

November 20, 2006

Dear Friends,

Now that the elections are over, we in the peace movement must increase our efforts to end US military presence in Iraq and elsewhere, and to pursue an agenda that promotes and restores civil liberties, economic equality and justice to all parts of our society. Your support for the Muste Memorial Institute will help keep this movement growing stronger.

Please take a moment to read the enclosed letter from five World War II draft resisters who share a unique perspective as peace makers. Their movement seemed small in the face of the overwhelming push for war at the time. But they and their comrades accomplished much in the years that followed.

Today, the Muste Institute funds small groups because we know these efforts help lead to bigger changes. We don't know where the next mass nonviolent movement will take hold, but we know our early support can make the difference.

Please send in your contribution today. Let's work together toward a New Year that brings us all closer to a more just and peaceful world.

In peace,

Murray Rosenblith  
Executive Director

Mexico for human rights abuses. The state has the largest indigenous population in Mexico, and the highest levels of poverty. The state has been ruled by the political party PRI for over 70 years.

The Chiapas Peace House Project began to plan the opening of an office in Oaxaca after Ruiz assumed power in 2005 and human rights violations escalated. Our first volunteers arrived in September 2006, and found themselves in the middle of an impressive grassroots uprising where there seems no end to the creativity and will of citizens. To demand the governor's resignation and attention to their demands, Oaxacans have engaged in "mega-marches," civil disobedience, strikes, sit-ins, disruption of traffic and hunger strikes, and have spread their message through music, street theater and public art including graffiti, sculptures, sand murals, and altars for assassinated activists.

CASA Chapulin volunteers work for local organizations seeking to address the  
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## Grantee Profile: Oaxaca's Grassroots Struggle

In December 2005, the Muste Institute granted \$2,000 to the Chiapas Peace House Project, which in 2003 established a center for education and solidarity in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, CASA de la Paz. Our grant helped set up a similar center in neighboring Oaxaca state: CASA Chapulin. (In Spanish, CASA stands for Collectives of Support, Solidarity and Action.)

CASA Chapulin opened its doors in the southern Mexican city of Oaxaca as a center for international solidarity, education, and activism in September of this year, only to find itself in the middle of a conflict which captivated the nation, and the world.

Starting in the last week of October, Federal Preventive Police (PFP) helicopters began to circle the city of Oaxaca, descending menacingly low. While they had entered with the pretext of being peacekeeping troops, it soon became clear that they had allied themselves more or less with the state governor, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, who has been actively repressing the social movement for the last five months.



Child wearing a mask to protect her from police tear gas on the streets of Oaxaca.

The night before the PFP entered the city, Oaxaca was filled with anxiety for its citizens. Glued to our radio, we listened to the calls for peaceful resistance and reinforcement at the barricades under attack. At 2am there was a knock at our door—a friend who had been at a nearby barricade and run for his life when 40 paramilitaries, men paid by the governor and dressed in civilian clothing, showed up and opened fire.

Oaxaca has been the site of extraordinary mobilization since May 22, when 70,000 teachers declared a strike and occupied the streets with basic demands of salary increases and free books and uniforms for poor students. State police responded by violently removing the teachers from the occupied historic center of the city, using dogs, helicopters, tear gas and firearms. The teachers regrouped and took back the city's center, but the police violence triggered a massive public outcry out of which was born the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), made up of some 400 social organizations, collectives, and individuals.

Oaxacans rose up because they felt indignant at the use of force against peaceful protesters, and at the many years of political repression they have endured. Oaxaca now ranks first in



PHOTOS BY LAURA BÖÖK

The people's "Megamarch" in Oaxaca on October 29. "Enough of being sacrificed, silenced, assassinated. [Governor] Ulises and PFP [federal police], get out of Oaxaca."

