

a. j. muste and ways to peace

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Time magazine, with its penchant for fastening indelible labels upon historical phenomena, made its contribution to the peace movement in 1939 when it laid upon A. J. Muste the mantle of "the Number One U.S. Pacifist."¹ Among many non-violent activists of today Muste's right to that title is still accepted. Whatever modifications the designation may undergo when placed in historical perspective, Muste's role as a leading organizer of pacifist efforts, from the late Thirties to his death in 1967, is hard to ignore. Key organizations—the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters League, the Committee for Nonviolent Action—valued his leadership. Recent studies show how substantially their history was affected by it.² His writings pervade the pacifist press and he was a founder and editor of its outstanding organ, *Liberation*. For draft resisters from the World War II generation symbolized in David Dellinger to the draft-card burners of the Vietnam era, Muste served as a chief mentor. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer and

When the typical reformer or revolutionist proclaims the new order, he goes on to urge men to organize, agitate, get out the vote, fight. Jesus also proclaimed The Kingdom of God [i.e., the revolution] is at hand; but immediately added in true prophetic fashion, Repent. That is to say, if we are to have a new world, we must have new men; if you want a revolution, you must be revolutionized. A world of peace will not be achieved by men who in their own souls are torn with strife and eagerness to assert themselves. In the degree that the anti-war or pacifist movement is composed of individuals who have not themselves, to use Aldous Huxley's phrase, achieved detachment, who have not undergone an inner revolution, it too will experience the same failure to achieve self-discipline, integrity, true fellowship among its own members which has afflicted other movements for social change.

A. J. Muste, *Non-Violence in an Aggressive World*
(New York, 1940), 175-176

Bayard Rustin are only the most prominent among the civil rights workers who have acknowledged his influence on their development.³

The magnetism which A. J. Muste exerted over these men and movements was rooted in passionate religious conviction. Muste's closer associates have perceived the importance of this faith. David McReynolds (WRL) wrote that Muste's "Christianity was so central to him that his life cannot be understood without realizing that he was, even at his most political moments, acting out his religious convictions." Labor-radical Sidney Lens devoted several paragraphs in his commemorative article at Muste's death to the theme that "for Muste the term 'religion' and the term 'revolution' were totally synonymous." And one of the pacifist's oldest and dearest friends, John Nevin Sayre (FOR), has said with certainty that religion was his colleague's "motivating force . . . right up to the end of his life."⁴ But more commonly peace movement commentators and the public press have neglected this central force in their portraits of the man. The causes which he espoused were, on their face, purely political and for a few years carried Marxist overtones. Muste's public image accordingly took on these entirely materialist traits. That image requires revision. The spiritual quality of his motives is the key to A. J. Muste's biography.

I

Abraham John Muste was not prepared to assume the role of America's number one pacifist until he was fifty-one years old. He was born January, 1885; he achieved the psychological equilibrium upon which his pacifist leadership rested July, 1936. In the intervening years his immigrant cultural experience and Calvinist religious heritage were gradually harmonized with intellectual integrity and a growing political consciousness.

The Dutch Reformed community in Michigan where Muste was raised had been established in the 1840's by men who were set upon creating "the truly orthodox kingdom of Calvinism."⁵ It was characterized by a theology that could deaden the mind and a politically stultifying patriotism. A gripping sense of the imminence of God permeated the entire setting. Young Abraham, possessing an introspective and poetic temperament, absorbed the community's religiosity. He also drank in its love for America. Possessing equally a keen, ever-inquiring mind he strained against his elders' restrictive world view. He rebelled against their political quietism, turned to the past of the Dutch Reformed Church and found there a crusading tradition which stirred the germinal activist in himself. He rebelled also against his elders' theology. But on this score church history did not help. It held no theme to counter their rigid orthodoxy.⁶

After five years (1909-1914) as an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, Muste underwent what he later described as an "agoniz-

ing reappraisal' of the beliefs in which I had been reared." He ceased professing them and sought "a freer denomination." Congregationalism provided a new measure of intellectual freedom when the young pastor was called to the pulpit of Central Congregational Church in Newtonville, Massachusetts.⁷ But soon, in the face of World War I, Muste was seeking to express his faith in a manner which he described to his parishoners in 1917 as "to do something that costs and hurts, something for humanity and God."

His search led him to a study of the writings of Quaker scholar, Rufus Jones, on "spiritual religion." In this strain of the Judaeo-Christian tradition Muste found the link between religion and social action which he had sought. In the lives of Belgian mystic, John Ruysbruck; Quaker founder, George Fox; and Quaker saint, John Woolman, he perceived how faith and moral conviction could inspire what Jones described as "great reforms and movements of great moment to humanity."⁸

Muste affiliated with the Christian pacifist movement in 1916 and became a Quaker in 1918. This earliest phase of his pacifist career was marked, however, by ambivalence. In the first days of United States entry into the war A. J. Muste's boyhood conditioning—his parents' eagerness to be loyal citizens, his school studies of "the Man Without a Country," his infatuation with Lincoln mythology, the entire patriotic ethos of the "heartland of America"⁹—was more in evidence than his year-and-a-half old membership in the Fellowship of Reconciliation and recent public avowals of pacifism. One finds him in April, 1917, eulogizing the stars and stripes as "the best flag in the world" and calling for national prohibition to conserve "the food supply of the nation" and protect "the moral and physical well being of our soldiers."

