Nonviolence and Social Empowerment

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edited by Chris Ney

Timed to coincide with the launch of its new Nonviolence Programme, War Resisters' International finally publishes articles based on presentations at its 'Nonviolence and Social Empowerment Study Conference" in February 2001. While not complete, these articles reflect some of the discussion at the conference. which was the result of a process over several years. In a report of the conference, War Resisters' International wrote: "The conference program stretched the bow from personal experiences with empowerment and disempowerment, over working in groups and organisations to social movements and to international cooperation (or disempowering tutelage?) (...)"

More than providing new answers this conference raised new questions, and again raised old questions in new circumstances. "Globalization" or its effects ran as a topic through many plenaries and working groups. What are the effects of globalization on the social movements? What possibilities exist to counter the "globalization of multinationals" with a "globalization from below", a globally connected resistance, that is empowered by its variety?'

Chris Ney kindly agreed to edit case studies submitted for the conference, and War Resisters' International would like to thank him for his work, and is glad to be able to finally make these resources available to a wider public online.

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I. EMPOWERMENT: IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

Empowerment: just another phrase?

By Vesna Teršelič

Buzz words. You catch them here and there—in peace, environmental or women's initiatives and United Nations documents. They change from season to season, from year to year. "Empowerment" has appeared in the language of my colleagues who are working on social change as an attempt to explain to ourselves and to others what we are actually doing.

Once upon a time, the magic word was "participation," but for the last few years, it has been "empowerment." People involved in development work during the 1960s, '70s and '80s swore by peoples' participation, while activists in the '90s and the beginning of the new millennium swear by empowerment.

The term empowerment must suit my work better—I am up to date with activist nad linguistic fashions! More than a fad, I would like to present some arguments why the concept of empowerment is a step forward compared to the concept of participation.

In development circles, the request for participation was made following the big revolutions of the twentieth century, revolutions which have not brought much to the world's poor. Asking for participation was rather humble and modest, not oriented on gaining power or controlling the world's resources. The idea behind asking for participation was that "big power" might be left to the existing power holders, as long as they allowed space for communities to make their own local choices. Soon, the big organizations (including the United Nations) accepted the language of participation. They started proclaiming it themselves. Unfortunately, with or without participation, the poor continued to get poorer, there have been more wars, and things have gone from bad to worse for many people.

"Power," according to distinguished sociologist Dennis H. Wrong, "is the capacity of a person to produce intended and foreseen effects on others." In other words, power is the capacity to influence. While this definition does not cover all that might be said about nonviolence and empowerment, it will be good enough for this argument about participation vs. empowerment.

The phrase "power to the people" does not sound very fresh, but may be a promising way to understanding empowerment. Seen in this light, empowerment seems to be better than participation because it expresses determination not just to offer any kind of contribution (something that participation has very often meant), but to contribute in a way that will lead to shifts in power relations. Following an era of shyness, when activists felt that any kind of power was wicked—and many people involved in civic initiatives were afraid of being seen as power hungry or manipulative—embracing the concept of empowerment might mean that civic initiatives want to have real influence. To realize that goal, they need to deal with power.

Participation meant taking part in the existing power structures, empowerment might mean transforming power relationships through transforming one's self, changing relationships in society, and changing cultural patterns. The question remains: how to do it. Inequalities, first addressed centuries ago, are still enshrined in present power structures. When power relationships shift today, do we know how to act and not merely complain?

Reality Check the Concepts

In the aftermath of the anti-globalization protests that began in Seattle, the question we

should ask might not be "What is the utopian horizon of a more just world?" but "What small, achievable steps can we take now?" "How many successful empowerment experiences can we present in the spaces that open after successful street actions?" Writing in *The Ecologist*, Simon Retallack makes the point" "Seattle has created a unique and historic opportunity for real change. Now is the time to seize it." Opportunities for change usually open only after protests that use lots of energy and skill. How often have those opportunities been fully exploited? The point is not just to demonstrate at the front doors of decision-makers, but to participate in the decision making process.

I do not want to look at distant examples and will start, therefore, with what is happening in my own backyard. Power structures in Croatia are shifting following the elections in January 2000. The Croatian Democratic Alliance (HDZ) that led my country through the wars, is in pieces, and the new MPs are receptive to different proposals. Organizations that have been working on peace-building since the beginning of the war in 1991 are out of breath and out of sight. People are exhausted. The authoritarian regime of the HDZ lasted too long, and it is unclear whether we will be able to use this unique chance to exert any influence at all.

In 1993 when the Volunteer Project in Pakrac began, activists from the Antiwar Campaign Croatia (ARK) dreamed about such opportunities for dialogue. We had hoped for dialogue between people of Serbian and Croatian nationality from the two parts of the war-damaged town. We had hoped for dialogue on normalization with the local media and authorities. But, our hopes dissolved after several days of military action in May 1995 during which most of the Serbian people fled from Western Slavonia.

Still there have been some important changes; we may have failed in creating space for dialogue, but we have opened paths of empowerment for women. The women's club in Pakrac, which started its activities with a modest laundry in 1995, is now a strong and visible organization. It is participating actively in women's rights campaigns. The group carried out impressive actions before the general election, inviting people to use their power and vote. Women, who had been invisible a few years ago, now have a voice. Women can put issues on the local agenda and can no longer be ignored.

What the women's club in Pakrac, together with most peace organisations in Croatia, still find difficult is to speak to power. How to address important issues like the return of refugees, war crimes and peace-building in the media? How to start local projects to increase economic empowerment? How to open public dialogue?

For civil initiatives in Croatia—and anywhere in the world—it remains to be seen whether we are empowered to take responsibility for transforming a crisis. Are we empowered to stop assuming that everyone will see the value of our arguments? Are we empowered to step out of the margins and jump into mainstream culture, to avoid compromise while promoting dialogue?

Assumptions and Fears

Are we ready to question our assumptions? Are we ready to face our fears?

In the summarizing chapter of his study *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defence*, Australian nonviolent activist and scholar Robert J. Burrows underlines how important personal change is, pointing out that "everyone can learn to speak the truth…everyone can learn to deal with the conflict in their personal lives… everyone can learn to respect others more deeply." Of course, everyone could choose to do all that, and even more. But why should one do that?

More than two thousand years ago Buddha made similar recommendations. Jesus Christ offered a similar message. Utopian socialists like Thomas Moore described towns of

happy, satisfied people. The 18th century English feminist Mary Wollstonecraft demanded equal rights for women. Friends of mine, working on the protection of human rights, share the same dream as Martin Luther King Jr. and hope for, even demand, the impossible.

All of them could do their best to explain that things might work better if all of us could act according to certain prescribed ideals. The saints have proposed different options: meditation as a way to conscientious living, respecting the ten commandments in the Old Testament, following any kind of expected behavior—from Christian morality to feminist ethics.

But, that does not answer the question. What about the people who do not find themselves following these prescribed ideals? Everywhere in the world activists are a minority. While being abused some feel it is better to sit still and wait, others resist. But resisters seem to be the much smaller group. Dialogue among ourselves is important. But, isn't it even more important to engage the majority? How do we continue dialogue with people who are not ready to give up mainstream values? Or are not interested in searching for new kinds of power, but prefer to struggle for their portion of the dominant power?

One of the questions we might consider in reaching out to mainstream audiences is whether their daily struggles within the dominant power system—struggles which appear perfectly natural to many people—are not the source of anxiety and fear. In *Women Who Run With Wolves*, Clarissa Pinkola Estes has written: "When culture narrowly defines what constitutes success or desirable perfection in anything-looks, height, strength, form, acquisitive power, economics, manliness, womanliness, good children, good behavior, religious belief -there are corresponding dictates and inclinations to measurement in the psyches of all its members." The majority of people in northern countries tend to live up to these culturally and socially prescribed standards. In turn, they might be entitled to gain a share of security—maybe even power. Perhaps the best way to change these ancient patterns is not to expect radical transformation, but to work out methods of involving more people in dialogue, and eventually in common projects

Activists often speak about apathy, prevalent in many communities. "The cause of apathy is linked to indifference," according to writer and therapist Louise K. Schmidt. "However if we look more deeply, we will find the cause of our apathy stems more from the fear we feel surrounding despair than from indifference. Apathy is a defense that prevents one from facing fear. It is a refusal to feel that, which unattended, creates numbness and ultimately non-action."

How do we confront the feelings of insecurity that Nobel Prize winning author Elias Canetti described in his book *Crowds and Power*: "Rulers tremble today, not, as formerly, because they are rulers, but as the equals of everybody else." Everybody is afraid, not only are we caught in networks of relationships and power structures, determined by social and cultural contexts, but we are also prey to disabling fear.

In Place of a Conclusion

Empowerment may be a more promising concept than others that have been offered in the development debates of previous decades. Taking steps closer to power, on both a conceptual and working level, means something, but the questions arising from previous concepts have remained unanswered, and are still painfully present. Significant, tangible change is not around the corner. But, that fact does not dissolve my desire for change or diminish my will for accountable power. Even if it does turn out that empowerment has been just another phrase.

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What Power Do We Want?

By Cecilia Moretti

It isn't easy to think about the kind of power we want, especially when we believe in a freedom that is opposed to any kind of authoritarianism. It becomes even more difficult because, over the centuries of human history, the word power itself has been contaminated with notions of authority and domination.

Frequently when power is discussed, it is referred to as the power of those who govern, those who maintain their power through the appropriation of common treasures—such as land and natural resources—for their own interests. This story has been repeated since prehistoric times, when tribal communities became sedentary and began to enter into disputes over land with their neighbors, occupying territories by force, expelling people, and appropriating natural resources and even human beings into slavery. At this stage in human development, wars also began to occur.

The scenario continues into the present day, in which a few multinational and transnational corporations control economic and political power, and place the rest of the world at their feet. The globalized world is their territory and they move through it searching for markets and for cheap labor to exploit. More and more, everything becomes subordinated to their obsessive desire for wealth and profit.

This kind of power is based on control by the few, egotism, individualism, competition, the exercise of violence on all levels, and exploitation.

However, another type of power has also existed throughout the history of humankind. Thanks to this other kind of power unjust situations have been transformed. In the face of death, this other power manifests itself as the power of life. Faced with the destruction of wars and violence, it emerges as a constructive force. In the face of individualism, it exists in collective and solidarity efforts.

Nonviolent leader Mohandas Gandhi said that the power to change resides in the people. Similarly, some Eastern philosophies assert that the power to change comes from within ourselves. These beliefs refer not only to collective power but also to individual power. Change at both levels is needed because the dominant power has sought to put external obstacles in the way of our freedom (in order to dominate us) and it has lodged internal obstacles (as false values) in our way. These internal obstacles—patriarchy, individualism, egotism, competition, materialism, discrimination, the instinct to consume (which has damaged the environment so severely)—sometimes impede us far more than the external ones. We have been trained for submission and passivity, so that we obey and do not rebel against the power exerted over us. On occasion, many of these false values have represented the greatest hurdles in the way of social and political revolutions. We have also been brainwashed to believe that the only way to have power is to impose our will on the next person.

The power to transform

But there is another concept of power, based on the capacity that each one of us—as human beings—has within us the capacity for great creativity and richness. Each person is capable of different types of power, even if that power sometimes lies dormant. Those of us who are nonviolent and anti-authoritarian believe, not in the power of domination, but in the power of freedom. We believe in the power to make decisions autonomously and solidarity with others. We believe in the power to transform situations of injustice through the power of working side-by-side. We believe in becoming conscious and raising consciousness in others, because the power to change resides within us.

We can take away power from the corporations by consuming less or differently—

choosing carefully what we consume, buying from small and independent producers and not from large companies. We can refuse to pay taxes that prop up corrupt governments who abuse our rights or attack other nations or sell arms that increase conflicts. We can reclaim or occupy land that has been appropriated by the few and cultivate and use it for the benefit of ordinary rural people who work it. The Movimento Sem Terra (Landless Movement) has done this in Brazil as have other indigenous people in different countries.

One's entire personal and social life can be developed in such a way as to avoid any type of collaboration with this power for domination. This power tries to appropriate our own power, for example, the power of production. In the process, our own powers are diminished. If we could act with total freedom, we could do so much more.

Power corrupts

We do not believe that we solve our problems by taking power characterized by domination, or by turning the dominated into the dominators. This kind of power corrupts. Its values and behaviors become internalized, and show themselves in the actions that follow. We have too many examples of revolutions that took power, but soon reserved it to a small group who came to dominate the rest.

For us, power is synonymous with creative action and transforming situations, making the most of resources and improving human relations for the benefit of all. It is about creating organizational forms that seek different objectives that enable individual and collective goals to be met in a way that is pluralist and horizontal. We work to build organizations in which all play a part and share decision-making, with respect for one another.

Not large corporations, but small. Not economics, politics, and society on the macro scale, but on the local level. Rather than the state, the community; and instead of centralization we look for decentralization and diversification.

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Translation: Lucia Brandi.

Empowerment

By Pushpa Bhave

The word or concept of empowerment comes from the patriachal discourse because patriarchy has been obsessed by 'power.' Women as a group have been or are derived of that power. Although some women have been caressed by it, more often women are oppressed by it.

In the initial stages of gaining a new awareness of their situation, women have shown signs of yearning for power—it was a time when they wanted to be like men in order to be equal. But that was only a passing phase. When women started thinking critically and felt free to perceive the world through their new awareness, they established a new philosophy of life. This philosophy challenged the hierarchy of power—it challenged the tug of war for supremacy among nations, exemplified by the possession and the use of nuclear weapons. Women realized that violence, war, and a culture of hatred endangered the human values that are nurtured around the world as core cultural values. Two world wars and many other peripheral wars had devastated not only the physical structures of cities, but also the value structures of humanity. Because women have always been victims in the battles for supremacy among men, they raised their voices—together with peace-loving men—to oppose war and nuclear weapons.

But the texture of human affairs is not so simple. Ambition comes naturally in this achievement-oriented world. And the newly liberated women saw the light of the public domain as a challenge. They wanted to prove themselves—not an easy task for these women who struggled to establish themselves for the first time in the public realm. Meanwhile, men who held power—and were well accustomed to the world of bargaining —knew how a gesture to the sharing of bit of power can help in bargaining with any nonconformist. By the skillful use of power, one can easily co-opt people and create a rift among militant and dissident groups.

Gender bias continued despite the many eloquent words about equal opportunity. And among the women who were trying to stand on their own feet in a male-dominated world, there were differences of caste, creed, social class. As women achieved success in the so-called man's world, in fields ranging from education to industry and the professions, there were new differences—both natural and structural. Women's attitude towards other women who were not so successful changed and vice versa.

The male-dominated world did not like the challenge and competition posed by 'these liberated women.' Although we recognize that there were individual men who admired these women, as a group they reacted against it. So, they used women against women, creating groups like working women versus housewives—women fell victim to this game.

Similarly, economic independence has been much talked about, but not a single country has safeguarded women against tyranny in the family, domestic violence, or a subservient position in the home. The ability to earn a living, while important for women on its own, does not solve as many of the problem that it was claimed it would resolve. At the same time, being in the public realm exposed women to another set of power structures and hierarchies. Some women became a part of these power games without questioning them. Some were co-opted by the patriarchy, a process that is most evident among right-wing political parties and movements that use religious sentiment as bait. Finally, some women are even now questioning the structure from within. These three groups are not well-defined or well-established compartments.

It is not surprising that women, who as a social group had been restricted to the private world and almost invisible in the public scene, wanted to arrive by assuming positions of decision-making power. Yet, they were not free from the abuses of that power, just as no

human being who is part of our contemporary world can claim to be completely innocent as far as the use of power is concerned.

Returning to the theme of empowerment, it is interesting to note that in the last decade, concept words arrive periodically on the horizon. In some years, the concept was 'structural adjustment,' but we don't hear much about that anymore. In recent years, the term has been 'empowerment.' Frequently, the true meaning of these value-ridden concept words can be found in the context in which it has been used.

Just as patriarchy has been obsessed with power, the word empowerment points to the male ego as the man sees himself even now in the role of the provider. The notion of empowerment risks extending the role that patriarchy envisions for itself (including the state) to the role of providence—a role that is trying to provide empowerment to women who are deprived and are not looked after by so-called successful city women. Empowerment is presented by many agencies as a packet that is neatly wrapped by efficient hands. But genuine empowerment is an ongoing process.

True empowerment relates to how a woman interacts with the situations around her. And how she discovers fountains of energy deep within her. A grief-filled situation might break one person while it empowers another. So, empowerment should not be viewed as an ornament offered to women to appease them. We must emphasize that real empowerment is a process from within and without. For a woman to raise her consciousness of her self, begin to shape her own worldview, and form an association with other people whose consciousness is also being awakened is genuine empowerment.

Social empowerment has been described as having three levels: personal or power within; collective or power with; social or power in relation to certain ends and/or power against certain social forces. Of course, these levels are interrelated. Examining these different levels helps to distinguish between genuine and false empowerment. Let me consider several different examples from our history.

Long ago, during the movement for India's independence, Gandhiji encouraged women to come out of the private domain by empowering them with a redefined of womanhood. In his philosophy, personal power (power that was not achievement-oriented) held an important place. What was significant in Gandhiji's approach was a new relationship forged between the poor woman in the village and the city woman (sometimes even a millionaire's wife). The use of khadi (homespun cloth) was a means to this end. The city woman discarded her fine sari from Manchester and accepted the thick homespun cloth that was spun in the village cottages. "Power with each other" was created. He convinced the women to reject gold, so there was empowerment by means of renunciation. Gandhiji's efforts at changing women's sex role was important also.

But to arrive at some more recent history, I would like to cite the example of Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) or the movement for justice for people displaced by the Sardar Sarovar dam project. Empowerment is usually understood economically, but the social groups here were very marginalized and their passage from depravity was eased by th empowerment achieved through their collectie actions. This movement sought to stop the construction of a series of dams along the Narmada river. Their efforts have forced the World Bank and Indian governments to review this and other damn projects. They concluded that the project was ill-conceived and while the struggle against the dam project continues, it also sparked a people's movement.