## New Developments

### *An update on projects funded by the Muste Institute*

On October 1, 2006, more than eighty women activists kicked off Faslane 365, a year-long nonviolent blockade of the Trident nuclear weapons base in Faslane, Scotland. Over 55 affinity groups from peace, justice, environmental and human rights organizations have committed to blockading the base in two-day shifts. The opening Oct. 1-3 rota was led by the "Greenham women," nonviolent activists who held an encampment on Britain's Greenham Common from 1981 to 2000 to protest the storage of cruise missiles at a US airbase there. "We wanted to make a link between the success of the women's peace movement of the 1980s and the start of these Faslane blockades," explained Faslane 365 coordinator Angie Zelter. The Muste Institute granted \$1,718 in April 2006 for the September 9 public launch event for the blockades. For reports and photos, see [www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org).



*Greenham women knit as they blockade the Trident nuclear weapons base in Faslane on October 2.*

## Oaxaca

*continued from page 1*

underlying roots of social problems in Oaxaca, in the areas of women's rights, ecology, strengthening citizenship, alternative education, and indigenous rights. We are finding that there is much to learn from this movement, which calls for democracy and social justice, and where citizens become active by taking a participatory role in decision-making.

One CASA Chapulin volunteer helped out with the organization of the "Citizens' Initiative for Dialogue towards Peace, Democracy and Justice in Oaxaca," one of numerous assemblies called by the people to discuss what they want government to look like, and to formulate proposals for structural and political change to benefit society as a whole. The citywide assembly was moderated by a woman from a local feminist organization and included speeches in three indigenous languages.

Freedom of expression has been at the core of the struggle in Oaxaca. The voice of the teachers union, Radio Plantón, was destroyed by local police on June 14, but Radio Universidad stepped in as the new voice of the movement. On August 1st, some 2,000 women of the APPO peacefully took over the previously state-run television Channel 9, as well as Radio ARO, the state radio, in order to further the voice of the popular movement. On August 21st in the middle of the night, paramilitaries entered both the radio and TV station and destroyed all equipment. One activist who has received support from CASA Chapulin, Diego, was at Radio ARO the night of the attack. "It was terrifying. We were unarmed so all we could do was hit the floor to avoid being hit by the bullets," Diego says.

The resilience of the movement became clear, however, when, by 8am the next morning, the APPO had peacefully occupied all twelve commercial radio stations in Oaxaca as a response to the violence of the government, returning all but two stations the following day.

One of the most important roles CASA Chapulin has played is in divulging information. The international press has tended to portray the conflict as a clash between government forces and "subversives," ignoring the peaceful movement's basic demands for government accountability, transparency and respect for human rights. As a collective, we have written articles, given interviews and submitted photographs for newspapers, magazines, and radios in the US, Sweden, Finland and Italy, and have helped organize solidarity actions in these countries. We are collaborating with the Oaxacan Network for Human

Rights to develop a program for international accompaniment, and continue to provide food and lodging to activists who, amidst many illegal detentions, disappearances and assassinations, fear being victims of the violence instigated by the state governor. For an unarmed grassroots movement such as the one that has developed in Oaxaca, international solidarity is crucial. To find out what you can do to support the people of Oaxaca, or to gain a deeper understanding of the political dynamics in Oaxaca, we invite you to visit our website: [www.casacollective.org](http://www.casacollective.org)

—Diana Denham, CASA Chapulin

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute makes small grants for nonviolent grassroots activism for social justice. Our next deadline for proposals is February 9, 2007. Guidelines are at [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org).

## Swann Fund

With a generous gift from an anonymous donor, the Muste Institute has started the Swann Fund to further expand our support for nonviolence training and organizing. The fund is named in honor of Marjorie Swann Edwin and her late ex-husband Robert Swann. The Swanns were among the founders of the Committee for Nonviolent Action and organizers of many of the significant pacifist, civil rights and anti-war actions in the 1950s and 1960s. They worked closely with A.J. Muste for many years and helped organize the Omaha Action against nuclear missiles, the Quebec-to-Guantanamo and San Francisco-to-Moscow walks for peace, and the Polaris Action campaigns. Bob Swann died in 2003. Marj presently lives in California and remains a committed nonviolent activist.

The Swann Fund made its first grant in June: \$50,000 for the Albert Einstein Institution's work promoting practical applications of nonviolence. The Swann Fund also provided support in 2006 for the Muste Institute's International Nonviolence Training Fund and for our regular grantmaking program. The Swann Fund does not accept applications.

