



Land for the People!

Nonviolent Movements Against Land Grab and Militarism



*From the men of property the order came:
They sent the hired men and troopers to wipe
out the Diggers' claim.*

*"Tear down their cottages. Destroy their
corn!"*

*They were dispersed but still the vision
carries on.*

- Lines from Leon Rosselson's song celebrating the Diggers and their struggle for land in 17th century England

Throughout history, militarism has been associated with the unjust appropriation of land and displacement of the local population. And this is still going on today whether we are referring to military facilities - huge bases now under construction, a variety of testing or training facilities - or to the military enforcers (state or private) of the globalized phenomenon known as "land-grab" in the name of monocultivation, biofuels or resource extraction.

Land is often seen as the foundation of life, and land movements can somehow evoke something deep in us. Perhaps this connection has been recognised more by fascists and nationalists than by urban leftists, but it is also a utopian impulse in anarchist and nonviolent traditions from the Diggers' "common treasury for all", through Kropotkin

and Gandhi, to the slogan *Tierra y Libertad / Land and Freedom!* Indeed, in every continent, among tribal peoples and peasants, we find a different relationship to the land - and indeed to the earth - than the attitudes of domination, exploitation and extraction that underlie so much destruction.

For me, campaigns that combine attachment to land with opposition to war and militarism have always carried a special appeal. I think now of some of the campaigns mentioned in this Broken Rifle, and particularly of the current campaign in Jeju island, South Korea, in which some friends of WRI have been arrested. One of the most inspiring struggles in Europe in the 1970s was the Larzac campaign in France in the 1970s to stop the expansion of a firing range. A campaign that saw farmers taking their sheep to demonstrate with the Eiffel Tower as their backdrop. A campaign that used a wide repertoire of tactics, including war tax resistance and the creation of a land trust in which thousands of people bought their tiny square of the Larzac plateau. A constructive campaign in which people showed alternative uses for the Larzac, setting up a nonviolence training centre, experimenting with renewable energy, and promoting other small cooperative economic projects.

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Editorial

Land-grabbing and militarism is the theme of this Broken Rifle, a theme that it is as timely as ever. As I write, activists in South Korea are using their bodies to blockade the construction of a military base in Jeju Island - as reported in Angie Zelter's article.

In today's world, where everyone seems to act in a very specific social sphere and where social movements are atomised and work on very specific issues, it is inspiring to learn of experiences where different movements come together. Howard Clark's article sets the theme for this Broken Rifle with different experiences of land movements, some of them deeply connected to WRI. In this issue we also have a story on the Diego Garcia military base, which is one of the most dramatic examples of the consequences that the war machine can have, with the displacement of a whole community off its land.

Some of the articles in this issue of the Broken Rifle were selected to follow up on actions and events that the WRI has organized in recent years. An article on the NEAT military test range in northern Sweden brings us back to the place where last year WRI helped organise a mass civil disobedience action, under the slogan "War Starts Here!" Finally, the article on nonviolent land movements in India re-connects us to our last International Conference in India and the issue of nonviolent livelihood struggles.

As you can see, this issue of The Broken Rifle is not a collection of articles on just any theme. Rather, we revisit here a theme that touches on the core principles of WRI and links to a continuous thread of action and involvement on WRI's part. The articles are all based on work by groups connected to WRI, and in its content, it provides a vivid illustration of the truth of our declaration that war is a crime against humanity.

Javier Gárate



Nonviolent Resistance to US War Plans in Gangjeong, Jeju

For five years, the Gangjeong villagers on the Island of Jeju, Republic of Korea (ROK/South Korea), have nonviolently and bravely resisted the construction of a naval base on their land. The proposed ROK naval base would cover 50 hectares of prime agricultural land and would be available for unlimited use by the United States (US) navy and military and would be used to host aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and AEGIS warships that are part of the US anti-ballistic missile defence (MD) system. It is also likely that the base would be used in the conflict with China that the US is planning and openly preparing for. The US Space Command have been computer war-gaming a first-strike attack on China (set in the year 2016) and the MD (really missile offence) is a key part of US first-strike strategy. MD systems have also proven to be capable anti-satellite weapons and they are driving a new arms race with Russia and China.

The Pentagon is now encircling Russia (which has the world's largest supply of natural gas and significant supplies of oil) and China (a rising economic power) with MD systems. The US knows it cannot compete with China economically but China imports more than 60% of its oil on ships. If the Pentagon can choke off China's ability to transport these vital resources, then it would hold the keys to China's economic engine. The proposed naval base on Jeju Island is just 300 miles from China's coastline and would become a strategic port for Aegis destroyers and other warships and would also be used by nuclear submarines. The US has over 1000 military bases around the world, (including 82 in South Korea alone) – China has no significant military bases outside of its borders. Construction of the naval base at Gangjeong only serves to further military tensions and creates an obstacle to world peace in the East Asian region.

The base will create far more problems than it will solve as China is South Korea's number one trading partner. However, the US is trying to change this pattern and has just signed a Free Trade Agreement with South Korea, despite major opposition from South Korean civil society.

