

August 23, 2004

## Dear Friends,

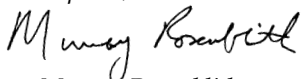
I want to offer sincere thanks to all of you who responded so generously to Howard Zinn's recent letter. Your contributions have helped us meet the urgent demands put on the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute's resources by the current crisis.

As Howard pointed out in his letter, we cannot expect the presidential election to bring social justice and peace. At the Muste Institute, we are preparing for beyond November, to step up our support of the grassroots movement as it faces new challenges in opposing war and injustice. As the "Stop the Merchants of Death" campaign makes clear (see profile on page 2), companies like Halliburton, Bechtel, and Lockheed Martin have the power and motivation to keep endless war on the agenda, regardless of who is in the White House.

If you haven't contributed lately, please do so now. This month we are reprinting several of our Essay Series pamphlets, including the Spanish-language Martin Luther King pamphlet, this time incorporating a never-before-published Spanish translation of King's famous speech at Riverside Church against the Vietnam war.

You can use the envelope enclosed with our last appeal to send in your donation, or go to our website at [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org) and click on the JustGive "button" at the top of the main page. Join us now to turn back the tide of war and militarism.

In peace,



Murray Rosenblith  
Executive Director



VOL. 12, NUMBER 1

FALL 2004

## A.J. Goes to South Vietnam

In April 1966, President Lyndon Johnson was building up American forces in South Vietnam and expanding the war at an alarming rate. At the same time, the peace movement in this country was finally showing the increasing vitality and strength that would lead to massive antiwar protests within two years. A.J. Muste—then 81 years old and supposedly long into retirement—was at the center of all this activity.

After addressing one of the first major demonstrations against the war in December 1964, A.J. followed up with a public "speak out" on the steps of the Pentagon on June 16, 1965. Next he organized a three-day "Assembly of Unrepresented People" in Washington in August that culminated with a sit-in at the Capitol where 350 people were arrested. On the heels of this action, A.J. was instrumental in creating the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee, which brought out over 25,000 people on October 15, and organized another large demonstration in Central Park in March 1966.

With all that going on, A.J. decided a pacifist team should visit Saigon to "know more first hand" about the Vietnamese and initiate dialogue with U.S. personnel in Vietnam. He also wanted to stage an act of protest so the Vietnamese would know that some Americans did not support the war. A.J. entered South Vietnam on April 15, accompanied by Barbara Deming, William Davidon, Brad Lyttle, Karl Meyer and others.

At first, authorities paid little attention to the delegation, which spent the week meeting with American AID workers, the press, Buddhist monks, Catholic priests and students. A.J. and his associates soon learned that virtually no one wanted the U.S. to stay in Vietnam. Even if they did not support the National Liberation Front (the "Viet Cong"), there was a universal sense that the Vietnamese should be left to resolve the situation themselves. They also came to realize that, contrary to the information reported in the U.S., there was very

*continued on page 2*

PHOTO FROM WWW.STONEWALK.ORG



While politicians convene in Boston and New York this summer, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows is making a dramatic statement of solidarity with the victims of terrorism, violence and war around the world. From July 26 through September 2, Peaceful Tomorrows members are walking from the Democratic National Convention in Boston to the Republican National Convention in New York, pulling a 1,400-pound granite memorial honoring "Unknown Civilians Killed in War." In the photo, walkers push the memorial en route from Mendon to Milville, Massachusetts, on August 3rd. The Muste Institute supported "Stonewalk 2004" with a \$1,000 grant to Peaceful Tomorrows in April of this year. For more photos, press coverage and daily reports from Stonewalk 2004, see the website at [www.stonewalk.org](http://www.stonewalk.org).

## Grantee Profile: Stop the Merchants of Death!

The *Muste Institute* granted \$1,500 to the *War Resisters League (WRL)* in April of this year for outreach and publicity for the "Stop the Merchants of Death" campaign. This article is by G. Simon Harak, WRL's Anti-Militarism Coordinator.

In my work with the national "Stop the Merchants of Death" campaign, I have spoken to dozens of audiences—students, activists and faith groups—about the role of corporations in *making*



*war for profit.* Yes, you heard right: these companies do not just profit from war. With their vast influence, they make wars for profit, in effect commandeering the U.S. military for

corporate takeovers of entire countries. War profiteers influence government decisions on what weapons systems to buy, what countries to invade, and what lands to occupy. Campaign contributions create a "revolving door" between politics and the business of war profiteering.

