

November 18, 2005

## Dear Friends,

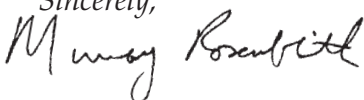
For more than 30 years the Muste Institute has been supporting radical nonviolent action for social change. A recent study of grant makers found that many prefer to steer clear of the term "social justice" for being too inflammatory and outdated. We proudly embrace those words.

If we were concerned about updating our image, we might not continue to use A.J.'s picture as our logo. After all, what could be less "hip" than some old guy who died almost forty years ago?

But A.J. Muste inspired thousands of people, young and old, and his history and story continue to inspire activists today. A.J., regardless of his years, was always at the forefront of activist movements. As you can see in this issue, when a group of young men set out to burn their draft cards in 1965 to protest the Vietnam War, A.J. was at their side.

Now, as a new generation of activists works to create counter-recruitment campaigns across the country to oppose today's economic draft, A.J. may be gone, but the Muste Institute's support is here.

Peter Muste, our newest member of the Board of Directors, is someone who knows something about the importance of that continuity, both from his political perspective and a more personal connection. Please read his enclosed letter and join Peter and the many others who support our work by making the largest contribution you can to help promote nonviolent action for social justice.

Sincerely,  
  
Murray Rosenblith  
Executive Director



VOL. 13, NUMBER 2

WINTER 2006

## A.J. and the 1965 Draft Card Burning

BY DAVID McREYNOLDS

In 1964, in the heated campaign between Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Baines Johnson, a great many in the peace movement (including me) urged a vote for LBJ, fearing, from Goldwater's own statements, that Goldwater meant war, and Johnson meant peace. However by the middle of 1965 it was clear Johnson was involved in a vast build-up of US forces in Indochina. It was war which would deepen, last until 1975, and ultimately cost the lives of over three million Vietnamese and nearly sixty thousand Americans.

Four men—Tom Cornell, a member of the Catholic Worker, along with Roy Lisker, Marc Edelman and Jim Wilson—decided to burn their draft cards. Congress had just passed a law making the burning of draft cards illegal, and the four of them felt it was time for a dramatic challenge to that new law, and to the war. I agreed to join the action, in part because of a guilty conscience for having, a year earlier, been so sure the election of LBJ would limit the Vietnam War.

We made a first effort to burn the cards in late October 1965 near the Federal Court House in Foley Square, with A.J. Muste as the "host" of the event. However the press jammed in so close to us that it was impossible for A.J. to make any statement, or for any of us who were involved to burn our cards in a dignified way. A.J. called off the burning, and we rescheduled it for a later date in Union Square. Our co-workers built a platform at the north end of the square.

Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker joined A. J. in hosting the draft card burning on November 6 in Union



Nov. 6, 1965: (L-R) Tom Cornell, Marc Edelman, Roy Lisker, David McReynolds and Jim Wilson burn their draft cards at Union Square in New York City as A.J. Muste looks on.

Square. Both made brief statements, and then each of the five of us stepped forward to burn our cards. (There was a moment of drama when someone who opposed us squirted us with water to put out the burning cards—we realized later that it could just as easily have been gasoline that he squirted!).

The draft card burning was attended not only by a large number of our supporters, but by a picket line of pro-war folks carrying signs with slogans such as "Burn Yourself, Not Your Cards." There were police on the rooftops of the buildings around the square to guard against any snipers attacking us. We were emotionally keyed up when the burning was over, and as we left the platform, escorted by police to their patrol cars, we assumed we were under arrest. To our surprise, the police cars drove swiftly downtown to the old War Resisters League office at 5 Beekman Street and let us out there, telling us: "you should be safe now."

The arrests came later, at the hands of  
*continued on page 2*

## Grantee Profile: Project YANO

The *Muste Institute* has supported the Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (Project YANO) with six grants over the past 20 years, starting with a \$500 grant in 1985, when the group was just a year old. In April of this year, we granted \$1,500 to allow Project YANO to revise and restock its bilingual Spanish-English counter-recruitment literature for local and national distribution, and to make a counter-recruitment organizing manual available online. This article is by Project YANO Program Coordinator Rick Jahnkow.