The leader of the NBA, Medha Patkar, has served as a principal organizer for this movement, but many individuals' lives have changed because of NBA. So it happened that a young woman was alone in Manibeli (a village on one side of Narmada), but she had the courage to resist the police force—something that was unimaginable among poor illiterate rural communities. On the other side of the river, women who have been

rejected by their husbands carry a social stigma. But, in NBA two women who were rejected by their husbands assumed positions of respect. Now when women from the NBA go to march or protest in the city, the men look after the small children and the housework. The empowerment that they have achieved by working together is, in some ways, more effective and meaningful than economic empowerment.

In the recent past, it is also important to look the phenomenon that I call, 'mock empowerment.' Using political practices and rhetoric that create majority empowerment combined with minority disempowerment, this phenomenon has been the work of rightist groups or parties that use religious sentiment to divide people and reinforce male power.

It gives women a false sense of pride that they are working for religion and in the name of religion, they are encouraged to be violent. They also work against other groups of women. In the 1992-93 riots in Bombay and elsewhere, women took an active part in the violence. These political parties and groups are not opposed to gender bias, but they have rallied large groups of women to support them. Thus, patriarchy created mass-hysteria against a certain race of people. And it can happen again.

The real empowerment is fountain of energy from within, it manifests itself in social action and aims at social change.

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Collective identities: trap or tool for empowerment?

By Andreas Speck

Collective identities—"we" as queers, or whatever group you like—are often perceived as empowering by providing a sense of belonging. At the same time, by the very existence of these collective identities produce new boundaries of "in" and "out" and new norms of behavior that limit people's freedom to be and to do. Thus, identity can be disempowering and even threaten people's lives, in the case of nationalist or homophobic attacks.

Perhaps it's obvious, but I consider none of the normally-discussed collective identities (ethnic, gender, or nation-based) as "natural." All of them are social constructions. That doesn't mean they don't exist or that they don't have an influence on our lives. But it means that we have an active role in shaping our collective identities, in stabilizing or deconstructing them.

As a gay man, I write primarily about that perspective. But I believe that similar processes are at work in the construction of other collective identities and these reflections are not limited to issues of gay identities.

Constructing "the Other"

It is probably no coincidence that Western European/Northern American, heterosexual, middle-class white men are generally unaware of their identity: they represent the "norm" against which everything is measured. Collective identities are often definitions of "the Other," different from the norm and therefore less valued. At the same time, these descriptions of "the Other" are necessary to define the "norm." One of these "norms" is heterosexuality. Thus, something that is a social construction is shown as normal—a practice that serves to maintain power and to secure control. This practice is not possible through definition of heterosexuality on its own, but through the construction of "the Other:" the non-heterosexual or homosexual. This demarcation—the exclusion from the norm—leads to the construction of identity and the description of a collective identity for homosexuals.

In this process there is no awareness that normality depends on "the Other" even though it is the dominant form in society—that is, definitions of heterosexual depend on definitions of homosexual. Rather, those who do not belong become aware, painfully, of their own collective identity through this very exclusion. The Other experiences a collective sense of not-belonging and being different. Coming Out as gay or lesbian then can be a first step in the process of empowerment and there is little doubt it is crucial for a one's personal development and self-confidence. At the same time, this homosexual (or gay/lesbian) identity would not be possible without a hetero normality.

Redefinition of identity: first step of empowerment

One necessary first step of the gay/lesbian emancipation movement was to redefine the negative collective identity that was imposed on the community as a positive. *Gay Pride* and *Gay is Good* were slogans that attached positive values to one's identity. According to writer Susanne Kappeler, "The development of a political awareness of identity...is a first step in the politicization of the resistance of oppressed groups.... Awareness of identity is a result and a means of liberatory politics, identity a (temporarily) term of struggle: a response to discrimination and the view of the norm. Identity in this sense means awareness of a common history of exploitation and oppression...." This means empowerment on both a group and personal level.

In the beginning, many of these movements had to struggle to overcome definitions

inherited from the outside. Many people of color in the U.S. and elsewhere had a socially-inherited view of inferiority compared with white people. As part of the process of organizing for empowerment, they had to overcome and reshape that perception. Similarly, many gays and lesbians agreed with a negative view of themselves, leading to a policy of claiming to be the same as straights. The gay and lesbian movement that emerged after Stonewall was largely a Coming Out movement in which gays and lesbians empowered themselves by working on their own outing.

In the women's movement, women's groups filled a need to share the common experience of oppression with each other and to empower themselves as women. Then they served to develop political action. All of these movements experienced a shift from identity as a common experience of oppression toward a politics of identity. Newly found identities as Black or gay or lesbian or women became the basis for political action. As the gay movement consolidated, however, the frontal assault on the basic notion of boundaries between sexual identities rapidly lost popularity. Gay activists began to argue that gays were a sexual minority deserving of the same rights as other citizens. Instead of tearing down the system, the new goal emerged—rearrange the system and allow homosexuals to participate on a more equal basis. Thus, identity looses its character as a temporary term of struggle and becomes a means of constructing new norms for the group on which this identity was first imposed.

Dominant identities: invisible norms

Male identity, heterosexual identity or white identity exist as norms, but there is little awareness of them. It does not make sense to employ them as terms of struggle or products of liberation politics. To the contrary, through their norm-setting character they are means to shape and oppress and do not require an awareness of identity to achieve this end. Rüdiger Lautmann states that heterosexuality is not suitable for identity. It is only a category of exclusion—a category of the rest. Perhaps heterosexuality wants to be seen as the same as being human being and this immodest claim is the reason for its universal success. This white, male, heterosexual norm reflects the structure of power relations in society, a prerequisite and product of the power to define. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to question this identity as a norm. Weakening this norm-setting identity involves snatching it from its status as "natural" to achieve its collapse. At the same time, it is not enough to deny these identities and to pretend they don't exist.

As a white man from Germany, I have a view of the norm. Without reflecting on it, I am likely to judge others according to this norm, to divide people into categories according to well they conform to the norm and perhaps even pressure into compliance the norm as an exercise of my power. These characteristics—male, heterosexual, and white are attributes of power-over, not of liberation. At the same time they limit the behavior of those to whom they apply, just as the norm robs the potential of others. Everyone becomes enslaved to the norm.

Anyone who has tried to break with masculinity understands the powerful pressure of the norm, even for non-heterosexuals. The pressure begins with banal issues like clothing—through these superficialities society's pressure to conform is most evident. Ever tried cross-dressing in public? Although empowerment for heterosexual men might sound strange in a patriarchal society, I see it as crucial to breaking the cycle of reproducing oppressive masculinities. In this process, it is important to acknowledge men's power-over (women, gays, people of color) as a step toward overcoming the desire for power-over and replacing it with power-with others.

Marginalised identities

The collective identities of marginalized and oppressed groups are also ambivalent. I believe that advocates of identity politics tend to overvalue the collective awareness of oppression in the attempt to reshape identity in a positive way. Although recognizing shared oppression is an important aspect of empowerment, the principle of exclusion is built into these collective identities. They are constructing norms and thereby limiting inclusion also. Judith Butler cautions that while we fight the violence of being made invisible, we do not produce new forms of violence in this context norms of identities. New regulative ideals are easily constructed, controlling which forms of gender and sexuality are legitimate and which are not, leading to new forms of marginalization. The effect is disempowerment, when I realize that I don't fit the norms of the collective that I identify with.

Susanne Kappeler makes the point: "The content and reason of a political awareness of identity is not to celebrate a newly found identity, but to overcome the racist, sexist, heterosexist identity and the abolition of all criteria of discrimination and exploitation....Politics of identity, a politics of interests out of so called identities, means the de-politisation of the struggle for self-liberation of oppressed groups. With this politics of identity—women's politics instead of feminist politics, lesbian and gay politics instead of anti-heterosexism politics, female culture instead of criticism of patriarchy—with all this politics of identities and differences, which is emerging today, the political sense of building a collective awareness of identity of oppressed groups got lost. Identity was run-down to a psychological and cultural term, and lost its meaning for liberation politics."

Queering, the identity dilemma?

This is what queer politics is about. With the weakening of oppression resulting from personal and social empowerment—queering of identities is one option to avoid the trap of identity politics. At the same time, insisting on the awareness of identity as an oppressed group might still be an important political tactic. While it might be easier to identify as gay—at least in the cities of western countries—I still have to accept one of the collective identities, gay or straight. But aren't these just new norms? Does taking this identity mean that I accept the norm? Does it meant that I am complying voluntarily with the norm?

There are many practical difficulties in refusing to conform. One is that society's norms have a lot of power to shape reality. This power affects me too. Although I have my share of the advantages that patriarchy offers to men (despite the fact that I'm gay), society often imposes an identity on me—whether I like it or not. But, do I have to take part in perpetuating the homo-hetero binary just to comply with the norms of the gay community? Where is the liberation in this?

For me, empowerment is the means overcoming of the need to comply with collective identities—to see being gay as one of many aspects of my individual identity, no more important than the others. The question is how to liberate ourselves from society's constructions of the norm? The danger is in simply denying the power of existing collective identities or to be unaware of how we participate in them. If we manage to refuse to take part in constructing and stabilizing these norms, then maybe possibilities for liberation will emerge.

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Be realistic, demand the impossible

By Howard Clark

Look back at an experience of empowerment. I wonder if the experience now seems that it was just a passing feeling you had at the time. Back then, you or your group somehow gathered the strength to make a difference—or at least feel that you made a difference. You may have changed something permanently, but the feeling was ephemeral. It wore off. A sense of empowerment is something that needs to be recreated continually.

Forms of empowerment, whether types of activity, attitudes, styles, spread by contagion. But after a while we begin to look for improvement, some benchmark to surpass—an additional element, an innovation, or better results. A street action that is empowering the first time we participate soon begins to need something new—more people, a wider range of groups, more impact. When it becomes difficult to extend the level of social mobilization, it is a common mistake for many of us to confuse militancy for empowerment. People escalate the action hoping for similar results in terms of public disruption and press coverage. But this kind of militancy has its price. It often increases the marginalization that activists experience and is likely to narrow the social base for the actions. It can lead to a disempowering downward spiral, reducing the prospect for change either on the question under debate or on how social power is constructed.

In this article, I want to look at the need for strategy to achieve our goals in the context of an understanding of the power needed to oppose certain social forces. Let me begin with a brief review of the discussion about nonviolence and social empowerment. Nonviolent social empowerment does not aim to establish power-over (domination) but to strengthen people's power-to-be and power-to-do. It envisages a process—perhaps a better word would be praxis—of restructuring social power from the grassroots. It operates on three levels: power-within (personal power—the sense that each of us has when we feel centered), power-with (the power we feel when we connect and cooperate with others), and power-in-relation-to (the power to achieve our goals, to defend our values, to stop the forces of death and destruction).

Power-for

A movement needs some assessment about what it can achieve in a certain timeframe. That assessment may be intuitive or analytical, but it is best when made explicit. Of course, any assessment needs to be revisited and reevaluated regularly. Sometimes success takes a movement by surprise and allows it to move quickly beyond its initial demands—the campaign against genetically-modified food in Europe is a recent example. Unfortunately, activists sometimes confuse symbolic power and the espoused goal, especially when movements employ direct action. An example of this confusion sometimes affects efforts to liberate space (also known today as reclaiming space). Is the space or land itself important. Or is the action's statement of taking control more important? Is the practical or the principle paramount? Confusing symbol and political goal also effects actions for environmental defense and direct disarmament.

In the great anti-technocratic revolts of 1968, the slogan "Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible" was a rallying cry against the managerialism of the times. As I write, it warms my heart to hear the staid tones of the BBC reporting on anti-capitalist demonstrations in Washington DC. But a rallying cry is not a strategy for change.

With the anti-globalization demonstrations in Seattle in 1999 and Washington in 2000 and other cities, we have seen encouraging mobilizations representing the force of one coalition of opinion within society. Who now will make use of that force? Who offers channels for the energy now mobilized to take concrete forms? At a local level, solidarity

projects and fair trade shops do their work, but efforts are underway to move beyond that? Is there anything more than a number of lobby groups with merely reformist perspectives? I ask because I don't know, but these are important questions. It often seems that the more important it is to show results, the less visionary the demands become. The point, however, is not to abandon the pursuit of the vision but to find limited steps and possible forms of activity that enhance our capacity—our power-within and our power-with. We also need to look for practical and attainable objectives matched to our strength, which will ultimately be the steps towards realizing the vision: the impossible takes a bit longer. Redefining what is possible requires a strategy in which each phase creates a base for future expansion.

Power-against

At the same time, it is not enough merely to build up the strength of a movement. One also has to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the power structures we wish to challenge, looking for leverage points and particular sensitivities on the question at issue. A nonviolent attitude generally seeks to include the opponent in the outcome of a struggle, to recognize the opponent's legitimate concerns. Nevertheless, entrenched interests do have to be engaged in struggle, and, at some level, defeated.

Empowerment for social struggle must include preparation for some kind of contest in which we need to make tactical calculations about where to focus our energies. We must also be aware of the full repertoire of methods available and the different constituencies that can be mobilized. Unfortunately, many movements tend to repeat themselves—to stay with familiar methods and draw on familiar constituencies—instead of testing different methods

Are there ways to maximize our unity while promoting divisiveness amongst our opponents? The consumer boycott against Nestlé in the 1970's and 1980's because of its marketing practices in the Third World found a way. Nestlé was not the only manufacturer conning Third World mothers that powdered baby formula was better than breast milk. If they had all been put under the spotlight, they would have coordinated efforts to present a common front—no doubt paying for scientific reports to prove that powdered baby formula is better than breast milk. But when only the biggest company came under attack, the others began to change their practices to prove that they were better than Nestlé. In the end, Nestlé itself introduced a new code of practice.

Are there weak points where a limited action can inhibit or restrain the opponent? Peace Brigades International found that the presence of a few international volunteers would give dictators and death squads pause in threatening human rights activists. They also found that they could not always assume that this would be the case—at times, the international presence could attract unwanted attention and have adverse effects. Liam Mahoney and Enrique Eguren have done an excellent analysis in their book, *Unarmed Bodyguard* (Kumarian Press, 1997.)

Many movements concentrate on symbolic sites for struggle particularly the very site where a regime or company has plans to do something (build a road, site military hardware, etc). At this symbolic level we should ask: are there other mobilizing symbols closer to home that can inspire and engender connections with a wider range of people?

More than a contest

There are also people's actions that the ruling power simply cannot resist. If the elite repress the people, it brings out a reactive sympathy. If they allow the people's action to go ahead, then they concede ground to the movement. What dilemmas can we pose to our opponents?

Is there anything we want that our opponents would not mind conceding? Is there

anything we can offer our opponent that would help them make concessions? The decision of some of London's pioneer squatters to offer to manage houses they had saved from demolition was controversial in the movement at the time (nearly 30 years ago), but offered a win-win solution to both local councils and squatters.

The leading scholar on nonviolent action, Gene Sharp, has suggested four mechanisms by which a power structure changes in the face of a nonviolent movement: conversion (so that it accepts the movement's demands); coercion (so that it concedes); accommodation (so that it grants part of the demands); or disintegration. Most of us have probably experienced accommodation and the problem of trying to press for what we really wanted all along. Many of us have probably experienced success in converting or coercing a power structure and then faced the backlash from those who were not converted, those who felt left out of the accepted compromise. In some dramatic cases, groups have seen their society's political regime disintegrate only to fear the forces that stepped in to fill the power vacuum.

All of this suggests that nonviolent struggle is more than a contest. Power-against is just part of the third level of empowerment, power-in-relation-to.

Within every nonviolent movement that works on a particular issue, there is a deeper agenda. An agenda that includes creating societies in which people have the power to shape their own lives and strengthen a sense of social connectedness. Nonviolent social empowerment is not just a process or praxis, but a goal—replacing remote and impenetrable hierarchies with human-scale and transparent structures.

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Empowerment: International Dimensions

By Andreas Speck

Although international cooperation among political movements is as old as the movements themselves, it has become more important in times of economic globalization. Since the UN Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, solidarity has entered official discourse in discussion of an international "civil society." Rather than add to that discussion and the growing NGO-ization of popular movements, I want to examine the experience of one movement—War Resisters' International (WRI)—with international cooperation through the lens of empowerment. As an international network of pacifist and nonviolent organizations, WRI focuses on the grassroots level and works to achieve change at the leadership level by indirect means.

My approach to these issues is shaped by my experience as a "total objector" to both military and alternative service in Germany in the 1980s. I have been involved in the nonviolent peace movements and their anarchist or direct action wing since the mid-80s and got involved with WRI as a representative of the Federation of Nonviolent Action Groups (FöGA), the network of nonviolent anarchist groups in Germany. In this essay, I will explore three areas of international cooperation: solidarity actions, international nonviolent interventions (both of which are acts performed by "outsiders" to a conflict in cooperation with parties in the conflict) and, finally, the formation of a joint struggle against militarism.

Solidarity Work

War Resisters' International's solidarity work has focused primarily on supporting conscientious objectors who face imprisonment and other form of states repression. In the conflict between conscientious objectors on the one side and the state and militaries on the other side, War Resisters' International "intervenes" as a partisan third party[1] - providing support for the antimilitarist movement, and promoting the common cause of conscientious objection. During the second half of the 1990s, a major focus of WRI's solidarity work was the antimilitarist struggle in Turkey especially the imprisonment of conscientious objector and WRI vice chair Osman Murat Ülke[2].

The Turkish antimilitarist movement

The antimilitarist movement in Turkey is still quite young. It began with the first public declaration of conscientious objection by Tayfun in 1989. A second declaration followed in 1990 by Vedat Zencir, combined with a campaign against conscription. Both conscientious objectors were prosecuted and sentenced under Article 155 Turkish Penal Code and charged with "alienating the people from the military," but not for conscientious objection itself.

Early in its development, the Turkish antimilitarist movement looked for international cooperation. In 1993 the International Conscientious Objectors' Meeting (ICOM) gathered in Ören, Turkey. Although the meeting did not enjoy legal status in Turkey because it was never approved by the Turkish authorities, the contacts made were important for the movement that followed. On 17 May 1994, *İstanbul Savaş Karşıtları*

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1 Diana Francis and Norbert Ropers make the distinction between partisan, semi-partisan and non-partisan actors in a conflict (Francis/Ropers 1996). Even more explicit are Berndt/Francis in a diagram used in KURVE Wustrow's trainers training (Berndt/Francis, without year). WRI's solidarity work is clearly partisan.
2 a brief overview of the Turkish antimilitarist movement is included in: Movement Action Plan for Turkey. Documentation. Patchwork 1998, especially from page 9 on

Derneği (Istanbul War Resisters' Association) organized a press conference to mark International Conscientious Objectors' Day, celebrated on May 15. Four Turkish COs used the forum to declare their conscientious objection publicly. Three German supporters gave presentations on the situation of conscientious objectors in Germany and Europe. Organizers of the press conference raised a demand for the right to conscientious objection, supported by more than 100 signatures (Nadler 1994: 7).