The last time a military base was located on Jeju Island, in 1948, more than 30,000 people (a ninth of the population) were killed in a genocide that is known as Sasam. They were killed by the South Korean government under US military rule, 84 villages were razed to the ground and a scorched earth policy left thousands of refugees. People were not even allowed to openly talk about this trauma until 2006 when the late President Roh Moo-Hyun officially apologized for the massacre and designated Jeju an 'Island of World Peace'. You can imagine how terrible the sense of betrayal was when only 2

years later he agreed to build a naval base on Jeju.

It is not only those who wish to stop war who are concerned about the building of the naval base but also environmentalists. Jeju Island is a Global Biosphere Reserve and the village of Gangjeong is surrounded by no less than three UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites and nine UNESCO Geo-Parks and was designated one of the "New Seven Wonders of Nature." The sea in front of Gangjeong is the cleanest and most beautiful on Jeju and is the only UNESCO-designated soft coral habitat and a site of the Indo pacific bottle nose dolphins (a IUCN-listed endangered species) as well as the red-footed crab (a Korean designated endangered species). The area around Gangjeong was designated an "Absolute Preservation Zone" to protect it but the military is simply ignoring all these cultural and environmental protections.

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I think too of campaigns in concert with indigenous peoples, especially against nuclear testing or other parts of the nuclear chain, such as uranium mining. This is real protection of heritage - at the local level and at the global level in opposing the nuclear threat.

Historically, war resisters themselves have often looked to forming communities on the land where they can live according to their own values. Today's communities for the peace movement in Colombia have gone much further. Some are declarations by tribes or municipalities of their rejection of arms - be they of the state, the paramilitaries or the guerrilla - but others are communities of several hundred previously displaced people, determined to live in peace, organising themselves in a participatory way, and practising ecological agriculture without conceding to monocultivation. When the former Uribe government insisted on placing a police station, violating the principles of the first Peace Community, San José de Apartadó, members of the community dismantled their homes and collective facilities and rebuilt them away elsewhere.

I am writing shortly after this year's

Palestinian day of the land, where Israeli troops killed one protester and injured more than 120 others. Since 1976 this has been a day of protest against the continuing confiscation of Palestinian lands, a central issue in the oppression of Palestinians. It is worth noting that campaigns for the land have not only seen some of the most powerful Palestinian nonviolent actions, but also actions in which Israelis are more likely to take part. Some of the many local struggles against the Separation Wall - a monstrous barrier which confiscates yet more Palestinian land, isolates Palestinian communities one from another and cuts them off from essential resources - can be seen as land struggles. Also some of the most constructive actions that have taken place since the 1960s - such as when groups, often a combination of Palestinians and Israelis have attempted to reclaim the land and its fruits by planting olive trees or trying to harvest olives.

Finally, land remains central to the global social conflict which fuels so many local or national conflicts. Although urban dwellers globally now outnumber rural dwellers for the first time, 75% of the world's poor still live in rural areas. Their access to land is

fundamental, especially for the millions of women subsistence farmers. In an age of globalised land-grab, venerable concepts such as "the commons" take on a new relevance for those whose livelihoods are under threat and who face displacement. But more than this, as the groups connected with Via Campesina and other rural networks have emphasised, the issue is not just food security - but food sovereignty: "the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems". Against the interests of corporate profit, of supporting non-viable levels of consumption and greed, of seeing land in terms of industrial modes of exploitation and extraction, War Resisters' International stands with those who nonviolently resist and who strive to demonstrate what the world needs.

*This earth divided we shall make whole
So it will be a common treasury for all.*

Howard Clark



The Gureombi rock, where many of the protests against the naval base take place, is not only environmentally sensitive but also an ancient place of prayer. It is the only smooth volcanic fresh water rock in Korea and the fresh-water springs underneath the rock are believed to be the source of the Gangjeong Stream that provides 70% of the drinking water for the southern half of the Island. The first explosions of the rock by the destruction companies, Samsung and Daelim, led to pollution of this water source and there are fears that the drinking water will be badly affected.



The resistance of the villagers and their supporters has been remarkable despite being repeatedly subject to arrest, imprisonment and heavy fines. The South Korean military claim that the base construction approval process was approved by a democratic vote was exposed as a lie. Only 87 people, some of whom were bribed (out of 1800 residents) had an opportunity to cast a vote, by applause only. When the village elected a new Mayor and held their own re-vote, that fairly included the entire community and was done by proper ballot, 94 percent of all villagers opposed the military base—yet the government and military refused to recognize these results. The democratically elected Mayor of Gangjeong who oversaw the 94 percent vote was recently released from 3 months in prison for standing up for the rights of his villagers.

The village have organised press conferences, lobbied the Island Council in Jeju City and the central Government in Seoul, organised peaceful demonstrations and vigils and in return have been subjected to police harassment, assaults, corrupt bribery which has divided their community, and illegal measures that have taken away their ancient rights to pray at their sacred rocks and to use the local public port.

As the destruction work progressed the nonviolent resistance developed into

daily blockades with around one or two hundred people regularly taking part. Their protests are peaceful and nonviolent but the force exerted against them is increasingly violent, especially with the general election approaching on 11th April. The Lee Myung-Bak government is enforcing destruction as fast as possible so that the situation becomes irreversible. Over 400 people have been arrested since January 2010 and that number is now rising rapidly since the blasting of Gureombi rock began on 7th March. Ominously over one and a half thousand riot police have been deployed from the mainland - something that has not been experienced on the island since the days of the 1948 massacre. The protesters are now peacefully entering the site to try and disrupt the destruction, they are breaking down the fences and cutting through the razor wire, taking boats and kayaks over the sea to gain access to the sacred rock – and each action is being met by more and more violence. The courage of these protesters is remarkable as they face harassment and violence perpetrated by police and by the Daelim and Samsung security guards. People have been beaten, had their teeth knocked out and suffered concussion and broken bones.