The first reaction from audiences when I explain all this is shock. When I show people what's happening on the

ground in Iraq—houses bulldozed, families kidnapped by US soldiers—people are just stunned. And amazed, when they learn about the massive nonviolent protests in Iraq. Here in the US, people tell me, we never hear how widespread nonviolent resistance is among Iraqis.

For that, we can thank the corporate media. General Electric (GE), for example, owns the NBC television network. And GE this year will manufacture \$2.8 billion worth of weapons for the US government. Those women and men on the NBC nightly news are not working to defend our first amendment rights—they are working to make money for a weapons manufacturer. So they're certainly not going to report on the struggles and successes of nonviolent movements. Because they're required by corporate interests to "sell" people on the need for more and more weapons. And if they don't do a good job of it, they'll be fired. So the media coverage on NBC becomes advertising for the war.

After the shock comes anger. Some are angry at me for saying it, because they don't want to believe we aren't really fighting for democracy and freedom. Others are angry because they finally understand the responsibility of the corporations in all this bloodshed, and they want to put an end to it. For

### David Dellinger Memorial

There will be a public memorial service in New York City to celebrate the life of longtime nonviolent activist David Dellinger on Saturday, October 23 at 6:30pm. The event, which is being organized by David's family and friends, will take place at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine at 112th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan. The *Muste Institute* is sponsoring the event. Tax-deductible contributions in Dave's honor should be made out to A.J. *Muste Memorial Institute* and sent to our office at 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012, earmarked for the "Dellinger Memorial Fund."

these folks, we have an action plan to help them start organizing in their communities.

If you wish to join the "Stop the Merchants of Death" campaign as an organizer or a speaker, or you want a speaker to address your group, contact me—G. Simon Harak—at 212-228-0450, ext. 104, or [amc@warresisters.org](mailto:amc@warresisters.org). For more information about the campaign, go to the "programs" section of WRL's website at [warresisters.org](http://warresisters.org).

—G. Simon Harak

PHOTO: MUSTE INSTITUTE ARCHIVES



Barbara Deming and A. J. Muste in detention at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon, Vietnam, April 21, 1966 pending imminent expulsion from South Vietnam.

### South Vietnam

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little support for the South Vietnamese government among the people.

Near the end of the week, the group was picked up by the police and told their visas were expiring and they would have to leave. First, authorities let them hold a press conference at Saigon City Hall. Before reporters could ask any questions, a group of "students" began shouting at the pacifists and throwing eggs and tomatoes at them. Later, one of the young men who disrupted the press conference came to A.J. and admitted that they were security agents and had been instructed to break things up. He apologized and said he hoped they would come back to Vietnam in the future. (A.J. did indeed return, but this time to North Vietnam,

in early 1967, for the final trip of his life.)

On April 21, the day they were told they had to leave, A.J. and the others decided they would try one last time to demonstrate at the U.S. Embassy. They gathered up signs and leaflets and headed off on foot. After being stopped several times by security police, A.J. and the rest were gently picked up and loaded into police vans. Driven to the airport, they were held in a detention room for several hours and put on a plane out of the country. They returned on April 24 to Kennedy airport in New York, where A.J. held a well-attended press conference and said he felt the trip had accomplished its purpose. Despite his frail health, A.J. returned from this trip with renewed energy for antiwar organizing. The year ahead would turn out to be one of his busiest ever, and also his last.

—Murray Rosenblith

# New Grants, June 2004

## ASOCIACION CIVIL CENTRO ESPERANZA

Chiclayo, Peru: \$4,000 (SFE)

This neighborhood organization promotes citizen participation and leadership among women, youth and children in the La Victoria district of the city of Chiclayo, in the northwestern Peruvian department of Lambayeque. This grant from our donor-advised Sheilah's Fund East goes to build organizational capacity toward achieving greater efficiency in trainings for democratic and ethical leadership.

## CAMPAIGN TO END THE DEATH PENALTY

Chicago, IL: \$2,000

Founded in 1995, Campaign to End the Death Penalty is a national grassroots organization seeking to expose the truth about the racist and unfair use of the death penalty. The Campaign also organizes rallies, demonstrations and press conferences to pressure public officials. This grant goes for the Campaign's fourth annual national convention, "We CAN Stop the Racist Death Penalty," scheduled for November 13-14, 2004.

