

Dear Friends,

Fall is here, and we have some exciting news:

- The “undocumented and unafraid” youth we featured in the last *Muste Notes* won a big victory this summer: many can now avoid deportation and work legally by applying for “deferred action” status. Our tenant and grantee, the New York State Youth Leadership Council, has been busy educating fellow dreamers about this option while building new leadership and keeping up the momentum for full rights, a path to citizenship and an end to deportations.
- A colorful new mural at our front door shines a spotlight on A.J. Muste’s role in the peace movement (see page 3).
- Sky Hall has settled into the *Muste* staff since joining us as administrative assistant earlier this year. We’re grateful for Sky’s help with all the various office tasks that keep the Institute going.
- The “Occupy” movement is out in the streets of New York City, celebrating a year of nonviolent action for the 99%.

*Thanks so much for your contributions in response to Ali Issa’s appeal this summer. If you missed Ali’s letter because you were away, it’s never too late to make a gift to the *Muste* Institute—just use the enclosed envelope or donate online to help us sustain nonviolent action around the globe.*

Sincerely,


Jane Guskin
Co-Director


Jeanne Strole
Co-Director

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Summer/Fall 2012

SERPAPJ - México: Working for Peace in a Country at War

by Pietro Ameglio

*Pietro Ameglio is a founder and member of Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ) - México. The *Muste* Institute has been supporting SERPAJ, the Service for Peace and Justice, with annual grants from its NOVA Fund since 1998. Pietro wrote this article (translated from the Spanish by Jane Guskin) shortly before joining the Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity, which recently toured the U.S. to promote nonviolent action to end the drug war.*

Mexico is currently suffering a wave of drug violence which so far has left 60,000 people dead, 10,000 disappeared, and tens of thousands of people displaced from their homes, while intensifying the selective targeting of social justice activists, journalists and human rights defenders.

The drug trade affects all social classes. It is also the largest producer of jobs in Mexico, according to studies by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Perhaps that explains why in the July 1 elections, a significant number of voters chose candidates who promised to continue the current drug war, albeit with more “negotiation by those who know how to do it.”

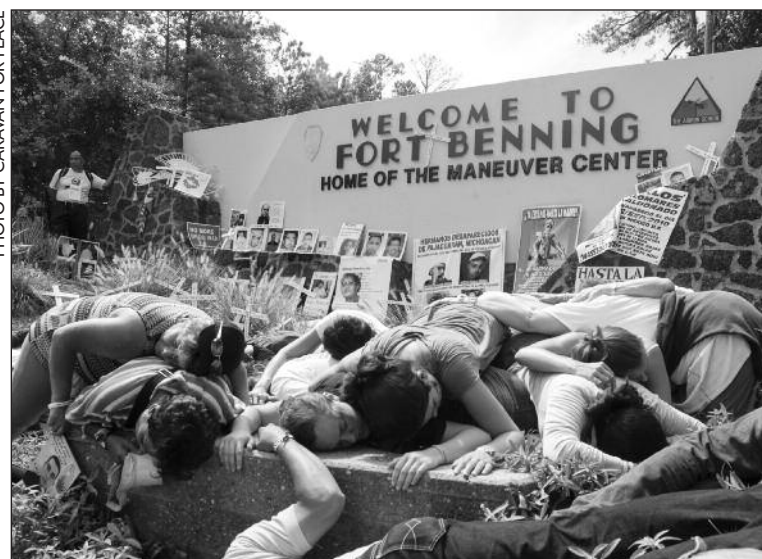
Unfortunately this means the model of “armed peace” will continue. In response to crime, we get militarization of the public security forces and an increasing spiral of violence which further feeds the business of war and crime.

Here at SERPAJ - México, we have been working to organize, train and coordinate groups close to the national Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD), with the goal of expanding a culture of nonviolence and building a participatory and horizontal

decision-making structure.

