps in Vietnam in 1970-71. Powell is the author of *A World of Hurt: Between Innocence and Arrogance in Vietnam*.

PHOTO BY NY VETS FOR PEACE

What's Happening with the Building?

Most of you first heard about the structural problems with our building last August, when I wrote about the situation in the fall issue of *Muste Notes*. Since then, the Muste Institute's Board of Directors and staff have worked hard to gather information as we consider whether it's possible to raise the money to substantially renovate the building or if we should sell the building and relocate to another space in New York City.

The initial estimate of \$1 million now seems optimistic even for the most basic repairs to our three story, walk-up loft building built in the 1920s. It would certainly cost a great deal more to make the building wheelchair accessible, more energy efficient and functional as a long-term home for the Institute, War Resisters League and our other tenant groups.

The Muste Institute has no operating endowment, and a major capital project would require engaging outside consultants for planning, fund raising and construction management. We've



PHOTO BY MURRAY ROSENBLITH

explored grants, loans and how to increase the income from the commercial space on the ground floor to help pay for such a project. We have met with other progressive groups seeking permanent space in New York to explore creating a partnership to own and operate the building. We have contracted for a complete engineer's survey on the existing structure which we expect to be completed by late June.

Early this year, a group of people who have been associated with the Peace Pentagon came together with the goal of restoring the building. This ad-

hoc committee is to present a plan to the Board in early June for raising the money needed to do this. After considering this presentation, the engineer's report and all the other factors, the Board will decide whether it appears feasible to stay at 339 Lafayette Street.

These are not easy decisions. We recognize that they will have a tremendous impact on the long term future of the Institute. While this process continues, we urge those who support the Muste Institute, and who value all of our contributions to the movement for social justice, to show us some encouragement by making a donation. If you believe we should keep the building, you can make a pledge or contribute now (to help offset the cost of the engineer's report, for example). If you are excited about our programs promoting nonviolent activism for social justice, your increased donations will help us maintain that work through this challenging time.

—Peter Muste

Veterans *(continued)*

students about "the things that we carry" to help them to understand the message of Tim O'Brien in his book of that name. Dayl Wise and I frequently work together as a team. Dayl describes one of his flashbacks of going through a village near the Cambodian border: "I had to get to the other side to pick up a chopper ride. I could do that... I have an M-16, 200 rounds of ammo and 4 grenades. I could have killed everyone... nobody in the military would have cared."

Sometimes we lighten up—we need for the kids to see us as humans, not just old gray-haired veterans. So Dayl will describe the rations that we ate in Vietnam and then point out how wonderful school lunch is by comparison—which always gets a laugh and a fun argument.

Our main goal is to make sure the kids realize that the pain may be life long and that we destroyed a beautiful culture. War is not a movie... it's 23 hours and 59 minutes of boredom, loneliness, anger and stupid games—and one minute in which your life can change forever and your buddies killed or wounded.

Do we need more opportunities to spread our message? Yes! There are a lot

of combat veterans who could be talking to young people, but many have not had any prior training or experience with making presentations to high school classes. With help from a Muste Institute grant, we held a "Taking Back Our Schools" workshop in September 2006 in Manhattan with veterans, teachers, students and community activists. In the morning session we did a training with veterans where they took turns presenting to the group as they would present to a classroom. We filmed the training and created a DVD of it which we have sent out to over 200 veterans' groups around the country who requested it to help them start local speakers' programs in their communities.

Anyone who wants a copy of the training DVD can contact me, Jim Murphy, via email at mandm11@optonline.net or by phone at 845-358-5709.



PHOTO BY NYVETS FOR PEACE

Aneka Hewitt, a student activist at the High School For Global Citizenship in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, won first place in the 2006-2007 anti-war poetry contest sponsored by NY Veterans Speak Out with a poem titled "In the Eyes." In this photo, Aneka receives the prize—a \$500 check for college—from Jim Murphy of NY Veterans Speak Out.

NOVA TRAVEL GRANTS

In February and April 2008, the NOVA Travel Fund made nine grants totaling \$7,250 to organizations in eight Latin American countries. These grants are listed in the web version of this newsletter. The NOVA Travel Fund helps grassroots activists from Latin American, Caribbean and indigenous North American organizations to participate in regional meetings. The next deadlines are August 1 and October 1, 2008. Guidelines are in Spanish at www.ajmuste.org/novaintro.html.

New Grants, April 2008

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute makes small grants to groups engaged in nonviolent education and action for social justice. Our next deadline is July 18, 2008. Guidelines are at www.ajmuste.org/guidelin.htm.

CALIFORNIA PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

Fresno, CA: \$2,000

The California Prison Moratorium Project was founded in 1998 with the goal of stopping the expansion of the state's prison system. This grant goes for a campaign to build public opposition to construction of a new juvenile jail in Fresno, California.

