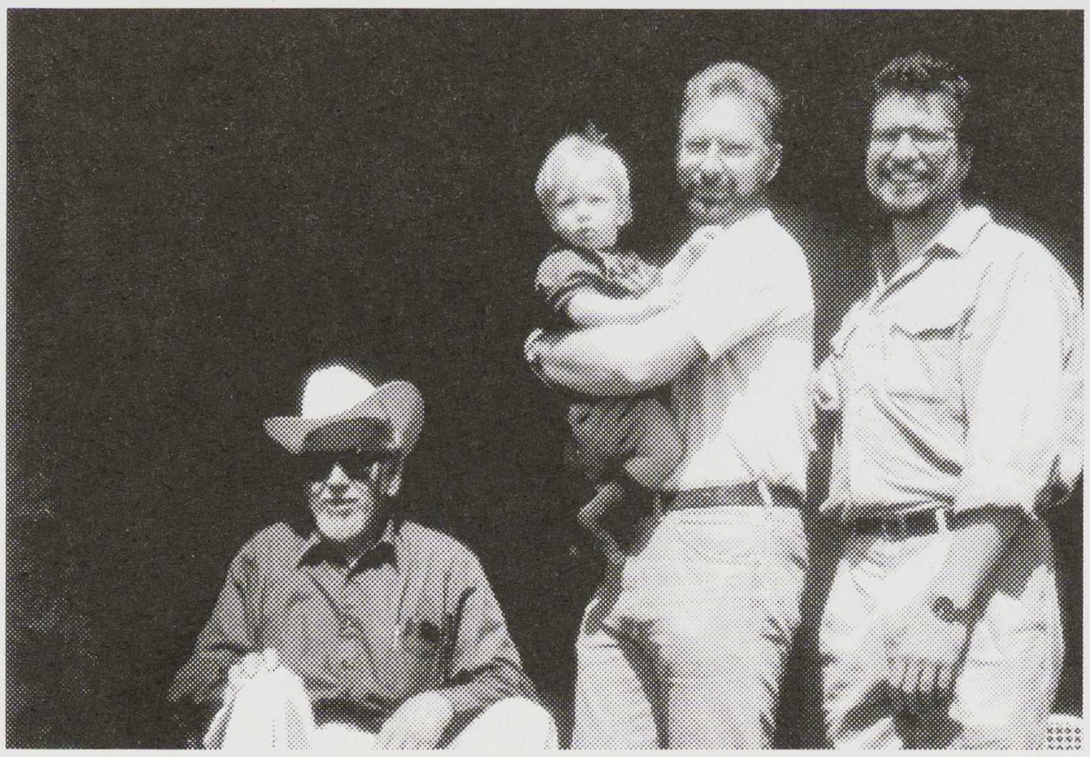
A Letter from the Muste Family



John Muste, Peter Muste holding John James Muste, Christopher Muste.

November 1996

Dear Friends,

This coming February it will be thirty years since A.J. died. The human individual he was exists today only in the memories of those of us lucky to have known him. He was not only an idealist dedicated to the search for peace and social justice, but a very human being who had a long and happy marriage, loved visiting his grandchildren, enjoyed a game of softball with them, played croquet and quoits with a most unpacifistic vigor, and grieved the deaths of his beloved wife and daughter. When those who knew him are gone, much of his special value will go with them.

But what A.J. stood for and what he represented will remain, if the Institute which bears his name continues to thrive and fulfill his mission. Many people who do not know about A.J.'s life mistakenly think he was a wealthy person who endowed the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute. As we well know, A.J. was a full time activist and depended on the help and good will of his many friends in the peace, labor and civil rights movements to raise money for the organizations and projects he was involved with. Likewise, those same friends who started the Muste Institute just over twenty years ago expected that many people like you would support the Institute's efforts to carry on his work. This is still true.

A.J.'s vision of nonviolence was all encompassing. During the course of his life, he worked to apply pacifism and what Gandhi termed "active nonviolence" to advance disarmament and world peace, civil rights and liberties, union organizing, economic justice, and national liberation. He spent a good deal of his time and energy raising funds to support these efforts. Over a fifty year period he was a principal force behind Brookwood Labor College, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, the American Workers Party, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Congress of Racial Equality, War Resisters League, the Committee for Nonviolent Action,

(over please)