After the press conference, 17 Turkish participants and the three German delegates were arrested. The Germans were released the following day, but were prevented from leaving Turkey. After trial in early June, they were forced to leave the country and banned from visiting again. While most of the Turkish people were released on the same day, four remained in prison for weeks and even months—among them was Osman Murat Ülke. They also were charged under Article 155. *İstanbul Savaş Karşıtları Derneği* was banned.

Although Osman Murat Ülke participated in the press conference only as a translator, he was the most outspoken person during the trial. In June 1995, at the anticipated end of the trial, an international delegation was organized to observe the proceedings at the Military Court at the General Staff in Ankara. Faced with huge international interest, the court postponed the trial ended until August 29, 1995. Another international delegation was organized, this time smaller than the first. While three of the accused were convicted and sentenced to prison terms equal to the time they had already spent in prison, Osman Murat Ülke was acquitted. But he was sent immediately to the recruitment office and called up to report to his military unit at Bilecik two days later. He was allowed to go home and to travel to Bilecik on his own. Not surprisingly, Ülke did not obey the call up order, but used World Peace Day on September 1 to make a public statement. At a press conference in Izmir, he burned his draft papers, and publicly declared his conscientious objection. Although everyone expected his immediate arrest, nothing happened for more than one year. Then on October 7, 1996, Osman Murat Ülke was arrested and taken to the Mamak military prison in Ankara (Speck 1996: 1/8)

International Solidarity

The development of Osman Murat Ülke's case made it possible to prepare for solidarity actions. Osman Murat Ülke was not only well known in the international antimilitarist movement when he was arrested in October 1996, but also a practice of cooperation existed between *Izmir Savaş Karşıtları Derneği* (Izmir War Resisters Association or ISKD) in Turkey and several groups of the WRI network. The ICOM gathering in 1993, several delegation visits to Turkey, and travel Osman Murat Ülke to groups in Europe laid the ground for a large solidarity campaign.

Immediately after his arrest, the international network mobilized an action alert. Protest faxes and letters from all over the world arrived at the prison, and letters expressing solidarity were sent to Osman Murat Ülke in prison. When he was transferred from Mamak military prison to his military unit in Bilecik following the trial on 19 November 1996, faxes arrived at Bilecik barracks before he did! The same thing happened when he was moved to Eskisehir military prison, where he was tried several times for disobeying orders and desertion. He was finally released on 9 March 1999, after being sentenced to one year imprisonment, which he already served while awaiting trial. Although there were no new charges against him, he was ordered to present himself at "his" military unit in Bilecik again. But everyone knew that he would not report (ISKD 1999). Since then, he has been living in Izmir, officially sought for desertion, but practically ignored by the police and the military. Still, he can be arrested whenever it suits the Turkish state.

In an interview Osman Murat Ülke points to the importance of solidarity - solidarity

from within Turkey, and from abroad - while he was imprisoned. He received more than 2,500 letters while in prison, contributing to his own sense of empowerment or *power-within* while in prison (Ülke 1999). Earlier, ISKD activist Serdar Tekin pointed out, that in case of arrest "international delegations and support are of a practical importance, to reduce the danger of torture and mistreatment". (Tekin 1996).

Excursion: theoretical questions

Because empowerment is about the effectiveness of different strategies, the question arises: why did this work (at least in a limited way) in the case of Osman Murat Ülke? By contrast, why did Serbian war resisters warn their international partners against carrying out a similar solidarity campaign in the event that one of them would be arrested[3]? Why did they fear this kind of international solidarity from below?

Figure 1

Sources of Power of Elite

Result of Withdrawal of Consent

Figure 2

Sources of Power of Elite

Result of Withdrawal of Consent
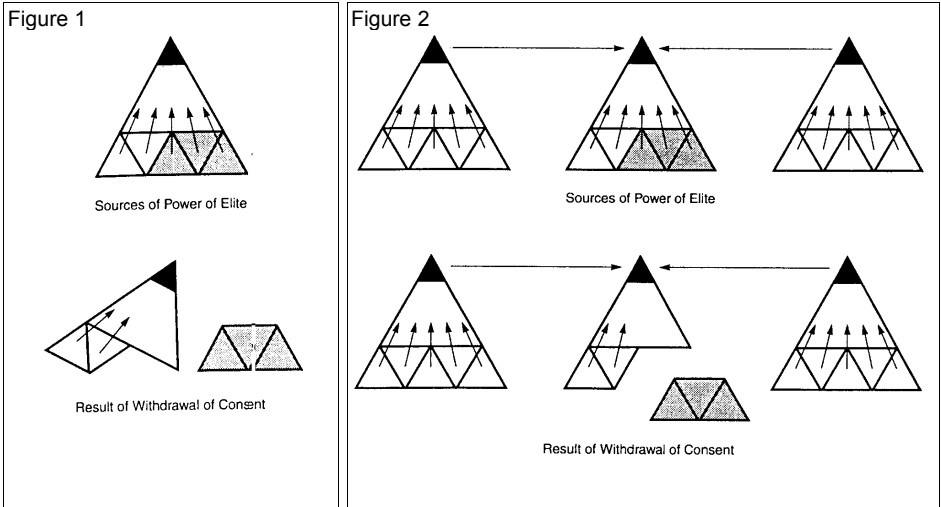
A closer look at *Gene Sharp's* "Consent Theory of Power" (Sharp 1973, 1980) might provide an answer. According to Sharp, power is based on the consent of those governed. If this consent is *actively* withdrawn, power crumbles, it ceases to exist (see figure 1). Although Sharp's model presents a simplified analysis of power relations within a society, it completely overlooks important issues of international relations and must be modified to address solidarity.In the case of Turkey, the Turkish elites (especially the military) enjoyed strong support from most NATO countries, especially from Germany and the United States. Greece, a nation that is almost at war with Turkey, is the notable exception among NATO members. Following Sharp's model, this international support stabilizes the Turkish elites. A withdrawal of consent by the Turkish population can be neutralized through support from outside elites such as Germany and the United States (see figure 2).

Building on Sharp, Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung has suggested another model, the "great chain of nonviolence." Acts of solidarity those states that support the Turkish elites become very important. Thus, the Turkish elites become dependent on public opinion in Germany and the United States, a power relationship that could be

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3 So did Igor Seke from Serbia at WRI's seminar "From Kosov@ to Seattle: what role for nonviolent action?" in Oxford in August 2000, a few months before Milošević finally lost power in Yugoslavia.

exploited with international delegations to trials and with campaigns of protest letters and faxes to military and prison authorities following Osman Murat Ülke's arrest.

Although additional conscientious objectors publicly declared their objection to military service during and after Osman Murat Ülke's prison term, no new CO's were called up or arrested. It seems that the Turkish state has decided to ignore the issue, perhaps to avoid the emergence of a new human rights issue while Turkey seeks membership in the European Union, a process that has identified Turkey's human rights record as an issue.

The case of Yugoslavia was very different. The antimilitarist movement in Yugoslavia was already accused of being an agent of "the West." Because Yugoslavia and "the West" view each other as enemies (and even went to war during NATO's bombing in Spring 1999), a solidarity campaign by citizens of Western states could have supported the claim the Yugoslav powerholders. These international antimilitarist groups were far from being supporters of the Yugoslav regime, even when they opposed NATO's bombing campaign. To support the Yugoslav antimilitarists, there was no power relationship that could have been exploited for solidarity actions.

Solidarity Work: Other Aspects

Solidarity actions provide support, and that shouldn't be a one-way road. While the Turkish antimilitarist activists receive solidarity from other activists around the world, they are also expressing their solidarity with antimilitarist activists in other countries, like Greece or the Balkans.

From the point of view of empowerment, this mutual support is important not only because of the direct consequences (providing funds for a campaign or carrying out solidarity actions to raise public awareness), but also because of the power that comes from the sense of belonging to an international movement. These exchanges of solidarity provide that experience and the direct human interaction that might help to break the experience of isolation in one's own country. This experience was especially important for Yugoslav peace activists during the era of the Milošević regime. It became increasingly important during NATO's bombing campaign when peace activists felt more isolated and marginalized in an increasingly nationalist Serbian society.

However, solidarity can also be disempowering—both for those receiving solidarity and for those offering it[4]. For those on the receiving end the potential danger is the development of a relationship of dependency in which the local group depends on outside support for almost everything. Even in the best of circumstances, this situation can lead the group to take its political agenda and policies from its supporters, not its constituency. At its worst, I call this dynamic "the NGO syndrome," which involves the development of local or regional NGOs that are completely dependent on outside funding without any local base. This activity might empower those employed by the NGO, but the local community is prevented from self-organization and degraded to receiving foreign "aid."

For those providing solidarity, there are two potential dangers that can lead to disempowerment: the first is an uncritical acceptance of every action and policy of those who receive support. This often happened in the third world solidarity movements of the 1970s. The second danger comes from overlooking the links between international issues and the problems in one's own society. This problem can result from a reticence to confront the reality in one's own country and from projecting idealized or romantic visions on movements that are far away

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4 On some problems of solidarity work and international cooperation see Rohwedder 1998

Nonviolence and Social Empowerment

International Nonviolent Intervention

Although international solidarity is a form of international nonviolent intervention, the term is used increasingly to name *nonpartisan* interventions in a conflict by third parties. Although the history of international nonviolent interventions goes back to the 1930s, when Maude Royden started to form a "Peace Army" to act as a human shield between the Japanese and Chinese forces during the war between Japan and China (Weber 1993), initiatives for nonviolent intervention became increasingly popular after the end of the Cold War. Some of these projects have been described in the journal, *Peace News.*

War Resisters' International has a long history of involvement with international nonviolent intervention. After its Triennial meeting in 1960, Gandhi's idea of a Shanti Sena (Peace Army) was taken up on the initiative of Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) to create an "international Shanti Sena," an effort that became the "World Peace Brigade," founded in 1961 in Beirut, Lebanon (Weber 1993: 50-51). Although short-lived, this organization was an important experience for the subsequent creation of "Peace Brigades International" in 1980. In 1971, during the war of secession between Bangladesh and Pakistan, WRI and *Peace News* initiated a similar project, "Operation Omega" as an international nonviolent direct response that also sent relief to the border areas of Bangladesh (Graham, 1971; Moody, 1971, 1971a, 1971b; Omega 1971).

Balkan Peace Team

In the 1990s WRI's most important project of international nonviolent intervention was the Balkan Peace Team, which operated in Croatia, and later expanded to Kosov@ and Serbia. The project closed in January 2001 when the Kosov@ team left the project.

The Croatia team of the Balkan Peace Team engaged in different activities at different levels of society, usually in close cooperation with local civil society groups. The teams observed trials of members of the opposition or of minorities, documented human rights abuses against Serbs and members of the Croatian opposition. They also contributed to the development of civil society networks through the exchange of information. While the human right monitoring work helped to create political space that could be used by local activists (and served as an indirect contribution to local empowerment) the network building activities contributed very directly to the empowerment of local activists.

In a first study Müller/Büttner (1996) wrote, "The BPTI project plays a strongly supportive role in civil society's development of articulation and conflict resolution abilities (peacebuilding: empowerment through seminars and networking)." In a more detailed analysis, they point out that the most important aspect is "the continuous strengthening of the local partners through the specific additional and supporting work of the team" (Müller/Büttner/Gleichmann, 1999).

Critical Remarks

Some critical remarks need to be made about the growth of activity in the field of international nonviolent interventions, a phenomenon that cannot be viewed in isolation from the poor state of the peace movement in most Western countries, at least in the period from the end of the Cold War. With the advent of the so-called "war on terror" increased mobilization and some coordination offer hopeful signs, but a renewed movement has not yet firmly established itself.

To a significant degree, the fall of the Berlin Wall had a disempowering effect on many peace activists. The changes that it represented may have brought (capitalist) freedom to Eastern Europe, but they also marked the end of any alternative to the Western model of

capitalist liberal democracy. It also revealed that, stripped of the simple east-west schema—there are no easy answers to long-standing conflicts and wars in many parts of the world.

When the initial hope for a "peace dividend"—massive disarmament (or even demilitarization) and reinvestment in social programs didn't become true, the peace movement in many parts of the West seemed to have been demobilized and even disempowered. In fact, the military even gained ground in most countries and found new justifications for its existence. In response to the war on the Balkans, initiatives for humanitarian aid and nonviolent interventions were widely welcomed in the movement, while the militarization of our own countries continued and the role of our governments in fuelling the Balkans conflicts remained largely unchallenged. It seemed that the peace movement of Western Europe emigrated to Yugoslavia to empower others and support anti-militarist activists there, while it was too disempowered to confront militarism at home.

"Maybe we got our priorities wrong," said Nenad Vukosavljevic of the Sarajevo based *Center for Nonviolent Action* one day after NATO started its bombing campaign in March 1999 (Berndt 1999). Perhaps the concentrated peace work on the Balkans combined with the lack of campaigning against militarism in the NATO countries was one factor that contributed to NATO's bombing campaign. His question points to the need for linking international nonviolent intervention with antimilitarist campaigning and organizing at home (Berndt/Speck 1999, 2000), something that is in the present proposal for an *International Nonviolent Peace Force*.

A similar pattern can be observed in conscientious objector movements in countries were conscription has been abolished or where conscientious objection is no long a political issue. Many of these groups turn to solidarity work with CO movements abroad, a strategy that often means that only a small group of activists continues to be concerned with CO issues. Rarely do they develop new strategies to challenge a professionalized army at home.

Joint Struggle Against Militarism

Although War Resisters' International (and the larger peace movement) has decades of experience with international cooperation, the organization is still far from a joint struggle against militarism. Some international campaigns like WRI's efforts surrounding *Prisoners for Peace Day* on 1 December, or *International Conscientious Objectors' Day* on 15 May—or campaigns against nuclear weapons or to ban landmines—have been successful to a limited extent. Yet it seems that the more successful they can be, the less they challenge the roots of militarism itself. Indeed, the ban on landmines has even been supported by powerful militaries.

In developing a joint struggle against militarism, we need to be aware of internal power relationships among anti-militarist movements in the West and other parts of the world. While the major military powers reside in the West, antimilitarist movements from the West express their solidarity with movements elsewhere and often provide material support. Although this support is needed, it does not represent a joint struggle—something that would include challenging the military might of the Western nations.

We, who live and campaign in the "First World" need to be aware that we benefit from the West's militarism, even as activists. We enjoy from freedom to travel (and cheap fares), benefit from social security and welfare, and purchase inexpensive imported products (which are the result of a globalized economy and cheap labor secured by militarism). In short, we benefit from the massive military strength of the West.

Thus, a joint struggle against militarism needs to put capitalism—and patriarchy—on the political agenda, issues that are often avoided by the Western peace movement because

they require us to acknowledge our own contradictions and to questions the Western way of life. Without tackling these issues and promoting a fundamentally different social, economical and political order, we will be stuck in solidarity work that risks the dangers outlined above. But we will never achieve fundamental change nor develop at a shared struggle that tackles the roots of militarism

Closing Remarks

On the first day of the Nonviolence and Social Empowerment conference, the Indian *Sarvodaya* activist *Daniel Mazgaonkar* made some important remarks. He raised the question about what kind of democracy we mean when we talk about the need for democracy, for democratic change? Are we talking about parliamentary systems, which are presented today as the ultimate ration of democracy? Or do we think of a new kind of democracy, one that is not based on state systems, but developed from the grassroots, and embedded in people's lives—a democracy that we might call Gandhian, or anarchist?

Western peace activists also need to ask questions about what kind of economy we want, when we talk of economic empowerment, and self-reliance? And what kind of technology?

International solidarity is an important aspect of War Resisters' International's work today, and makes important contributions to the empowerment of activists. But in the long run, it can only be the beginning of a process in which we need to empower each other to face global militarism, and to develop a joint struggle for a just social order.

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Fear—a sign that we are alive

By Roberta Bacic

As a participant in an action of the "Sebastian Acevedo Movement Against Torture" shortly before the plebiscite in 1988, we gathered in front of the National Library located in the heart of Santiago, the capital of Chile. The action was planned for 12 o'clock sharp and it was supposed to last not longer that 3 minutes. It all started perfectly and, as soon as we started, we heard the police cars and the doors of the library closing up. Fear was immense. What would happen? Could we find a way to escape if the doors were closed and in front was the street full of transit? There was no time to think or discuss. We read our pledge naming people who were held in custody and were being tortured, threw it so that people could collect it and hold hands while singing our song, "Por el pajaro enjaulado. . . ." ("For the caged bird...")

The police was already there, spraying water mixed with acid towards our group. We finished our song and tried to escape but without allowing anyone to depart alone, as we were trained. We had internalized our training. Some managed to disperse amidst the normal crowd and the spectators who had come to see what was happening. Some were taken by the police while I fell on the library's stone steps—the force of the water was so strong that did not allow me to stand. One of my colleagues held my hand, aware that it was a risk to be alone. Somehow we ended up in a taxi, after having rejected one that offered help, but we rejected it for security reasons. It took us to office of SERPAJ (Latin American NGO Peace and Justice Service) quite far from the library. We had to take off our clothes as the acid was irritating our skin and reacting with our clothes. We were welcomed by our friends who had not come to the action, then we took a shower and sat down to lunch. Nobody asked anything. It was up to us to share. The evidence of abuse was clear. . . . months later we learned that the acid thrown on us was the same used in South Africa to disperse demonstrations in favor of ending the apartheid.

When I was asked to write about living with fear—a topic that had been so crucial in resisting the dictatorship in Chile—I didn't think it would be difficult to share part of the experience of living with fear and to talk about how we managed it at personal and social level. But it has not been easy at all. My experience of fear was re-awakened and I have had to deal with it again.

