

# Dear Friends,

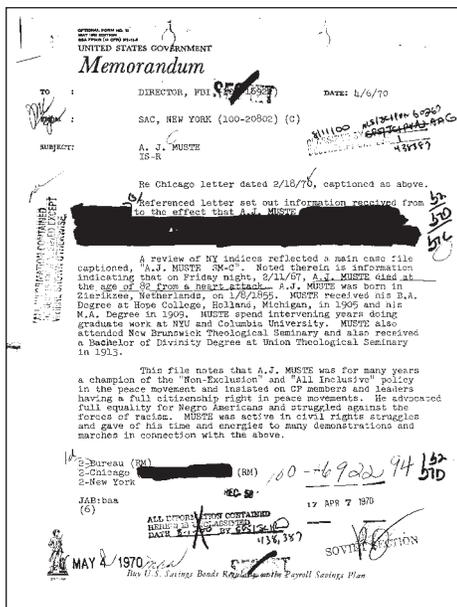
I hope the New Year finds you with your spirits and energy refreshed, ready to join us in the tremendous challenge of sustaining resistance to militarism in a world at war. At a moment when new scandals have erupted over government surveillance, our look at A.J. Muste's FBI files in this issue is a good reminder that there's nothing new about federal agencies wasting tax dollars spying on pacifists.

But there's good news too. We're excited about some of our newest sponsored projects, working on issues ranging from climate change to immigrant rights. And we're pleased to update you on the growth of a special fund supporting nonviolence work in Latin America.

We deeply appreciate the contributions many of you sent in response to Peter Muste's letter, and we urge those of you who haven't yet done so to send in your gift today. With your help, we can continue to expand our work sustaining and supporting nonviolent action around the world.

Sincerely,  
*Murray Rosenblith*  
Murray Rosenblith  
Executive Director

## Decoding the A.J. Muste Files



VOL. 13, NUMBER 3

SPRING 2006

## Demanding Justice, Disarming War: New Sponsors Seize the Day

The Muste Institute is proud to introduce these four fabulous groups, the latest additions to our family of sponsored projects:

School of the Americas Watch (SOA Watch) is a nonviolent grassroots movement working in solidarity with the people of Latin America to close the School of the Americas (SOA) and change oppressive US foreign policy. The US Army founded SOA in Panama in 1946 to train Latin American military officers; the school was moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1985. In



PHOTO BY LINDA PANETTA

SOA Watch brought nearly 20,000 people from all over the US to Fort Benning last Nov. 19-20 to demand the closure of SOA/WHINSEC, where the US military trains Latin American soldiers.

2000 the Department of Defense took it over and renamed it the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). Over the years, SOA graduates have notoriously been found responsible for massacres, coups and torture. SOA Watch was founded in 1990 after SOA graduates directed the murder of six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter in El Salvador. Each November since 1990, SOA Watch has organized a vigil at the gates of Fort Benning to commemorate that massacre and demand closure of the institution. The Muste Institute became the sponsor for the educational work of SOA Watch in December 2004.

Artists Against the War was organized in New York City just before the March 2003 US invasion of Iraq. In 2005 the group began preparing Disarming Images, a multimedia presentation demonstrating the breadth of creative resistance to the war on Iraq. Produced as an hour-long tri-screen video projection in DVD format with text in English, Italian, Spanish and Arabic, the project

In July of 1966, A.J. Muste and others in the peace movement tried to arrange visits to North Vietnam to witness the extent of civilian casualties caused by American bombing raids. Their personal telegrams to the General-Secretary of the North Vietnamese Peace Committee were reported verbatim by an unidentified Western Union employee to the National Security Agency, which forwarded the information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It's a chilling reminder that the recent uproar over NSA surveillance of people's personal correspondence is not exactly a new tactic in the government's approach to "protecting national security."

We first wrote to the FBI on August 3, 1998, requesting A.J.'s files under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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## New Sponsors

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was completed over the summer of 2005 and has been shown in 15 public venues: from the tent at Camp Casey in Crawford, Texas to the Resistance Film Festival in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Muste Institute became the sponsor for Dismaying Images in July 2005, and has expanded the sponsorship for 2006 to cover Artists Against the War's other projects, including a planned book version of Dismaying Images.

**Climate Crisis Coalition** was formed

grown to include 70 groups around the country. Last Dec. 3, a Day of Action to Stop Global Warming, the Coalition facilitated 40 actions in the US, while at least two Coalition activists joined a 30,000-strong "Global March for the Climate" in Montreal during the UN Climate Conference there. CCC activists also helped coordinate a press conference in Montreal where they presented the People's Ratification of the Kyoto Global Warming Treaty, with 40,000 signatures, to the US Consulate General. The Montreal events garnered worldwide media attention.

**DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving** was founded in 1999 in New York City as a low-income South Asian community organization for social justice. DRUM's Immigrant Justice Program works to build power and leadership among immigrants and families facing detention and deportation, and to organize against anti-immigrant policies that affect low-income South Asian communities. The YouthPower! program works to develop sustained leadership among low-income South Asian and Muslim new immigrant youth through training

programs and organizing campaigns. DRUM's Third World Resistance project builds strategic alliances with anti-war and racial justice movements nationally and globally. The Muste Institute began sponsoring DRUM in December 2005.



PHOTO BY CAROLE ASHLEY

*In this photo from Artists Against the War's Dismaying Images project, marchers hold signs based on Picasso's famous Guernica painting at a mobilization against the Iraq war on March 20, 2003, in New York City.*

in early 2004 to coordinate efforts among environmental, peace and justice, labor, student and other groups to address the issue of global warming and impending catastrophic climate change. CCC became a sponsored project of the Muste Institute in June 2004, and by December 2005 its network had

## Decoding

*continued from page 1*

The FBI's office for handling FOIA requests responded by informing us that the file appeared to be over 10,000 pages. So we asked them to leave out any public information like news clippings, leaflets and flyers gathered from activist groups, and just send us FBI documents such as surveillance notes, informant reports and agency memos.

In 2002, we received our first box from the FBI: over 1,000 pages detailing A.J.'s activism in the 1940s and 1950s. Several more boxes followed over the years, and we now have more than 3,500 pages spanning three decades of surveillance. The most recent item is the

1966 telegram to the North Vietnamese Peace Committee, which came to us last month as part of four pages released by the NSA's Central Security Service in Maryland. Most of the other files consist of eyewitness accounts—written by informers posing as activists—of meetings, demonstrations and other events, with occasional memos about internal meetings or private conversations. Because FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was obsessed with the "threat" of communism, much of A.J.'s file is focused on his ties to alleged communist organizations, as the agency desperately tried to paint movements for civil rights,

nuclear disarmament and civil liberties as controlled by the Communist Party.

Perhaps the most baffling item in the files is a memo (see image on page 1) from the FBI's New York office to headquarters, noting that A.J. Muste died on Feb. 11, 1967 at the age of 82. After running through a quick summary of his activism, the letter goes onto a second page to note that "in view of the above, no further action is contemplated... and the case on A.J. MUSTE is being placed in a closed status." The memo is dated April 6, 1970—more than three years after A.J.'s death.

—Murray Rosenblith



*Climate Crisis Coalition members in Montreal for the Day of Action to Stop Global Warming on Dec. 3, 2005.*

PHOTO BY LIZ VEAZEY



*A DRUM Family Organizer at a March 2005 demonstration in Queens, New York, organized by Immigrant Communities in Action, a coalition effort by DRUM and other immigrant groups.*

PHOTO BY DRUM

# New Grants, December 2005

## ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ACORD)

Sialkot, Pakistan: \$1,000

ACORD was organized in 2005 in the Sialkot district of Punjab, Pakistan, to assist community members with vocational skills, health awareness and other issues. This grant goes for Women's Rights Awareness Training Program, educating women in villages and slum areas of Sialkot about their rights.

## CENTER FOR STUDY OF WORKING CLASS LIFE

Stony Brook, NY: \$1,000

The Center for Study of Working Class Life, based at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, is producing a 27-minute documentary about the visit of senior Iraqi labor leaders to 26 US cities in June 2005. This grant goes for promotion and distribution of the documentary, titled "Meeting Face to Face: Iraqi Labor Leaders Tour the US."

## CHIAPAS PEACE HOUSE PROJECT

Santa Cruz, CA: \$2,000

Chiapas Peace House Project is a two-year old center for education and solidarity in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, working to raise awareness of the impact of globalization and militarization on indigenous and other communities. This grant goes for the Oaxaca Project, setting up a similar solidarity center in the neighboring Mexican state of Oaxaca.

## COALITION AGAINST MILITARISM IN OUR SCHOOLS

South Pasadena, CA: \$2,000

Started in 2003 by activists working against the US war in Iraq, CAMS seeks to inform students, educators and the public in the greater Los Angeles area about the growing mili-

tarization of schools, and to provide nonviolent alternatives and resources. This grant goes for the Youth Projects, supporting young people's efforts to develop and expand anti-militarist resources, including brochures, posters, peace clubs and workshops.

## FLAGSTAFF NEW DAY PEACE CENTER

Flagstaff, AZ: \$2,000

Founded in 1996 as the Northern Arizona Peace and Justice Coalition, this group changed its name in 2005 to the Flagstaff New Day Peace Center. Our grant goes for "Exposed in Kingman," a photo and oral history exhibit coordinated with the Mohave County Downwinders, raising awareness about the effects of nuclear testing on residents of Mohave County, Arizona, and supporting their struggle for justice.

