

April 25, 2011

Dear Friends,

Undocumented. Unafraid. Unapologetic. And demanding the right to follow their dreams.

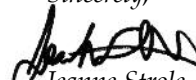
Thousands of brave young immigrants across the country are showing us the power of nonviolent action, and the victory of courage over fear. Like the activists who led the civil rights movement of the 1960s, these young people are literally putting their bodies on the line. Just by "outing" themselves as undocumented, they are risking deportation, separation from their families, and sometimes even their lives.

Never heard about them? That's what we're here for: to bridge that gap.

A.J. Muste was known for bringing together different movements, and different generations, to work together for common goals. Following that legacy, the Muste Institute unites a diversity of activists under one supportive "roof"—through the literal shelter of our building, and the broader range of grantmaking programs with which we sustain nonviolent action internationally.

From undocumented youth in New York pushing for equal access to education, to Wisconsin labor activists demanding we "Bring the War \$\$ Home"; from ex-prisoners winning employment rights in Massachusetts, to activists stopping a plutonium facility in New Mexico, YOU help it all happen through your contributions to the Muste Institute. Thank you!

Sincerely,


Jeanne Strole
Co-Director


Jane Guskin
Co-Director

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VOL. 19, NUMBER 2/3

Winter/Spring 2012

Fighting for our Dreams

by Sara Martinez

[The author is a member of the New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC), a new Muste Institute tenant and grantee.]

My name is Sara and I am undocumented, unafraid and unapologetic.

I am 22 years old. I came from Mexico with my mother when I was a year and a half old. We crossed the border to reunite with my father who was already living in New York. The reason my parents came here, and brought me here, was to provide a better future for me, and also for their families back home.

The NYSYLC is the first and only undocumented youth led organization in New York. It was created when a group of friends in high school and college saw a need for a safe space for immigrant youth to talk about their status, spread awareness of the situation they face, and find educational resources for undocumented students.

I found out I was undocumented when I was in high school. When it came time to apply for colleges, I found out you needed a social security number to apply for financial aid. I was wondering if I was going to college or not, and the NYSYLC came and did a presentation about the DREAM Act, a federal bill that would provide a path to citizenship for undocumented youth after meeting certain requirements. It was there that I learned that New York state offered in-state tuition to undocumented students and that I could go to college even though I didn't have a social security number. I also learned that the DREAM Act, if passed, could help me adjust my status.

I joined the NYSYLC because I was moved by the courage and leadership that I saw among the undocumented youth in this group.

As our membership grew, the NYSYLC started a mentoring program that partners undocumented high school students with college students to help them in the college process. We are currently in our second cycle of mentoring. We also raise funds for our own scholarship program and distribute information about other resources that undocumented students can qualify for.

More than a year ago, the NYSYLC started working on the NY Dream Act, a state bill that would equalize access to higher education by opening state financial aid to students regardless of immigration status. We have been building momentum for the NY Dream Act by organizing and participating in petition drives, town halls, a statewide week of action, an action day in Albany, and a 150-mile walk from New York City to Albany to gather support for the bill in upstate communities. We also held a rally and civil disobedience

From left to right: Wearing t-shirts proclaiming themselves to be "undocumented, unafraid and unapologetic," Janet Perez, Rosario Quiroz and Sara Martinez block traffic in front of Governor Cuomo's New York City office on March 28. All three activists were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

NYS Youth Leadership Council organized the civil disobedience action and a support rally to demand that Cuomo get on board with the New York Dream Act, which would give undocumented students access to state financial aid.



