

October 21, 2013

Dear Friends,

One of our former tenants and sponsored projects, the Nicaragua Solidarity Network of Greater New York, got some unexpected fame recently when the New York Times mentioned that New York mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio volunteered with the group in the early 1990s. Reporters rushed to New York University's Tamiment Library to dig through the Network's archives for old fliers, press releases and posters.

The media attention served as a reminder that many thousands of people actively opposed the US-sponsored wars in Central America in the 1980s and 1990s. We are proud of our role in supporting that movement among so many others over the past 40 years.

In June and September we welcomed four new members to the Muste Institute board: Bruce Cronin, Rodolfo Díaz-Reyes, Ellen Luo, and Matt Meyer. Also in June, James Cole became chair of the Muste board. Former board chair Peter Muste is on a leave of absence until summer 2014.

Our newly expanded board is working diligently to develop a solid, innovative plan for our sheltering program. If you are interested in being part of this process, please get in touch.

Thank you for sustaining the Muste Institute's work in support of nonviolent action for social justice.

Sincerely,

Jane Guskin Jeanne Strole
Co-Director Co-Director



VOL. 21, NUMBER 1

FALL 2013

Training for Freedom at Lhakar Academy

by Lobsang Yangtso

In April 2013, the Muste Institute's International Nonviolence Training Fund (INTF) granted \$4,000 to Tibet Action Institute for Lhakar Academy—Tibetan School of Leadership and Change, a three-week training program in nonviolent campaigns, strategies, leadership and skills.

I was honored to attend the 2013 Lhakar Academy in Dharamsala. I escaped from Tibet when I was seven years old and I have never been able to go back, not even to visit my family. The situation in Tibet today is the worst it has been in many years, with violent crackdowns on anyone who dares to speak their mind, widespread surveillance and now police and paramilitary forces deployed to even the most remote towns and villages. It has gotten so bad



PHOTO BY TIBET ACTION INSTITUTE

Students practice giving each other constructive feedback during the Academy's leadership module.

recently that 120 Tibetans, including monks, nuns, lay-people and even teenagers, have self-immolated—most in the past 18 months—to protest against China's repression and demonstrate their desire for freedom.

Every Tibetan in exile wants to find a way to help our people inside Tibet and regain our lost freedom. However, it is not always easy to see how best to do this and it's often overwhelming to know where to begin. I am committed to the struggle and am always seeking workshops and opportunities to learn more about how I can contribute. Lhakar Academy's Tibetan School of

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PHOTO BY TOM REILLY

HONORING THE EARTH

August 5, 2013: Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign paddlers carry signs urging the closure of the Indian Point nuclear power facility in Buchanan, New York, as they pass it on their way down the Hudson River. The Muste Institute was an early co-sponsor of this campaign led by Haudenosaunee nations and supporters, calling for ecological stewardship, a just peace between peoples and a sustainable, shared future.

NONVIOLENCE TRAINING NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Please donate now so the International Nonviolence Training Fund can help more people build effective nonviolent campaigns for social justice. To sustain this important work, make a tax-deductible gift to the Muste Institute and designate it for "INTF."

Lhakar Academy *(continued from page 1)*

PHOTO BY TIBET ACTION INSTITUTE



At their graduation ceremony, students sing a favorite song in the freedom struggle: “Phayul dhi ngatsoe tsangma rey”, the Tibetan version of Woody Guthrie’s folk classic “This land is my land.” The Tibetan lyrics, written in the 1970s in Dharamsala, celebrate the beauty of the land of Tibet and emphasize unity among Tibetans.

Leadership and Change was one of the best I have ever attended because it was practical, informative, creative and very intensive. The program helped me get an in-depth understanding of key issues related to Tibet and China in global politics and history as well as more understanding and knowledge of strategic nonviolent action, tactics of resistance, secure communication technology, media and leadership skills.

Some people may think that we Tibetans are experts on our own issue, but it’s not the case. The pressures of school, work, and of trying to survive economically, especially as a refugee living in a foreign land, mean most Tibetans do not have time to study our own struggle and history as we should. Lhakar Academy provided me a rare chance to better understand the central issues between Tibet and China through examining our history and the current situation. Taking time to examine my own identity in the first session and discuss this with the other participants and our trainers helped make my goals very clear and showed me that a lot still needs to be done to realize our dream of a free Tibet. Through the next session, I gained a much better understanding of China in the context of contemporary global politics, which is important because many Tibetans haven’t had the opportunity to hear from experts about China today.

The program imparted new ways to look at our struggle and many ideas on renewing our movement. In the session on Strategic Nonviolence, I found sections on “Pillars of Support” and “Sources of Power” very helpful in

considering the Chinese Communist Party and how they maintain their control over Tibet and over their own people. I had never studied or thought about our situation in such a way and this allowed me to develop new insights. Shifting these “Pillars of Support” toward Tibetans and/or working to shift key groups within them to a more neutral position is quite an interesting approach that opens up more possibilities for positive change.

Another important skill set that I developed during the training was planning, analyzing, and implementing strategic campaigns and tactics. In the Tibetan movement, many times people get confused between campaigns and tactics. During the training, we were taught the differences between the two, discussed kinds of campaigns and tactics that suit the Tibetan movement, and looked at effective campaigns and tactics that achieve high impact with lower risks. This is very important for resistance inside Tibet because the price for direct street protest—or any overt political action or speech—is almost certainly imprisonment and torture. We applied the theories of nonviolent strategy to actual movements—such as the Otpor movement in Serbia, the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement for democracy in China, and the Singing Revolution in Estonia—to see how concepts like unity, planning and nonviolent discipline work. This helped illustrate the value of the ideas.