The fact that Pinochet was in London (and that he was sent back to Chile to live a life in impunity instead of returning to face trial), has triggered internal processes and stimulated a need to evaluate the way we dealt with fear during the dictatorship. My thoughts have been on how I as an individual and we as a community would face it now. I will try to share with you that which remains constant.

Fear is an emotion that works as a survival instinct. It lets us know that we are in danger. Because of this we have to look into it—face our fears and deal with them. If we deal with fear adequately it can become a very empowering experience, but if we do not succeed in dealing with it, fear can disempower us. We cannot expect to overcome fear, nor we will defeat it. But we can hope to develop the ability not to panic, to live with our fear, and to use it constructively to take the necessary steps to move towards our goals or targets. In my case, the goal was to stop the dictatorship and struggle towards a more just society.

When I share this experience with the human rights and social action groups that I have been involved with, I use a passage from a story that helps us understand the ideas I have tried to express in words:

> "And the boy's knees trembled as he felt he was lost in the forest. So, he
> said to himself in loud voice: -Get away fear!,
> -and as his legs kept trembling he shouted:

-Get away fear! Leave me!
And then the legs continued trembling, but only because it was cold.

(Taken from: *La Piedra Arde*, by Eduardo Galeano. Graficas Ortega, S.A. Salamanca. Spain. 1983.)

In situations that push us to our limits and we perceive ourselves at risk, fear will likely surface as a response. We have to face it. What situations am I referring to? Any situations in which we live with insecurity and anguish. In war situations, or as was the case in my country, during dictatorship, the feelings of insecurity and anguish merge: fear of being arrested, fear of being denounced, fear of being tortured, fear of being caught in an illegal meeting, fear of being betrayed, etc. Fear can arise in response to the unknown (what happens if I am arrested?) and in response to what is known (a specific threat over the telephone).

The Components and Consequences of Fear

As a mechanism, fear can act to prompt us into protecting ourselves or others. Fear can also inhibit us. Fear itself is not necessarily negative. It acts as a defense mechanism that allows us to take precautions in a dangerous or threatening situation. But fear can also push us towards paralysis, obsession, and feelings of guilt.

Fear creates a general state of alertness, a sensation that we must always be on edge and that we are under stress because of what might happen. Fear makes us feel that we are vulnerable, that we are unprotected, and that we can be harmed. We might feel impotent. Fear might make us feel unable to act in the face of difficult circumstances. Or we might feel that what happens to us does not depend on our actions, and is out of our control.

Because of fear, we may even experience an altered sense of reality. We might lose sense of where fear really is, or if it even exists. The sense of anxiety and fear might appear diffuse and we might even be unable to perceive what is happening in or around us.

Facing fear directly during extreme situations seems the best way to deal with it. Sharing different experiences of fear and methods for dealing with it, as part of a group, proved to be very helpful for us. These are some of the resources that we have found to be particularly useful:

- Have an active attitude in the face of fear. If we do nothing to face the anguish it creates, its power will increase and probably consume our energy when we try to control it. There seem to exist two different ways to face this anguish. One is to do it directly, that means getting into the situations that provoke it. If we cannot eliminate it, then we might do something about it, like taking precautions, etc. The other option is to face the consequences—try to keep control over situations and avoid impulsive behaviors. For example, if we have to face the fact that the police might arrest us during a demonstration, we can try to control our fear by deciding beforehand how we will act if the police confront us. If that does not work, then we can try to imagine and prepare for police repression, arrest, and even torture if we are taken into custody.
- Working out our fears, meaning that we deal with them in different ways and follow a variety of steps:
  a) Acknowledge the fear, meaning that we are aware that we have fear and that we are able to express what we feel and think about it.
  b) Analyse the fear in order to evaluate risks and implications.
  c) Socialise our feelings to share the experience and overcome the negative self-image we might have of ourselves for being afraid.

d) Deconstruct the fear into its components; for example, decide as a group how to act if the police arrest some—but not all—of the participants at a protest and how to deal with police violence directed at activists.

- Avoid taking rigid positions in the face of fear. Often, we try to deny fear exists or we try to hide from it and act as if it doesn't exist. None of these options helps us to move forward in our actions or to deal with the presence of fear.
- Share the feelings and emotions that arise from fear. Talking about these feelings with trusted associated helps us to understand the deep commitment we have to our struggles, and the motivation of other individuals have to join us.
- Last, but not least, is the need for promoting solidarity. To live and survive in extreme political situations, the feeling of being part of a group—of being a member of a body and not an isolated individual—is a fundamental resource in our struggle. We feel co-responsible for the progress we make and we share our failures.

Resources

Lastly, I'd like to add that we used to run workshops on dealing with fear which proved to be incredibly helpful. A key resource has been the book, *Salud Mental: La Comunidad Como Apoyo* by Carlos Martin Beristain and Francesc Riera based on their experience of working in El Salvador and Guatemala during periods of intense repression.

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II. EMPOWERMENT: ACTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

Peace in Bougainville and the Work of the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency

By Kris Hakena

Background to Bougainville

Bougainville is in the South Pacific, approximately 1,000 km. northeast of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and is part of the Solomon Islands group in Melanesia. It has a land area of some 10,620 sq. kms. Bougainville comprises two large islands, Buka to the north and Bougainville less than a kilometer to the south, and about 168 smaller groups of islands and atolls scattered over 450,000 sq. kms. of the Solomon Sea. At its southern end, Bougainville is barely 20 km. from the neighboring Solomon Islands.

Like its neighboring Pacific regions, Bougainville was administered as a colony for many years. Buka and Bougainville were a British possession until 1898, when they were traded to Germany. They were occupied by Australia at the beginning of World War I. In 1942, the Japanese invaded the islands, but the Allied forces recaptured them in 1945. After the war, Bougainville came under Australian administration as a United Nations Trust territory. In the late 1960s and early '70s, when Papua New Guinea achieved independence from Australia, Bougainville was declared part of the new nation, over the objections of the Bougainvilleans—one of the world's many examples of colonial powers drawing borders that do not correspond to long-standing relationships between indigenous peoples.

Bougainville has nineteen distinct groups, each with its own language, customs and traditional practices, and a further 35 dialects. Its population is somewhere between 160,000 and 200,000 people. (There was no census in Bougainville between 1980 and July 2000, and at this writing there are no figures available.)

Except for two districts, Buin and Nissan Island, Bougainville is a matrilineal society; kinship, descent and inheritance of property—including land—are determined in terms of matrilineal lines, and Bougainvilleans see women as equal partners in the political, economical and social development of Bougainville. The women of Bougainville, like all other women in Papua New Guinea, produce and process about 80% of their families' food and commonly have the responsibility for raising young children.

Most people live on the coast and in central villages. Sweet potato and fish are the main foods. The second starch foods are taro in the northwest and yams in the southwest. A variety of traditional and introduced foods are grown in swampy areas. Sago is an emergency food.

Bougainville has many natural harbors. Large swamps dominate the west coast. Plantations line the east coast and the inland lowlands of the Buin district. Most of Buka is coral that has been raised above sea level by earth movements over thousands of years. Coconut and cocoa plantations cover most of the coastline.

Bougainville is almost all of volcanic origin, and rich volcanic soil covers most areas. There are two dormant volcanoes, Mt. Bagana and Mt. Balbi. The Emperor Crown Prince and Deuro Ranges form a central mountain spine, where the Panguna mine is situated.

The Bougainville Crisis

The people of Bougainville always wanted self-determination; they never wanted to be

part of a united Papua New Guinea. The fight for self-determination started back in the early 1950s. This is not a new issue. Bougainvilleans strongly align themselves with the people of the South Solomons, which went from British colonial rule to independence in 1978. Bougainville has traditional ties and a lot in common with the South Solomons.

The recent political crisis, however, could be said to have its origin with the commissioning of the Panguna mine by the government in 1969. The traditional Bougainvillean landowners were vigorously opposed to the mine. In the 1970s, those who lived or owned land near the mine were unable to protect their land, houses, and other properties. The treatment of the landowners and others by the administration and mine officials further alienated them from the Papua New Guinea political leadership.

The formation of the Bougainville Special Political Committee in 1973 gave a boost to the idea of political development in the North Solomons province. On September 1, 1975, Bougainville declared its independence from Papua New Guinea in a demonstration of both Bougainville's cultural unity and identity and widespread reluctance among Bougainvilleans to be railroaded into a united Papua New Guinea. Bougainville and the new government of Papua New Guinea reached a peaceful compromise when the Papua New Guinea government offered partial self-determination to Bougainville through the formation of the North Solomons Provincial Government, the first of its kind in Papua New Guinea.

But during the 1987 national elections in Papua New Guinea, one Bougainville political party strongly opposed Bougainville Copper Ltd., which developed into a very serious confrontation between security forces and the traditional landowning communities in the Panguna area. The crisis heightened in late November of 1988 when the militant landowners took to the jungle as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and caused damage to properties. The militants demanded the closure of the mine, 10 billion kina in compensation, and the secession of the North Solomons Province from Papua New Guinea. The national government offered a development package that was irrelevant to issues raised and thus both inadequate and impractical.

The Panguna mine ceased operation in May 1989, and Papua New Guinea declared a state of emergency in June. In 1990 it imposed a blockade around the island, cutting off trade and the import of many necessities. The national government tended to approach the crisis as a law and order problem rather than a political one, as have successive national governments ever since the North Solomons Province was granted partial self-determination (albeit with very little legislative power).

Other issues that contributed to the conflict include:

- A priority among Bougainvilleans on employment of Bougainvilleans at the copper mine, then largely in the hands of non-Bougainvilleans;
- The destruction of land and the environment in an area of about ten square kms. around the mine;
- The refusal by the Papua New Guinea government to pay the 10 billion kina compensation demanded by the Panguna landowners;
- The unfair distribution of financial benefits from the sale of gold, copper and silver, accounting for some 20% of Papua New Guinea's gross national product.
- A desire for the political decision-making process to be brought closer to the people;
- A long-standing resentment on the part of many Bougainvilleans toward the Port Moresby government for years of neglect, marginalization and disrespect—especially in terms of economic development; and
- The belief of many Bougainvilleans that, after successfully running their own provincial government and its business arm, the Bougainville Development Corporation Ltd., they had the capacity to manage their own affairs.

Thus, what started as a land use issue, with the Panguna landowners against Bougainville Copper Ltd. and the Papua New Guinea government, turned into the armed conflict Bougainvilleans call the "Bougainville crisis."

The conflict caused enormous suffering for innocent people, especially women and children. An estimated 10,000 to 18,000 were killed during the conflict. Atrocities were committed by all the armed forces. Villages were burnt. Millions of kinas worth of investments owned by the government, businesses, and ordinary people were ransacked and destroyed. At the height of the conflict in 1989, all administrative, social, and economic services came to a standstill. Nearly ten years of fighting resulted in total destruction of the island's economic and social infrastructures and greatly sabotaged the Papua New Guinea economy as well. Destruction, death, and suffering became the hallmark of the "Bougainville crisis."

The damage had a psychological component as well. The conflict caused people to become their own enemies. It created disunity, hatred and a desire for payback. Power came to be seen as coming from the barrel of the gun. Some uncontrolled elements claimed the right to lead by force and terror; those who did not toe the line were beaten up or killed. Everyone was subject to all kinds of humiliations and abuse. Fear was instilled in the minds of the people. Innocent Bougainvilleans were forced to do things against their will.

In short, the conflict created a long nightmare of anarchy, destruction, chaos, and despair, leaving in its wake a way of life that needs healing and rehabilitation from within and a shattered economy that needs reconstruction from external sources.

The Peace Process

At their twelfth negotiation, the Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville leaders agreed on amendments to the Papua New Guinea constitution to allow for the establishment of the autonomous government on Bougainville and a referendum on Bougainville's future political status, to be held no earlier than ten years and no later than fifteen years after the election of the first autonomous government. The agreement on the referendum was a gesture to the people of Bougainville in recognition of their long struggle for self-determination. The Bougainville leaders also agreed to dispose of weapons and implement good governance.

In early 1990, there was a lot of peace reconciliation work throughout Bougainville under the guidance of the Bougainville Council of Elders supported by the women's and youth organizations. Within their respective communities, at the councils of elders are well respected on Bougainville and have a lot to say on what goes on the community level. The Bougainville Council of Elders with the assistance of the Papua New Guinea government has now established authority and has basically brought everything under its control in Bougainville. The Council has played a very big role in peace and reconciliation and general maintenance of law and order.

The women's, youth, and church groups and non-governmental organizations have also played a pivotal role in the peace process. At times, women's organizations even walked into non-government controlled areas to bring peace to the armed forces and beg them to lay down their arms and talk peace. The women's groups made their pledges for peace known in meetings, peace negotiations, and political meetings between the Papua New Guinea government and Bougainville leaders.

The fragile peace process in Bougainville is now moving in the right direction supported by countries such as Australia and New Zealand. There is a Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) that consists of seventy-five peace monitors—twenty from New Zealand, thirty from Australia, fifteen from Vanuatu, and ten from Fiji—to monitor the progress of the peace process. Its prime role is to monitor the adherence of the parties to the

undertakings they have made concerning the peace process and in particular to monitor the cease-fire agreement. The second task is to provide assistance to the parties so as to facilitate the peace process. The PMG has done an excellent job. Its presence has helped to build confidence in the peace process throughout the province.

The Bougainville leaders and the Papua New Guinea government both still consider the PMG presence as essential, in part because, unfortunately, the program on arms disposal has not been accomplished as yet. The guns used during the armed conflict are still in the hands of the ex-combatants. A working committee known as the Peace Process Consultative Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of the United Nations in Bougainville to formulate a program on arms disposal.

Women and the Bougainville crisis

Since the beginning of the Bougainville crisis in 1989, women were the among its principal victims. Women were raped, tortured and abused by the armed forces. At the height of the crisis and the blockade imposed by the Papua New Guinea government around the island in May 1990, all administrative, social and economic functions came to an abrupt halt. At the same time, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army destroyed many of the health and education institutions that were left in the province. Women and children suffered the most, as there was no medicine available on the island. Many women died during childbirth; many lost loved ones—husbands, sons, and daughters. (A survey conducted by our organization revealed that there are 2,000- plus widows in the province.) Others were deserted by their husbands, and there was an increase in the number of single mothers. There was total breakdown of family values.

Also, during the crisis, women's freedom of speech was restricted; they were afraid of being harassed and abused even more if they expressed their views openly. And their movement to attend to their families' needs was restricted. They were not free to go to their gardens to collect food for their families.

Yet during that time, many Bougainville women, even when they were suffering, pulled their families together as the basic unit of community support. Even during the worst of the crisis—as well as after it—women organized themselves into church groups and stood together praying for reconciliation and peace.

The conflict brought about many changes and challenges. Bougainville will not be the same again politically, economically, or socially. New roles are being imposed on the women of Bougainville, and new roles need new approaches. We need a new vision that can be put into practical use for the betterment of Bougainville women and of all of us. This is an important task that needs expertise and funding.

Women have a special place in our society. They are mothers, teachers, owners of land, they have traditional values and responsibilities. Bougainville is predominantly a matrilineal society, and under the traditional system women are responsible for making decisions on the use of the land. The cultural rights of the women of Bougainville had been suppressed since foreign colonization of the island, but women are still well-placed and well-respected in the Bougainville social system and are in a good position to influence our leaders to restore peace on Bougainville.

Those are some of the reasons women organized themselves to end the conflict. As a result of the countless problems they encountered, they have taken an active role in the process of finding lasting solution to the ten-year conflict. Women's groups are very much aware of the lessons of the conflict, and many have organized themselves to face the present challenges and are involved in community rehabilitation programs. They feel that their potential and capabilities for rehabilitation and development need to be recognized because they hold important keys that no one else can turn. At the same time, the women feel strongly that they will not be safe until the guns in circulation are

completely destroyed.

The Birth of LNWDA

My wife, Helen Hakena, and I personally experienced many of the horrors of the crisis on the island of Buka. In 1990, when the Papua New Guinea government withdrew its troops and services from Bougainville, BRA commanders quickly took up positions throughout Bougainville and on Buka. Their troops went on patrols, checked registration of vehicles, and carried out raids on the homes of ex-soldiers, businessmen, educated people, government workers, people who were suspected of having guns, and people who supported the Papua New Guinea government and were opposed to secession.

Helen and I saw our home, our business, and our entire village looted and burnt by elements of the BRA. We saw people at Helen's village being shot at indiscriminately and beaten with grass knives and gun barrels by the BRA, which also confiscated our two vehicles. We witnessed young Bougainvilleans left out in the sun by the Papua New Guinea security forces in efforts to collect information from them on the whereabouts of the BRA. I witnessed a gun battle at night between the Papua New Guinea security forces and a group of BRA that saw many BRA troops killed. We were so closely monitored by the BRA that we became depressed and traumatized. Under the stress, Helen gave birth prematurely to our son Max. We had no medicine and we were constantly on the move to avoid being captured by the BRA. Our lives were shattered.

All those events, plus other experiences of atrocities witnessed and reported by others, gave us the idea of starting an organization that could bring about peace and normalcy to the province. The thing that drove us above all was how the vulnerable and innocent people were being affected by the conflict, in particular the women and children.

Thus we came to found the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA) to "meaningfully contribute to restoration of peace on Bougainville by promoting nonviolence and women's rights and empowering women as agents of change to improve their social status." (The language is that of the organization's vision statement.) Prior to founding LNWDA, Helen worked with the Catholic Women's Association to get clothing, medicines, and cooking equipment to both government and BRA-controlled areas.

LNWDA Goals and Structure

Leitana is the original or traditional name for Buka, as Nehan is for the island of Nissan. We coined the name to reflect the community-based nature of the organization and its ownership by the local women from northern Bougainville. Since our programs have gone into mainland Bougainville, there has been debate about changing the name to reflect our Bougainville-wide aspirations and to counter the criticism that Buka women should not seek to do the work that should be done by local women in other districts.

LNWDA is an NGO, registered with the Papua New Guinea Investment Promotion Authority. It carries out community education workshops and advocates on behalf of women on issues affecting them. Its goals are:

- to reduce gender violence in Bougainville;
- to work towards a nonviolent Bougainville through the creation of healthy and self-sufficient communities;
- to help Bougainvillean women provide for and meet their own basic needs, such as healthcare, food, education, shelter, and clothing by encouraging small income-generating projects;
- to strengthen the ability of women to effectively participate in social and economic development in Bougainville and decision making; and
- to provide leadership in promoting a greater public understanding of the

importance of achieving these goals.