None of the cases filed against these assaults have been allowed into the courts. Nor have the road closures, the public port closures, the maritime police stealing of public kayaks and the illegal erasure of the environmental protections been subject to judicial inquiry.

The resistance continues however. For instance on 3rd April 5 pastors broke through the fence in the early morning and were arrested after entering the military construction site to try to stop the blasting.

This brave resistance needs the support of peace loving people all around the world. There will be a demonstration outside the Korean Embassies in London and Paris on 9th May. If you can organise similarly in your own country then let me know.

Angie Zelter

Countering the Militarisation of Youth

International Conference, Darmstadt, Germany 8-10 June, 2012

War Resisters' International is organising an international study conference on countering the militarisation of youth, in cooperation with German partner organisations and supported by the German teachers union (GEW). The conference will not just look at military recruitment and counter-recruitment actions, but will take a much broader view on the militarisation of youth, the creation of a culture and value system favourable to recruitment. In preparation for the conference, WRI is conducting a survey on the militarisation of youth. The survey is not a test, and we are not looking necessarily for statistical evidence or facts based answers. What we would like to gather with the survey are impressions, anecdotes and experiences of these topics. Please participate in the survey at <http://wri-irg.org/programmes/militarisationofyouth/survey>. The programme of the conference will begin with a focus on analysing the different ways youth are militarised, looking at issues such as military and public spaces, Militainment, military and education, Queer/gender and militarism, and the recruitment of immigrants and low income youth. The aim of the study conference is to foster an on going regional and multi-regional network of cooperating antimilitarist organisations. The overarching objective is strengthening the work against the militarisation of youth in Europe (and beyond) by providing opportunities for people to exchange skills and experience of working in this field and to create/strengthen networks and relationships across the region.

More information at: <http://wri-irg.org/militarisationofyouth>



Europe largest overland test-range on indigenous people's land

North European Aerospace Testrange (NEAT), Europe's largest overland military training area, covers 24 000 sq km of space in northern Sweden, right above the land that historically belongs to and still is used by the indigenous people of Sweden, the Saami. The land areas where the bombs are dropped during military exercises are the same areas where the reindeers are herded. According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "military activities shall not take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples", but if so, the indigenous people need to be consulted through an official channel. This did not happen before military exercises started at NEAT.

Colonization of Saami land and oppression of the Saami people in Sweden

The Saami people have a long, unbroken historical connection to the land areas that today are part of northern Sweden, Finland, Norway and

Russia. This is where Saami people have lived and worked for centuries and where the Saami culture developed. Saami history dates back to long before the nation states colonized the land. Swedish colonization of Saami land began in 14th-15th century and then was intensified from the 17th century onwards; hollowed by centuries of forced labour, displacement of Saami and the exploitation of Saami land. In short, the same pattern of oppression and exploitation of indigenous people as usual. This exploitation was justified through racist depictions of the Saami as a people inferior to "Swedish" people, which also included so called research on Saami in the Eugenics institute.

Sweden recognized the Saami as an indigenous people in 1977. According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (adopted in 2007), indigenous people have special rights, in addition to the rights resulting from the status of national minorities (Saami is one of five national

minorities in Sweden, the others are Roma, Jews, Tornedalen people and Finnish-Swedes). These rights relate in particular to self-determination and land rights of the areas traditionally belonging to an indigenous people. Sweden recognizing the Saami as an indigenous people has not improved their position in any significant way. The UN Declaration is not legally binding; it represents an international minimum standard for the treatment of indigenous people. In addition, there is a Convention on Indigenous Issues (ILO 169), which is legally binding, that Sweden has not yet ratified. The Saami in Sweden have thus not been given access to the rights that this Convention gives to the Saami as an indigenous people.

Formation of a military training area in Vidsel in the 1950s

In the mid-1950s, the Swedish military began their operations in the area of Vidsel (village in northern Sweden) and in the 1960s the current test area at

Vidsel was decided upon through a parliamentary resolution. All activities on what was to be called "Robotförsöksplats Norrland - RFN" ("place to tests robots in northern Sweden") were under strictest secrecy as these activities aimed to develop a Swedish nuclear bomb. The "Defense Materiel Administration" ("FMV" in Swedish), is the government agency responsible for the activities at RFN. The civil servants working at RFN in Vidsel during the 1950-60s were not permitted to talk about their work, not even with their families. People who lived in the area that was made into RFN, both Saami and other Swedish people were "redeemed" and forced to move. This included several families and the Udtja Sami village.

Since the formation of RFN the operations there have developed and expanded, and after the state investigation "Snow, darkness and coldness" (2004), the training areas have opened up for foreign armies and companies





to train for war. In this investigation it is claimed that this immense area of space and land in northern Sweden is very suitable for military exercises since it; has the unique conditions of offering 24h training in daylight during the summer and 24h training in darkness in the winter, has a geography and a climate that resembles other parts of the world where war is being waged, and also, it is "uninhabited land". Calling northern Sweden "uninhabited land" says quite a lot about how the government of Sweden view the people living in northern Sweden; as non-existing, or at least as non-important people. Colonization and other forms of oppression are (more than in this specific case) justified by describing the periphery as uncivilized and/or something that exists to serve the centre/nation state. Exploitation of Saami land has historically been about hydroelectricity, mining and logging and now it's about training for war, but all of these is about the area and the people of northern Sweden serving the (centre and south) state of Sweden.