The trainers at Lhakar Academy spent many days working with us on developing and strengthening skills

that are important in our broader work in the Tibetan struggle. We practiced delivering compelling messages to the media and other audiences when we are representing Tibet on a national or international stage. We received training in digital security and how to use information and communication technologies in a safe and secure manner. We even got the chance to put this knowledge to use at a public awareness program on digital security that was organized by Tibet Action Institute in the Tibetan refugee community in Dharamsala during the Lhakar Academy program.

I think one of the most important sessions was focused on our own personal leadership and how to improve it so that we can be more effective in everything we do. Before we went to the training, I asked my peers to fill out a 360-degree evaluation of my leadership and I also filled it out myself. This was to identify my strengths and areas for improvement as a leader that relate to my work for Tibet. I have never had the opportunity to hear feedback like this from my peers or to think of myself in this way. It was challenging but so important and made me want to improve myself and my leadership, not just for me personally but for the sake of our struggle.

With some time to reflect on the Lhakar Academy experience, I can say with certainty that this training has changed my life. It helped us come together and work with mutual trust and respect and reminded us that while we have differences, when it comes to Tibet, without a doubt we are one. We developed the basic skills that can help us organize more effectively in our community and our freedom movement. Lhakar Academy is something that I know will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

PHOTO BY FRIENDS OF CO-MADRES



FIGHTING IMPUNITY

Co-Madres director Patricia Garcia speaks at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights during a visit to New York in May 2013. Since 1977 Co-Madres has been seeking justice for victims of El Salvador’s U.S.-backed counter-insurgency war. The Muste Institute is proud to sponsor the Friends of Co-Madres (FoCo-Madres), which spreads the Co-Madres message outside the borders of El Salvador and builds solidarity with their work.

Social Justice Fund Grants, December 2012 – June 2013

The Muste Institute's Social Justice Fund makes grants for grassroots activist projects in the U.S. and around the world. If supporting nonviolent action for social justice is important to you, please donate now to help us expand this important program. Thank you!

PHOTO BY NAOMI ARCHER



April 9, 2013: Lakota activists Charmaine White Face (at right) and Canupa Gluha Mani (at left) lead over 100 people in support of the Lakota Truth Tour on a march through New York City to the United Nations, where police barricades prevented them from delivering a official complaint of genocide documenting the injustices faced by the Lakota people. In June, a Lakota delegation met with United Nations officials and delivered the complaint.

Lakota Solidarity Project, Asheville, NC: \$2,000 in December for the Truth Tour, taking traditional grassroots Lakota elders and activists from the Pine Ridge Reservation to New York, Washington and other cities to present evidence and educate the public about the ongoing genocide of the Lakota people.

A.J. Muste Memorial Institute

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Military Families Speak Out Metro Chapter, Brooklyn, NY: \$1,500 in December for outreach and education among military families, deployed members of the military, veterans, peace activists and the general public, with the goal of uniting and strengthening efforts to end war and redirect resources to social needs.

Minnesota Arms Spending Alternative Project, Minneapolis, MN: \$2,000 in June to educate Minnesota residents about the need to reduce government funding of the military industrial complex and redirect funds to serve the basic needs of people in local communities.



Members of the Providence Student Union demonstrate at the Rhode Island State House against high-stakes testing.

Providence Student Union, Providence, RI: \$2,000 in June (via sponsor: AS220) to organize a new, youth-led PSU chapter at E-Cubed Academy, providing students with an opportunity to get involved in an accessible youth organizing after-school program, where they can organize for a greater voice in school-level decisions that impact them, and mobilize with other youth beyond their school around education and other social justice issues.

CELEBRATE
 40 years of support for
 nonviolence and social justice.
 Please give generously
 today to the
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Solitary Watch, Washington, DC: \$2,000 in June (via sponsor: Community Futures Collective of Vallejo, CA) for intern stipends to facilitate Dispatches from Solitary, which seeks to inform, support, and enrich the growing movement against solitary confinement while giving those directly affected a voice in the movement.

We Divest Campaign, Oakland, CA: \$2,000 in June (via sponsor: Jewish Voice for Peace) to educate and mobilize a grassroots base to pressure financial services company TIAA-CREF to divest from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of Palestine.



July 16, 2013: Activists demonstrate in front of the TIAA-CREF offices in San Francisco as part of a national day of action coordinated by the We Divest Campaign. Protesters urged the retirement provider to divest from companies which profit from the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, such as Veolia, Caterpillar, and Northrup Grumman.

Youth Arts New York, New York, NY: \$2,000 in December for Hibakusha Stories, involving survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings in Japan in a series of interactive workshops, seminars and public conversations at New York City area high schools and universities about the dangers of nuclear weapons and nuclear fuel.



Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor Shigeo Sasamori engages with students at Brooklyn Friends School during a May 2013 visit organized by the Hibakusha Stories project of Youth Arts New York and supported by a Muste Institute grant.

PHOTO BY ALISSA WISE

PHOTO BY PROVIDENCE STUDENT UNION


PHOTO BY PAULE SAVIANO

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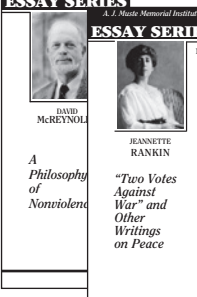
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#15: David McReynolds – longtime activist with the War Resisters League, Socialist Party presidential candidate – *A Philosophy of Nonviolence*

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
Edited by Nat Hentoff, preface by Jo Ann O. Robinson. Originally issued in 1967, this 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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