Counter-recruitment work has offered what is probably the most effective way to materially interfere with the war in Iraq. With Army enlistment rates already causing a serious problem for military planners, new counter-recruitment efforts are mushrooming across the country, creating conditions that may force an end to the war much sooner than the Bush administration might desire.

For over two decades, Project YANO has been on the leading edge of counter-recruitment work. Founded in 1984, it is a grassroots organization based in heavily militarized San Diego County, California, home to several major US Navy facilities. In addition to educating local youths about alternatives to the military and exposing them to the realities of military enlistment and war that are disguised by recruiting propaganda, Project YANO provides resources and trains organizers for the growing national counter-recruitment movement. It also is a primary source for bilingual materials for Spanish-



*Project YANO activist Jorge Mariscal addresses reporters at an August 29 news conference in San Diego, announcing a national campaign to counter military recruitment among Latino high school and college students.*

speaking communities that have been especially targeted by the Pentagon.

On August 29 of this year—the 35th anniversary of the 1970 National Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam war—Project YANO joined the Latino Caucus of the National Network Opposed to the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY), the Guerrero Azteca Project for Peace, Coalition Against Militarism in Our Schools and Latinos For Peace in announcing a campaign by Latino organizers to demilitarize high schools and community colleges. Project YANO activist Jorge Mariscal addressed reporters at a news conference in San Diego, and similar press events were held that day in Chicago, El Paso, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Puerto Rico.

Among other things, the Latino cam-

paign seeks to educate parents and students on how to opt out of military recruiting lists and avoid taking the military aptitude test (ASVAB) that is given in over 14,000 high schools annually. The website for ASVAB describes it as a “Career Exploration Program” but in fact it was developed by the Department of Defense to measure skills for military jobs. Recruiters convince schools to give the test so they can get personal information about students. The Pentagon is also using ASVAB to create a national database on all teenagers.

For more information, contact: Project YANO, P.O. Box 230157, Encinitas, CA 92023. Phone: 760-634-3604. Sample educational and organizing materials are available on the web at [www.projectyano.org](http://www.projectyano.org).

—Rick Jahnkow

## A.J.

*continued from page 1*

federal agents. Of the five who burned their cards, four went to prison for six months. I was not arrested, in theory because the FBI couldn't find enough of my draft card to be sure it was a draft card—but more likely because I had just passed my 35th year and the government doubted the law would be upheld if applied to someone past draft age.

There was a tragic note to the event. Roger LaPorte, a young Catholic Worker, set himself on fire near the United Nations building to protest the

war shortly after our action, and died. It was believed by those close to Roger that he had been deeply disturbed by the level of violence among the pro-war crowd protesting our action, and saw his own action as a way of taking some of the violence onto himself.

That A. J. Muste played a key role in the November 6 draft card burning event was yet another example of his long history of supporting militant actions by youth—as well as taking such actions himself, of course.

## MUSTE QUOTES

**Nonviolence is in fact “weak” partly because we waver in our own allegiance to it. It is “weak” in practice because our practice of it is sentimental, dogmatic, abstract, and not imaginative, creative and revolutionary. But for nonviolent revolutionaries, it is equally imperative to be nonviolent and revolutionary, to be revolutionary and nonviolent.**

(from *Crisis in the World and in the Peace Movement*, 1965)

# New Grants, September 2005

## AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK

Washington, DC: \$1,500

This grant goes for educational materials and organizing resources to help launch the Uganda Conflict Action Network, a grassroots campaign to raise public awareness in the US and internationally for a just solution to the 19-year old armed conflict in Uganda. Africa Faith and Justice Network, founded in 1982, is sponsoring the campaign.