We collaborated intensively for three months to help organize the National Gathering of Stakeholders of the MPJD, which took place in January with a hundred representatives from nearly 20 Mexican states. Out of that effort emerged a national network of victims’ families, which held its own gathering of 50 family members in April in Cuernavaca, kicking off the MPJD’s 1st National Gathering. The family members were then joined by 300 more people from throughout Mexico and beyond, including many from the United States, for the broader gathering. Participants established a regional representative structure and developed common strategies for supporting the victims’ families, searching for the disappeared and seeking justice for those killed, as well as rebuilding peace in the social fabric of the communities.

PHOTO BY CARAVAN FOR PEACE



On Aug. 31, Caravan for Peace participants held a die-in at Fort Benning, Georgia, to demand closure of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, a U.S. military training facility formerly known as School of the Americas.

SERPAPJ - México *(continued from page 1)*

During the meeting with victims' families, we carried out an important nonviolent action: a collective fast on the Mexican Senate floor by family members and members of the MPJD, demanding passage of a victims' rights law which the legislators were blocking. The action was successful: even before the fast began, lawmakers felt its pressure and passed the bill. For the victims' families it was an important moment which gave them a sense of their own power, and the power of radical nonviolence, at a moment when they had thought all was lost. Unfortunately, the law was vetoed by the president.

Another priority for SERPAJ - México has been the organizing of the MPJD caravan in the United States, especially



PHOTO BY CARAVAN FOR PEACE

Caravan members and local supporters join Mexican poet Javier Sicilia, whose son was a victim of the drug war, at a Sep. 7 press conference on the steps of New York's City Hall. After the press conference, Sicilia walked into an HSBC bank branch with a suitcase full of blood-stained money, which he asked bank officials to "launder" for him. The caravan targeted HSBC because of its involvement in a money-laundering scandal in Mexico.

the inclusion of indigenous people. We succeeded in getting nearly 20 representatives of indigenous nations to participate in the caravan, crossing the United States from Aug. 12 to Sep. 12. Their presence as "community victims" whose territory has been stolen from them gives meaning to the other testimonies shared during the caravan, and inspires solidarity among struggles in both countries.

In recent years the SERPAJ "Think

Out Loud" Collective has also been carrying out peace and culture actions in the streets as a way of combating fear and organizing resistance among the public. We organized a children's humor and film project titled "Steps for Peace," and led workshops on humor, peace and creativity at schools in low-income, high-crime neighborhoods.

We are also participating in the wave of nonviolent resistance that sprang up to protest fraud in the July 1 elections.



PHOTO BY CARAVAN FOR PEACE

In Houston on Aug. 27, poet Javier Sicilia destroys an AK-47 assault rifle in a symbolic protest against gun smuggling. At least 60% of the weapons used by Mexico's drug cartels come from the United States.

Social Justice Fund Grants, June 2012

Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, Austin, TX: \$1,500 (via Austin Community Foundation) to challenge the collaboration between federal immigration authorities and local law enforcement through political education, leadership development, and building strategic alliances to expand the power of grassroots social action.

Education for Liberation Network, Chicago, IL: \$1,500 (via Chicago Freedom School) for Education for Liberation Circles, bringing together people from across the country who are involved in education justice issues to determine how the work they are doing in their own communities can be more effectively connected.

A.J. Muste Memorial Institute

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PHOTO BY SCOTT LANGLEY

Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty helped organize this vigil at the Capitol in Atlanta on Sep. 21, 2011, to demand a stay of execution for Troy Davis. Georgia executed Davis despite the protests—and despite substantial evidence pointing to his innocence—but the state killing galvanized public sentiment against the death penalty.

Nonviolence Training Grants, July 2011-June 2012

The Muste Institute's International Nonviolence Training Fund (INTF) makes grants for nonviolence trainings outside the U.S., or in indigenous communities within the U.S. Guidelines are at ajmuste.org/guidintf.htm. To support INTF grantmaking, indicate "INTF" on the memo line of your check or when designating your online gift to the Muste Institute. Donate today!