The LNWDA agenda is set in the community workshops that we hold, a "bottom-up" approach. A "shopping list" of requests and suggestions come from these events and the board works with the staff to cluster these and set program priorities.

The organization is governed by a voluntary board of directors who meet quarterly. Of the eight board members, five are women and three are men; we included men because we want to promote gender balance and because in our Melanesian culture, men, women, and children work together to complement each others' work. Board members are selected and elected for their experience and commitment to the goals of the organization. We come from an established social network of friends and colleagues in the islands of Buka and Nissan in northern Bougainville.

LNWDA's Programs

With our mission statement realized and our goals and objectives set, we went about identifying the sort of programs and activities that could best suit the mission. Our first activities, while the conflict still raged, involved organizing and helping to organize conferences, meetings, and marches for peace; later, we were able to create continuing programs to help Bougainvilleans recover.

Conferences, Meetings, and Marches

The Bougainville Catholic Women's Reunion, 15 August 1994

LNWDA, together with the Bougainville Catholic Women's Association, organized the first women's reunion (predominantly Catholic), which, surprisingly, brought together more than 2,000 women from all over Bougainville. At that time the conflict was at its peak, but with their commitment to the return of sanity, peace and harmony to the province, the women who attended felt they had to do something.

The aims of the reunion were to unite the attendees to end the conflict through prayers and other nonviolent approaches; to reaffirm their commitment to peace on Bougainville —that is, personal peace, community peace and peace in the province; to strengthen their network in the province; to participate meaningfully and effectively in decision-making; and to participate in all forms of development affecting their lives.

Peace trip to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 1-9 September 1994

Again LNWDA and the Bougainville Catholic Women's Association organized 105 women on a peace trip to Port Moresby that coincided with a National Catholic Women's Federation conference. The trip's expenses were personally met by the women themselves. The aims of the peace trip were for Bougainville mothers to reconcile with mothers of soldiers killed by the BRA and for all Catholic women in Papua New Guinea to unite and influence the national government to stop the fighting and find peaceful means of ending the conflict that was bringing havoc, despair and destruction to the people and the nation.

Peace Conference, Arawa, Papua New Guinea, October 1994

LNWDA assisted in organizing women to attend the 1994 peace conference in Arawa, the first of its kind since the conflict started in 1988. This peace conference drew thousands of people from both sides the BRA- and government-controlled areas. Though leaders of the BRA like Joseph Kabul and Francis Ona did not turn up, this was the beginning of

the realization by the people of Bougainville that they had to unite and work together to achieve common goals. This conference resulted in the attendance by more than 200 Bougainville leaders from the BRA and Papua New Guinea government at peace meetings in Burnham and Lincoln, New Zealand. After the Lincoln meeting a cease -fire was signed by both parties on 30 April 1998.

Silent Peace March, December 1995

LNWDA organized a silent peace march attended by hundreds of women in Buka in December 1995. The aims of the march were to show and voice concern about the continued atrocities and violence committed against the women of Bougainville by the armed forces and to move toward ending the conflict by peaceful means. Women's groups from all over Buka and Bougainville organized for the march and paid their own expenses to attend it.

The organizers moved ahead despite the ambivalence of the Papua New Guinea security forces about the march. The security forces questioned Helen about the aim of the march, but then released her. The silent peace march was filmed by a TV crew from Port Moresby and showed in 45 countries all over the world.

Other International Conferences

Helen and two of LNWDA's directors, Agnes and Alina, attended a number of international conferences to get support from women from all over the world to end the violence and the conflict. Expenses for these conferences were funded by people and organizations that are committed to peace throughout the world. Both the BRA and the Papua New Guinea security forces made traveling overseas difficult at that period because they feared international condemnation of their activities. The BRA had a very sound and effective intelligent network in Papua New Guinea and strong support from people and organizations in other countries, especially Australia.

On one of Helen's peace trips to Australia she was quietly held up by two men at the Port Moresby airport. They harassed her, confiscated her documents—including video tapes to be presented at the conference—and told her to return to Bougainville, which she did for fear of being killed. We had to engage a security service for her in Port Moresby. We are still puzzled as to who organized the holdup and confiscated her documents, but such is the fate of people who work for peace or who believe in nonviolent approaches to finding peace.

Strengthening Communities for Peace (SCP)

This is a program that was developed in 1998 by LNWDA and an Australian-based NGO, the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). It builds on an eight-year partnership between IWDA and members of LNWDA on a working-toward-peace project that sought to address conflict-based homebrew alcohol abuse and community violence in Buka, Nissan, and the northwest district of mainland Bougainville. Through the SCP project, LNWDA has expanded its program of community awareness throughout Bougainville and will offer communities follow-up workshops to facilitate the development of strategies to deal with social problems.

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the restoration of peace on Bougainville by promoting nonviolence and women's rights. One of its main objectives is to strengthen the ability of women, communities, community leaders and LNWDA trainers to address violence on Bougainville in general and violence against women in particular.

Homebrew Alcohol Awareness Raising

Because of the physical and psychological effects caused by the conflict, our people,

especially the youth, turned to homebrew alcohol in order to put the past behind them or try to shield themselves from the full horror of their bad experiences, not knowing that they were indirectly causing more problems for themselves and the community. Most people affected by homebrew-related problems are women. These problems include incest, rape, break-ins, abortion, weekend divorce, murder and marital rape. Most cases of domestic violence, rape, and sexual harassment are homebrew- and crisis-related. In just one incident, a women who was pregnant with twins lost both babies when her drunken husband threw a chair at her, killing one baby on impact; the other one died later in the hospital. Recent thefts or holdups by drunken youths of vehicles belonging to overseas aid donors like Ausaid and the European Union is a great cause for concern. This is going to affect reconstruction programs that are funded by those agencies, like rebuilding Bougainville's roads.

LNWDA has organized seminars and workshops and has ongoing community awareness campaigns to schools, market places, villages, and communities to educate people about the health problems and other social effects related to the consumption of homebrew alcohol and promote discussion among families and the community about how to deal with trauma and address conflicts in a nonviolent way. In follow-up workshops, communities will devise strategies to reduce the incidence of homebrew abuse and address violence, particularly violence against women. Homebrew awareness programs are directed at families, couples, youth, ex-combatants, and the community at large.

LNWDA was given air-time of 20 minutes every Thursday by the management of Radio Bougainville, where we broadcast our programs to thousands of people throughout Bougainville so those we do not reach in our community awareness and workshops can hear our programs. This has proven to be very successful, judging from the number of people writing to tell us that they like our programs and the number of people, especially women, who have sought counseling services from us.

Violence Against Women

We also focus our efforts on raising awareness on women's rights as human rights, doing work on gender sensitivity and creating opportunities and creating links between violence against women and alcohol abuse. This promotes limited services available for counseling for victims of rape, domestic violence, and other forms of violence. This topic has changed the hearts of many youth who have attended our workshops. In our youth mobilization workshop in 1999, where more than 700 youths, including ex-combatants, attended, many of them cried openly when they shared their experiences of violence inflicted, especially upon women. This was true rehabilitation and healing from within.

Counseling Services

Now that the guns are silent, the violence is not over for the people of Bougainville, as shown by our counseling figures and data. With staff trained in feminist counseling at the Fiji Women's Center, LNWDA offers a popular confidential drop-in service for basic counseling, couples counseling, and legal advice on rights and procedures for survivors of rape, trauma, incest, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and child abuse. This service is also provided in our weekly radio broadcast on Radio Bougainville. Our counselors sometimes travel to other districts of Bougainville to see clients, and sometimes LNWDA receives referrals from other organizations such as the police department, the courts, and the government welfare office. A boy who as a four-year-old became mute after witnessing combatants rape his two sisters was given range of medical treatments to no avail. LNWDA's trauma counseling was successful: He burst into tears and regained his speech after six years.

Last year there was a big increase in clients seeking services from our office. There were

458 cases of rape, domestic violence, child abuse, etc.—too many for our counselors to handle. This caseload could result in our counselors getting secondary trauma which could have a very devastating effect on their lives.

The organization believes that there are a lot of women in Bougainville who are in need of special counseling services and legal advice about rights and procedures. These women are very unfortunate as they are not able to present themselves for counseling and advice by trained counselors. Counseling is greatly needed throughout the province, due to the experiences of the past ten years of crisis and the rapid changes threatening family life.

Women's Rights Advocacy

This is another area of work we do to promote peace on Bougainville. During the weekly broadcast on radio Bougainville we share information about women's rights and concerns: What rape is, and its effects, domestic violence and its effects, sexual harassment and its effects, and child sexual abuse and its effects. On or around International Women's Day and Papua New Guinea Women's Day we have organized workshops (instead of dancing and partying) since 1998 at which the women talk about the peace process (apart from other women's issues and concerns), its political implications, and how it affects them. Since 1999, we have been able to bring together more than 3,000 women from all over Bougainville to attend these workshops.

Youth Mobilization

This is another core area of LNWDA's work, which we started in 1992. From evaluations done by the participants in our workshops, we concluded that there is a big need in Bougainville to empower groups such as youth and the communities with the right information for them to meaningfully participate in the peace process and development in Bougainville. We have taken on this task, since the government's extension agencies (including the youth office) are not doing enough to visit communities and carry out their extension programs. Their presence in rural areas is very limited and in some areas, non-existent. While the administration blames insufficient funds for not doing more extension work, its absence can have a very negative effect on the peace process.

Our program provides an opportunity for the youths to come together, to learn about each other, to explore reconciliation issues, and to promote respect for one another. It is also an opportunity for the youth to talk about the issues that concern them and to plan to collaborate on these issues in the future, so that the issues can be given to the politicians and public servants to formulate. As yet the government has not formulated a youth policy that could guide the development of youth in the province. Most organized activities with youth are sports-oriented, and there is very little being done to help young people into economically productive activities.

Our youth mobilization workshops have been very popular. In 1999, on the first day, we had 100 participants, and by the third day, we had more than 700. Because we simply could not feed them, we had to turn some away. Participants in these workshops have included ex-combatants who, with great emotion, shared atrocities committed during the crisis. This has been true healing for them.

Integral Human Development

The workshop on integral human development seeks to develop the whole person—the spiritual side, the emotional part and the physical—helping him or her understand who he or she is in relation to others. We are convinced that this is an important and effective part of social rehabilitation and reconciliation.

Summary

In the final analysis the peace process is moving very rapidly at the initiative of the Bougainville people. The people of Bougainville have publicly declared that "enough is enough" of the pain, suffering and killing of innocent people. People want peace and nothing else.

The people have a commitment that peace on Bougainville is owned by the people of Bougainville. It is their property. They themselves have to find a lasting peaceful solution to the ten-year armed conflict. The Bougainville people were responsible for an undertaking that lives and property. The onus is on us the rebuild lives and infrastructures.

Without the sheer determination and commitment of the people of Bougainville to the peace process, we would not have come this far. A lot is owed to the people for taking a united stand for peace on Bougainville—people's power moved the peace forward from all corners of Bougainville.

Resisting the War in Yugoslavia: Thoughts on Empowerment and Disillusionment

By Bojan Aleksov

The turning point in my life came when I joined the Yugoslav People's Army in September 1990 to do my compulsory military service. I had neither a genuine understanding of the political situation in Yugoslavia nor developed pacifist beliefs. Soon after I enlisted, the state of military preparedness of my unit, based in Osijek, Croatia, was raised. I could feel and would soon participate in the dissolution of—and bloody war in—former Yugoslavia.

Because of the tense political situation and their personal fears, the officers often treated the soldiers with abuse and violence. My unit was in a constant state of war readiness, exposed to the harshest drill imaginable, and subjected to numerous interrogations by military security officers. On May 2, 1991, we were alerted during lunch and sent to Borovo selo (near Vukovar), where there was a clash between Croatian police and Serbian villagers. The horrifying pictures of dead bodies and burnt houses shocked me and made me conscious of my situation and the expectations that the military officers had for me. Throughout that summer, this scenario repeated regularly. On one occasion we were attacked and had to return fire. I remember that event as the most idiotic situation—we were all scared to death, and no one knew where to shoot.

As a consequence of these events, I developed a strong disgust for the Army and began to question its role in the Yugoslav crisis. I could sense its greed for power and privileges wrapped in ideological formulas. I didn't want simply to accept my "fate": obey absurd orders, adjust to the war, and acquiesce to the contempt, mistrust, and hysteria that were feeding it. During the summer months many soldiers from Slovenia and Croatia deserted from the Yugoslav Army barracks even as the officers described them as cowards, traitors and enemies. But I could not instantly change my feelings about my friends who deserted and consider them enemies; I could only understand and share their fears and concerns. Their decision to desert was spontaneous and often not political. But by deserting they were sending a semiconscious message to those of us who stayed behind, to officers in command, and to all soldiers and civilians equally.

On August 7, 1991, my unit was ordered to Djakovo, Croatia, to protect an isolated military campground and ammunition and weapon storage. I was very afraid and attempted an escape. I was stopped by guards. Instead of finding freedom, I was taken to the highest officer in command. The next morning, I was in the central military hospital in Sarajevo and was released after eleven months of service with a statement that said I was, "mentally unable to serve in the army."

Still questions remained. Was deserting the war enough? I had come to believe that there was no cause for which I should die or kill. My friends and family provided a positive environment that supported my decision, even as it took time for me to realize all of the political implications of my action. The general atmosphere in Belgrade was completely different. Most of the people were unaware of what was happening a mere hundred and fifty kilometres away. Many supported the war and did not know what it was really like. As news arrived of the deaths of some of my fellow soldiers, I realized what a miracle it was to get out of the army. I was determined not to remain silent about their deaths, but to talk about my experience with as many people as possible. Not only was I persuaded never again to take up arms, but also I felt the need to do something against the war. Thus, my contempt for war, the military, and violence developed from personal experience and became the source of my political activism trying to help those who, like me, did not want to go to war.

Whether and how desertion was meaningful to anyone else besides those of us who deserted is still hard for me to judge. The wars went on without us and it always seemed there was enough cannon fodder for generals and politicians who waged the wars. Some indirect evidence might suggest another view. Serbian authorities repeatedly closed borders to prevent men from leaving the country, harsh legal and extra-legal measures were employed against deserters, and the media focused on the traitors and deserters on our side as much as they did on the enemy.

Back in Belgrade, I joined the antiwar protests organized by the Center for Anti-War Action (CAA). There were daily vigils in the Pioneer Park. We established a permanent office, giving counseling and distributing alternative information. In addition, we organized a peace caravan to Sarajevo, fearing for the future of Bosnia if the war spread there. We launched a campaign to collect the hundred thousand signatures necessary for a referendum in which the citizens of Serbia would vote on whether soldiers from Serbia should fight beyond its borders, but we managed to collect only 60,000 signatures. Disappointed, we remained committed to our cause and in the spring of 1992 we organized some of the biggest peace protests ever in Yugoslavia even as war in Bosnia was in the air. Actively resisting the war, I could overcome some of the feelings of guilt and shame I had for leaving my friends in the army. I could transform those negative feelings into positive energy.

In July 1992 I attended the annual international meeting of conscientious objectors in Larzac, France, where I met activists from all over the world who supported the right to conscientious objection and desertion. I met people who had spent years in prison or hiding or exile because of their refusal of military service. Later I would discover that there were those in Yugoslavia who did the same, but their fate was hidden from the public. There were other people in Larzac who were not directly affected by conscription or war or imprisonment, but they were equally resolved to support those in danger and "to struggle for the removal of all causes of war." Only at that moment did I realized that the few of us who resisted the war in Belgrade were not alone. My instinctive feelings gained self-awareness and became a political stand.

As the war in Bosnia raged on, there were more and more deserters coming to Belgrade and hiding there, but they found very little support and understanding. Women in Black (WiB), a small women's group which stressed women's public resistance to war and militarism, acted as some of the most outspoken advocates for war resisters and deserters because of their anti-war politics. With WiB I collected information and wrote regular reports about mobilizations, trials of objectors and deserters, and resistance to war. We also tried to offer concrete help to those in need. We provided lawyers and other forms of care to objectors from Serbia; for deserters coming from Bosnia, we tried to find shelter and counseling and, for some, safe passage to other countries.

We found little support for our work at home, but Women in Black, initiated as a result of international contacts and exchange, worked from its beginning to establish a strong international solidarity network. Solidarity became our chief motto. Some women in our group came from war areas and we became deeply involved in work with refugees, work that could not have been done without solidarity from our foreign friends. Unfortunately, international solidarity was often misunderstood. Some who received solidarity acted as victims, while others who offered solidarity acted paternalistically. Frequently, we overlooked these problems because we had no energy to take care of ourselves and our fellow activists once we had dealt with the refugees and other war victims.

The most important aspect of our work were the links and relationships we established with individuals and groups from the "enemy" side. Refusing to accept division, hate speech and propaganda, or the isolation that comes from ignorance, we strove to have

our eyes and ears open to the stories and opinions of "the other." A special chapter in the WIB annual anthology, *Women Crossing Borders*, was always dedicated to the ritual of crossing the borders—even between countries and peoples at war—and the empowerment gained by witnessing, knowing, and testifying about "the other."

Other doubts and problems arose along the way, the worst being our inability to heal the broken or save the endangered. Despite our efforts many objectors and deserters remained in jail or in hiding. No matter how much we tried, we felt our hands were tied. When hundreds and thousands of young men fled from Serbia to Hungary to avoid participating in all-out war against NATO, we thought that they would received the support they needed. Major human rights organizations claimed they were entitled to a refugee status according to the Geneva Convention. Around the world, major newspapers and television media reported on the issue. The resisters fled an internationally condemned war and escaped from political leaders who had been accused of war crimes. NATO planes dropped leaflets inciting people to rebellion and desertion. Many deserters risked their lives to escape and cross the closed borders. Those who stayed behind were arrested and condemned to long-term imprisonment. Despite all the attention they received and all the suffering they endured, when the deserters reached Hungary (a NATO member), these men were offered none of the needed protection. Other NATO countries ignored them, refusing to issue visas or accept any of the endangered deserters. The Hungarian authorities were left to resolve the issue on their own. Disbelief turned to desperation and rage at the treatment of the Serbian deserters and war resisters. Again, the only relief came from a few small antimilitarist groups in the NATO countries. Their solidarity allowed the deserters never to feel alone and through their work the deserters and war resisters received the necessary moral and material support. These actions served, if not to empower, then at least to reduce disillusionment. Despite all our efforts over these many years, desertion in Yugoslavia remains a shameful act and conscientious objection is little known, unpopular, and legally undefined.