## ANJUMAN BRA-E-KHAWATEEN (ABK) ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN

Punjab, Pakistan: \$1,500

ABK was formed in 1996 as a voluntary association of rural women with the mission of empowering women for a self-reliant and dignified life. Following a day of action on International Women's Day in 2005, ABK helped organize the Women Peacemakers Network, bringing together 28 women's groups from six rural districts of Punjab province. This grant goes for the "Mothers as

Peacemakers" project, organizing women in the six districts to promote a culture of peace and nonviolence.

## BOSTON MOBILIZATION

Cambridge, MA: \$1,500

Boston Mobilization began in 1977 as a local chapter of the then-nationwide anti-nuclear organization Mobilization for Survival. Over the last five years, the group has renewed its activity as a largely youth-run organization. This grant goes for efforts to mobilize the public against Boston University's plans to build a Level 4 Bio-Weapons laboratory in Roxbury, a low-income community of color.

## CORVALLIS COUNTER-RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

Corvallis, OR: \$500

This all-volunteer group formed in April 2005 as a subcommittee of Corvallis Alternatives 2 War, a local grassroots anti-war organization. Our grant goes for educational materials, speakers and displays to inform students, parents and community members in the Corvallis area about recruitment, military service and alternatives.

## GLOBAL WOMEN'S STRIKE

Philadelphia, PA: \$1,500

Global Women's Strike is a network of women in over 60 countries who act together to demand that governments "invest in caring, not killing." This grant goes for counter-recruitment work in Philadelphia's low-income communities, including a campaign to inform parents, students and community members about the right of students to "opt out" of military recruitment. The campaign is being carried out in partnership with two affiliated groups, Women of Color in the GWS and Payday, a multiracial men's network.

## LEHIGH-POCONO COMMITTEE OF CONCERN (LEPOCO)

Bethlehem, PA: \$1,000

Founded in 1965 to oppose the US war in Vietnam, LEPOCO now has more than 500 members in the Lehigh Valley area of eastern Pennsylvania. This grant goes for efforts to provide information about military service and alternatives to students; and for trainings to help young activists explore the practice and potential of nonviolence.

## PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CENTER OF SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS

Wichita, KS: \$1,250

Since 1992, the Center has been educating and organizing around issues including war, globalization, gender rights, the juvenile justice system and the death penalty. This grant goes for organizing, outreach and followup around the Iraq War Conference, helping activists in South Central Kansas to develop strategies and focus their anti-war efforts.

## YOUTH FORUM FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Kitwe, Zambia: \$1,250

This group has been training youth and students in peace-building skills since May of 1999 in Zambia's copper belt region, and has fostered the creation of numerous "Peace and Justice Clubs" in schools throughout the region's ten cities. Our grant goes to further build the work of the Peace Education Project.

If you are making up your will, we hope you will consider leaving a bequest to the Muste Institute to ensure the continuation of our work in the future. A suggested simple wording to use in making bequests is: "I bequeath \_\_\_ dollars (\$ \_\_\_) or \_\_\_ percent of my estate to the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute, Inc., a charitable, not-for-profit organization located at 339 Lafayette Street, New York, New York, 10012, to be used for its general purposes." To discuss other types of bequests, such as those directed toward a specific purpose, please contact our office.

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 February 3, 2006. Guidelines are on our website at [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org).

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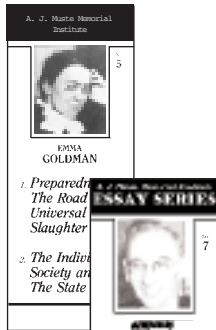
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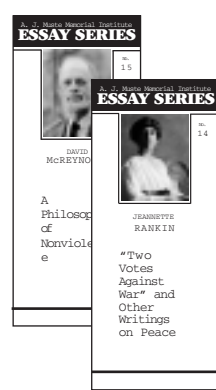
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**Wear Your Peace Shirt**  
Muste Institute t-shirts are black cotton with a four-color geometric design and the words: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way – A.J. Muste" Available in large and extra large (please specify) for \$15 each.

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## 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.

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