Since 2004, the war exercises have included armies such as the NATO Response Force, the U.S. Air Force and the British Air Force, and weapons companies such as Alenia Aeronautica and SAAB have been testing their new weapons and UAVs at NEAT. What was in the 1950s just the ground area at Vidsel has now expanded to include the air space reaching from Vidsel to the other ground area outside of Kiruna called Estringe, all of this constituting NEAT. In total there are about twenty Saami villages affected by NEAT and the activities taking place within the area. A Saami village is not a village in the literal sense but a local community of Saami people that, for example, herd their reindeers in the area.

Violating indigenous peoples' rights

For hundred of years the Saami people have lived and worked the area that is now NEAT. When the RFN was created in the 1950s, an

agreement between FMV and the Saami people was settled, to regulate the conditions under which military exercises were taking place. This agreement is the one that still applies, although written in a time when the concept "Saami rights" were unheard of and thus never considered. Since then both declarations and conventions concerning indigenous people's rights have been implemented, though Sweden chooses not to follow these. In the agreement between the military and the Saami, it says that exercises should not take place during the reindeer calving season (from May to mid June). But this was exactly the time when the NATO Response exercise Loyal Arrow took place in 2009, using the Vidsel base for bomb dropping exercises.

According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "military activities shall not take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples, unless justified by a relevant public interest or otherwise freely agreed with or requested by the indigenous peoples concerned". And if a military exercise is taking place, "states shall undertake effective consultations with the indigenous peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions". Therefore, it is not enough to just inform the Saami villages concerned about military activities. If the indigenous people concerned, in this case the Saami parliament, is not consulted, this is a violation of the UN declaration. The Saami people have not been asked through an official channel when military exercises can take place at NEAT. What happens is that the military settles agreements with the different Saami villages concerned.

There have been some protests against the military exercises at NEAT related to the rights of Saami people. A representative from the Saami parliament said in public service radio that the NATO exercise would risk the reindeer calving since the



reindeers would be so frightened by the aeroplanes. Before the U.S. Air Force bombing exercise in the summer of 2010, highlighting the exercise and the fact that the Saami were not asked, were made by Fjärde världen (indigenous people magazine) and by Same Ätnam (oldest Saami organization in Sweden). As Lilian Mikaelsson, vice-president of Same Ätnam, puts it;

- We have not been able to say anything. Neither through Saami nor Swedish channels of information no one has been informed about this or been able to say what one thinks about it. The government ignores the people who live up here.

The NEAT military training areas on the ground (in Vidsel and outside of Kiruna) offers both advantages and disadvantages for the Saami. Because these are restricted areas, Saami herding reindeer for example are not, as in other areas, disturbed by snowmobiles and other outdoor activities, and there is no logging or mining in these areas. This is, of course, with the major exception that the Saami have to evacuate on short notice before a military exercise. When this happens, they go down in shelters underground or are flown out of the areas with helicopters.

The exploitation of this area that is historically Saami land, by the Swedish government and military, as well as by foreign militaries and companies, is just a continuation of the exploitation of indigenous lands that has been going on all over the world since colonization began. It can be argued that making these areas into military, and therefore restricted, areas has been good for the woods and for the reindeer herding Saami. But this argument is fundamentally wrong. The woods, the natural environment and its resources should be left in peace and not be exploited, and the Saami, as well as any other people, should be granted their rights, as humans and as a people.

Cattis Laska



Land-movements and Nonviolence in India

In India, the most publicized land-movement was the Bhoodhan movement. In the 1950s and 60s, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, Vinobha Bhave walked across the country asking for land as gift. His strategy was to ask land-owning families to treat him as one of their own and give him one share of the land which can then be redistributed to the landless people. It took 14 years for him to walk across the country and collect a little more than 4 million acres of land. This was a very radical approach based on his philosophy of 'change of heart'.

This approach was often criticized by the left-political parties because they thought that Vinobha Bhave was trying to protect the land-owners and prevent a forceful law that will enable the state to take way the land of the farmers. I will not use this opportunity to analyze the success or the failure of this movement as there is already a lot written about it. But it is very

interesting to see how an individual can use a particular strategy to redistribute land from the powerful to the powerless. Even though the socialist and the left were all building their movement around the agenda of land-distribution, land is no longer on their agenda. With the arrival of globalization, there is a drastic shift in the thinking of those who believed in socialistic or leftist ideologies. They are also slowly submitting themselves to the idea that globalization is inevitable and nothing much can be done to protect land and livelihood resources of the people. At this stage let me also recognize the role of radical groups who believed in violence as a method to redistribute land. Though there were not able to distribute land in the real sense, at least in the areas where they have their presence, people still hold on to land and livelihood resources or successful to some extent in preventing the onslaught of globalization. Janadesh and Jansatyagraha are proposing

the middle path in land redistribution. We believe that it is difficult to have the scale of moral power of Vinobha Bhave to solve the problem by using this element of compassion. It is also not worth to shed blood and creating permanent animosity between groups in our efforts towards land -distribution. The approach we have taken is to use nonviolent mass action to pressurize the government to solve this problem through a legal framework. Within the legal framework the government can do a lot in terms of implementing the laws that are already there but these laws can be implemented only if the government is willing to take a position in support of the marginalized communities. Because the ruling class is drawn from the communities with land and resources, it is not easy for the ruling class to take a radical position in support of the weak and marginalized. For the international readers let me give some examples.