In the summer of 2000, members of Women in Black and I were personally targeted for severe repression by the regime of Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević. The regime became increasingly repressive as it feared losing power. My friends and I lived at the hectic pace of an activist's life and tried to deny that we were in any danger, so we were completely unprepared for arrests, maltreatment and torture. Finding myself in this situation, I felt terrified and helpless. Indeed, there was little my nonviolent activist friends in Serbia and abroad could do. Despite all the previous times in which we had set ambitious and noble goals for ourselves—and striven with all our force to achieve them—there was suddenly nothing we could do to help ourselves or our closest friends when they were in danger.

After I was released and escaped from Belgrade, the most precious aid, comfort and understanding came from my long-term activist friends. But the sharp contrast between the support and care that they offered and the attitude of some other friends—activists who succumbed to panic, suspicion, rumors, and even plotting—was as demoralizing and discouraging to me as the torture I endured while in the hands of the state security. Unable to overcome their own fears, their insecurity about the future, and their lack of self-confidence, these friends exposed some of our own most basic failures. Because of the constant pressure we faced from the political and social environment and from our own goals and expectations, we often left unresolved problems of interpersonal relations, teamwork, and mutual confidence. We recognized the need for dialogue and discussion among ourselves and the need to combine and strengthen our individual powers in the group. We even saw the importance of being prepared for different roles. Yet we tended to prioritize other tasks that could be more easily measured and achieved. Consequently,

some of us could not endure the strain. Today, in retrospect, I can see that these problems did not develop so much because of our weakness, but because we set our own expectations, and perhaps even our principles, too high.

Eventually, the Milošević regime collapsed because of the breakdown of its own structures, the united effort of the opposition, and international pressure. For us nonviolent social activists, the change in regimes opened many new avenues for social engagement. But it also brought new challenges and raised old doubts. The main focus of our discontent, Milošević, disappeared, leaving behind less visible, but almost unaltered, structures and mindsets that kept him in power for so many years. The question arises, how much did we change the existing patterns and relationships in society? Were we able to use the power we found in ourselves and in our groups to empower others and to influence decisions about important issues in public policy—and even more importantly, in our everyday lives? Or did we exhaust our new-found power on ourselves?

Paradise Invaded: The U.S. Navy Bombs Puerto Rico

By Robert L. Rabin Siegel

Around 7:00 on the evening of April 19, 1999, a U.S. Navy pilot launched two 500-pound live bombs from his FA-18 jet at a target on the Navy bombing range in Vieques, Puerto Rico. The bombs missed their target, destroying the Navy's observation post and killing David Sanes, a civilian Navy security employee, and injuring several others.

Sanes' death was the chronicle of a death foretold. For decades Viequenses have been clamoring for an end to the bombings and shelling on the island and for an end to the U.S. military presence there. As the Washington Post put it in a May 3 editorial, the killing was "more than an isolated accident"; it was "the latest instance of predictable harm to the people of Vieques that goes back through decades of military neglect of island interests." The Post editorial concluded that the military could find another site for its bombing range, as there simply should be no bombing on a small inhabited island. Political and religious leaders, as well as leaders and representatives of other sectors of Puerto Rican society, have spoken out firmly and consistently since Sanes' death, demanding an immediate end to the bombing and the end of the U.S. military presence in Vieques.

The April incident was not the first time that the Navy missed its target. In October of 1993, another FA-18 fighter jet missed by about 10 miles, dropping five 500-pound live bombs about a mile from the main town of Vieques. Luckily, no one was killed that time. During maneuvers involving Navy and Puerto Rican National Guard troops in 1998, bullets broke windows in school buses parked near the municipal government buildings in the Santa Maria sector of the island (the part that is not "Navy property"). Several government employees had to take cover until the shooting stopped. The mayor of Vieques has not received an explanation from the Navy about either of these recent "accidents" and will probably never receive much information about the killing of David Sanes.

But the bombs that hit their targets damage Vieques as well. In the past, U.S. forces have bombed the eastern end of the island with live napalm, and the Navy recently admitted that last February it fired 263 depleted uranium projectiles from a Harrier Jet into the impact area at Vieques during training for the war in Yugoslavia. (Depleted uranium is linked to the Gulf War Syndrome that affects many veterans of that conflict and poses a serious threat to the health of the people of Vieques.) Documents from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission indicate that only 56 DU rounds were retrieved; because of the danger of unexploded conventional ordinance in the area, the search for the rest of the DU was postponed.

An Island Expropriated

Vieques is an island municipality of Puerto Rico, six miles southeast of the main island. Since the 1940s, the U.S. Navy has controlled three-quarters of Vieques' 33,000 acres. The western end is used as an ammunition depot, while the eastern third is a bombing and maneuver area. The United States "rents" Vieques to NATO and to other countries for bombing practice. The Navy controls the highest points on the island, the best aquifers and the most fertile lands, extensive white sand beaches, hundreds of archaeological sites and the shortest connecting route between Vieques and the main island. (The Puerto Rico Port Authority must use an 18-nautical-mile route instead of the six-mile route controlled by the military.)

The military expropriation of Vieques caused a social and economic crisis that lasts to this day. Almost three-quarters of the island's approximately 9,000 people live below the

poverty level. The municipal government reports more than 50 percent unemployment. Studies by the University of Puerto Rico School of Public Health indicate that Vieques suffers a 27 percent higher cancer rate than the rest of Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rico legislature approved legislation ordering an epidemiological study to determine the causes of the abnormally high cancer rate, but the people of Vieques and environmental and health experts throughout Puerto Rico relate the cancers to the environmental degradation caused by U.S. Navy and NATO bombing.

'More Craters than the Moon'

Fishing people have struggled for decades to get the Navy to stop bombing and leave the island. The giant military ships destroy fish traps; the bombing and other maneuvers impose severe restrictions on entering some of the best fishing areas around the island. On numerous occasions fishing boats have been damaged by naval gunfire, and fishers have been severely hurt by bombs exploding close.

Large-scale ecological destruction of the land is another result of more than half a century of bombing and experimentation with new weapons systems. According to Professor Jose Seguinot Barbosa, Director of the Geography Department of the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras, "The eastern tip of the island constitutes a region with more craters per kilometer than the moon." In his study, "Vieques: The Ecology of an Island Under Siege," Professor Seguinot Barbosa adds, "The destruction of the natural and human resources of Vieques violates the basic norms of international law and human rights. At the state and federal level the laws pertaining to the coastal zone, water and noise quality, underwater resources, archeological resources and land use, among others, are violated." Another scholarly article by chemical engineer Rafael Cruz finds that "... chemicals from the bombing ... are transported by diverse mechanisms toward the civilian area. ...[T]he effective concentration of particles over the civilian area of Vieques exceeds 197 micrograms per cubic meter and therefore exceeds the legal federal criteria for clean air."

Protests Escalate

There is a long history of protest on the island against the Navy bombing. In May of 1979, hundreds of Viequenses and main-islanders demonstrated at a site the Navy calls "Blue Beach." Twenty-one of them were arrested and sentenced to prison terms in mainland U.S. federal prisons; one of the 21, Vietnam vet Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, was sent to a Tallahassee, FL, penitentiary for six months—and beaten to death there a month before he was to be freed. Viequenses now call the area Angel Rodriguez Cristobal Beach.

The protests have intensified, however, since Sanes' death April 19, 1999. Groups of Viequenses and supporters from the main island of Puerto Rico have been occupying several areas inside the bombing zone to block the possibility of renewed bombing or maneuvers. Close to the site where Sanes was killed, a giant cross was placed April 22 by local fishing people and members of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. Since that day, a group of young Viequense men and women and university students from Puerto Rico have maintained a permanent vigil at the site of the cross. The community has renamed the area Mt. David.

Beginning in May of that year, the Puerto Rico Independence Party maintained a permanent protest camp in the bombing range about a mile from Mt. David. On the north coast of Vieques (both Mt. David and the Independence Party camp are on the south coast), a group of fishers and other residents of Vieques also occupied the Yayi Key, an islet off Vieques, while a group of Vieques teachers and members of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques erected a chapel, school and

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community building at a camp on a beach directly across from the key. All of the protest camps are within Navy restricted zones—and within the bomb impact area and eastern maneuver area.

Protesters held other civil disobedience actions inside Navy-controlled territory. More than 100 protesters spent the night of May 16 at Blue Beach, a.k.a. Angel Rodriguez Cristobal Beach. The protesters—including several of those arrested with Cristobal in 1979—went by boat to the restricted area and the following day marched out of the base through the main gate of the Navy facility known as Camp Garcia. Emboldened by the success of these actions, the protests flourished. The following week several hundred demonstrators, including workers from various Puerto Rico union groups, fishers from Vieques, the Archbishop of San Juan and the Bishop of the Catholic Church for the Vieques region, forced their way into the entrance area of Camp Garcia to hold a lively demonstration. Marches, vigils, press conferences, radio and television reports about Vieques have gone on continuously since April 19. On the main island a national coordinating committee coordinates work with the community organizations.

Representatives of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques have traveled throughout Puerto Rico, in many U.S. cities and around the world to bring the issue to the attention of the public. The committee has participated at the U.N. deliberations on the decolonization of Puerto Rico, at times lobbying the embassies of several Latin American countries who participate in U.S.-directed military maneuvers on Vieques. Also, the Puerto Rican Lawyers Guild has written letters to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights at Geneva. protesting Sanes' death on behalf of the committee.

[The killing of David Sanes and subsequent campaign of civil disobedience created a firm consensus across all ideological and religious lines in favor of putting an end to the U.S. military presence on Vieques. The people of Vieques have received unprecedented attention and support from the people of the main island of Puerto Rico and the mainland United States. On May 4, 2000, federal marshals raided the civil disobedience camps, detaining (but not arresting) 200 protesters. Subsequent protest actions have resulted in hundreds of arrests, including celebrities, civil rights activists, and politicians. Elected leaders, including several governors and many members of Congress have supported the demilitarization of Vieques. The issue has had a decisive impact on elections in Puerto Rico. Two Presidents have felt compelled to address the issue, including a June 2001 pledge (but not a formal commitment) by President Bush to end U.S. bombing. Although the events of September 11, 2001—the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—and the subsequent U.S. war on terrorism led to a temporary cessation of civil disobedience, resistance to the military occupation of Vieques continues. At the same time, limited military maneuvers have resumed on the island and support for an ongoing military presence in Vieques has grown more vocal among some of the military establishment and members of Congress. The ultimate outcome of the struggle over Vieques is far from certain, but it is clear that Vieques activists have won widespread support for their position: total demilitarization, decontamination, devolution (return of all lands to the people) and development of the island.]

For a demilitarized Vieques

The Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques has begun to articulate, with the assistance of experts from Puerto Rican universities and international organizations, a vision for the future social and economic development of a Vieques freed from the Navy. The committee recommends the creation of a land trust to keep and maintain the lands rescued from the Navy in the hands of the community of Vieques. It also

recommends the establishment of a continuing education and training program in order to adequately empower the community of Vieques to manage its own resources, including but not limited to its hotels, restaurants, agricultural projects, small factories, and scientific and environmental projects. The goal is to ensure the sustainable development of Vieques by Viequenses, for the benefit of Viequenses and visitors.

With the help of the Puerto Rico Lawyers Guild and professionals in the area of social-economic development from Puerto Rico and the United States, the committee coordinates the formation of a multi-disciplinary technical team to assist the community in the struggle to create a new social and economic order based on peace and justice instead of war. A group of highly respected professionals, including architects, planners, economists, sociologists, among others, met recently with members of the committee to formally begin the creation of the technical team.

The people of Vieques have demonstrated the power of nonviolence by winning support from mainland U.S. activists including environmental, ecumenical religious, peace and trade union organizations and even elected officials to address the issue of Vieques and respond to the demand for the demilitarization of Vieques, a paradise invaded.

Robert L. Rabin Siegel is a member of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques and Director of the Vieques Historic Archives.

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Deterrent Nonviolence

By Jørgen Johansen

The best-prepared and most successful large-scale civil disobedience action in Scandinavian history never took place.

In 1996 the Norwegian Parliament decided to build two large power stations to produce electricity from natural gas. With a company ready to build and a decision made by the authorities, it seemed almost impossible to prevent it. Natural gas had for years been presented as "clean" and "friendly to nature." To promote the project the company behind the plans took the name "Naturkraft" (The Power of Nature). Who could protest "The Power of Nature?"

For many years, Norway has produced and consumed more electricity per capita than any other country in the world, except Canada. Most of the electricity comes from waterfalls with enormous destruction to nature, culture, fauna and flora. Opposition to high energy consumption and environmental destruction dates to the beginning of last century. Since 1969 several actions of civil disobedience have taken place to prevent the construction of dams, roads and pipelines connected to these gigantic energy systems. In the late seventies civil disobedience prevented the first nuclear power stations from being built in Norway. Norway also enjoys a unique situation with many informal networks of NGOs, political parties, trade unions, farmer's and women's organizations and environmental groups. These networks formed when the first referendum on membership in European Economic Community took place in 1972—leading to an unexpected defeat for EEC membership. That same network was mobilized again when the European Union referendum took place in 1994—resulting in another victory! The traditions for organizing nonviolent resistance are broad based and well known, but this time organizing seemed to start too late.

But activists from the radical youth organization *Natur og Ungdom (NU)* took the initiative and began a campaign against the new power stations. In mid February 1997 the first meeting took place in secrecy. Initially, the idea was to have a surprising and well-organized press conference to announce the structure, aims, means, and main arguments of the campaign against the power stations. The planned campaign would have on two pillars: first, educating politicians and the public about CO2 emissions and the consequences for the greenhouse effect; second, preparing large-scale civil disobedience. The group adopted the name *Fellesaksjonen mot Gasskraftverk* or *FAG* (The Common Action Gas Power Stations).

With members from NU, elderly activists and local people from the planned sites FAG was launched and the struggle begun. The Kyoto-protocol was finalized those days, so environmental discussions in media were focused on the greenhouse effect of C02 and other gases. FAG developed a small number of arguments around this issue that they used at every opportunity. They trained their members to reply to any journalist's question that the "dirty and old fashioned power stations polluted as much as 700,000 private cars." Eventually, almost every politician and journalist referred to "dirty and old fashioned power stations" and used the example of seven hundred thousand private cars. Those who wanted to sign the Kyoto protocol and take the greenhouse effect seriously could not accept the power stations.

The campaign's other pillar was preparation for nonviolent resistance done in a very public way. First, FAG created a small group of experienced activists to develop a strategic plan, prepare training, and organize the actions. The leading strategy was

collecting signatures of people who promised to participate in any necessary actions. Presented as a pledge for resistance, the names represented more than a list of supporters—those who signed knew what was expected. They knew that the lists would be made public and that would prepare for any necessary actions. In addition to the "normal" young activists, FAG made a special effort to get famous people to sign. FAG wanted to show how seriously these people viewed the power stations and how broad-based the movement was.

The number and names on the list became a regular media topic. When some members of Parliament signed the list, it made the headlines, of course. Then some priests and bishops signed and again it made the news. When leaders of trade unions signed, the media reacted in the same way. But when *Grandmas against Gas Power Stations* began to knit socks and collect warm clothes to the activists the media made headlines out of that also. When the number of signers passed one thousand, the media made a big thing out of it. They did the same when the number passed two thousand and three thousand.

FAG realized at an early stage that they need some financial support to carry out the work they had taken on. Initially they received modest support from NU, but soon they began to organize their own fundraising efforts. Volunteers did most of FAG's work, but regular presswork and campaign coordination required a paid staff person. They received sufficient income from a system of "chain-letters" to set up an office and employ a person part- time. Even if the main office was in Oslo, FAG decided to hire a women living close to the site for the first planned power station. That decision was based on her skills and need to give the local resistance a face. FAG activists knew they had to avoid being seen as professional troublemakers, coming from the capital, and telling the local people what to think.

Just as FAG put lots of energy into mobilizing people all over the country, they also sought to build alliances with local people at the planned sites for the power stations. Well aware of previous experiences with a hostile local population, they contacted people from the areas around the proposed power stations at an early stage and invited them to become part of the leadership of FAG. Inspired by the Gandhian idea of constructive work, FAG organized a summer camp close to one of the building sites and helped the residents with cleaning the beaches, painting the local church and repairing some of the buildings used by fishers. The effect was double. First, they were seen as serious and hard working individuals, rather than a bunch of trouble-making activists. Then, many new friendships were built between "guests" and people from the neighborhood. Because of these good relations with people in the area, FAG picked up lots of information and rumors about what was happening in the district—including preparations for the start of construction, training by the police to arrest hundreds of demonstrators, and the local authorities' perspective on the situation.

The next task was convincing the government that these people did not sign the list for fun. An action committee prepared for massive civil disobedience. Weeklong training camps took place in several parts of the country while activists mapped the areas of planned actions in public view. Meetings with local people and the local police were also done publicly. Almost all the preparations became media events with TV teams reporting on the activists' preparation for all eventualities.

Tent-camp exercises took place night and day to anticipate any surprise "attacks" by the police. FAG hoped to show the political parties and the power station company that they would have to face thousands of well-trained and prepared activists if they started construction work. This action was not going to be a symbolic blockade. Before any construction could take place, the government would have to mobilize huge police forces and arrest thousands of environmentally concerned citizens. Since nearly all the political parties competed for "green" voters, they found themselves in a dilemma.

The Social Democratic government faced opposition among their own members. The party's youth organization even took part in the campaign against the "dirty old fashioned power stations." Some of the opposition in the parliament had their own reasons to criticize the government, but most tried to act responsibly, making "green"—environmental and future-oriented arguments. The liberal center parties and the Socialist Party talked about the greenhouse effect, the Kyoto protocol and the need to think of future generations. Increased CO_2 emissions do not fit into this framework.