By summer, his thinking had crystallized into an antiwar commitment which was at least clear enough to create friction between him and his non-pacifist congregation. But, contrary to the standard story of his departure from Central Congregational Church, the record shows that the Rev. Muste resigned his pulpit, March 31, 1918, only after considerable vacillation and that his final decision to leave in order to pursue full-time antiwar activities was his own, not that of the parishoners or their officers.¹⁰

Ambivalence also characterized the early work which Muste undertook on behalf of conscientious objectors. In describing a group of conscientious objectors held at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts, whom he had been permitted to visit as a counselor, the inexperienced and experimenting opponent of war could praise only "some . . . at least" of the draft resisters and allowed that all of them might be "mistaken." He commended for sympathy only those with "beautiful trust in God" and an absolute desire to "do the will of Christ," and empathized with army officials who feared that lenient treatment of war resisters would encourage "slackers" to "develop consciences overnight."¹¹

Further experience in pacifist circles gradually increased the firmness of the positions which the Quaker convert took. At the end of the First World War Muste became the leading figure in the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Boston. Beginning in 1919 and through the early 1920's he demonstrated a solid commitment to Christian pacifism in his application of it to labor organizing.¹² Until about 1930 Muste remained convinced that the struggle for social justice was essentially a religious undertaking. He pictured labor unions as embodiments of salvation. "Am I writing as if the Labor Union of the Future, the developing labor movement were the Messiah for our modern world?" he asked in 1923, and answered, "Quite so." He assured political activists that they could best arrive at sound policy decisions by regular and devout prayer. And he was wont to declare that the yearning of radicals and progressives toward a new social order was tantamount to issuing in "The Kingdom."¹³

In the later years of his labor career these assumptions were altered. Muste's comments on churchdom became biting and sarcastic. His interest in probing the spiritual implications of political action disappeared from view. He espoused a Marxist-Leninist philosophy and for a year and seven months (December, 1934 to July, 1936) was actively affiliated with the Trotskyist Workers Party of the United States.¹⁴ This period of alienation from the religious habits and attitudes of a lifetime was one of great stress. Bitter factional fights undermined the organizer's efforts to create a truly American labor party. Duplicity on the part of Trotskyist colleagues reduced the leadership position which he theoretically held in the WP-USA to a sham.¹⁵ Friends anxiously observed the physical and emotional toll which these developments were taking. In 1936 a campaign was begun to raise funds for a vacation for the tired Trotskyist and his equally weary wife. The sum collected provided them with a two month trip to Europe. On a June day in 1936 they boarded a ship at Hoboken pier. As the ship pulled out to sea the friends who had gathered to say farewell saw A. J. Muste raise "his skinny arm in the clenched fist salute of the bloody revolution."¹⁶

Less than a month later, while resting in a Parisian Catholic Church, the Marxist was overcome by a sense of not belonging among secular revolutionaries. In courting their favor, he felt, he had been denying some fundamental prompting within himself. "I must lead a religious life," he declared.¹⁷ It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this moment in the life of Abraham John Muste. It is the point toward which all the forces of his formative years had pushed him and the point from which all activities in the remaining thirty-one years of his life would emanate. A psychologist might interpret the event of this July day as the climax of a series of identity crises. Earlier mystical experiences had first brought to intense consciousness the religious passion within him, when he sought full church membership at the age of fourteen, had freed his mind from the dogmatism of his native church

when he moved to Newtonville in 1914, and later had liberated his social conscience from the unquestioning patriotism of his immigrant upbringing during World War I.¹⁸ In this final moment of truth the demands of the passion, of the mind and of the conscience were reconciled. The fifty-one year old man achieved emotional integration and equilibrium.

For all these years he had been seeking to improve, if not to replace, the provincial and often simplistic values upon which he had been raised. Now he found that the essence of those values—their religious nature—had so permeated what he called his “innermost being” that it could not be eluded. His Trotskyist colleague, James Cannon, had been correct in fearing that “the terrible background of the church” had marred Muste for life.¹⁹

In achieving his newly integrated being Muste apprehended what he called “the essential nature, the heart of the universe in which we live.” He declared “comradship” to be “the law of human existence,” because “God . . . Love, is the basic reality,” and concluded from this that violence in any form—injustice, deception, greed, oppression, all-out war—flies in the face of reality. He rejected his former arguments that labor violence in the face of capitalist provocation was sanctionable, and declared the need to evangelize among the working classes on behalf of “the Christian spirit” and “the method of nonviolence.” In one sense he retained his earlier belief in labor as “the messiah of the future.” He theorized that physically powerless workers were far more capable than the *status quo* of adopting spiritual instruments of force. The task remained to develop that capability.

