February 16, 1996

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2 WINTER 1996

Dear Friends,

First I want to thank all of you who responded so generously to our recent fund appeal. We are especially grateful to those of you who we haven't heard from in several years who sent in gifts. It's good to have you back as active partners. Because the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute depends almost entirely on the individual contributions of our supporters, your donations determine how much we can do to promote nonviolent social change. You have given us a great start in 1996.

The Board of Directors began the year with a round of grants from our general program and from our International Nonviolence Training Fund. These distributions are described on page 4. I'm also taking this opportunity to provide you with a brief overview of our past year.

The hallmark of 1995 at the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute was our ability to turn misfortune into opportunity. We also began the process of creating some of the new programs that will ensure the continuation of our work into the next century and expand our services to nonviolent activists.

Things got off to a rocky start. Illness and major family medical emergencies took me out of the office for most of January. I also began my four month parental leave following the birth of my twin daughter and son, Audrey and Rubin. This all took place on the heels of a disappointing return on the major fund appeal in December 1994. Things did not look very promising for the Muste Institute.

It's incredible how much can change in just 12 months. Under the leadership of Board chair Barbara Hirshkowitz, the International Nonviolence Training Fund Advisory Committee began full operation and regular grantmaking for the first time this year. Because of donors' increased support, we were able to modestly expand other grantmaking, awarding 26 grants in 1995 totaling $25,575 (up from 20 grants totaling $21,000 in 1994). We received a bequest from the estate of Harrop and Ruth Freeman and have set up the Freeman internship program for the War Resisters League national office (see our profile of the first intern on page 2).

Sadly, we closed out our anonymous donor fund after six years of operation and over $46,000 in distributions. The individual who had established this fund in 1990 exhausted the inherited monies pledged for grantmaking. While it was in operation, this fund allowed our donor to contribute highly appreciated stock, making a significant amount of money available for activist groups. We continue to seek other donors who wish to use appreciated assets in this manner.

In the wake of the fire in the building basement in July, we decided to make some long-delayed improvements in our electrical and plumbing systems. This resulted in improved efficiency that is saving us about $100 a month in electric costs. Unfortunately, we also had to part ways with Ben Johnson, our superintendent for almost 11 years. We were lucky enough to find a new maintenance person quickly. Wellington Almanzar took over as building superintendent in late October. Wellington, who brings over twenty years experience in maintenance and repair work, made things noticeably cleaner in a short time and is rapidly getting our old building back into shape.

Our sponsorship program took on a new dimension in 1995. In the past, we provided a charitable umbrella for contributions to our sponsored organizations. This year we were able to actually help several groups manage funds and provide some additional administrative services. We made direct program expense payments on behalf of the International Peace Bureau for costs of their Women's Peace Platform Project at the United Nations and NGO womens' conferences in China. By making disbursements directly, we saved IPB the money that would have otherwise been lost in currency transfers from New York to IPB's office in Switzerland. The Institute also began a more intensive effort to work with the War Resisters League in administering bequests. One immediate result was that we were

Continued on page 2

A Visit With the Mustes

PHOTO MURRAY ROSENBLITH

While attending a conference in Albuquerque in November, I took the opportunity to visit with A.J. Muste's son John and his wife Jean. The Mustes live in Taos, New Mexico where they moved after John retired from teaching at Ohio State University in Columbus. John and Jean have been strong supporters of the Muste Institute since its founding. Since I was only going to be 100 miles away, I made arrangements to spend an afternoon with them. I gave them a detailed report on the Institute's current activities and they filled me in about A.J.'s life from a more personal perspective. My visit with John and Jean Muste gave me a welcome chance to appreciate another dimension of A.J. Muste's life.—Murray Rosenblith