

March 1, 2004

Dear Friends,

First, I want to thank all of you who sent in contributions in response to our December fund appeal. Without your support, we could not continue to provide vital assistance to the movement for nonviolence and social change.

The news in 2004 will be dominated by the presidential elections. Here it is only March, and already we are inundated with stories about candidates, parties and election strategies. While it is an important election, there are grassroots activists and organizations all over the world who are continuing to work for global justice and an end to war. This work can't be put on hold for a year. And the need for it will continue, regardless of how the vote turns out.

Our ability to help these groups and to carry on our other programs promoting nonviolent action always depends on your support. If you didn't respond to our last fund appeal, please take this opportunity to send in a contribution now. If you already contributed, please consider making another donation to help the Muste Institute's work promoting nonviolent social change at the community level.

In peace,
Murray Rosenblith

Murray Rosenblith
Executive Director

Grantee Profile:

Mas'ha Peace Camp

Mas'ha Camp was established in March 2003 to protest construction by Israel of the "Security Fence" or "Wall." The "Wall," which may either be a 25 ft. high concrete wall or a complex of fences or patrol roads, built on a meandering path, cuts deeply into the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River. Had the "Wall" been built on the 1967 "Green Line," it would have drawn little



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Nonviolence Against the Wall

In recent months, at least three Muste Institute grantees have been involved in active campaigns against the "separation wall" being erected by the Israeli government across the West Bank. The barrier has come to be termed an "apartheid wall" by Palestinian, Israeli and international peace activists who oppose its role in segregating and isolating Palestinian communities, severing residents from their lands, their jobs and each other.

This past December, the Muste Institute granted \$1,921 (the amount requested) to **Mas'ha Peace Camp**, formed in March 2003 by Palestinian residents of Mas'ha village together with Israeli and international activists to protest the Wall's construction.

In June 2002, the Institute awarded a \$2,000 startup grant to **International Women's Peace Service (IWPS) Palestine** to establish an international team of women activists in Hares village in the West Bank, where they document human rights abuses, work with the media, and join Palestinians in nonviolent protests. Recently IWPS Palestine has become very active in the campaign against the Wall, participating in demonstrations in Mas'ha, Budrus and elsewhere.

In 1993, the Muste Institute granted \$1,000 to the Israeli peace group **Gush**



PHOTO BY PENGON/ANTI-APARTHEID WALL CAMPAIGN

Two boys are dwarfed by the Wall as they pose holding a poster for the Campaign to Stop the Wall during a February 23 demonstration in the West Bank town of Abu Dis, marking the first day of hearings on the issue at the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

Shalom in the group's first year of existence. Gush Shalom has now spent 11 years educating and mobilizing Israelis to demand an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Over the past year Gush Shalom has become very involved in protesting the Wall.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government refuses to participate in a hearing of the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands, on the legality of the Wall. The Muste Institute is proud to support nonviolent social justice groups in their efforts to protest and draw world attention to this grave injustice.

For more info:
<http://stopthewall.org.il/mashacamp>
www.womenspeacepalestine.org
www.gush-shalom.org/english
<http://stopthewall.org>

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Mas'ha Peace Camp

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Intifada (the Palestinian uprising), Mas'ha's access roads were blocked off. A year ago Mas'ha received a second, mortal blow: the Wall would pass next to it and amputate 93% of its farmlands. Alarmed villagers began protesting in March 2003 as construction of the Wall approached. Together with equally minded Israeli and international peace activists, they established a camp among olive orchards on a hill overlooking the village, where they spent days and nights collecting information about the Wall and its impacts, disseminating it domestically and abroad, and engaging in nonviolent demonstrations against the Wall. By working and staying together at the Camp, Palestinians and Israelis demonstrated that, contrary to popular misconceptions, they were not enemies at all but quickly turned into friends.

Camp members showed many local and foreign visitors the meandering path of the Wall and how it imprisoned the Palestinian population. Camp members established a website encouraging worldwide opposition to the Wall.