COMMUNITY MEDIA ORGANIZING PROJECT

Knoxville, TN: \$2,000

The Community Media Organizing Project is a partnership of six community-based organizations in the southeast which joined together to increase their capacity for using media coverage as an organizing tool. This grant goes for media trainings to help Greater Birmingham Ministries carry out the Constitutional Reform Initiative,



PHOTO BY HAITIAN WOMEN FOR HAITIAN REFUGEES

In a scene from the documentary "Birthright Crisis," produced by Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, children demonstrate in Santo Domingo to protest a policy of scapegoating, attacks and deportations against Dominicans of Haitian descent.

an effort to build public opinion toward eliminating codified economic and racial inequalities in Alabama.

HAITIAN WOMEN FOR HAITIAN REFUGEES

Brooklyn, NY: \$2,000

Two Haitian-American women activists founded this group in 1992 to

help Haitian refugees deal with the challenges of survival in the U.S. Our grant goes to distribute the *Birthright Crisis* video among Dominican and Haitian communities in New York City and beyond, with the goal of building opposition to racism and discrimination.

MISSOURIANS TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

Saint Louis, MO: \$2,000

This group started out as a loosely-structured statewide abolition coalition in 1987. This grant goes for the "Road Trip for Justice" project, organizing speaking events in five Missouri cities to raise awareness about and build public opposition to the death penalty.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY WELFARE SOCIETY

Pudukottai, Tamilnadu, India: \$1,987

Since 1993, this group has been promoting sustainable agriculture, women's empowerment and labor justice. Our grant goes to mobilize domestic workers in Pudukottai district in defense of their human and labor rights.

Counter Recruitment Grants, April 2008

The Muste Institute's Counter Recruitment Fund supports 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 options. Our next deadline is July 18, 2008. Guidelines are at www.ajmuste.org/counterrecruit.htm.

American Friends Service Committee - Hawai'i Area Office, Honolulu, HI: \$1,200 for "Increase the Peace," a program of events in Hawaii schools focusing on alternatives to the military and development of educational materials geared toward Native Hawaiian, Filipino and Pacific Islander students.

High Rocks Educational Corporation, Hillsboro, WV: \$800 for a project serving high school-age young women in the rural West Virginia counties of Greenbrier, Pocahontas, and Nicholas, helping them explore vocational and educational opportunities outside of the military.

Peace Action Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI: \$1,000 to expand efforts to educate youth about the realities of military service and educational and vocational alternatives, with a focus on low-income students from the African American, Latino and Hmong communities in and around Milwaukee.

Rochester Against War (RAW), Rochester, NY: \$1,000 for an "Anti-War Crisis Center" storefront to serve as a meeting and event space for youth and a resource center for information about the realities of military service and educational and vocational alternatives.

Washington Truth in Recruiting (WaTiR), Bellevue, WA: \$1,000 for a program reaching out to parents, teachers, coaches, boards of education, superintendents, principals, student leaders and counselors in rural and eastern areas of Washington state, educating them about military recruiting practices in the public schools.

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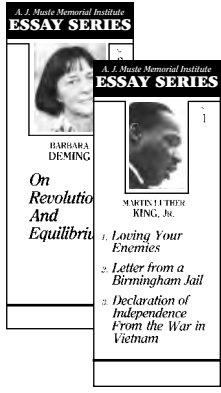
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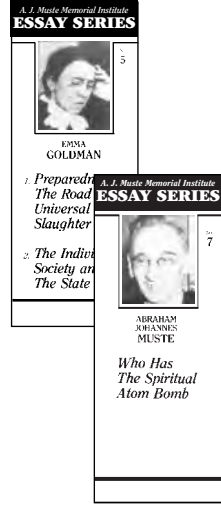
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#7: A. J. Muste – foremost 20th Century pacifist theoretician and activist, minister, socialist – *Who Has the Spiritual Atom Bomb?*
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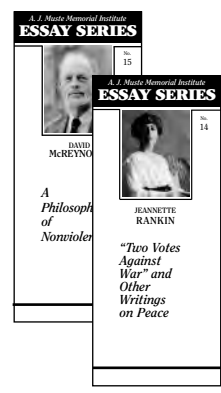
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#11: Some Writings on War Tax Resistance – thoughts, poems, tales from resisters, including Juanita Nelson, Allen Ginsberg and Pete Seeger
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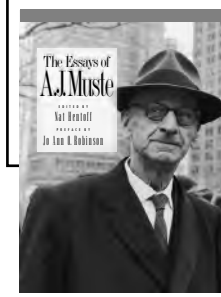
#13: (Spanish) Martin Luther King, Jr. – Spanish language translation of *Loving Your Enemies, Letter from a Birmingham Jail and Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam*.
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Peace Agitator: The Story of A.J. Muste, by Nat Hentoff
 A 250-page biography with many photos, profiling the 'grandfather' of the U.S. peace movement – minister, labor activist, pacifist and resister. Introduction by Larry Gara.
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Wear Your Peace Shirt
 Muste Institute t-shirts are black cotton with a four-color geometric design and the words: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way – A.J. Muste" Available in large and extra large. Shirts are made in the U.S.A.



The Essays of A.J. Muste
 Edited by Nat Hentoff, preface by Jo Ann O. Robinson. Originally issued in 1967, this new 500-page edition includes Muste's "Notes for an Autobiography," plus essays on pacifism, civil rights, trade unionism and foreign policy, written between 1905 and 1966.

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