Muste’s critique of working class movements in general was accompanied by an analytical rejection of Marxist-Leninist organizations in particular. Their reliance on “armed insurrection, civil war and terrorism” was reactionary, he argued. Far from being able to destroy exploitative political and economic systems violence perpetuated them and was their foundation. As long as advocates of a new social order accepted that same foundation as their own their every effort was doomed.

Unmistakable signs of the onset of World War II, which the Mustes had noted throughout their European travels, were for the reconverted Christian the final proof of the futility of violent means. He concluded that in the implementation of nonviolence lay mankind’s only hope for averting war and the tragedies that would follow in its wake.²⁰

II

For the rest of his life A. J. Muste labored to persuade others of the validity and critical importance of his revelation and to formulate strategies of peace-action in its light. He was constantly faced with what he once described as “the eternal problem of the religious man, of every man who lives the moral life, namely how you are going to put your

vision to work in the actual situation.”²¹ As he worked on that problem across the next thirty-one years, he relied primarily upon three theoretically distinct but practically overlapping strategies.

First, on occasion, A. J. Muste assumed the stance of a biblical prophet exhorting men to ready themselves for the total shock of a certain miracle. Second, and more regularly, he followed the tactic of organizing on the principle of what we might loosely call “geometric progression”—bringing together into “cells” individuals who were both affiliated with a key social institution and committed to the way of love, helping these cells convert their institutions to the way of love; then mobilizing the institutions, in turn, to convert the power centers to which they related. Muste looked to the church, the scientific establishment and academe for manpower to implement this plan. Implicit in the strategy is the assumption that vast numbers of recruits must be added to the peace movement and that a spiritual minority could not hope to directly and immediately influence the strongholds of political authority.

Third, Muste approached the problem of established authority from a different angle. He developed the notion of a spiritual power center to be offered to men and women as an alternative to the hopelessly polarized and incredibly violent power blocs that were vying for their allegiance. Sometimes Muste described the spiritual center as developing a mighty enough attraction to drain off all loyalties from the loci of violence. He seemed to suggest that the established powers had done the movement’s recruiting for it and that disaffected peoples needed only to be organized into a third camp, where they could develop the nonviolent instrumentalities to sustain and build their moral strength. The seeds of future civil disobedience campaigns were planted in this suggestion. At other times, he referred to the nonviolent third camp in the scriptural context of “the saving remnant.” In this context the power center had strength enough to survive morally and physically while old structures collapsed around it. But it did not directly compete with those structures.

In none of his strategies was there the slightest inclination to work through the accepted channels, or follow the “proper procedures” or strive for recognition within the American political system. The governing concept behind all his plans of action was one of persistent non-conformity. Unlike peace movement leaders of the Thirties, whose acceptance of established institutions as legitimate has been described by Charles Chatfield, Muste believed that all ruling bodies rested upon violence.²² Thus any cooperation with them amounted to acquiescing to an insidious force. Violence is totalitarian, he warned: obey one of its wishes and before you know it you are completely in its grips.²³ As we briefly look at some of the workings and outcomes of Muste’s strategies, then, we might bear in mind Paul Goodman’s remark that all of A. J. Muste’s “serious actions are shoestring operations,” because “he is too sane to be able to withdraw from the front page world and too sound to be corrupted by it.”²⁴

Anticipation of a miracle is a recurrent theme in the thought of A. J. Muste. He had experienced divine intervention and was certain that it could occur in the lives of others and could transform society. In the period 1936-1940 he believed that the entire American left was verging on conversion, similar to the experience he had undergone.²⁵ In the same period he entertained the notion that either Germany—out of the depths of suffering—or the United States—out of richness and might—could perceive the futility of a second world war and, as he put it, come by “the sublime horse-sense, the divine foolishness to break the evil spell that is on mankind [and] lay down [their] arms.”²⁶ When the war came instead of the miracle and ended with the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Muste declared that now “man in his extremity must turn to God.” He suggested that by repentance and unilateral disarmament the United States could act out the historical possibility which theologian Paul Tillich had once described. “A people can become the church,” Tillich said, “if in an unexpected historical moment it is seized as a whole by the transcendental idea and for its sake renounces power.”²⁷

In ascribing such a role to the United States Muste was perhaps partaking of some of that nationalism which Charles DeBenedetti has described as so characteristic of peace advocates a quarter of a century earlier and which had been so much a part of Muste’s own upbringing.²⁸ In the wake of World War II Muste could still expound upon the “American Dream . . . of equality, of freedom, of brotherhood, of peace.” Americans had never taken the dream seriously, he said. “But now we have come to the final crisis . . . [We] have to be deadly serious about it. And we have to share it with all the world.” He envisioned Americans dismantling their armed might and sending their armies on great missions of mercy around the globe. However, he did not pin his hopes on America alone. Other nations sometimes appear in his writings as carriers of redemption, most frequently, in the post-World War II period, Germany. The German people, he argued, “after having twice experienced the material and moral catastrophe of being involved in a major war,” could lead the way in seeking alternatives to rearmament and international power politics. When it later became evident that Germany would not move in this direction Muste not only criticized the leadership of Konrad Adenauer but—in a clear departure from hopeful nationalism—bitterly assailed the “criminal prodding from the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon” which, he charged, had urged Adenauer on.²⁹