## CENTRAL NEW YORK - CITIZENS AWARENESS NETWORK

Oswego, NY: \$1,600

In 1997, this coalition of community groups came together in response to news that the internal components of the Nine Mile Point nuclear plant in Scriba, New York, were cracking apart. In 1999, this coalition became a local chapter of Citizens Awareness Network

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute makes small grants to groups engaged in nonviolent education and action for social justice. Our next deadline for proposals is October 22, 2004. Guidelines are available on our website at [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org).

(CAN), a Northeast regional grassroots anti-nuclear organization. This grant goes for the Nuclear Neighbor Accountability Campaign, informing people about the dangers of the Fitzpatrick nuclear reactor in Oswego and the safety, environmental and labor record of its parent company, Entergy.

## CONVERGENCE OF MOVEMENTS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE AMERICAS

Washington, DC: \$1,600

The Convergence of Movements of the Peoples of the Americas (COMPA) was founded in 2000 to bring together grassroots and solidarity organizations throughout the Americas in a collaboration led by those who are most directly impacted by corporate-led globalization. This grant goes for the First Hemispheric Assembly of COMPA Women, scheduled for November 2004 in Nicaragua.

## EARTH ACTION

Prince Edward Island, Canada: \$1,000 (donor-advised)

Earth Action works to draw public attention to the health and environmental threats from pesticides and other pollutants in Prince Edward Island, Canada, where the economy is heavily dependent on industrial agriculture. This grant, suggested by an anonymous donor, goes for general support. This year Earth Action plans to begin a six-month health survey of two of the island's communities, while continuing to organize demonstrations and produce educational materials.

## ESTACION LIBRE COLLECTIVE

Los Angeles, CA: \$1,600

Estación Libre, formed in 1998, seeks to support and strengthen the struggles of Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and Native communities in the US and Canada by promoting community organizing inspired by the model of Zapatismo, which emphasizes democracy through dialogue and inclusion, and justice through accountability

and self-determination. This grant goes for a month-long delegation of indigenous youth from Canada to visit indigenous communities in the southern Mexican states of Chiapas and Oaxaca.

## GUSH SHALOM

Tel Aviv, Israel: \$1,600

Founded in 1993, Gush Shalom seeks to win over Israeli public opinion for an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and for acceptance of the right of the Palestinian people to an independent and sovereign state. In 2003, Gush and other groups began a campaign to oppose the Israeli government's construction of an "apartheid wall," which is cutting off Palestinian communities from their land and enclosing them in what Gush calls "the largest prison on earth." This grant goes for outreach and educational work.

## SERVICIO PAZ Y JUSTICIA (SERPAJ)- AMERICA LATINA

San José, Costa Rica: \$10,000 (SFE)

This Sheilah's Fund East donor advised grant goes for the regional coordinating office of SERPAJ (Peace and Justice Service), a network of nonviolence organizations in Latin America. SERPAJ chapters focus on such issues as human rights, the environment, labor rights, women's rights, indigenous rights and conscientious objection.

## THREE CITY ART PROJECT

New York, NY: \$1,600

This grant goes for promotional and educational work for "Art Against the Wall," an exhibit organized in Ramallah (Palestine), Tel Aviv (Israel) and New York by Palestinian, Israeli and US artists. Accompanied by an educational forum in New York, the show seeks to create awareness of the "apartheid wall" which Israel is building through Palestinian land. The project is sponsored by ABC No Rio, a collectively-run center for art and activism in New York.

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**#15: David McReynolds**—longtime activist with the War Resisters League, Socialist Party presidential candidate—*A Philosophy of Nonviolence*  
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**Peace Agitator: the story of A.J. Muste**, by Nat Hentoff. An activist writer chronicles the 'grandfather' of the current U.S. peace movement—minister, labor activist, pacifist and resister. This 1982 edition contains many photographs and an introduction by Larry Gara, a leading historian of the nonviolence movement.  
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**The Essays of A.J. Muste**  
Edited by Nat Hentoff, preface by Jo Ann O. Robinson. Originally issued in 1967, this new edition includes Muste's "Notes for an Autobiography," plus essays on pacifism, civil rights, trade unionism and foreign policy. Written between 1905 and 1966, the essays stand as an extraordinary companion to our everyday work for peace and social justice. qty: \_\_\_\_\_

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