## PRISON ACTION NETWORK

Albany, NY: \$711

Members of a support group for friends and relatives of incarcerated people started the Prison Action Network in 2003 to address the impact of the criminal justice system on prisoners, families and communities. This network of organizations and individuals now produces a newsletter and weekly radio program on criminal justice and prison reform. Our grant goes for efforts to expand the network by bringing in a faith-based organization.

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 14, 2006. Guidelines are on our website at [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org).

## NOVA: With New Name, Fund Grows

The Muste Institute's Sheilah's Fund East, which has been supporting active nonviolence in Latin America since 1999, has now been renamed the NOVA Fund and will expand its grantmaking in 2006 and 2007. The fund gets its new name from the shorthand term used by Latin American groups for "No-Violencia Activa" (Active Nonviolence). The fund was originally named to honor the donor, although grant recommendations are made by an associate of the Muste Institute with years of experience supporting Latin American nonviolence work. Pleased with the success of the fund's first six years, the donor has now reiterated her commitment with a gift of \$150,000 for 2006 and 2007 (a 50% increase in funding), plus additional support for several new special programs to be announced soon.

From September 2005 through the end of the year, Sheilah's Fund East made four grants:

**Hogar Comunitario Yach'il Antzetic** (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Mexico): \$3,000 for activities promoting the health, well-being, rights awareness and self-esteem of single pregnant women and single mothers and their children in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

**International Development Exchange, IDEX** (San Francisco, CA): \$1,000 for representatives of Guatemalan grassroots groups to participate in the 5th Annual Solidarity Economics Gathering in Chiapas, Mexico in November 2005.

**Oficina del Monseñor Samuel Ruiz** (Mexico City, Mexico): \$2,500 for efforts by the office of Samuel Ruiz, retired bishop and honorary president of the Secretariado Internacional de Solidaridad (SICSAL), to promote peace, justice and human rights in Mexico and throughout the world.

**Servicio Paz y Justicia, SERPAJ** (Buenos Aires, Argentina): \$2,000 to help the Argentina office of SERPAJ recover from a vandalism and theft break-in last November 8.

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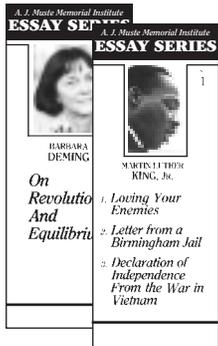


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**ESSAY SERIES ON NONVIOLENCE**



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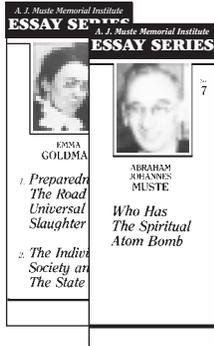
**#2: Barbara Deming** – the feminist connection to nonviolence – *On Revolution and Equilibrium*

**#3: Henry David Thoreau** – the original architect of resistance – *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*

**#4: Jessie Wallace Hughan** – suffragist, peace activist, founder of the War Resisters League – *Pacifism and Invasion; On Duelling*

**#5: Emma Goldman** – fiery orator, anarchist, agitator for peace and liberation – *Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter; The Individual, Society and the State*

**#6: Rosa Luxemburg** – courageous leader of Germany’s democratic socialist movement – *Prison Letters*



**#7: A.J. Muste** – foremost 20th Century Pacifist theoretician and activist, minister, socialist – *Who Has the Spiritual Atom Bomb?*

**#8: On Wars of Liberation** – three essays on pacifist responses to armed freedom struggles, including analysis of Gandhi’s position

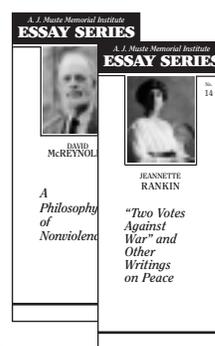
**#9: Aldous Huxley** – Twentieth Century visionary and prolific writer – *Science, Liberty and Peace*

**#10: Paul Goodman** – pacifist, anarchist, activist – *The Morality of Scientific Technology; The Psychology of Being Powerless*

**#11: Some Writings on War Tax Resistance** – thoughts, poems, tales from resisters, including Juanita Nelson, Allen Ginsberg and Pete Seeger

**#12: Sidney Lens** – peace and labor activist, socialist, occasional political candidate – six articles spanning three decades on the state of the U.S. labor movement

**#13: (Spanish) Martin Luther King, Jr.** – Spanish language

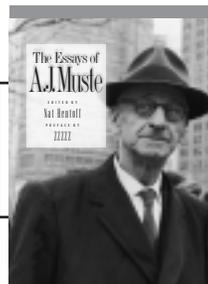


translation of *Loving Your Enemies, Letter from a Birmingham Jail and Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam.*

**#14: Jeannette Rankin** – first woman in Congress, suffragist, pacifist – “*Two Votes Against War*” and *Other Writings on Peace*”

**#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.



**The Essays of A.J. Muste**

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

**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.

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15 David McReynolds	_____	_____			

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