Because of intense professional lobbying and media work, the gas power question became one of the most discussed issues in the coming election campaign. When FAG called a meeting, all parties had to send their leaders or other prominent representatives or face criticism not taking environmental questions seriously. FAG representatives had easy access to newspapers, radio and television. At the May Day demonstrations, FAG printed thousands of small handheld posters to be carried on sticks and dominated the whole demonstration. Any meaningful picture from that day showed a large number of posters saying "No to Gas Power".

As the elections approached, opinion polls showed a majority of people supported FAG and their struggle. All candidates were asked their position on gas power so the voters would know when they went to the polls. The prime minister, Jagland, decided to delay the necessary "go ahead" from the government until after the election in a vain attempt to prevent the debate about gas power from dominating the elections completely.

Not surprisingly, a coalition of liberal parties opposing the "dirty and old fashioned" gas power station got enough votes to form the new government. They did not have a majority by themselves, but hoped to survive with support from other parties on individual issues and no other coalition could agree to form a government. In the coalition's first declaration to the Parliament, they promised to oppose the two planned power stations. When asked if the planned campaign of civil disobedience influenced their decision they did not acknowledge its importance, but everyone knew that it was the main reason. Publicly they said the decision was merely a part of their environmental friendly policy.

FAG expressed hope but did not trust that the battle was won. They continued with preparation for massive civil disobedience. Large numbers of activists took part in practical training with the expressed aim of preventing construction with massive blockades. The Norwegian winter weather on the west coast is extremely hard with temperatures of negative twenty degrees Celsius for days and hard wind and snow. Sitting in a blockade outdoors for hours or days with few possibilities for moving demanded careful preparation. People on the lists took courses on how to dress and what sort of food to bring while supporters across the country took part in a campaign to collect needed equipment. At central squares in the main cities FAG set up tents to collect tools, cooking equipment, tents, sleeping bags, warm clothes and other gear for a long winter camp with civil disobedience.

Those who accepted more responsibility for the actions took special training in decision-making, consensus, first aid (specifically for frostbite and exposure), working with the media, and the history of nonviolence. Activists who had taken part in the earlier civil disobedience actions from 1969 onwards helped with training, strategic planning and tactical decisions. All agreed that never in the history of nonviolent struggle in Scandinavia had actions been so well prepared, planned, and public.

The pressure on the newly elected government mounted from two directions. FAG demanded a clear decision to stop the plans for the two power stations, while *Naturkraft* (the company who planned to build them) argued that there was no way it could be stopped—all the legal agreements were in place. The newly elected government needed to find a way out. Knowing that Parliament had accepted the plans and that formal laws

offered little support for stopping construction, the government introduced a change in the interpretation of the environmental law. The main change in the law was defining CO_2 as a pollutant that would require a special permit before it could be released into the atmosphere. Thus, environmental authorities could stop the planned construction. The power company had to submit an application for the emission of CO_2 and was required to use "the best available technology" to reduce CO_2 emissions. Not surprisingly, the demands on the company turned out to be so strict that they appealed this interpretation of the law, stating publicly that they could not make a profit under these conditions.

Leading social democrats and right wing parties joined with the industrialists saying that the process was a set-up to win political points. They pledged to pressure the government through the majority in Parliament to force the government to reverse its decision. They also criticized the government for giving in to activists. In the end, the Social Democrats pushed the government to accept the power stations or resign. They built a large enough majority in the Parliament in favor of ordering the government to give the "go ahead" to the power plants. And the government resigned!

By that time, the owners of Naturkraft became doubtful about potential profit of the project. New environmental technologies were being tested and the cost of CO_2-emmissions would grow in the years to come. Awareness of dangers of the greenhouse effect continued to grow. And the two power stations never came into existence.

In retrospect, the FAG campaign was an example of successful *deterrent nonviolence*. Even if no politicians would confess that the planned civil disobedience made the difference, it is obvious to everyone that without FAG the power stations would be up and running today. The combination of a good media strategy, serious preparation for the largest civil disobedience actions in Norway in the last 50 years, discussion of "climate change" on the international agenda, high electricity consumption and many committed people made this campaign victorious. NU had a critical impact on FAG. Many of their earliest leaders took on important roles in FAG. Their skills and commitment cannot be underestimated. Most of them were experienced nonviolent activists who were also familiar with how to "treat" media. In addition, NU used their whole organization, including their financial strength and local groups, to support and work with FAG.

Another influential factor is that traditions of civil disobedience in Norway go back several hundred years. Awareness of the history of nonviolent resistance has grown in recent years. The environmental movement is well aware of their four-decade experience with radical actions, but the role of civil disobedience in the struggle for democratic freedoms and rights in Norway—dating to the Middle Age—is receiving new attention.

When representatives from the church, trade unions, political parties, universities, and other parts of the civil society regularly and openly supported the arguments and strategy opposing the power stations, FAG received strength that few campaigns in Norway had ever enjoyed. Time also worked in favor of the movement. Every delay of the startup made alternatives appear more realistic and convincing. That the government resigned over the question of the gas power stations shows the force in this campaign.

In the end, about 3,500 people signed the pledge of resistance—less than one per one thousand of Norway's population. Why should the government care about a campaign that never came close to a majority of the people? They knew a large number of people willing to use civil disobedience to stop construction of the plants, the number of people who opposed the plans must be many times higher, a fact also reflected in opinion polls.

Can we draw any general conclusion from the struggle against the power stations? In any

situation, a number of variables are at work including the country's political situation, its media, culture, and development of civil society organizations. In Norway, these came together in a unique way. Nevertheless, the history of FAG tells us that the combination of well planned strategy, serious preparation for large scale civil disobedience, good relations with the local community, openness about the plans for action, convincing arguments and sufficient human and financial resources can make a different.

If construction started and the blockades put into place, it is impossible to predict what might have happened. Few believe that FAG could resist the power of the state and police for very long. Still, the political cost of arresting thousands of Norwegians committed to "save the planet from greenhouse effect" would have been very high.

The long-term impact on social change movements is also impossible to predict. Thousands of individuals in the environmental movement experienced a sense of empowerment through this effort and trust in the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance grew immensely—two factors that may ripple across Scandinavia's political life for years to come.

The Chipko Movement

By Chandi Prasad Bhatt

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi's concept of *Gram Swarajya* (village self-rule) aimed to create egalitarian, self-sustaining communities within an egalitarian and nonviolent society. To work toward that goal, a group of people established the *Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal* (Dasholi Village Self-Rule Organization, or DGSM) at Gopeshwar, India, in 1964. DGSM offered training in village industries, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, harvesting forest produce, utilizing mineral resources, employment in various construction activities, raising consciousness around forest protection and conservation of natural resources, etc. Gradually, DGSM become a symbol of village self-reliance.

In 1970, everything changed when a massive flood hit the Alaknanda basin in Uttar Pradesh, devastating lives and destroying property. Wooden beds floated in the Alaknanda River; grim-faced women and men with withered cheeks, looking old beyond their years, became a common sight.

The government labeled the flood—unprecedented in the history of the region—a natural calamity. However, the relief workers of DGSM refused to accept that characterization, because for the previous twenty years they had seen the plight of forests in the watersheds where the flood originated. During the relief operations, DGSM volunteers concluded that the flood was more a human-made calamity than a natural one.

Then, in 1973, while the memory of the 1970 flood was still fresh in our minds, Simon Sports, a sporting goods company in Allahabad, was given permission to harvest ash trees for sporting goods from the Mandal Forest near Gopeshwar. The people of the region used this tree for making yokes, traditional agricultural implements; the action struck at the core of our way of life and our livelihoods. We asked ourselves if we would allow another incident like the 1970 flood to occur or whether we would instead protect our forest from future tragedy. There was only one option: To save the people and the terrain, we had to prevent further genocide of our forest. Claiming the trees as our birthright, we decided to protect them from commercial exploitation and at the same time advocate respect for traditional rights within the forest.

DGSM called a meeting attended by members of different political parties. Various proposals were put forward and discussed. In the end, the meeting accepted a proposal from DGSM based on its principle of nonviolence: We decided to cling to the trees (chipko) that were marked for felling and prevent the lumberers from axing the trees without cutting us first. Thus, rooted in the philosophy of nonviolent resistance, the first direct action began in Mandal Forest near Gopeshwar in 1973 when the local people marched with their traditional musical instruments to the felling site to seek protection for the trees.

The Spread of the Movement

Mandal Forest was the starting point of people's nonviolent resistance to commercial exploitation of the forests in the region. The action was unprecedented in the history of the region and caught the Simon Sports contractor by surprise. Seeing the massive participation of the people, the contractor retreated. When a subsequent contract was awarded to a lumberer in the Mandakini valley, the contractor again faced the people's resistance.

After the Mandal Chipko action, DGSM volunteers fanned out into all potential

lumbering areas to educate and warn the people about the possible threat—and to share the success story of the Mandal Chipko movement. The turning point came in 1974, when lumbering rights in the Rani forest were auctioned off. Chipko workers, local people and students got involved in the movement in large numbers, demonstrating against the arrival of lumberers in the sensitive catchment area of the Rishi Ganga River near Reni village.

The protest resulted in a dramatic victory. One day, the men of the area had gone away to the city of Chamoli to collect money owed to them as compensation for their lands. The Chipko representatives were also not there, because they had been called to Gopeshwar for consultation by the forest department. Only the women remained in the village: twenty-seven small bodies against many professional axe-men.

Not worried about the odds against them, the women rushed to the felling site and clung to the marked trees while angry lumberers threatened them with their glistening axes. They remained in the forest for the entire day despite the overwhelming odds. The next day, their numbers increased as the women and men of about a dozen villages arrived at the site to join them.

The nonviolent protest continued for a month while people spread the word by beating drums and singing Chipko songs. The women of the region, who were usually confined to household work, began to take the lead because they were the worst hit by the decline of the forests—collecting fuel and fodder for their domestic needs had become more difficult, adding to their suffering. The women's leadership and action proved a decisive blow to the contractors, who came to realize that their objectives could not be achieved. The Reni vigil continued for three years until 1977, when the Reni Chipko Committee appointed by the Uttar Pradesh Government in 1974 recommended a complete ban on logging in the area.

The movement spread into Bhyundar Valley, the lower part of the celebrated Valley of Flowers. Despite heavy snowfall there, the local women saved the trees. Then, in 1980, another village in the Chamoli district, Dungri-Pantuli, took up the Chipko task. The government, in association with the men of the village, planned to fell trees near the village to plant a tree nursery for an orchard. This development would have deprived the women of easily available fuel and fodder.

The women disobeyed the men and flouted the government order. They put up brave and determined resistance to the felling and questioned the government officials about their failure to consult the village's women before felling. Because of the women's responsibility to fetch the fuel and fodder from the forests, any decision pertaining to the forests should have had the women's consent. This was a major victory for the Chipko movement and built the organizing capacity of the hill women.

Methods and Structure

The movement's methodology evolved through series of discussions with people hailing from various walks of life and political backgrounds. There were divergent views on how to prevent the forest felling. Opinions varied from obstructing the trucks heading toward the forest compartment to a pre-emptive cutting of the marked trees. Finally, the DGSM ideology was accepted, meaning that we would not use any means that had a component of violence.

The suggestion that we would cling to the trees and insist that the lumberers cut us before cutting the trees appeared quite exotic at the time. Many people thought that, as a form of passive resistance, it might not work at all. However, those who questioned nonviolent protest did not anticipate the traditional mindset of the hill people. Hill people are a peace-loving community with great determination, the result of their daily struggle for survival in the rugged terrain.

During the course of the movement, official or other lobbying channels were kept to a minimum. As the movement gained momentum, it won sympathy from various people in the region and beyond. Institutes like the Gandhi Peace Foundation and the national newspapers gave significant coverage in the national and international press. The newspaper and magazine reporting focused on the demands of the Chipko movement, its approach, and the role of the local people, creating enormous support for the movement and strengthening the morale of the activists.

The movement did not agree on a formal structure. It remained an informal assembly of local people and DGSM volunteers. The idea was to create local leadership so that the movement could be self-sustaining. DGSM continued to spread the movement and was present at the actions, but it kept in mind that local leadership should take the front seat.

After the 1974 Chipko actions, there was overwhelming participation by women in the movement. Because protest activity was new for the women, DGSM remained present at the direct actions, while always giving them as much opportunity as possible to express themselves and guide the action. The movement did not receive any outside funding. DGSM had a small savings that it used as necessary, especially for travel expenses. The local people supported everything else, so it did not need significant financial support.

Goals and Outcomes

Chipko's goal was to prevent commercial felling of forest crops while safeguarding the traditional rights to the forests in the river basin. After the 1970 Alaknanda flood, DGSM realized that it was important to save the forests because they serve as a green defense belt to protect the terrain and the people from future calamity. DGSM also recognized that the task was monumental and a small organization like DGSM could not do it alone. So it concluded that local people—especially the women, who are the worst affected—should collaborate in the action. That goal was achieved through persistent meetings, deliberations, and demonstrations.

Our objectives largely have been achieved. The government of Uttar Pradesh has put a total ban on commercial forest felling. This gives us a sense of accomplishment; however, the accomplishment is partial because the Himalaya needs continuous nurturing. The terrain has been mercilessly denuded for one hundred years. The wounds are severe. Therefore, the popular awakening has been mobilized toward rejuvenating the denuded slopes, so we have been conducting eco-development and environmental conservation camps in the Upper Alaknanda basin for the past 30 years.

This is a second phase of the Chipko movement, from protection to conservation and rejuvenation of the degraded forest. Initially, it seemed quite exotic to talk about regreening the barren community land. The initial phase was slow to get started, but the time and persistence of the DGSM volunteers paid off. Villages were selected based on their perceived need and on the assessed threat caused by the depleted forest resources. Gradually the eco-development camps become the platforms to develop relationships, exchange views and ideas, and evolve strategies for addressing various developmental issues.

Today these camps are a symbol of holistic development. In many watersheds the denuded forest cover has been reclaimed, biomass production has gone up, and lost prosperity has been gradually reestablished. Because of these successful developments, the movement of eco-development camps has increased and spread over many parts of the region with overwhelming participation of the local people, particularly the women.

Because of the terrain and mounting population pressure, this work might become an endless task. We felt that these camps should continue spontaneously with or without DGSM's presence. Currently, DGSM is pooling its energy and resources toward this goal while it keeps close watch on the forests of the region.

Empowerment

The movement, which began with saving the forest from commercial exploitation, became a symbol of the fight against social injustice, improper developmental planning, and faulty environmental policies. Rural hill folk who had been mere spectators of government policies became a force to reckon with. They could question the developmental planning if it was inappropriate to the environmental condition of the terrain. In every village, youth and women are organized and these organizations shape the destiny of their villages. There are innumerable village level women organizations called *Mahila Mangal Dals* (Organizations for Women's Development).

The collective force of the hill women is an outcome of the Chipko movement that has allowed and encouraged them to realize their hidden strength and immense potential. Because the majority of the men are away in the cities to support the family back in the hills, the major responsibility for running the village lies with the women. Since they suffered the genocide of the forest in the past, they realized the significance of the Chipko movement spearheaded by DGSM. In turn, DGSM realized that without organizing this large population of women, little could be achieved.

The ongoing eco-development activity of DGSM could motivate the women to address the natural resource and village rejuvenation program. Contrary to the government program that sought people's participation after programs were finalized, DGSM believed in the people acting as the initiator and implementer—especially the rural women of the region. In the process, DGSM and other agencies act as support organizations. Women of the region have now been empowered, so that in many places they are managing the village and forests, including various village development programs.

After 30 years of hard work, the results are evident for all to see. In economic terms, fodder and fuel yields increased, saving time for other work. High milk yield cows can be raised, supplying nutrition and earning cash. The camps also helped in promoting participation in other development issues such as school, roads, and basic health. Today, participants in the eco-development camps initiate similar program in their own distant villages and DGSM learns of their work only by receiving an invitation to participate.

Nevertheless, in such a people's program there are always some problems, especially through vested interest groups within the villages and outside of them. Such hurdles, though at times difficult, are tackled by open debate on the merit of any new program. For instance, when decisions are made about a direct action, DGSM follows the people's ideas as how to go about it. This collective approach becomes feasible due to the informal structure of the Chipko movement. There is no hierarchical setup. Though the initiators are the collective workforces of DGSM, the decisions are finalized in open assembly during the village-level meetings and in the Eco-development camps.

Movement Demands and Achievements

Many of the Chipko movement's six major demands have been achieved. They are:

All tree felling in the sensitive watersheds must be banned and there should be large-scale planting. The trees must not be cut for construction unless it is demonstrated that cutting will not affect the eco-system adversely. Forest conservation must aim at protecting the forestland and the water resources.

Forestry work should be done by rural organizations and labor cooperatives. The local hill people must be involved and consulted in any work related to the forests. They should be provided with relevant training and guidelines.

The daily needs of the forest dwellers in the region should be evaluated and they should be given reasonable rights over the forest resources. Forests must be thoroughly

surveyed and local rights evaluated.

Rural industrial ventures should involve the local workforce. Assistance must be provided to enable them to obtain raw material, finance, and technical expertise.

Denuded hills must be regreened through forestation. Local people must be involved and encouraged to take up agro-forestry. The local people should be encouraged to feel love and affection towards the trees and plants.

A detailed geological, ecological and botanical survey of the hills should be carried out before any heavy construction or forest department working plan.

These demands are not hollow; they have achieved the following results:

Commercial forest felling is completely banned in the Alaknanda basin where the Chipko movement started and in the entire Central Himalaya region.

A recent satellite study shows that the forest cover lost due to commercial felling between 1959-1969 has been nearly recovered in the sensitive catchment of the Upper Alaknanda River.

In February 1980, the Uttar Pradesh forest department revised its working plans to harmonize them with the notion of the "sensitivity" of these areas. While we disagree on the definition of sensitivity, at least they have recognized this crucial fact concerning the Himalaya.

In 1975, the Alaknanda Soil Conservation Division of the Uttar Pradesh forest department undertook the task of rejuvenating the barren Himalayan slopes. The next five years witnessed the functioning the Civil Soyam Forest Division in the entire Central Himalaya. To intensify these efforts in Chamoli, the Upper Ganga catchment has been established to plan for the security and safety of the small rivers and rivulets against soil erosion and landslides.