Center for Conflict Resolution (CECORE), Kampala, Uganda: \$2,000 in December 2011 for a nonviolence skills training with active members and leaders of political parties and other stakeholders in Uganda's political process.

PHOTO BY CECORE RESOURCE CENTRE



Political leaders in Uganda come together for the CECORE training.

PHOTO BY KSCO



KSCO activists celebrate International Conscientious Objectors' Day with a "Pedal for Peace" event on May 15, 2012.

Korea Solidarity for Conscientious Objection (KSCO), Seoul, South Korea: \$4,000 in June 2012 for a Training for Trainers, scheduled for October 2012, to build a local network of nonviolence trainers and increase popular awareness of nonviolent activism in Korea.

Refugees United for Peaceful Solutions (RUPS), Cairo, Egypt: \$3,000 in April 2012 for "The Practice of Active Nonviolence: Training for Trainers," a 10-week program in Cairo empowering 12 trainers with practical organizing skills to help their communities engage in nonviolent campaigns. The participants are refugees from Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia.



PHOTO BY KATHY KAMPHOFNER

At the RUPS training in Cairo, refugees work on strategies for facilitating sessions.

Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty, Atlanta, GA: \$1,500 (via Southern Center for Human Rights) for the Grassroots Initiative for Organizing and Transformation Project, supporting community leaders of color in developing local policy campaigns, educating the public, and building a membership base to advance fairness and respect for human rights in the criminal justice system.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN RAHILL



Olneyville Neighborhood Association, Providence, RI: \$1,500 for grassroots organizing and education to build a statewide movement in Rhode Island to demand that local police stop holding and transferring immigrants to federal immigration custody.

Peace Action Fund of New York State, New York, NY: \$2,000 for stipends to support two student interns working to develop and promote nonviolent activism for peace and justice among New York students.

Steering Committee for the Honor Program/The Other Death Penalty Project, Lancaster, CA: \$2,000 (via Catalyst Foundation) for the mailing and promotion of "Too Cruel, Not Unusual Enough," an anthology of stories from prisoners serving life sentences without possibility of parole.

Julia Stry, student organizer at the State University of New York (SUNY) Geneseo campus, represents Peace Action New York State at the national nurses union rally that kicked off the NATO Counter Summit in Chicago on May 18, 2012.

Mural Celebrates A.J.'s Legacy



PHOTO BY DAVID MCREYNOLDS

Muste Institute board member Nina Streich reads a message from board chair Peter Muste at the August 9 installation of a new mural at the Peace Pentagon. The mural depicts A.J. Muste and others singing over a pile of broken rifles, below a banner reading "There is no way to peace, peace is the way." About 50 people attended. Artist Christopher Cardinale told how he came to create the mural; board member David McReynolds spoke about A.J.'s role in the peace movement; members of tenant organizations spoke about their social justice organizing work; and local musician Eve Silber (pictured here with guitar) got the crowd singing along to anti-war songs. Because the event was held on the anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Nagasaki, participants also observed a moment of silence to remember the victims.

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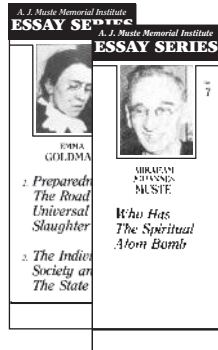
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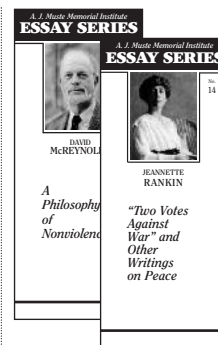
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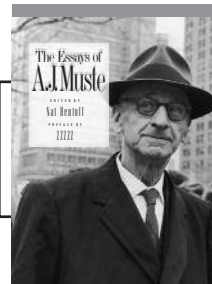
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Peace Agitator: The Story of A.J. Muste, by Nat Hentoff. A 250-page biography with many photos, profiling the 'grandfather' of the U.S. peace movement – minister, labor activist, pacifist and resister. Introduction by Larry Gara.

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

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