

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller

Recipient of the International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India – 2013

Born: October 21, 1939

In 1972 Mr. Jean-Marie Muller took the initiative to create the MAN (Non-Violent Alternative Movement). Its mission is to put forward the specific contribution of non-violence in the everyday life, education and social and political struggles. MAN promotes the principles and the methods of non-violent strategy, to support a positive resolution of the interpersonal, intercommunity or international conflicts. By thinking, acting and training, MAN thus seeks to promote justice and freedom. Mr. Muller reaffirms his conviction that humankind will not be able to meet the challenges that the world presents today if it does not follow Gandhi's intuitions, as he invites us to revisit our inheritance and our historic traditions, and to become aware of our compliance with the reign of violence, kept in place by their own culture.

Professional life and official missions

A professor of philosophy until 1970, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller left teaching to dedicate himself full time to the study of non-violence and its promulgation in his writings, demonstrations and speaking. For almost 50 years, he has been a spokesperson and facilitator of the Movement for a Non-Violent Alternative, which he founded in 1974. In 1983, the French Minister of Defence asked Mr. Jean-Marie Muller to conduct a study on non-violent civil defence. This study was published in 1985 by the Foundation for National Defence Studies under the title "La Dissuasion Civile" (Civil Deterrent).

In 1984, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller participated in the creation of the Research Institute for the Non-violent Resolution of Conflicts (IRNC). He is the Director of Studies at the Institute. Between 1985 and 1992, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller was a lecturer at the Institute of Political Studies at the University of Lyon where he taught a course on the strategy of non-violent action.

He writes regularly for the quarterly Non-violent Alternatives.

Conscientious objection

In 1967, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller was an officer in the reserves. During this tenure he was asked to be a conscientious objector. After the refusal to the authorities, he surrendered his commission to the Ministry of Defence. On January 8th, 1969 Mr. Muller appeared in court in Orleans and was given a three month suspended sentence, a fine of a thousand francs and the loss of his civil rights for five years. In this process Mr. Muller expressed his willingness to assume his civic responsibility through non-violent civil defence.

In 1982, he participated in a consulting committee created by the Prime Minister to provide a report on the feasibility of a new law on conscientious objection. Among the reforms that were ultimately adopted was the possibility of reservists obtaining legal status as conscientious objectors.

Public Activism

In June 1970, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller undertook a two-week hunger strike with Jean Desbois to protest the sale of sixteen Mirage military planes to the Brazilian military regime. This action had a big impact on public opinion and received the support of numerous movements and celebrities.

In 1973 he participated in the Peace Battalion in the Pacific to protest French nuclear testing.

In October 1978, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller participated in a hunger strike for four days with Lanza del Vasto, Jacques de Bollardiére, Jean Toulat, Jean Goss and four farmers from Larzac to inform the public and the authorities about the extension of the military camps planned at the time in Larzac, Francois Miterr and visited them and pledged his solidarity.

In August 2012, he participated with 40 other people in Paris in an international for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Travel, meetings and training

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller has participated in many meetings and seminars, delivered lectures and has facilitated many training sessions throughout the world to promote non-violence.

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller participated in the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow in October 1973. During his stay in Greece in March 1975 he lectured and attended meetings on non-violence.

In 1988, he participated as Consultant to a Mission to Nicaragua to develop non-violent approaches with the Sandinist government. This mission was an initiative of the Peace University of San Jose (Costa Rica).

In September 1990, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller was invited by the Lebanese organization Cultural Social Action to Lebanon where he participated in the first training session of social educators in Lebanon.

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller in April 1994 when in Washington D.C met the Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide along with various politicians in exile from Haiti in order to facilitate a non-violent resistance in Haiti against the military regime of General Cedras.

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller participated in the Resistant to War International in Porec (Croatia), held every three years.

In December 2004, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller travelled to Colombia to speak at an international seminar organized by the city of Bogota on the theme "Non-violence and civil resistance as instruments for reconciliation". He addressed on the theme "Option of non-violence in social and political struggles" at the World Social Forum in Brazil.

In 2006 in Amman, Jordan, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller facilitated a training session on non-violence for Iraqis working to promote human rights in civil society and travelled to Jordan to conduct training sessions in non-violence for Palestinians, Iraqis, Syrians and Lebanese.

In 2012, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller travelled to Lebanon where he facilitated a training session at the Arab University for Non-violence.

Work and travel to promote and update the philosophy of Gandhi

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller was introduced to non-violence by Lanza del Vasto. He spoke many times at meetings or summer schools at the Ark in La Borie Noble (France), at the Gandhi colloquium Lanza del Vasto, A Genius for their Time in Toulouse in 2006.

In 1977 Mr. Jean-Marie Muller met Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan during his visit to India. In 2001, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller travelled again to India to visit Gandhi's Ashram in Ahmedabad.

On December 5th 2011, Mr. Jean-Marie Muller spoke at the Sorbonne during the Colloquium Gandhi in the Contemporary Globalization, organized by Fabrice Flippo.

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller has written numerous books on the philosophy of non-violence, the strategy of non-violent action, the culture of non-violence, the civil non-violent defence, the civil peace intervention, as well as on the right and duty of civil disobedience. In 40 years Mr. Jean-Marie Muller has considerably contributed to the history of non-violence through his books on the Mahatma, as well as his many lectures on Gandhi throughout the world.

Mr. Muller's writings and publications portray constant discoveries of many powerful truths and his active experience. Some of his writings and publications include:

- The Gospel of Non-violence (L'Evangile de la non-violence)
- The Challenge of Non-violence (Le defi de la non-violence, 1976, translated into Spanish)
- The Meaning of Non-violence, translated into Italian, Spanish, Arabic, and Kurdish
- The Strategy of Non-violent Action
- To Het Rid of the Military-industrial Complex
- Gandhi, A Craftsman of Non-violence, in collaboration with other authors

- Gandhi, the Wisdom of Non-violence
- Understanding Non-violence
- The Principle of Non-violence, a Philosophical Itinerary, translated into Portuguese and Italian
- Gandhi the Insurgent, the Epic of the Salt March, translated into Arabic and published in Syria
- Non-violence in Education, translated into English, Spanish, Brazilian and Arabic
- Gandhi, Sage and Strategist of Non-violence

In 1987, Mr. Jean Marie Muller visited Poland and met with the main Solidarnosc leader. His book "Stratégie de l'action Non-violente" is translated in Polish.

Mr. Jean-Marie Muller was also the adviser and proofreader of Guillaume Gamblin when he published The Strength of Autonomy – Gandhi: A Precursor of Degrowth?

Two actions led by Mr. Jean-Marie Muller and the MAN are currently leading actions on the major issue of concern to the world, viz.

1 Nuclear disarmament, and more particularly the campaign for a unilateral nuclear disarmament in France

1 The struggle for peace and justice in the Middle East and more particularly in Palestine

By referring to the philosophy and action of Gandhi in his work, in training and education to non-violence and the strategy to non-violent action, Mr. Jean – Marie Muller enables the people and the groups he meets, to get involved in non-violent struggles throughout the world.

It is upon Gandhi's experiments with non-violence and his commitment to truth that Mr. Jean-Marie Muller built a soundly coherent philosophical architecture. Mr. Jean - Marie Muller is a living legend and a great scholar with practical nonviolent action experience.

Contact details

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