

## Dear Friends,

As you can see from this issue of *Muste Notes*, we've had a busy summer. On top of a packed cycle of general grants, we made 12 grants from our new Counter-Recruitment Fund and took on a new sponsored project.

On a sad note, our friend Norma Becker died in June. Norma was a longtime member of the Muste Institute board, and her daughter Diane Tosh was acting executive director during my sabbatical in 2002-03. Norma is remembered here by the Institute's first executive director, Van Zwisohn.

Many thanks to all of you who responded to Rebecca Libed's recent letter by sending generous contributions to the Muste Institute. If you didn't donate yet (or even if you did), please take a moment to send us a check or contribute through the JustGive button on our website. With your help, we will keep expanding our support for the many groups around the country and the world who are using nonviolent action to carry out their struggles for social justice.

In peace,  
Murray Rosenblith

Murray Rosenblith  
Executive Director

the longstanding Israeli government effort to crush grassroots, nonviolent resistance. Since Israel began building its West Bank Wall in 2002, the Israeli military has killed ten Palestinian protesters, wounded hundreds—including four Israeli activists who were seriously injured—and arrested hundreds of Palestinian, international and Israeli protesters. Over 100 international ISM activists have been denied entry to Israel and tens deported.

Despite these challenges, Palestinian, international and Israeli activists are inspired by the leadership of Palestinian organizers like Mohammed Khatib from Bil'in. In an op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune* a year ago, Khatib explained: "We refuse to be strangled by the wall in silence. In a famous Palestinian short story, 'Men in the Sun,' Palestinian workers suffocate inside a tanker truck. Upon discovering them, the driver screams, 'Why didn't you bang on the sides of the tank?'... Bil'in is banging, Bil'in is screaming. Please stand with us so that we can achieve our freedom by peaceful means."

— Patrick O'Connor



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## New Sponsoree:

## International Solidarity Movement

In June, the Muste Institute approved fiscal sponsorship for the International Solidarity Movement's work supporting nonviolent resistance against the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This article is by Patrick O'Connor, an ISM activist based in New York City. For updated information, see the ISM website at [www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org)

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM), founded in 2001, is a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land using nonviolent, direct action methods and principles.

This past July and August, more than 100 international activists traveled to Palestine for ISM's fifth annual Freedom Summer campaign. These activists joined Palestinian communities in resisting the construction of Israel's Wall on Palestinian land in villages like Bil'in in Ramallah district. Bil'in has been protesting the construction of the Wall for almost a year and a half, with the

support of international and Israeli activists. Bil'in's protests have focused a spotlight on Israeli government efforts to seize Palestinian land for Wall construction and the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements. The Wall will annex 10% of the West Bank to Israel and divide the rest into a series of disconnected ghettos.

Israeli military restrictions on entering the Gaza Strip have prevented international activists from maintaining a continual presence there since 2003, when ISM activist Rachel Corrie was crushed to death by an Israeli military bulldozer, and ISM activist Tom Hurndall was fatally wounded by an Israeli army sniper. Both incidents took place in Rafah, Gaza. Israel intensified its military assault on Gaza in March 2006, and again on June 25 when Palestinians captured an Israeli soldier: from then until the end of August, according to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, the Israeli military killed 226 Palestinians in Gaza, 54 of them minors.

When the Israeli military expanded its attacks to Lebanon on July 12, activists associated with ISM joined worldwide protests. On July 14 in Stockholm, 100 protesters blocked Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, forcing a meeting with the Minister. US-based support groups for ISM have helped mobilize protests around the country, including a July 30 march by 1,500 people across the Brooklyn Bridge.

Back in Bil'in, the weekly nonviolent protest was greeted on August 11 by cries from an Israeli officer that "This is Lebanon." The soldiers then wounded 11 protesters, two seriously. An Israeli lawyer was shot in the head from 15 yards with a rubber-coated steel bullet, and a Danish woman was beaten in the head with a rifle butt.

The attacks in Bil'in are an example of



Rina Klauman, an ISM member from Copenhagen (center), joins Palestinian, Israeli and international demonstrators at the weekly protest in Bil'in on August 11. The demonstrators carried fake bloodied bodies symbolizing an entire family killed by the Israeli army. Israeli forces violently attacked the peaceful protest, and Klauman was hospitalized with a severe concussion after an Israeli border policeman beat her in the head with his gun.

PHOTO BY ISM

## In Loving Memory: Norma Becker 1930-2006

There will be plenty said and written about our friend and mentor Norma Becker, and there can't be enough. It's hard to recognize now the courage it took for a northern white woman in the mid-sixties to go into the racially segregated American South to teach black children to read as part of the "Freedom School" program. For Norma, though, it may not have been that much of a stretch. Her day job was teaching black children to read in Harlem, in the racially segregated north.