Neither increased American armament nor German rearmament eradicated Muste’s faith in a possible miracle. In 1959 he prayed, during the Eisenhower-Khrushchev talks of that year, that the two leaders would experience “a moment of truth” and end the arms race.³⁰ In the final great campaign of his career—the struggle against the war in Southeast Asia—A. J. Muste again looked toward a miracle. He argued that the

nation which had been first with the physical atomic bomb was now called to cease "shooting at people and . . . roasting them with napalm," to unilaterally disarm and "make the changes in its own social structure which this entails." The effect of such a policy, he predicted, could be likened to a spiritual atomic bomb.³¹

But America's number one pacifist was never content to proclaim the coming of a miracle and then wait for the trumpets to sound. He always hedged his millenarian bets with other plans and programs of action.

Muste consistently worked *to leaven academic, scientific and religious institutions with pacifist values*. His approach was to organize what he sometimes called "cells" in these institutions.³² Academic and scientific personnel proved only slightly responsive to this strategy. After years of communication with individual educators and intellectuals, Muste finally saw in 1960 the establishment of a small committee of academics dedicated to persuading "the intellectual community that the concept of stockpiling arms as a deterrent to war must be radically reappraised." This Council for Correspondence, which attracted some attention among writers and theorists in the early Sixties, was not long lived.³³ It might be argued, of course, that Muste's influence on individual scholars (the names of Noam Chomsky and Staughton Lynd come most readily to mind) transcends the limited success of organizing efforts such as that which culminated in the Council. The response of scientists to Muste's overtures was similarly not overwhelming, but was productive of some results. His pleas to Albert Einstein at the end of World War II, that the great physicist take the lead in extricating science *completely* from military involvement, fell on deaf ears. A few other scientists were receptive. Dr. Victor Paschkis derived from Muste part of the motivation that went into his founding of the Society for Social Responsibility in the Sciences in 1949. The Society is still functioning today.³⁴

The main target for Muste's "cell" strategy, until the 1960's, was the church. It was the natural target for one who possessed his upbringing and experience. Immediately after his 1936 revelation Muste began to push the idea of pacifist cells within Christian churches.³⁵ But very soon, events surrounding the Second World War drained the manpower supply for such a program. Young war resisters, such as the Union Theological Seminary students who refused their deferments and went to prison, became disillusioned with religious pacifism and especially with the organizations that cooperated in the National Service Board for Religious Objectors. These included the Fellowship of Reconciliation of which Muste was executive director.³⁶ The rising tide of "crisis theology" swept others out of the pacifist movement and into a widening circle whose center was Reinhold Niebuhr.³⁷ Muste labored feverishly in these years to keep young conscientious objectors from going off in the direction from which he had just returned in 1936, and to demonstrate to former pacifist

war supporters that the “proximate justice” which Niebuhrians would substitute for absolute love was fatally unrealistic and not defensible on Christian grounds.

By the end of the 1940’s spiritual comradeship among war resisters had survived the upheavals of the war years. The advent of the atomic age had put crisis theologians—at least as Muste apprehended their position—on the defensive. Then, in 1948, the World Council of Churches acknowledged pacifism as one of the positions which Christians might embrace. “In other words,” Muste interpreted, “pacifists belong in the main body of the church, not outside as sects.”³⁸ He lost little time in capitalizing upon this recognition. By 1950 the Church Peace Mission—a coalition of denominational pacifist groups, religious pacifist organizations and traditional peace churches—was functioning under his direction. Through conferences, colloquies, sermon competitions, petition circulation and literature distribution, the CPM proselytized churchmen and seminarians throughout the United States and made some incursions into the thorny area of separation between western Christianity and churches in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.³⁹

The effect upon the Christian establishment was hardly commensurate with the hours and energy which Muste poured into CPM work. Pacifists may have been embraced by the church in 1948, but they were expected to “stay in their place.” CPM recruitment efforts were not welcomed. A revival of the concept of “vocational pacifism” hindered them considerably. This notion held that a certain minority of Christians must pay homage to Jesus’ antiwar teaching in order to remind the majority—as they prepare for war—to be appropriately penitent.⁴⁰ Even churchmen who took the pacifist position more seriously shunned the complete program of Mustean pacifism. John C. Bennett of Union Theological Seminary urged Muste in 1959 to support “more moderate emphases”—the scaling-down of armaments rather than unilateral disarmament. “For the first time,” Bennett wrote, “I agree with you that if the USA did take the initiative [in unilaterally disarming] this would probably be a better policy in terms of prudence as well as in terms of ethical sensitivity.” But, Bennett added, “I am still hung up by the realization that the USA will not do this.”⁴¹

Paul Tillich, whose concept of a nation becoming the church had assumed a central position in Muste’s thought, shared Bennett’s reservation. He wrote to the pacifist leader in 1963, “the idea [of a people renouncing their power] still has much attraction for me. But my doubts have increased.”⁴² Muste’s own doubts increased about the feasibility of expecting church people to initiate the beloved community. In 1962 he left the CPM.⁴³ In 1966 he warned that expecting the church to live up to its teachings and its prophetic function “might lead to great disappointment.”⁴⁴