In India we have a ceiling act. This act provides that every farmer can have up to 20 acres of irrigated land and about 40 acres of un-irrigated land (These numbers vary from state to state). If this act is implemented in letter and spirit there will be a lot of surplus land available for redistribution to the landless. A lot of manipulation took place with the awareness of government officials and as a result the amount of surplus land available for redistribution is limited. Another example is the recently enacted Forest Rights Act of 2006. This was the result of many years of struggle by several groups. Through this law, the claims by adivasis for the land they have been cultivating can be settled in their favour. You will be surprised that in a country where 80 million people are adivasis only 1 million people got land in the last 5 years (With 8 members per family, this comes to 12.5% distribution rate) which in itself is an indication of our level of





performance in support of poor people. Because of pressure from civil society groups, the government has constituted several committees to look into this problem of land-holding pattern and land-distribution in the country and come up with recommendations. In the last 10 years there were many committees and there were many interesting recommendations on the table. Different committees have repeatedly said that if the livelihood resources are not distributed it will lead to mass scale migration to cities and may also lead to increased level of violence in rural India. Unfortunately these recommendations are not translated into meaningful policies and laws. Like many other countries, India is also divided into two parts. On one side poor people are demanding land and livelihood resources and on the other side national and multinational companies are asking for land and resources. In a globalizing world where the decisions are mainly tilting in favour of global forces it is important to have nonviolent social movements like Janadesh and Jansatyagraha to remind the state that they cannot be one-sided. The decisions need to be all-

inclusive.

Though India has a history of nonviolent struggles under the leadership of Gandhi and many others, we tend to ignore the power of nonviolence in dealing with our problems today. While we constantly discuss about our history and our pride of our nonviolent struggle government tends to use force to put down the voice of those who are raising issues in support of the marginalized. Governance through a process of consultation and dialog hasn't become a culture even in most advanced democracies. The natural tendency is to say that the elected government should have the freedom to decide for everyone. They know what is in the interest of the country. And in this analysis the voices of the marginalized gets further marginalized. Through Janadesh and Jansatyagraha we are trying to bring their voice on the central stage. How long can a state be oppressive and how long can a state ignore the voices of the oppressed. While at the level of India there are many efforts that are being made, we feel the need for international solidarity in making nonviolence work and

work in the interest of powerless and marginalized.

Let me use this opportunity to inform you the kind of nonviolent strategies that we have put together in our ongoing struggle that began from 2 October 2011. The first strategy was to choose the international day of nonviolence for launching this action. We began a yatra (a road-trip) from Kanyakumari, the Southern tip of India on 2 October. We will begin our historical march from Gwalior on 2 October. The second strategy was to involve large number of organizations cutting across political ideologies. We are trying to bring about 2000 organizations on board for our action in 2012. The third strategy was to travel across the country through the yatra and visit most of the nonviolent struggles where people are trying to organize themselves against the transfer of resources to powerful lobbies and from each one of the struggle, we are taking soil samples to create an exhibition in Delhi to educate people about the history of each one of these struggles. Another important strategy is to train 12,223 activists to lead the historical

march of 1 lakh people. Each one of them needs to know how a long march can be organized with deep commitment to nonviolence. Another strategy put in place is to get the old generation freedom struggle groups who worked under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to sit in Delhi while the marginalized communities are on the road. There are many other strategies that are being used to make the entire process not only nonviolent but also highly participatory. So the entire struggle is designed by keeping land and livelihood resources as the core agenda without compromising on the philosophy of nonviolence. Through this process we hope that the land agenda will come back on the table and the government will be forced to act in a way that a powerful structural remedy can be found to enable land-distribution, sustainable agriculture and poverty eradication.

Rajagopal PV

Diego Garcia Military Base

As the British Empire collapsed, USA expanded into parts of it. When the USA-UK decided in the 1960's to install a massive military base on one of the Indian Ocean Islands making up Mauritius, that is to say, on the Island of Diego Garcia, in order to implement this decision, they committed a number of crimes.

The UK-US Crimes

The British Government had, firstly, to steal the Chagos Islands, including Diego Garcia, from the totality of the islands making up the State of Mauritius. This was in the run-up to Mauritian Independence which was in 1968. They did this behind the back of the British Parliament, resorting to an archaic Royal Prerogative, an "Order in Council". This was Harold Wilson's Labour Government. He contravened UN Resolution 1514 which states clearly that "Any attempt at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN". Furthermore, UN member

states who had got wind of the plot to dismember Mauritius had actually voted resolution 2066 calling on Britain "to take no action that would dismember territory of Mauritius and violate its territorial integrity". UN resolution 2066 prohibited this land-grab.

Once Britain had stolen the Islands and concocted a new colony called British Indian Ocean Territories or BIOT (which included some stolen Seychelles Islands that the Seychelles government, importantly, claimed afterwards when Albert Rene came to power, and got), Britain, together with the USA, proceeded with the second crime.