# INTF Makes New Grants

The Muste Institute's International Nonviolence Training Fund (INTF) stepped up grantmaking in 2006 with new support from the Swann Fund and the Samuel Rubin Foundation. The fund's past five grants are:

**CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (CEHRD)**

Rivers State, Nigeria: \$3,000

Since 1999, this group has been nonviolently confronting multinational oil companies and the Nigerian government over the harmful effects of oil drilling in the Niger delta. This June 2006 grant goes for a training to help women in the Otusega community of Bayelsa State develop successful strategies in their struggle against Shell oil company.

**INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT-USA**

Berkeley, CA: \$2,845

ISM works to build strategies for nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation. This June 2006 grant goes for a series of trainings by and for Palestinians, sharing strategies of non-

violent resistance to oppression and coordinating nonviolent actions among 12 different towns across the West Bank.

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE**

Chiang Mai, Thailand: \$2,500

This March 2005 grant went for three trainings with Burmese women living in Indian border villages, carried out in partnership with the Women's League of Chinland, a coalition of women's groups in Burma's Chin state and Mizoram, India. A total of 65 women were trained around issues of gender, power, collective leadership, structural violence and how to take action in the community.

**NONVIOLENCE TRAINERS INITIATIVE-IZMIR**

Izmir, Turkey: \$3,000

This group, formerly known as the Izmir War Resisters Association, focuses on spreading nonviolence training throughout Turkey. This September 2005 grant went for a one-week intensive "training of trainers" in May 2006 with 18 Turkish activists from the women's,



PHOTO BY GINGER NORWOOD

*Burmese women take part in a nonviolence training organized by the International Women's Partnership for Peace and Justice.*

gay-lesbian, human rights, ecology and anti-militarism movements.

**PACE E BENE**

Oakland, CA: \$1,500

This June 2006 grant goes for a non-violence training at an alternative school in the Alberdi neighborhood of Rosario, Argentina. The training equips participants with strategies and tools to challenge local police harassment; and seeks to develop a comprehensive non-violence training program for students.

## New Grants, September 2006

**ARLINGTON WEST FILM AND SPEAKERS PROGRAM**

Los Angeles, CA: \$1,000

This project helps students in disadvantaged communities make informed decisions about war and military service through a screening of the film "Arlington West," followed by a questionnaire, a talk from an Iraq war veteran and a parent of a soldier who was killed, and an open discussion.

**EPOCA**

Worcester, MA: \$2,000

Founded in 2004, EPOCA (Ex-prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement) works to break down institutional barriers that

keep people with criminal records from reintegrating into society. This grant goes to educate and mobilize the public against abuse of the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system.

**LIONESS MEDIA ARTS, INC.**

Forest Hills, NY: \$1,550

The Muste Institute made a grant in September 2004 for post-production expenses of Rachel Lyon's documentary "Race to Execution." This grant goes for an outreach campaign for the film, with the goal of raising awareness about racism and the death penalty.

**NORTHWEST INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK**

Philadelphia, PA: \$2,000

For 15 years, the Hospitality Network has coordinated the efforts of faith-based organizations to provide services to homeless families in Philadelphia. This grant goes to organize a speakers bureau of homeless and formerly homeless families to encourage shelter volunteers to go beyond service and take action toward eradicating homelessness.

**QUESTION WHY FILMS**

New York, NY: \$1,500

This grant goes to arrange screenings for New York City high school students of the documentary film "Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin." The screenings seek to generate dialogue and inspire youth around nonviolent action and racial and sexual equality.

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

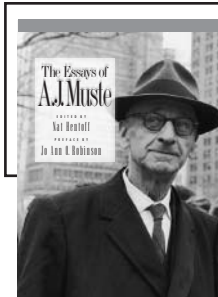
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**Peace Agitator: The Story of A.J. Muste**, by Nat Hentoff. A 250-page biography with many photos, profiling the 'grandfather' of the U.S. peace movement – minister, labor activist, pacifist and resister. Introduction by Larry Gara.

**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.



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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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