It's hard to recognize now the courage it took to be an out-front activist and organizer in the midst of the Civil Rights movement and in the early days of the Vietnam War, founding the Teachers Committee Against the War, organizing the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee and so much more. Norma and her colleagues put thousands of people on the street in New York City when "You Commie, go back to Russia" was heard a lot more often than "You go, Girl." I was part of those marches as a participant, bussing up from college, wondering at the excitement and seriousness and beauty of it all.

For most of us it's impossible to comprehend the courage it took to go on, as Norma did, after the death of her beloved son Gene.

Nevertheless, hers is an enviable resume: War Resisters League chair woman from 1977-83; many years a valued member of the Muste Institute Board of Directors; Mobilization for Survival; Village Independent Democrats; always there at the important moments, ready to push, a tireless worker, a loving and beloved parent, grandparent, friend and human being.

Norma had a way of tilting her head, eyes twinkling, and a big smile, often when she was about to point out the

errors of your thinking. But the same smile was there just to see you and include you in what I took as her secret joke: this is good work, righteous work, but it's a hell of a lot of fun, too. I recall her explaining to me how it wasn't altogether wrong to use slugs in the subway turnstiles (I tended toward button-down purity) since traveling in Our City should be free for all, and you couldn't use slugs in limousines. It's them and us.

For years the Muste Institute was run out of Ralph DiGia's cubicle at the War Resisters League, primarily as a fundraising program to enable the Institute to purchase the building it shares with WRL at 339 Lafayette. When I became the Institute's first actual Executive Director, I was commuting from upstate New York a couple of days a week. For two years or so in the late 70s, I almost always had a home at Norma's Charles Street apartment. I began to think of the upstairs spare as "my room." It's hard to describe the pleasure of latenight discussions, gossip and dinner over those evenings I spent between the office days. It would be hard to find her equal for generosity of both spirit and things.

I was among the many who learned a lot from Norma, all of which stood me in good stead as an organizer. How to run a phone bank, how to hire buses to go to unpopular places, to talk to police and politicians, to stay calm during contentious meetings (I didn't learn that one too well), that the life is in the struggle, and how to persevere.

I met Norma's daughter Diane, also a peace movement activist, at about the same time I first met Norma. Diane was younger than me as I was younger than Norma, but I remember so well how that very fact made me see that the movement was a history, not an event. I've always been grateful that some years



PHOTO BY GRACE HEDEMANN

*Norma in 1973, at the 50th anniversary conference of the War Resisters League in Asilomar, California.*

later, in the late 80s, my family came to know Diane, her husband Steve, and their children again in different circumstances. We rekindled a relationship with Norma, seeing her quite often in perhaps her most rewarding role – one of the world's great Grandmas. As Norma's health worsened, she was less a leading figure in the movement and in politics. She was and is sorely missed there as activist, worker, goad, truthsayer, talent, and friend. But perhaps the greatest testament to her is that in her darkest and most fraught days she had the true love and constant support of her family. If you could hear Norma's terrific granddaughter describe her grandmother during a particularly harrowing time, you would envy Norma as much as grieve for her. Small comfort, perhaps for Diane and Steve, Sarah, Nick and Katrina Tosh, Anita Becker and Alicia Becker, but it may help to know that so many sorrow for their loss.

Norma had a cartoon on her refrigerator that I particularly liked. It was a domestic scene in a working class kitchen. Dad in his undershirt is sitting at the kitchen table with the children while a frowsy, middle aged woman in Wonder Woman's costume is ironing underneath a bare light bulb. Dad has turned to the children, and the caption read: "Kids, your mother is a very special person."

Good luck, Norma, fine journey.

—Van Zwisohn

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## New Grants, June 2006

### ASSOCIATION FOR UNION DEMOCRACY

Brooklyn, NY: \$1,500

Founded in 1969, AUD works to advance democratic trade unionism in the labor movement. This grant goes for the Immigrant Outreach Project, producing and distributing materials in Spanish and other languages to inform immigrant workers about their rights within unions.

### BACK PORCH RADIO BROADCASTING

Madison, WI: \$1,500

In 1975, Back Porch Radio Broadcasting launched WORT-FM, a member-controlled community radio station. This grant goes to bring young volunteer radio activists from Radio Victoria in El Salvador—WORT's sister station—to Madison to meet and share skills and experiences with US-based grassroots radio activists.

### BIRTHRIGHT UNPLUGGED

Glenside, PA: \$1,500

Birthright Unplugged was started in 2005 by two activists from the International Women's Peace Service in Palestine. This grant goes for the Re-plugged project, arranging for children in West Bank refugee camps to visit Jerusalem, the sea and the places their grandparents fled in 1948, and to create photo exhibits contributing to the historical memory of their communities.

### DEEP DISH TV

New York, NY: \$1,500

Deep Dish TV was founded in 1985 as the first national grassroots satellite network. This grant goes for a campus outreach program using the video series, "Shocking and Awful—A Grassroots Response to War and Occupation," to inform students about the impact of war and mobilize them against it.

### FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION TASK FORCE ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

San Francisco, CA: \$2,000

The Fellowship of Reconciliation founded the Task Force (FOR-TFLAC) in

1983. This grant goes for the Colombia Peace Presence Bogotá Team, providing physical and political accompaniment to targeted Colombian grassroots nonviolent activists.

### NEW JERSEY PEACE ACTION EDUCATION FUND

Montclair, NJ: \$1,000\*

New Jersey Peace Action was a founding chapter of Peace Action (then SANE) in 1957. This grant goes for joint efforts with the Plainfield Branch of the Peoples' Organization for Progress to provide counter-recruitment information to Plainfield High School students and the community.

### OMNI CENTER FOR PEACE, JUSTICE & ECOLOGY

Fayetteville, AR: \$1,000

The OMNI Center started operating in 2000 in northwest Arkansas. This grant goes for a conference of peace organizations from Arkansas and nearby areas of Oklahoma and Missouri.

### "THE VISITORS" DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

Brooklyn, NY: \$2,000

This grant, sponsored by the Prison Action Network, goes for production expenses of Melis Birder's "The Visitors" documentary, raising awareness about the impact of incarceration on prisoners' families. The film follows a group of women who take a weekend charter bus from New York City to visit their loved ones in upstate prisons.

### WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL

London, England: \$2,000

WRI was founded in 1921 to promote nonviolent action and support and connect war resisters around the world. This grant went for interpretation equipment to allow greater diversity and participation in Globalizing Nonviolence, the 24th WRI triennial conference, held in Germany in July 2006.

### WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

New York, NY: \$2,000\*

This grant goes for the DMZ Network, a project of WRL's Youth & Counter Recruitment Program, providing resources, training and other assistance to build the capacity of local youth organizers around the US to effectively challenge military recruitment.

\*Funded through the Counter-Recruitment Fund

## CR Fund Grants

The Muste Institute's Counter-Recruitment Fund completed its first grant cycle on August 4. We expedited the first round to allow for back-to-school projects, and got 31 proposals for the July 14 deadline! It was tough to choose among such great projects, but in the end the advisory committee, made up of activists from around the country, approved 12 grants:

**Albany Park, North Park, Mayfair Neighbors for Peace & Justice** (Chicago, IL): \$500 for counter-recruitment work in three Chicago neighborhoods.

**Center for Justice, Peace and Environment** (Fort Collins, CO): \$1,000 for the Youth and Militarism project.

**Community Alliance of Lane County** (Eugene, OR): \$1,000 for the Committee for Countering Military Recruitment.

**Just Don't Go** (Helena, Montana): \$500 for the Montana Youth Network for Resistance.

**NC Choices for Youth** (Carrboro, NC): \$500 for counter-recruitment work in North Carolina.

**NY Veterans Speak Out/ Veterans for Peace** (South Nyack, NY): \$1,000 for a teach-in with war veterans, students, parents and community groups.

**Peace Action Wisconsin** (Milwaukee, WI): \$1,000 to provide information to Milwaukee high school students.

**Rochester Against War, RAW** (Rochester, NY): \$500 for counter-recruitment work in the Rochester area.

**Teen Peace Project** (Port Townsend, WA): \$500 for Olympic Peninsula Alternatives to Militarism.

**Truth 2 Youth** (Volcano, HI): \$1,000 for Give Peace a Dance, counter-recruitment outreach by veterans and high school students at dances and events.

**Western Massachusetts American Friends Service Committee** (Florence, MA): \$500 for the Truth in Recruiting program.

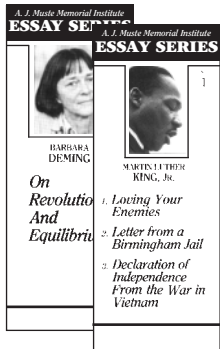
**Women Against Military Madness** (Minneapolis, MN): \$500 to provide information translated into Hmong, Somali and Spanish to young people in Minnesota.

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute makes small grants for nonviolent education and action for social justice. Our next deadline for proposals is October 20, 2006. Guidelines are at [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org).

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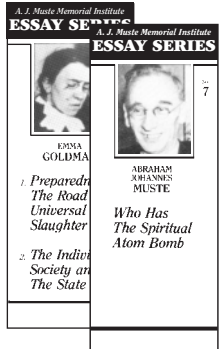
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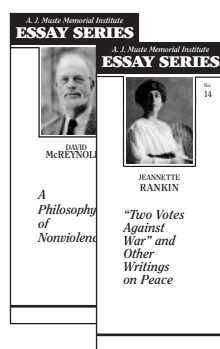
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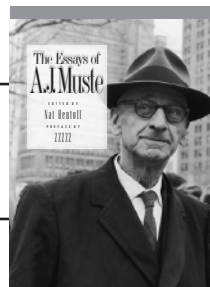


translation of *Loving Your Enemies, Letter from a Birmingham Jail and Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam.*

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