Yet despite these efforts, construction continued. By July 2003 the Wall had encroached on the campsite, forcing it to move closer to the village. In September 2003 they were forced to move again to a third campsite, this time to Hani and Muneira Amer's property to protest the Wall that would surround it, isolating and imprisoning the family with their 6 children. Till then, confrontations with authorities had been avoided. But when the Army declared the Amer's house and



Trying to negotiate passage through the Mas'ha gate

property a "closed military zone," and demanded to vacate the Camp, members refused. Consequently, 38 internationals, 4 Palestinians and 20 Israelis were forcibly removed and detained. All internationals and Israelis were released on bail the following morning after agreeing in writing not to enter the occupied territories for two weeks. But Nazee Shalabi from Mas'ha was detained for three days, charged with being in a "closed military zone," and eventually fined by the court NIS 1,500 (about \$346).

In November 2003, construction of the Mas'ha Wall was completed. It contained two "access" gates to the outside world—one at the main entrance to the village, the other about a mile north, supposedly to provide access to farmlands. Both gates have largely remained closed despite an official promise that they would be open at given intervals. The Army's not very convincing reason for continued closure was "warnings of imminent hostile intrusions."

At present, the Mas'ha Camp continues functioning, no longer in tents, but



Participants make posters at the Mas'ha camp

in an office shared with a Mas'ha women's organization. The Camp remains an information center about the Wall, formulates plans to oppose it, and supports other villages being closed in by the Wall. In January '04, camp members participated in a two-week demonstration at Deir Balout, protesting the destruction of a school which stands in the path of the Wall. The camp members also try to provide assistance in opening gates, which currently are closed or, at best, opened for brief periods at irregular intervals.

They realize they cannot single-handedly rectify the situation, yet they nevertheless continue to protest and attempt to draw the world's attention to the misery caused Palestinians by the Wall. It is their hope that their activities here and abroad will eventually generate sufficient pressure on the Israeli government to do away with the monstrous "Wall," or at the least realign it on the 1967 line and let people pass across regularly.

—**Dorothy & Israel Naor,**
Mas'ha Peace Camp

Gush Against the Wall

Gush Shalom conducted a protest action against the Wall on November 8th, 2003. About a thousand demonstrators—half of them Israelis, half Palestinians—converged on Saturday morning on the East Jerusalem neighborhood Sawahra, where a section of the "separation wall" is going to be built. It will cut tens of thousands of Palestinians off from the world—from schools, universities, hospitals, businesses, workplaces, and even from their cemetery. The demonstration was organized by the Coalition Against the Wall, a grouping of radical Israeli peace movements, including Ta'ayush, Gush Shalom, the Women's Coalition for

Peace and others. It was part of a worldwide demonstration to commemorate the 14th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Beate Zilversmidt, speaking for Gush Shalom, pointed to the similarity between the two walls. The demonstrators painted colorful graffiti on slabs of the wall, which are already there, such as "A Wall Prevents Hands Meeting", "Enough of the Occupation" and many others. Later in the day, the same organizations convened a mass meeting in Tel-Aviv's Cinematheque Square. Some 2,000 people attended. Gush Shalom spokesperson Adam Keller accused Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon of diverting the wall, which was



Gush Shalom activists paint protest messages on the Wall at a demonstration last Nov. 8.

originally planned as a security measure along the Green Line, into a political weapon to destroy any possibility of creating a Palestinian state.