The Christian radical’s disappointment with the church increased

the attention which he gave to his third main strategy—the *creation of a non-violent third way*, either a magnet depowering centers of violence or at least a remnant to survive their destruction. During the Second World War Muste had envisioned the religious pacifist movement assuming at the war's end a magnetic position between the exhausted enemy camps.⁴⁵ But war-weariness gave way so quickly to the taking of sides in the Cold War that Muste could not even begin to put his theory into practice. Instead, he started to experiment with the moral tools—tax resistance, civil disobedience, nonviolent direct action, fasts, etc.—upon which a spiritual power center would rely if ever it came into existence.⁴⁶ Simultaneously he struggled against factionalism among those who were the most likely candidates for the third force. The principle guiding his campaign against this constant bedevilment is unique in the annals of leftist history. He had declared it emphatically in 1944: “I am done forever,” he said, “. . . with political sectarianism.” Forever after he poured endless patience into resolving personal conflicts and heading off power-politicking among peace workers in the American organizations to which he belonged. He consistently counselled, with regard to national and international organizing, that “it is seldom wise to spend time in fighting other organizations. Let people give themselves wholeheartedly to what they do believe in, and let each concede the other that right.”⁴⁷

In the 1950's Muste's hopes for the third way soared when civil rights leaders—including men who had looked to him for guidance and support—began demonstrating a pacifist alternative to white racism and black despair. Though thrilled by indications of the alternative's potential, Muste was ever aware of its imperfections. In 1964 he warned that, in the black movement, “the concept of nonviolence has fallen upon hard times.”⁴⁸ Expectations which he had entertained in the 1950's for the emergence of an international third force of uncommitted peoples were also dampened by the mid-Sixties.

These expectations had risen during the Bandung Conference of Asian and African nations in 1955. The proceedings of that conference had carried the message, as Muste read it, that “great multitudes are coming to the conclusion that for them the most important cleavage is not that between . . . Russia and America, but between . . . atomically armed Russia and America on the one hand, and the rest of the world on the other.” Just as Negroes in the United States were beginning to envision a special nonviolent destiny born of powerlessness, so the Asian-African nations were coming to a new sense of vocation, “precisely because,” Muste argued, “they lacked physical force and were therefore driven to generate a different kind of power.” First by promoting the Third Way International Movement and later (in the early Sixties) by helping to establish the World Peace Brigade, Muste attempted to encourage and enhance what he deemed the real “strength of the peoples-

in-between,” i.e., “their ability to say No” and the consequent “slowing down and perhaps drying up of recruiting by the big powers for atomic war.” In 1964 he conceded that these efforts, at least for the time being, had failed. He observed that the uncommitted peoples had fallen victim to the same illusion that had briefly trapped him in the Thirties and that posed for the radical pacifist and nonviolent revolutionary a recurrent “psychological and spiritual problem”—the illusion that violence alone is realistic.⁴⁹

As his life neared its end, A. J. Muste’s prospects for finding some institution to convert to pacifism or some group to shape into a pacifist power center were dwindling. In his last years he placed great faith in activist youth. But he knew that they, too, could be frustrated into violence and could fall prey to factionalism.⁵⁰ America’s leading pacifist did not speak often in his final days of issuing in the beloved community. He acknowledged, indeed, that a wasteland could be in the offing. If so, he pleaded three months before his death, at least let there be “Voices crying in the wilderness.”⁵¹

His plea was not an utterance of despair. “To acquiesce, to go along, to create the impression that there is no ‘real’ opposition” to the forces of death—that, Muste said, was despair. For even one individual “to pit himself in Holy Disobedience against the war-making and conscripting State”—that was hope.⁵² The meagre successes yielded by Muste’s strategies never became tokens of defeat for him. In the first place, he made no claim to being a strategist. Professional scholars and theoreticians should and could assume that role he believed. In the second place, his vision that “the essential nature, the heart of the universe is love” had immunized him from defeat forever.⁵³

A. J. Muste became “Number One U.S. Pacifist” by virtue of his keen insight into the nature of violence and his unquenchable faith in the power of love. His reputation for political acuity and non-conformist activism revolved around his insight. But the prime and sustaining factor was his faith. It lent his political predictions the power of prophetic warning, enriched his pragmatic analyses of society with timeless wisdom about the human condition, and transformed bold confrontations with the state into “holy disobedience.” In his writings the peace movement has inherited a body of thought that brilliantly pinpoints the flaws in strategies of violence. In the religious conviction behind those writings his successors have the principle that Muste believed must govern the antiwar and nonviolent strategies which they seek: There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”⁵⁴

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footnotes

1. *Time*, July 10, 1939, 37.

2. Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice, Pacifism in America, 1914-1917* (Knoxville, 1971), *passim*.; Lawrence S. Wittner, *Rebels Against War* (New York, 1969), *passim*.

