April 20, 1998

Dear Friends,

As the last issue of Muste Notes *was going to press, it looked like the United States might be starting yet another war with Iraq. A rising chorus of protest and the UN Secretary General's successful negotiation with the Iraqis forestalled open hostilities for the time being. These events served to remind me how much militarism plays a role in the world today. Even in the absence of a "shooting war," most nations rely on the threat of armed response in their diplomacy. To keep these weapons at their disposal the world's leaders deny everyone vast resources that could be used to feed, clothe, house and care for people.*

We are galvanized into action by major crises. But it is the day-to-day effect that social and economic injustice has on people that the Muste Memorial Institute's work must ultimately address, by building a movement that strengthens grassroots efforts for change.

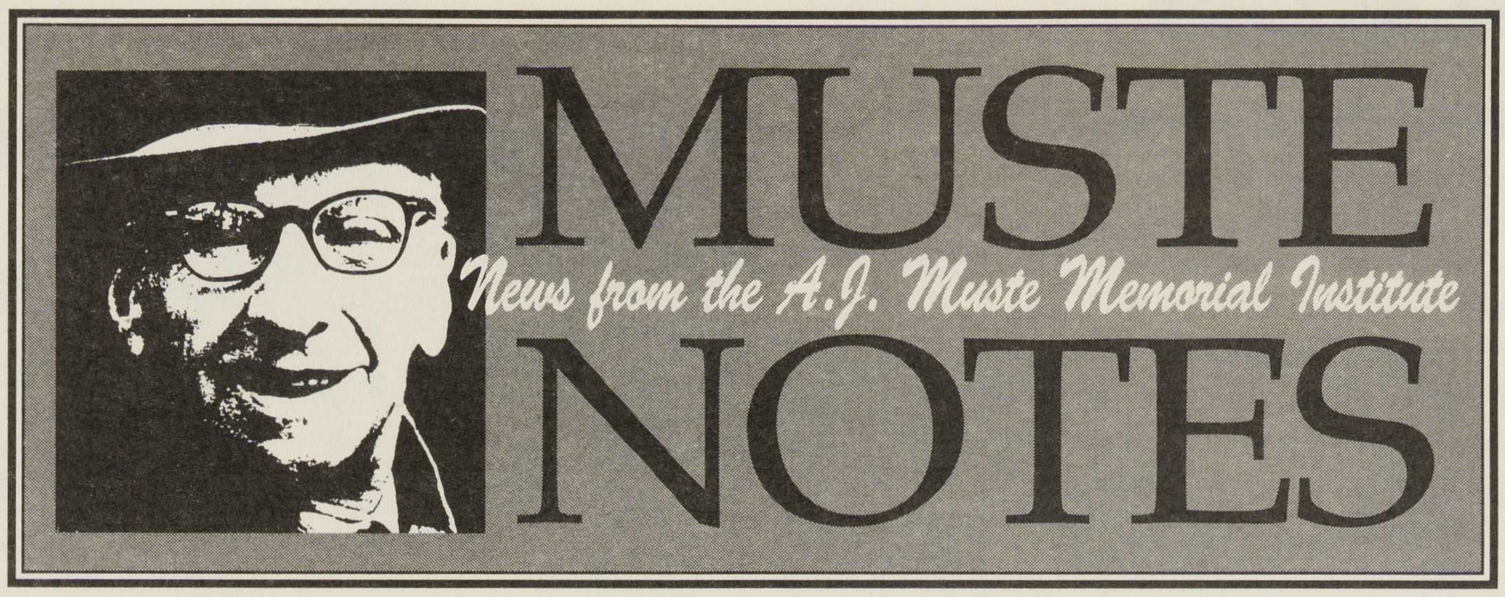
In this issue of Muste Notes, *we've highlighted some of our past and present grantee groups' work against injustice and militarism. While the number of proposals we receive can be overwhelming, seeing the important efforts so many groups and individuals are engaged in is one of the benefits of working at the Muste Institute. It is a constant reminder of a broad and growing movement for social justice.*

In the enclosed letter, I talk in more detail about the Muste Institute's efforts to sustain this movement and keep nonviolent action alive. As always, your support makes our work possible. Your generous response to our appeal will send the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute into the spring with renewed resources for the challenges ahead.

Yours for peace,

Murray Rosenblith

Murray Rosenblith
Executive Director



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New Developments

An Update on Projects Funded by the Muste Institute

In January of this year 13 members of **Michigan Faith and Resistance Peace Team (MPT)** took part in an international accompaniment delegation to the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. The delegation was invited to Chiapas by the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas to provide accompaniment for the Pilgrimage for Peace, a nonviolent protest caravan from Chiapas to Mexico City, to demand political and social rights for indigenous people and an end to paramilitary and military violence. More than 1,000 people from the Chol, Tzotzil, Tzeltal and Tojolabal indigenous groups took part in the pilgrimage, which was greeted by thousands of supporters at each stop along the journey through southern Mexico. Some 15,000 people showed up to welcome the pilgrimage in Mexico City. MPT coordinator Peter Dougherty describes the experience in an article in the March 1998 issue of MPT's newsletter, which was started up with help from a March 1997 grant of $2,000 from the Muste Institute. For information about future delegations to Chiapas or MPT's other peacemaking work, contact MPT at 1516 Jerome St., Lansing, MI 48912-2220; phone 517-484-3178; fax 517-484-4219; email <michpeacteam@igc.org>.

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In 1994, the Muste Institute gave $2,000 to Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation for the two-week annual **Journey of Hope**, held that year in Georgia [see *Muste Notes*, Winter 1995]. Now that Journey coordinator Bill Pelke has retired from Bethlehem Steel after 30 years of service, "Journey of Hope... from violence to healing, Inc." has become an independent nonprofit organization and will be on the road full-time, seeking to build opposition to the death penalty with testimony from victims' family members, death row survivors and other activists. This year the Journey will hold its annual traveling event in Texas, from May 29 to June 14, with a march to the State House in Austin led by Sister Helen Prejean on June 13. The annual two-week events will continue to be held in a different state each year—1999 will be in Maryland and 2000 in Tennessee—but in the meantime, watch for the Journey "anywhere and everywhere" in the country. For information contact the Journey of Hope at PO Box 950, Portage, IN 46368; phone 800-973-6548; email <journey@abolition.org>; http://www.abolition.org

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Left: Women prepare a meal in a jungle mountain village in Chiapas state, Mexico. This photo was taken by an MPT volunteer providing protective accompaniment in Chiapas.