A.J. Muste Memorial Institute

339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012 (212) 533-4335

December 5, 1997

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of reflection for the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute. The Institute is well past adolescence (1997 is our 23rd year of operation), but we've been going through some growing pains as the demand for our work has increased. Earlier this year, we started reviewing our history and engaging in the hard process of figuring out where we should be going. We haven't made any big changes yet and certainly haven't come up with an answer to all our questions.

There probably isn't a "right" one or a single new direction for us. We will keep working hard to make our programs grow while our search goes on. The only certainty is wherever our journey takes us, we need your continuing companionship. The Institute has always relied on your support for our programs and this will not change. Your assistance will carry us forward in our "experiments with truth" to borrow a Gandhian phrase.

Can we direct our energies in ways that are more relevant to events in the world today? How can we apply our focus on militarism to address a wide variety of organizing efforts? As the world gets smaller, how do we participate in international movements? We continue trying to figure out how the Muste Institute can use its resources to best further nonviolence as the means of social change.

One of our most crucial needs is expanding our current work. We don't emphasize it enough, but our building is a tremendous resource. The enclosed issue of *Muste Notes* highlights the range of dynamic activities emanating from 339 Lafayette Street. Those of us who work here sometimes forget this is a center not just of The Movement, but of **movement**! This place literally "buzzes" with action when a crucial event like the recent Media and Democracy conference or International YouthPeace Week takes place.

We have worked hard to focus our limited dollars for grants on under-funded local projects or those that link nonviolent action to social change. More and more we see the need to support groups working to ameliorate the violence of political, racial and social oppression and media projects that connect current work to the long, but often lost, history of pacifism and active nonviolence. Your donations have the greatest direct impact on our ability to keep these grants flowing and the future potential to increase our funding to social action groups.

This is a modest program, but an important one. We do not fund large campaigns or highly visible public projects. We ensure that your contribution reaches the groups that need it. It's as if we read all those letters piling up on your desk, those urgent appeals from so many groups, and pick through them, finding those that are doing critical programs of nonviolent action. But it's more than that, because appeals from many of the groups we fund will **never even reach your desk**!.

(over, please)

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