3. David Lewis, *King, A Critical Biography* (New York, 1970), 35, 36, 72, 106, 359; James Finn, ed., *Protest: Pacifism and Politics* (New York, 1967), 331. James Farmer to A. J. Muste, February 17, 1961, A. J. Muste papers at Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, Box 8 (hereinafter cited as AJM:SCPC).

4. David McReynolds in "A. J. Muste Memorial Issue," *Win*, February 24, 1967, 9; Sidney Lens, "Humanistic Revolutionary," *Liberation*, September/October, 1967, 7; John Nevin Sayre, "Fighting Reconciler: A. J. Muste as I Knew Him," *Fellowship*, March, 1967, 11.

5. Albert Hyma, *Albertus C. Van Raalte and His Dutch Settlement in the United States* (Michigan, 1947), 237.

6. Muste immigrated with his parents and three siblings from the Netherlands in 1891. The Grand Rapids, Michigan, community in which they settled is examined in my study of Muste which will be completed as a doctoral thesis at the Johns Hopkins University in January, 1972. Other topics raised in the first part of this article, relating to his life before 1940, are also examined in the thesis.

For a glimpse of Muste's early rebellion see "The Problem of Discontent," *The Essays of A. J. Muste*, ed., Nat Hentoff (New York, 1967), 175-179 (hereinafter cited as *The Essays*).

7. Muste, "Sketches for an Autobiography," *The Essays*, 43, 44 (hereinafter cited as "Sketches"); Muste, Oral History Memoir #589, Columbia University Office of Oral History, New York, the early 1950's, 221 (hereinafter cited as Oral Memoir).

8. Muste, "The Opportunity of Lent," *The Congregationalist*, April 13, 1916, 501-503; Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (New York, 1909), xiv-xv. Muste was influenced directly by Jones' writings. See "Sketches," 47 and Oral Memoir, 269.

9. "Sketches," 21; Oral Memoir, 74.

10. "Gift of Flags," clipping, April 15, 1917, in Central Congregational Church record book, Newtonville, Massachusetts, 530. Muste's call for prohibition in same record book, 531-532. Details of his resignation may be found in: clipping from *The Newton Graphic*, Friday, January 4, 1918; Muste, "To Whom It May Concern," December 12, 1917; Muste to Wallace Boyden, December 12, 1917; Muste to Wallace Boyden, March 31, 1918, all in Central Church files. In the record book see pp. 546-554, 583-584, 585, 587-588, 593-595.

The standard story of Muste's departure from Newtonville holds that the congregation was essentially responsible for his resignation. This version has been repeated several times. See Devere Allen, *Adventurous Americans* (New York, 1932), 99-117; Milton Mayer, "The Christer," *Fellowship*, January, 1952, 1-10; Nat Hentoff, *Peace Agitator* (New York, 1963), and Muste, "Sketches for an Autobiography," in *Essays of A. J. Muste* (New York, 1967).

11. Muste, "The Present Status of Conscientious Objectors," *The Congregationalist and Advance*, January 10, 1918, 49-50.

12. An introductory summary of Muste's activities in this period may be found in Hentoff, *Peace Agitator*, 47-72.

13. Muste, "The Union of the Future," *The World Tomorrow*, February, 1923; Muste, "Contradictions the Rebel Faces," *The World Tomorrow*, May, 1924.

14. Muste's increasing sarcasm toward the church is illustrated in Muste, "The Christian Employer," *Labor Age*, July, 1930; and Muste, "Capitalism in the Raw," *Common Sense*, December 5, 1932. His thinking as a Marxist-Leninist may be sampled in Muste, "An American Revolutionary Party," *Modern Quarterly*, January, 1934, 713-719, and as a spokesman for the Trotskyists in Muste, "Which Party for the American Worker?" (New York, 1935).

15. The two most bitter factional disputes were that which separated Muste from Brookwood Labor College in 1933 and the "French Turn" controversy which contributed to his resignation from the Trotskyists. On the Brookwood affair see "Muste Quits In Rift Over CPLA," *The Brookwood Review*, May, 1933, and "Whither Brookwood," *Labor Age*, February-March, 1933, 14-15. On the French Turn see "Sketches," 163-167; Max Schactman, Oral Memoir at Columbia University, 254; George Novack, "A. J. and American Trotskyism," *Liberation*, September/October, 1967, 22; Sidney Lens, *Left Right and Center* (Hinsdale, Illinois, 1949), 262.

16. Cara Cook and Doris Prenner to Dear . . . April . . . 1936 in Elizabeth Glendower Evans Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College; Cara Cook Ms. in AJM:SCPC, Box 1a; Milton Mayer, "The Christer," *Fellowship*, January, 1952, 7.

17. This revelation is described in Muste, "Fragment of Autobiography," undated Ms. (probably 1939), AJM:SCPC, Box 2. Quotation is from the statement which Muste reportedly wrote immediately after the revelation, undated Ms. (July, 1936?), AJM:SCPC, Box 3a, 15.