They forcibly removed the entire population of Chagossian Mauritians living there.

They hounded them off their homes by trickery, intimidation, threats, terror and finally brute violence. The Chagossian dogs were rounded up and killed before their eyes, and before the eyes of their children. The US-UK invented a blatant lie to the effect that nobody lived there. And they

knew it was a blatant lie. All this has been documented in detail, especially since the late 1990's when the 30 years of the Official Secrets Act ran out and proof was available by the ream – proof of the forcible removals, the conspiracy involved, of the conscious invention of lies, together with the racist comments that are concomitant to such violence. In the judgement in 2000 of Chagossian leader Olivier Bancoult's case against the British State, the British Supreme Court deplores the conspiracy. They even quote a civil servant's note saying "Unfortunately, along with the Birds go some few Tarzans or Man Fridays whose origins are obscure, and who are being hopefully wished on to Mauritius."

Thirdly, the USA, the receiver of the stolen Islands, proceeded to pour concrete and tarmac on to the most beautiful coral reef in the world, a horse-shoe shaped pair of islands, called Diego Garcia. They destroyed the entire eco-system. Now there are undersea re-inforced concrete bunkers, barracks for thousands of armed forces,

clubs for the different ranks present at the Base: the high ranks of top brass, the next highest for officers, then for the ranks of ordinary soldiers and sailors, and finally the lowest of mainly manual workers up to the level of nurses, who come from mainly the Philippines and Mauritius. There is also a huge runway from which B-52's thundered off to bomb Afghanistan and Iraq. There is a filthy harbour where air-craft carriers dock. The vessel responsible for servicing nuclear submarines expelled from Italy after demonstrations, is now stationed there. This is in contravention of the Treaty for a Nuclear Arms Free Africa, the Pelindaba Treaty, which came into force in 2010.

When a B-52 takes off from Diego Garcia and bombs a bazaar or wedding procession, killing a whole extended family, this is yet another crime. In recent years during the so-called war on terror, the US and Britain used Diego Garcia for illegal incarceration of prisoners for torture.

And though much of this story is now known, the story of the





resistance by the people of Chagos and Mauritius is a little known story.

Resistance

From the time of the forcible removals, there was spontaneous rebellion. And when the last ship, the Nordvaer, brought 200 Chagossians to the Port Louis docks in Mauritius, there was a sit-in on the docks. Chagossians, including the woman leader Aurelie Talate who died in January, 2012, refused to leave the harbour side.

Chagossians were soon facing a difficult urban environment, joining into a mass of unemployed Mauritians, eking out a living just after violent communal conflicts, which claimed hundreds of lives. Some had family, others were taken in by the poor.

Soon organizing began. The Organization Fraternel, a social movement, helped organize gatherings, hunger strikes, and candle-light vigils in residential areas like Bain des Dames. What characterised these protests was that they were women's protests. Many of the men were too saddened by the humiliation of the displacement to be active. But the women were Mother Courages. LALIT women members and one of our members who is a medical practitioner soon become involved in the hunger strike movements and joined the mobilization.

Meanwhile, the Mauritian working class rose up in two huge movements that many Chagossians (who had started working the docks and in the Municipality and were unionized) participated in. These were known as the August '79 Strike and the September '80 mass movement, which were both huge, near insurrectionist, highly organized movements.

After this experience, in 1981, Chagossians women together with LALIT women, organized street demonstrations three days in a row in Port Louis, to support eight Chagossian women on hunger strike in the Jardin de la Compagnie, in the open air, right in the middle of Port Louis, oppo-site the British

High Commission. The demonstrations saw hundreds of women with placards literally running around the main streets, screaming slogans at the top of their voices. The third day, they all sat down in front of the British Embassy and blocked the street. A confrontation with the Riot Police saw the women winning, but 8 were arrested, including Chagossian leader, Charlesia Alexis and LALIT members, Ragini Kistnasamy and Lindsey Collen. This was a turning point. From now onwards, everyone in Mauritius knew about the problem. It had been difficult until this point, to get the issue on to the mainstream agenda.

This was when the Mauritian State acted, and together with Chagossians claimed and won compensation from Britain. Each Chagossian got a house.

Since then the struggle has had many phases, sometimes dormant, then re-awakening. In the mid-1990s the Rann Nu Diego common front was set up by LALIT and the Chagos Refugees Group, Greenpeace agreed to take us to Diego Garcia in one of their ships, but this fell through. Olivier Bancoult's legal case then put the issue on the agenda. But since 1999, to some extent, the case has fallen into the trap of legalism, causing demobilization. Now the European Court of Human Rights has an appeal before it, which it has mercilessly postponed. Since 2004 LALIT has had support from No Bases, an international anti military bases network we helped set up. Last year the Mauritian Government, under pressure from LALIT, put a case against Britain under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. This case has the merit of exposing the UK plot to set up a Marine Protected Area in Chagos on territory that is not theirs, in order to prevent the return of Chagossians. Wikileaks documents proved this ulterior motive. Meanwhile, many environmental organizations, even Greenpeace, had fallen into the trap set by the British State.

Conclusion

Let us conclude by looking at



the principles that have guided us in LALIT during these struggles.