PHOTO BY NYSYLC

A Word from Nikki, the first Sara Bilezikian Peace Intern

Ten years ago, in the spring of 2002, many of us were grieving for Sara Bilezikian, a dynamic activist not yet 24 years old, who took her own life on January 12 of that year. Sara was one of the early participants in the Freeman Internship Program at the Muste Institute, which supports young activists interning at the War Resisters League (WRL) office. Sophie and John Bilezikian are now honoring their daughter with the creation of the Sara Ann Bilezikian Peace Internship Endowment, providing a new source of support for young activists contributing their skills to WRL's educational and organizing work. The new fund's first intern, Nikki Rankine, began her work at WRL in the fall of 2011, and on January 16, 2012—Martin Luther King Jr. Day—she helped kick off the internship program at an event that included Sara's parents and other family and friends, and members and supporters of the Muste Institute and WRL. Here's what Nikki told us about her experience:

My journey with War Resisters League began in the fall of 2011 and has been graciously extended until the end of spring of 2012. As the first intern of the Sara Bilezikian internship program I

have been honored with the opportunity to contribute to the War Resisters League's efforts to resist war both at home and abroad. This internship has provided a platform for me to understand how to achieve peace through nonviolent action while striving for structural and institutional change. This resistance embodies the legacy and the spirit that the late Sara Bilezikian brought to the League as an intern in the 90s—a spirit I aspire to bring to the WRL office with every task and duty I am assigned as the Sara Bilezikian intern.

I was not fortunate enough to meet Sara while she was alive but during the Sara Bilezikian Internship launch event in January, I was able to meet some of Sara's closest family and friends. This rare opportunity allowed me the privilege to meet people who were inspired by her deep and comprehensive approach to ensuring social justice and peace for all global citizens. Through personal narratives I was able to get a more insightful comprehension of Sara's character and especially about how her life greatly changed with the work she did with WRL.



PHOTO BY LIZ ROBERTS

Nikki Rankine

When I am working on tasks such as being the leading force on commemorating the legacy of distinguished former WRL staff member Bayard Rustin, and researching corporate war profiteers, I know that all of my efforts contribute to WRL's commitment to achieve global peace with justice. At the same time, this work helps me grow as a well-informed and active individual who hopes to continue spreading the message of nonviolent action, just as Sara Bilezikian did in her short life. —Nikki Rankine

Fighting for our Dreams (continued from page 1)

action in front of Governor Cuomo's office here in New York City, where I decided to risk arrest by blocking the street with two other NYSYLC members.

I never thought I would choose to go to jail. But I felt I had to take strong action to show the urgency of the situation that undocumented youth face every day when they are unable to continue their education and fulfill their potential.

We at the NYSYLC believe that the most important responsibility we have to our members is to empower immigrant youth to drop the fear and challenge the broken immigration sys-



PHOTO BY JUAN BASILIO SANCHEZ

Dreamers walking from New York City to Albany, the state capital, are joined by local Hudson Valley activists as they prepare to cross the Rip Van Winkle Bridge over the Hudson River into Catskill, New York, on April 14.

tem. It is only when we lose our fear that we can take control of our lives and be truly empowered, no matter our undocumented status.

A.J. Muste Memorial Institute

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NOTE: The print edition of the Fall 2011 issue of Muste Notes was misidentified as Vol. 18, No. 1, instead of Vol. 19, No. 1.

Social Justice Fund Grants, September 2011

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!

A Community Voice (ACV), New Orleans, LA: \$1,050 to organize and mobilize the underemployed and unemployed within Louisiana through community labor partnerships. ACV has held leadership trainings, created a hiring hall matching unemployed people to employment options, held community meetings and actions that led to new jobs for local residents, and engaged with local churches to support union organizing campaigns.



Members of A Community Voice and Local 100 United Labor Unions team up at an August 2011 joint leadership training in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Culture of Peace Alliance (COPA), Tucson, AZ: \$1,050 for a series of nonviolence trainings teaching the history and strategies used by Martin Luther King during the civil rights movement. COPA organized trainings throughout the region, helped create a "Peace Warriors" after-school program at a local high school, and hosted an Art & Peace Activity Center for kids at the Annual Tucson Peace Fair.



Young people take part in a training organized by COPA at Youth Works High School.