18. This series of religious experiences was reported by Muste in the "Fragment of Autobiography," *op. cit.*, *passim*. Corroboration for this report exists for the 1914 event in "Pastor Yields to Heavenly Vision," clipping from *Sunday New York Herald*, n.d. (spring, 1914), in Newtonville Central Congregational Church files, and for the 1917 experience in Central Congregational Church record book, 546-554.

19. James P. Cannon, *History of American Trotskyism* (New York, 1944), quotation from 171.

20. Muste's statement after his revelation, 15.

21. Muste, lecture notes for address at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, February 16, 1944, AJM:SCPC, Box 2.

22. Charles Chatfield, "Alternative Antiwar Strategies in the Thirties," *American Studies*, 13 (Spring, 1972).

23. In "Of Holy Disobedience," Pendle Hill Pamphlet #64 (Wallingford, Pennsylvania, 1952), Muste spelled out this position.

24. Paul Goodman, "On A. J. Muste," *The New York Review of Books*, October, 1963, 14.

25. The position which Muste took based upon this belief has been described in Jo Ann Robinson, "Pharos of the East Side: Labor Temple Under the Direction of A. J. Muste, 1937-1940," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Spring, 1970, 25-27.

26. See, for example, "The Problem of German Rearmament," undated Ms. (1936) for "Pastor Niemoller and Other Peace Workers in Germany," AJM:SCPC, Box 4 and a letter to President Roosevelt from "The Annual Meeting of the American International Church of Labor Temple, Monday, May 20, 1940," AJM:SCPC, Box 1, as well as Muste, *Nonviolence in an Aggressive World* (New York, 1940), *passim*. Quotation is from 157.

27. See Muste, *Not By Might* (New York, 1947), *passim*. Muste is quoted from 37. His quotation from Paul Tillich's *Interpretation of History* is on 106-107.

28. Charles DeBenedetti, "Alternative Peace Strategies in the Twenties," *American Studies*, 13 (Spring, 1972).

29. *Not By Might*, 131 on the "American Dream"; 112 on U.S. missions of mercy; Muste, "Trends in Peace Movements Abroad," 1960?, Ms. AJM:SCPC; remarks on early hopes for Germany and later Adenauer policy, 3-6 (quotation, 6).

30. Muste, "Meditation on Khrushchev-Eisenhower Talks," September, 1959, and Muste to Hon. Dwight D. Eisenhower, September 24, 1959, AJM:SCPC, Box 1a.

31. "Who Has the Spiritual Atom Bomb?" *The Essays*, 479-502 (quotations, 500-501).

32. Discussions of the "cell" idea are numerous in Muste's papers. See, for example, AJM to Rev. Ralph N. Mould, September 14, 1937, AJM: Labor Temple Collection, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereinafter cited as LT:PHS), Box 1; untitled Ms. on cells and discipline, dated July 29, 1944, AJM:SCPC, box 3a; Minutes of the National Council meeting of the FOR, May 29-31, 1947, FOR:SCPC, minutes on microfilm; Muste, "One World Groups—Draft of Manifesto," January 15, 1948, AJM:SCPC, Box 5; Muste, "Wednesday Evening Lectures on the Peace Testimony, Lecture # 5" Pendle Hill, April 28, 1954, AJM:SCPC, Box 2. See also Muste, *Not By Might*, 215.

33. A fulsome file on the Council of Correspondence (at first called the Committee of Correspondence) is in AJM:SCPC, Box 9. See also Hentoff, *Peace Agitator*, 183. The last edition of the Committee's newsletter (#35) appeared in the fall of 1965.

34. Muste, "Open Letter to Dr. Einstein, II," September, 1947 and "An Open Letter to Atomic Scientists and Others," March 12, 1946 in an unsorted box of papers at the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nyack, New York. Also see Hentoff, *Peace Agitator*, 184-185.

35. Regarding cells in churches, see note 32 above.

36. For the objectors' side of this story see Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 70-84. For Muste's point of view see Muste to David Dellinger and other conscientious objectors in Lewisburg Prison, April 21, 1944; Muste to Don Smucker, June 2, 1944; Muste to Norman Whitney, June 6, 1944, all in FOR:SCPC, Box 19. One might also consult the minutes of the National Council Meeting of the FOR, September 22 and 24, 1944, FOR microfilm at SCPC.

37. Jo Ann Ooiman [Robinson], "Essays on Pacifism," unpublished undergraduate honors thesis, Knox College, June, 1964, SCPC, examines the Niebuhrian position and Muste's response to it. For an introduction to Muste's position see "Theology of Despair," 302-307 and "Pacifism and Perfectionism," 308-321 in *The Essays*.

38. See World Council of Churches, *Findings and Decisions, First Assembly*, Amsterdam, Holland, August 22-September 4, 1948 (New York, World Council of Churches, n.d.), 54, *passim*. Muste discusses these developments in "Christian Pacifism Yesterday and Today," n.d. ca., 1963, AJM:SCPC.

39. Materials on the CPM were scattered throughout Muste's papers at SCPC, the heaviest concentration was in Box 18 and 19. A helpful introduction to the group is J. Harold Sherk and Muste, "Summary of CPM Activities 1950-1962," at SCPC.