The first principle was to keep the three main issues articulating together, and not to fall into single-issue traps nor allow one struggle to be bargained against another. The three struggles are:

- to close down the US military base. It is the root cause of all the suffering, and remains a danger for humankind.
- to re-unify Mauritius, its land and its people, thus completing de-colonization.
- to demand the right to return and full reparations for all Chagossians.

This first principle brings us natural allies. The entire anti-war movement when opposing military bases, anti-colonial forces seeking full de-colonization, human rights organizations, ecological and environment organizations mobilising against destruction of ecosystems are all natural allies. The women's movement worldwide will quite naturally be an ally of such brave struggles by women. Organizations that unite prisoners and their families are natural allies against rendition that has been happening on Diego Garcia. The people in the US and UK, when they realize what crimes are committed in their names, are allies against their own Governments.

The second principle is that in struggling for freedom from domination by empires and for peace for all, we need to understand that military bases,

and war machinery in general, exist for a purpose, and we need to understand this purpose. When the US says it is "protecting its interests", we know and need to know that it is the interest not of its people, but of its ruling classes. So, the struggle is also a struggle against class rule, the reign of an owning and controlling class. And that this is a truly international struggle, though one with neighbourhood roots wherever there are military bases.

The third principle is that when we call for base closure, we must be aware of the consequences. We need simultaneously to call for employment for everyone who worked on the base. We must be sure that the base does not just get transferred. And we must demand an environmental clean-up.

In LALIT, we pay homage in this struggle, to the tenacity of the people of the Chagos, who have so loyally continued to fight for their dignity and everyone's freedom.

Alain Ah-Vee



Liberation and the looting of African land

Despite decades of anti-colonial civilian resistance in Africa, a pernicious movement of land acquisition is overtaking the continent at a rate unprecedented since the conquests of the 19th Century. In a low-profile manner, significantly more than 125 million acres of land—more than double the size of Britain—has been sold to wealthy investors or foreign governments since 2010. With China and India leading the list of national purchasers, and Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan amongst the leading multinational corporate plunderers, the countries most affected by recent sales include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Oxfam International has reported that, in some cases, land has been sold for less than forty cents an acre.

Concern about this dangerous trend has begun to lead to nonviolent action on the regional and grassroots level. Within the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union, a July 2009 Heads of State meeting held in Sirte, Libya, under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi set forth a framework for land policy throughout the continent. "Comprehensive, people-driven land policies and reforms," they wrote, must be developed and adhered to, such that "full political, social, economic and environmental benefits" go to "the majority of the African people." The problem is, at a governmental level, presidents and prime ministers presiding over widely different economic systems have shown strikingly similar unwillingness to implement policies for the good of the people.

As International Land Coalition program manager Michael Taylor wrote in his foreword to *The Struggle for Land in Africa*, the newly regulated, partitioned and "enclosed" land must become "less of a vehicle for the concentration of land ownership and more of an opportunity for those that use the land—women, family farmers, pastoralists, first peoples, tenants, and the landless." The historic nature of enclosures and economic liberalism, however—as pointed out by Ousseina Alidou, Silvia Federici and others—rarely allows for that type of social progress. "Globalization" and globalized land acquisition in Africa, like the strings-always-attached "foreign aid," and "colonialism" a generation before have become the dirty words of a continent.

Even in the country with what many have called the best land law in Africa and with one of the strongest traditions of people-

centered government, the limitations of state-directed reform has been striking. Mozambique's 1997 Land Law, which struggled to balance the need for investment with both traditional pastoral land-use histories and the socialist history of state land ownership, has had a patchy implementation record. And while large areas of land are still controlled by local communities, the process of concentrated land grabbing has been cautiously described as "not yet irreversible."

International authorities have fared no better and often worse—sometimes due to their own negligence. The infamously divisive practices of the U.N. Mission in the Congo (MONUC) led researcher Thierry Vircoulon to correctly generalize (in another contribution to *The Struggle for Land*) that peacekeepers of all varieties must always be aware of the complexities and underlying tensions regarding land issues in every conflict situation. In the aptly-titled essay "When Armed Groups have a Land Policy and Peacemakers Do Not," Vircoulon underscores the vital point that land tenure for "average citizens" is synonymous with securing lasting peace.

Though organizing on a mass scale has not yet been part of the grassroots agenda in the Congo, activist Jacques Depelchin of the Otabenga Alliance asserts that "there are signs of revolt of ordinary people against many decades of oppression and dispossession." Depelchin suggests that a new wave of revolutionary consciousness is on the horizon and

ponders what it would take for true justice to emerge. Though not writing explicitly about nonviolent solutions, his queries strike to the heart of the dynamic which underlies most of the violence on the continent and beyond. "When will the rich understand," Depelchin asks:

that at the origin of their wealth, crimes against humanity were committed? ...When will a fair and true dialogue between the rich and the poor looking to abandon the hierarchy dictated by the rich begin? Only then will the healing of crimes against humanity begin.

In the West African country of Mali, an extraordinary series of meetings and dialogues culminated in an international gathering of peasants, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples on November 19, 2011, forming the Global Alliance Against Land-Grabbing. The final resolution of that gathering offered an interesting challenge to the role of the nation-state itself, noting that the post-independence government of Mali had only been around since 1960. How, they asked, could a state barely 50 years old proclaim sovereignty and legitimate power over local communities which have lived on the same land for many generations? "Clearly these nation-states of recent vintage and troubled tenure," noted Pambazuka.org author Abena Ampofoa Asare, "ignore the political fallout of land grabs at their own peril."