New Grants, December 2003

BIG MOUTH PRODUCTIONS

New York, New York: \$1,500

Since its founding in 1997, Big Mouth Productions has produced five feature-length documentaries on topics ranging from the criminal justice system to alternative healing, and has provided film and video production services for numerous U.S.-based and international organizations. This grant goes for an outreach campaign for the documentary film *Deadline* (formerly *Life After Death Row*), documenting the story of how, on the eve of his departure from office, George Ryan—longtime conservative Republican, supporter of the death penalty, and governor of Illinois—surprised the nation by commuting the sentences of all 167 prisoners on death row.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Oakland, CA: \$1,500

Since 1948, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) has been supporting and promoting individual and collective resistance to war and to preparations for war. This grant goes to produce and distribute a pocket-size "Know Your Rights" pamphlet for GIs, attorneys, families and concerned citizens, which will serve as a reference tool covering the rights of enlisted personnel, guidelines on military discharge and other useful information.

FLORIDA COLLEGE ACTIVIST COALITION

Orlando, FL: \$1,500

Founded in the summer of 2003, Florida College Activist Coalition is a statewide network of student activists working to build a progressive movement in Florida. This grant goes to educate Florida residents about the impact of the proposed hemisphere-wide Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on communities here and abroad, to mobilize people for protests at the FTAA meetings in Miami this past November,

and to continue building grassroots resistance to harmful trade policies.

MAS'HA PEACE CAMP

Jerusalem, Israel: \$1,921

Mas'ha Peace Camp was founded in March of 2003 to protest the Israeli government's construction of a fortified "security wall" through the Palestinian village of Mas'ha in the West Bank. This grant goes to support the Mas'ha Camp's continuing efforts to draw public attention to the Wall's impact, while serving as a model of nonviolent resistance for other affected communities.

STUDENTS UNITED FOR A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT (SURGE)

Chapel Hill, NC: \$1,000

Students United for a Responsible Global Environment (SURGE) is a non-violent network led by students dedicated to achieving social, economic, political, and environmental justice through collective education and action. This grant goes for the Southern Rural Lilliput Outreach project, connecting rural communities in the South to the larger movement for peace and justice.

SWEAT FREE COMMUNITIES

Bangor, Maine: \$1,000

SweatFree Communities works to build the collective bargaining power of sweatshop workers and the empowerment of local communities through sweatfree purchasing campaigns, which

allow people to make decisions about how their taxes and consumer money are spent. This grant goes for the National SweatFree Communities Gathering, scheduled for May 2004, bringing together local and national activists from around the country to strategize around institutional sweatshop-free purchasing campaigns.

UNITED MOVEMENT TO END CHILD SOLDIERING (UMECS)

Washington, DC: \$1,000

UMECS was initiated by youth activists, including former child soldiers, from South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the U.S. who are concerned that child soldiering is affecting millions of children and families in mostly rural sub-Saharan Africa, much of Latin America, Asia-Pacific and other areas of regional conflict. This grant goes for the Southern Africa Peace Building Mobilization Conference, launching a regional initiative to end war in Southern Africa through nonviolent action, and to address the needs of present and former child soldiers.

WAR RESISTERS INTERNATIONAL

London, UK: \$1,000

This grant goes for publication of the Devi Prasad book "War is a Crime Against Humanity: the Story of War Resisters' International," which will be distributed to peace studies departments, public libraries, WRI sections and affiliates, and interested individuals.

Countdown to Freedom for
Mordechai Vanunu
Israeli Nuclear Whistleblower

After 17+ years in prison his sentence ends on

April 21, 2004

More info • Updates • Sign freedom petition • Donate
www.nonviolence.org/vanunu
 U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu
 POB 43384, Tucson, AZ 85733.

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 April 30, 2004. Guidelines are available on our website at www.ajmuste.org.

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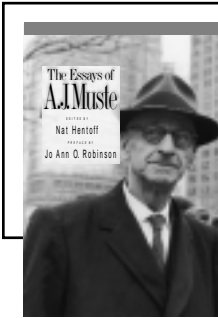
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Peace Agitator: the story of A.J. Muste, by Nat Hentoff. An activist writer chronicles the 'grandfather' of the current U.S. peace movement—minister, labor activist, pacifist and resister. This 1982 edition contains many photographs and an introduction by Larry Gara, a leading historian of the nonviolence movement.
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