40. Muste, "Christian Pacifism Yesterday and Today," *op. cit.*; for discussion of "vocational pacifism" see Edward Leroy Long, Jr., *War and Conscience in America* (Philadelphia, 1968).

41. John C. Bennett to A. J. Muste, March 29, 1959, AJM:SCPC.

42. Paul Tillich to Muste, August 23, 1963, AJM:SCPC, Box 16.

43. Muste explained his departure from the CPM on grounds of ill-health. But the fact that health did not restrain his extremely active participation in other peace groups raises a question as to the validity of that explanation. See Muste to Harold Row and others, May 2, 1962, AJM:SCPC, Box 18. One of his CPM colleagues has suggested that Muste turned from the organization because of a "growing sense that what was called for in the CPM format of conversation was a different kind of organizational gift of investment of organizational effort than he was interested in. To do this kind of careful prodding would have been for him a burden in time and nervous energy. . . . The activities he gave his time to later were just as

demanding in his time and energy but were more compatible with the kind of energy he had and the irregular or flexible ways of working." Letter to the author, February 11, 1969.

But one still suspects that the burden had become so heavy for Muste because the results of CPM efforts had been so meagre. As Ralph Potter has pointed out, "Throughout the nuclear era, virtually every major American denomination has issued statements or pronouncements pertaining to the use of armed violence in specific instances or to more general questions of the role of force in international relations. . . . It cannot be said that any of these materials made a fresh contribution to ethical reflection upon the dilemmas surrounding the use of violence. They seldom exhibit a profound appreciation or even awareness of the ethical tradition of the Christian churches." Ralph B. Potter, *War and Moral Discourse* (Richmond, Va., 1969), 112-113.

44. Muste, "Cleveland and After," *The Mobilizer*, December 19, 1966.

45. See for example, Muste, "Pacifism—After the War," pamphlet, Fellowship publications, 1943.

46. For a sketch of Muste's activities along these lines see Hentoff, *Peace Agitator*, *passim*. 47. Muste to David Dellinger and others in Lewisburg Prison, April 21, 1944, FOR:SCPC, Box 19, for quotation about "political sectarianism." For quotation beginning "It's seldom wise . . ." see untitled Ms. at SCPC regarding conference at Somerville in 1963, p. 4. For one example of Muste's role as mediator and faction-dissolver within peace movement ranks see the correspondence regarding controversy over CNVA's Cheyenne Project in August, 1958, in Box 7, AJM:SCPC.

48. Muste, "Problems of the Radical Peace Movement," mimeographed essay, New York, September 10, 1964, SCPC, 9.

49. Muste, "The Peoples Between" (1954); "The non-Communist World—Where Are We?" (1954); "Neutralism or Third Force" (1955?), all typed Ms., AJM:SCPC. Quotations regarding the significance of Bandung come from the last, 6 and 13. Muste's admission of failure can be seen in "Problems of the Radical Peace Movement," mimeographed essay, New York, September 10, 1964, SCPC, 9.

50. See Muste to Larry Gara, April 19, 1960, AJM:SCPC, Box 12; Muste to Miss Margaret Leonard, March 1, 1961, AJM:SCPC, Box 16; Muste, "A Strategy for the Peace Movement," *Liberation*, June, 1962 (Ms. in Box 4a, AJM:SCPC); Muste to Gordon Christiansen, June 18, 1963, AJM:SCPC, Box 21; "New Haven," Muste lecture notes, October 12, 1965, AJM: SCPC, Box 2; Muste, "Problems of the Radical Peace Movement," *op. cit.*, *passim*.

51. Muste, "Cleveland and After," *The Mobilizer*.

52. Muste, "Of Holy Disobedience."

53. His son John touched upon Muste's immunization from defeat when he told Nat Hentoff, "the basic thing about my father is that . . . he's always at peace with himself. He's the *happiest* man I've ever known. I can't believe a man can *be* that happy. But *he* is, he really is." Quoted in *Peace Agitator*, 148.

Regarding his reliance on professional scholars and theoreticians for strategies note how Muste's essays and speeches in the 1960's are studded with references to the experts whose work he believed was laying the necessary foundation—Herbert Marcuse, Joan Bondurant, Hannah Arendt, C. Wright Mills. See also his correspondence with such figures as David Riesman and Erich Fromm in AJM:SCPC, Box 9. Even Herman Kahn and other officials of Hudson Institute struck Muste as potential aids in formulating strategy. He became a "public member" of the Institute himself in 1962, to be in a position to encourage the thinkers there to consider his goals. J. Robinson, personal interview with Muste, Lake Villa, Illinois, April 12, 1964; "Hudson Institute, Inc. List of Members," July 1, 1962. See also D. G. Benner (of Hudson Institute) to Muste, November 3, 1965, AJM:SCPC, Box 30, temporary.

54. It has been claimed that the late Mrs. Caroline S. Urie of Yellow Springs, Ohio, is the originator of this quotation widely attributed to and often used by A. J. Muste. See *Fellowship*, January, 1968.