Ex-prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement (EPOCA), Worcester, MA: \$1,800 for a leadership development internship, part of the "Re-Routing the Prison Pipeline" campaign. Last year EPOCA helped win a state law barring employers from asking job applicants about their criminal history. Now the group uses a "Ban the Box Hotline" and outreach posters to ensure that the law is respected.



EPOCA member Michael Rose testifies at a public hearing in Boston in April 2012 about new regulations that bar Massachusetts employers from discriminating against people with criminal records.

Los Alamos Study Group (LASG), Albuquerque, NM: \$1,050 for an internship program to mobilize public support for redirecting federal funding from nuclear weapons toward a sustainable future for New Mexico. By distributing well-researched informational materials and organizing community meetings and actions, LASG recently won a victory: the federal government postponed plans to build a plutonium manufacturing complex — a flagship nuclear warhead project — at Los Alamos.

Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice (WNPJ), Madison, WI: \$1,050 for "Bring the War \$\$ Home," educating and mobilizing Wisconsin residents to press for redirecting military spending toward social needs. WNPJ develops key resources for the campaign, supports communities in presenting local "war \$\$ home" resolutions, and shares a digital "cost of war" counter for high-profile public displays.

Peace Pentagon Update

Here's the latest on the Muste Institute building in downtown Manhattan:

- The building is full, and active! Three new office tenants moved in last fall: **Global Revolution TV**, live-streaming nonviolent uprisings from Wall Street to Tunisia, Egypt and Spain; the **New York State Youth Leadership Council**, a vibrant statewide group led by and for undocumented immigrant youth; and the **New York City Organizing Project of the New York State United Teachers**, which primarily organizes adjuncts at private educational institutions in New York City. In addition, all our retail storefronts are rented out to small creative businesses.
- The sidewalk bridge scaffolding that surrounded our building is gone, replaced with safety netting, which provides better access and visibility. Also, the Transit Authority is mostly done with their work on the adjacent subway platform, and has put in a new sidewalk.
- With help from the nonprofit Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC) and various resource people, the Board is exploring how best to carry out our sheltering mission and all of our program work.

Please help by contributing to the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute today. If you indicate "sheltering" on your check or online donation form, your gift will go to provide affordable office and meeting space for our social justice movement tenants. Thank you!

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND GETS A BOOST

Thanks to a bequest left to the Muste Institute by a longtime supporter, we are increasing by 75% the amount available for grants in the next three cycles of our Social Justice Fund. Bequests are a great way to ensure that the next generation of activists will have the concrete resources they need to carry on the movement. You can designate your future gift for general support of our programs sustaining active nonviolence, or for a particular project. Contact us for details.

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ESSAY SERIES ON NONVIOLENCE



#1: Martin Luther King, Jr. – America's leading apostle of human dignity – *Loving Your Enemies; Letter from a Birmingham Jail; Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam.* Also in Spanish – see #13.

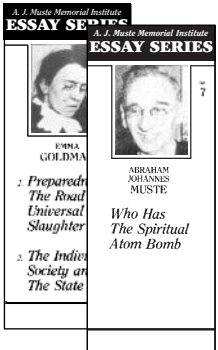
#2: Barbara Deming – the feminist connection to nonviolence – *On Revolution and Equilibrium*

#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 struggles, including analysis of Gandhi's position

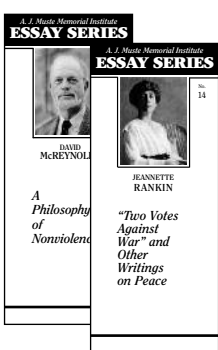
#9: Aldous Huxley – Twentieth Century visionary, classic writer – *Liberty and Peace*

#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



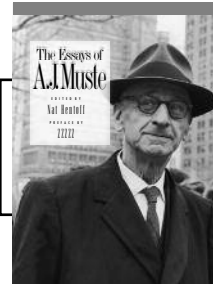
translation of *Loving Your Enemies, Letter from a Birmingham Jail and Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam.*

#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.

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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11 War Tax Resistance	_____	_____		
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14 Jeannette Rankin	_____	_____		
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