Another grassroots initiative with broad regional and international potential is the





campaign Stop Africa Land Grab. Founded by Nigerian businessman Dr. Emeka Akaezuwa, the U.S.-based movement is fueled by great concern throughout the Diaspora. Their methods have

included a petition drive opposing the unfolding "tragedy of epic proportions," as well as educational and consciousness-raising efforts. Along similar lines, former TransAfrica director and Black

Commentator columnist Bill Fletcher, Jr. is calling for a reconceptualization of the "global African worker" as the focus of new efforts for change. Like the organizers in Mali, Fletcher suggests that the land grab is symptomatic of an economic moment characterized by the restructuring of capitalism away from nation-based centers of struggle. The national liberation movement mentality of the past must now give way to a 21st-century Pan-Africanism which is committed not simply to continental unification, but to economic justice for all.

The new African land grab is nothing short of a direct re-colonization of land and people who have already suffered unprecedented theft, exploitation and oppression. A new movement is also in the making; Fletcher correctly demands that in order for this movement to achieve truly liberating success, it must "not only address race, gender, and class, but it must be centered on the needs and struggles of the worker."

Matt Meyer

WRI & Africa

War Resisters' International and Ceasefire Campaign in South Africa in collaboration with the African Women's Active Nonviolence Initiative for Social Change (AWA-NiCh), Women Peacemaker Program of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) and the Organization for Nonviolence and Development of South Sudan (ONAD), are proposing to organise a nonviolence trainers exchange to take place between 26 – 29 of July, 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Despite the achievements of nonviolent action and peacebuilders in many parts of Africa, some Africans still believe that violence ultimately needs to be combated by violence. The continent has been blighted by many forms of physical violence: the spectrum ranges from state and non-state armed groups, including some that kidnap children and train them to kill, through economically-motivated criminal violence, to domestic violence, and recently "hate crimes".

This project is part of a bigger project of WRI for strengthening its work in Africa, together with other international partners, such as IFOR, IANSA and possibly the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (Washington, DC). WRI is planning to hold its 2014 International Conference in South Africa, hosted by WRI's member, Ceasefire Campaign. The International Conference aims to bring up to 300 participants from all over the world, half from various parts of Africa. The theme for this conference "Challenging the Continuum of Violence: from Domestic Violence to Military Alliances". The Training Exchange is part of this bigger process, where by bringing African trainers together we can strengthen cooperation between groups in Africa working for nonviolence social transformation.

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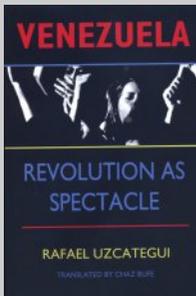
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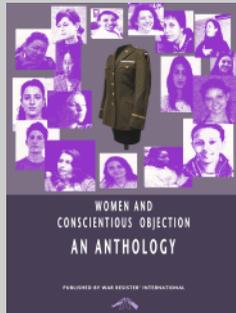
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Venezuela: Revolution as Spectacle analyses the Chávez regime from an antiauthoritarian Venezuelan perspective. It debunks claims made by Venezuelan and U.S. rightists that the Chávez government is dictatorial, as well as claims made by Venezuelan and U.S. leftists that the Chávez

government is revolutionary. Instead the book argues that the Chávez regime is one of a long line of Latin American populist regimes that - "revolutionary" rhetoric aside - ultimately have been subservient to the United States as well as to multinational corporations. The book concludes by explaining how Venezuela's autonomous social, labour, and environmental movements have been systematically disempowered by the Chávez regime, but that despite this they remain the basis of a truly democratic, revolutionary alternative.

Rafael Uzcátegui
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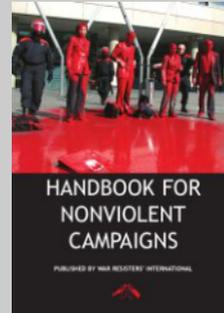


Conscientious objectors are generally seen as male — as are soldiers. This book breaks with this assumption. Women conscientiously object to military service and militarism. Not only in countries which conscript women — such as Eritrea and Israel —

but also in countries without conscription of women. In doing so, they redefine antimilitarism from a feminist perspective, opposing not only militarism, but also a form of antimilitarism that creates the male conscientious objector as the 'hero' of antimilitarist struggle.

This anthology includes contributions by women conscientious objectors and activists from Britain, Colombia, Eritrea, Israel, Paraguay, South Korea, Turkey, and the USA, plus documents and statements.

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Social change doesn't just happen. It's the result of the work of committed people striving for a world of justice and peace. This work gestates in groups or cells of activists, in discussions, in training sessions, in reflecting on previous experiences, in

planning, in experimenting and in learning from others. Preparing ourselves for our work for social justice is key to its success.

There is no definitive recipe for successful nonviolent actions and campaigns. This handbook, however, is a series of resources that can inspire and support your own work, especially if you adapt the resources to your own needs and context.

This handbook has been a collaborative effort of people working in nonviolence within the WRI network from Australia, Belgium, Britain, Colombia, Chile, Germany, Italy, Israel, South Korea, Scandinavia, Spain, Turkey, and the USA.

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