A movement that started from the sheer need for survival became the mouthpiece of the local people, who could now think, plan, and execute programs to meet their needs and pool their collective energy to save the terrain from further calamity.

Translated from original Hindi

Dalit Organising in India

By Bijay Singh

The Dalit and Adivasi Liberation Trust (DALiT) was established by a groups of dalit men and women in 1996. The goal of DALiT is to empower the dalit (so-called untouchables) and adivasi (aboriginal people) communities by initiating different development programs and peace-building measures in specific geographical area in a non-political, non-religious and nonviolent manner. At present, DALiT works in two Gram Panchayats (villages) of Kandhamal and GaJapati district of the state of Orissa along the Eastern Gbat Mountains about 3300 feet above the sea level. DALiT works with Panas, a sub caste within the dalit community and Kandhas within adivasi community. To date, DALiT has not received any foreign funding for its programs.

In general, dalit means the oppressed and suppressed people. They are the so-called untouchables. Although the practice of untouchability practice was formally abolished by India's constituion, it is far from over. The "touch-them-not practice" may have gone away in urban areas, but it continues in many rural areas. The negative impact of caste system on the dalits is so great that it is difficult to measure and explain, having penetrated the social, economic and even spiritual spheres of the dalit community for millennia. If we isolate and examine the poorest families in any part of the country, we will find at least 70 families out of 100 families belong to the dalit community. Space does not permit an exhaustive examination of the wretched condition of dalits in general or the Pana community in particular. So let me say something about the Pana community, who are the majority in DALiT's programs.

The traditional caste-based occupation of the Pana community is carrying dead animals and skinning the dead cattle. They were the part of scavenging community. But for some centuries, their traditional occupation has been a viable way to earn a livelihood. Because the community members traditionally did not possess property and had no other skills, the loss of their traditional occupation caused their entire social safety net to break down. Today, community members exist largely as agricultural laborers and subsistent farmers. About eighty years ago, European missionaries spread Christianity through the area where DALiT's projects currently work. Many believe that a desire to overcome poverty and relief from untouchability might have motivated the Pana community to convert to Christianity. Unfortunately, the two conditions did not change, rather they intensified and became complex. What we have discovered through the programs of DALiT is that one of the greatest problems facing this community is their own inferiority complex.

Another target group of DALiT are the Kandhas. In some ways, their condition is even worse than the Panas, even though they are do not suffer from untouchability. The main occupation of the Kandhas community is agricultural labor. Because most are illiterate and naïve, they are the targets of exploitation. Like the Panas, a major problem for the Kandhas is an inferiority complex.

In DALiT we feel that poor socio-economic conditions aggravate the dalits and adivasis lack self-confidence and self-reliance-factors that leads to a sense of inferiority. This inferiority complex is the major impediment to the long-term development of these communities. How does the inferiority complex manifest itself? It means not being able to feel good about our background and to hide it whenever possible. It means fear of being identified as dalits in the presence of others and fear of the suggestion that I got the job or entrance to the university because of a caste quota. It means hating oneself for

belong to the dalit community and not being proud of the dialects we spoke. It means living with the fear of being identified at a temple or restaurant and hiding one's heritage by adopting the cultural traits of another group, even at the cost of our own (sanscritization). It means a deep-seated belief that nothing will happen through our efforts because we have been taught to believe that we have not accomplished anything historically.

In DALiT we believe that if members of the communities that we work with overcome their inferiority complex then we will be confident to do what others are able to do. While we think that the provision of material benefits and anti-discrimination measures (like reserving some jobs and seats in the schools and colleges for oppressed groups) might help in the short run, long term development requires that we see our own worth and potential. We need to see that we can develop on our own. To realize that dream, we need to overcome the inferiority complex.

We believe that inferiority complex is a deeply rooted problem in our communities. To root it out we need long-term programs and varied methods. One cannot simple develop a project called "inferiority complex removal program" or expect that a one-time training course will solve the problem. The change needs to take place not only at an intellectual level but also deep inside the heart. On a the programmatic level, our efforts to remove the sense of inferiority are interwoven with many other activities, such as the pre?primary school program, self?help groups, watershed committee meetings, village development committee meetings, and youth camps. In

these activities, we hammer out the same message again and again: we are not inferior even if we belong to lower caste. The caste system is not made by God, but is a system made by humans. We have the same human features and potential as anyone else, so let us take pride in our own identity and let us develop spiritual practices to strengthen our sense of self-worth. Let us promote a culture of our own.

To be more concrete, I will say something about my own experience and how I find my personal power. It is not easy for me to talk about myself-it feels like beating my own drum. But I decided to put on a brave face to share something because it is important to my community and the work we are trying to accomplish.

I am an Indian. I belong to the Pana sub-caste. I try to practice Christianity. I am 43 years old, married with two children. I have completed two post-graduate degree courses and worked with national and international development organizations inside and outside India. I am the founding member and president of DALiT. While I was growing up, I endured many humiliating experiences because of my untouchable background. As recently as ten years ago, I felt so badly about my social background that I rarely told anyone my correct caste and religion. If someone would ask, and people usually ask, I would deliberately lie. Many experiences haunted me and my lies began to pile up. At times, I would get caught in my lies and my sense of humiliation would only increase. I felt terribly bad. This is likely the reason for my high blood pressure.

Then, in 1985, I had the opportunity to attend a personality growth training course at Amadabad. At the beginning of the course, the trainer asked me about my caste background but I did not tell him the truth. Ironically, the course was designed to help remove inhibition. Only after several years did I realize the true impact of that training course. The source of my greatest inhibition was my caste-based inferiority complex. After recognizing that there is nothing is wrong with me simply because I belong to a particular caste or religion, I felt liberated.

Slowly my confidence grew and I felt that I could to do better and different things. I started talking to others about how they felt about their dalit background and I observed that their feelings and experiences were similar to mine. After that, I thought that I

should do something for the member of my community to help them overcome our inferiority complex. It's not that I have overcome my inferiority complex entirely, but I feel quite alright about my background. Last year I left my international job and currently I am back in my village working with dalit and adivasi communities.

I have read some useful books including one by the Honorable Sulak SivaTaksa's called, Seeds of Peace, which mentions that to work through a difficult situation, we need to have personal power. It says, "We need to drink from our own wells." We need the power to endure suffering. This power is the moral strength of a person. From this power comes the legitimacy to lead an organization or a community. I believe that this power comes more from inside the heart than it does from the knowledge and skills a person has. To harness this power, we require constant practice for spiritual growth.

I am not good at consistent spiritual practice-it varies from time to time and has its up and down periods for me-but I attempt to do something to grow personally. Included in my usual routine are a few activities: I get up a little early in the morning, read a passage from the Bible (usually a daily reading book of scripture) and try to meditate on the words. I try to go deep inside to understand how my body feels and what my general emotions are in the morning. Then I plan the day's work. In the evening, before I go to bed, I try to reflect on the day's events-where I got positive energy and where I got the negative energy. Then I go to sleep with a short prayer. I have noticed that when my intentions are honest and efforts sincere, I felt more powerful. And I had the feeling that the power had a legitimate basis. This power gives me happy feelings and a sense of achievement that I am being true to myself. I have also noticed that when I dilly?dally, I feel weak and fake. So I want to gather more of the positive power so that I can be happy and go on as long as possible.

At the organizational and village or community level, I usually suggest beginning the group meetings with some silent time to discern the energy level of each individual and the energy of the group. If all the member of the group are Christian, we may read scripture and meditate. Sometimes we try to discern whether the energy flow is positive or negative and whether any negative energy might lead to violent action. I have noticed that if the group goes through this discernment exercise prior to any group activities, the results are usually more creative or less destructive. If each individual is full of positive energy, free from the inferiority complex and true to one's own identity, then the sense of well-being and power increases for the entire group.

19 February 2001

The Experience of the Youth Network of Medellin Colombia

By Cesar Bedoya and Martin Rodriguez

Empowerment in an adult-centric and patriarchal society

Since the decade of the 1990's, there has been growing concern in Colombia about the youth (ages 12 through 26) of society, particularly in Medellin. This concern developed amidst the country's profound social and political crisis, because young people have been the principal protagonists—as agressors and victims—in a dynamic of war, the narcotraffic war. In response, the state government and nongovernmental civic organizations started to think about developing projects that would attend to and protect youth. They approached their work with an understanding of these social problems as an illness—an epidemiological vision of the youth situation. As a result, their programs are oriented more toward social control than toward empowering a process through which this sector of the population can assumes its role inside or outside of the society.

The importance of this moment is that it created an opportunity for many organizations and individuals, ranging from the state to the nongovernmental organizations, to propose a different way of thinking about and developing projects that give power to youth *as actors in society* rather than treating them as objects of study or tools for maintaining the status quo. Thus, in addition to the many projects that were shaped by a protectionist and controlling vision, this moment also created an opening to establish projects for empowerment and youth autonomy. These projects facilitated direct access to information and mechanisms for political participation that were little known in Colombian society (based on the Constitutional reforms of 1991). They broke with the past, creating the expectation of social transformation, and conflicts and aggression toward the new tendencies.

On the one side there existed youth who were violent and involved in conflict; but, on the other side, there existed organized efforts among youth to influence social and political processes—the student movement, outreach by the Catholic Church and the youth sections of the political parties, both traditional (conservative and liberal) and organizing campaigns on the Left. These youth processes had a strong political content and control by adults. Frequently, young people interested in politics were enrolled by these projects, or they were led to them to abandon politics completely because of too much dogmatism and verticality.

In this general context for youth, the proposal for a Youth Network erupted with a methodology that sought—and seeks—to propose a reading from these same youth, in which adults play a role of accompaniment and motivation. The interest of organizing the youth groups depends on the initiative and proposals of the youth themselves and it has become an option that expands the range of possibilities for youth work in the city.

With a high level of participation, self-direction, unity, and youth autonomy, in other words, empowerment, the youth network has initiated a process that seeks to unlearn the old social practices that were vertical and authoritarian. It has begun to create different forms of relating among young people and with other generations. Youth are developing as social and political actors with the capacity for decision-making and the ability to influence public policy. It has not been easy either to unlearn the old practices or to develop this political power. The youth have had to overcome many stigmas, even among themselves, to achieve a level of participation that empowers the public at large.

What is the Network?

It is an organization made up of and oriented toward groups of youth, the majority of whom come from lower social classes. During the last 10 years, it has supported the consolidation of self-direction for youth and youth autonomy while interacting with other social sectors, both public and private.

The network is based on a participatory model that promotes attitudes and practices of transformation of the social, political, and cultural reality in which the majority of young people in the city live.

What does it seek?

That young people who join the Network develop their own individuality and become capable of supporting the construction of their own future while overcoming of their daily problems.

To be a permanent space for youth self-development that uses discussion and group action to recover cultural themes, rights, and desires of the neighborhood group.

For the next three years, we have constructed, redeveloped, and deepened our process with an understanding of globalization in order to act in our local context of war.

Our Mission:

From the perspective of active nonviolence and civil disobedience, the Youth Network seeks to contribute to the transformation of social, political, and cultural reality by strengthening, empowering, and articulating an identity of youth as a social process. From that process, we seek to construct a just, inclusive, equalitarian, and humane society.

Our Vision:

The Youth Network promotes a process for youth that engages the reality in which they live and interact, generating proposals to transform the traditional culture that is the base of our current society—alternatives that constitute and strengthen civil society and construct their own form of society. The Youth Network supports this vision with values like cooperation, autonomy, equity, solidarity, commitment, pluralism, attitudes of transformation and change, and horizontalism with respect to human rights, resistance, self-determination, and nonviolence.

Why Do We Need a Youth Network?

In the midst of a society like Colombia's that lurches toward a general social and political crisis, the presence of alternatives for work and strengthening of civil society—especially among youth—supports the creation of a different way of thinking. It promotes an alternative for resolving conflicts without resorting to the elimination of "the other" who disagrees—thinking that is central toward escaping the crisis situation.

The Youth Network also allows the construction of a social fabric, not only among youth but also among other organizations and processes. This social fabric, the integration and unity are the basis for thinking about a new citizenship that is more integrated, brotherly, and enjoys a greater capacity for action in this environment.

Strategic Objectives

A. Social base: during the next three years, the Youth Network seeks to construct and implement a model of interaction with its social base by means of a plan for wholistic development that articulates the process for the actors and permits them to sustain their own action, influence public policy, and strengthen the organization.

B. Political orientation: to speak as a political protagonist in the city's diverse settings to strengthen the discourse and political practice by means of debate, interchange, and ongoing interaction and cooperation with alternative political practices at the local, national, and international levels.

C. Management: to construct a system of efficient and effective management that supports the financial sustainability and functioning of the organization so that the planning and social projection of the Network and its political action can confront the demands of the moment in the different settings of the city.

D. Internal Support: to construct and implement a plan of promotion and development for strengthening the Youth Network and the individuals that belong to it by means of analysis, reestablishing interpersonal relations and generating support for cultural transformation from the organization's own processes.

With these elements that involve external as well as internal factors we think that the wholistic development of a youth process is possible. Further, we believe that it will also influence its members as individuals.

For the preceding, we seek: To consolidate the role of youth as protagonists, strengthening the base and adopting active nonviolence and civil disobedience as a philosophy and orienting principle.

To be a space for the development and increasing awareness of our members so that we win more and better space each day for the development of our proposals and dreams. This development will involve technical skills as well as political reflection, with young people internalizing the importance of knowing what has happened and being able to act favorably on it.

To continue the articulation and interchange with regional and international humanitarian processes that oppose today's dominant system and its violence, exclusion, and selfishness in order to permit the strengthening of alternative actions and alternative discourses of these processes.

We hope these elements serve for reflection of our work and that we can initiate a discussion with others about the construction of a better world with greater dignity for all because in the Youth Network, we have dreams and we construct realities.

Inside Out

By Keith Goddard

The Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) was founded in 1990 to provide support services to lesbian and gay communities in Zimbabwe. Frustrated by the Zimbabwe government's attempts to silence the organization and prevent it from reaching out to potential members, GALZ was forced to transform itself into a human rights lobby group and to adopt a highly political profile. Although this change happened through interaction with international human rights bodies and other organizations, it was some time before GALZ began to be accepted by local human rights groups. Even today, many organizations—Zimbabwean and international—view the work of GALZ with suspicion.

Shortly after its formation in 1990, GALZ joined the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). In 1992, representatives of GALZ attended an ILGA conference in Paris and made contact with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC). However, GALZ found it difficult to convince international activists that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) people in Zimbabwe faced problems: there was no evidence of the gay community being targeted for persecution and the government had no policy on the matter.

The climate changed in 1995. The state-controlled Sunday Mail carried a headline article in January ridiculing an independent initiative by the American gay activist, William Coursen, to take the Zimbabwean government to the African Court of Justice for abuses against the Zimbabwean lgbt community. Although the article contained useful ammunition for GALZ (it claimed that homosexuality was a foreign perversion being imposed on Zimbabweans by outsiders), Coursen's initiative backfired. GALZ asked Coursen to withdraw the legal case, but too late: the African court issued a damning statement that made it difficult to reopen the case at a later stage.

The book fair saga

Throughout 1995, the climate for lgbt people worsened dramatically. GALZ applied to participate at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF), the premier literary event in sub-Saharan Africa. An annual event, it had as its theme that year, Human Rights and Justice. GALZ's application was rejected, but its effort to be admitted received powerful support from South African publishers and others. Although GALZ did not participate, the organization learned, perhaps for the first time, that its concerns were legitimate and that pressure from outside Zimbabwe could be a powerful tool for lobbying. The campaign very nearly brought down the prestigious book fair.

The 1995 Book Fair saga and the first vitriolic speeches against the gay community by President Mugabe sent a clear signal to the international community that gay people in Zimbabwe were about to be targeted for persecution. Mugabe opened the fair with a speech that denounced gays and lesbians as "sexual perverts" who do not deserve to exercise their rights to free speech. At a subsequent political rally, he delivered his infamous "Dogs and Pigs" speech, saying of homosexuality: "its unnatural and there is no question of ever allowing these people to behave worse than dogs and pigs" His words launched the lgbt struggle in Zimbabwe. Now better prepared, GALZ repeated its attempt to participate at ZIBF in 1996, again provoking a strong negative reaction from the government and others. But this time, GALZ took the government to court and won the right to participate.

Mugabe's anti-gay rhetoric, supported by Parliament, created a climate of hysterical homophobia in this country. While it put the lgbt community at risk, there have been many positive outcomes. GALZ received substantial financial support from foreign

funders and the organization became a household name. At the same time, the plight of homosexuals came to the attention of the London office of Amnesty International, which began to monitor the human rights abuses against lesbian and gay people in Zimbabwe.

In 1996, a lesbian member of GALZ, Tsitsi Tiripano, faced legal problems as a consequence of her presence at the GALZ stand at ZIBF. Her case led international alert by Amnesty International that lasted more than a year and a three-month speaking tour in the first quarter of 2000. During the tour, she met with human rights supporters and detailed the situation facing lesbians and gay men in Zimbabwe. At both book fairs, the National Coalition of Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) of South Africa provided support and encouragement to GALZ. Gays in London responded by forming the May 8 Group which now provides legal advice and general support to lesbian and gay organizations in Southern Africa.

Arrest that man!

President Mugabe is a renowned globe trotter. Lgbt groups in South Africa, Britain, the United States and elsewhere, have kept up the pressure through high visibility public protests—a style of action not possible in Zimbabwe because of the danger of physical violence and repression.

These public protests went largely unreported in the local Zimbabwean press. But in November 1999, the London group, Outrage!, went much further by attempting to arrest Mugabe while he was on a private shopping trip in London. The incident sparked a diplomatic incident between Britain and Zimbabwe and heated discussion in the media. It became the platform from which Mugabe launched his campaign against the British government to sponsor the land reform process in Zimbabwe.

The incident did lead to a few revenge attacks on members of the gay community in Zimbabwe and a scandal in the British gay press. But Mugabe's claims that the British government was run by "gay gangsters" in league with secret agents who want to destabilize Zimbabwe was so far-fetched that even Mugabe's own hard-line supporters were incredulous. Although GALZ had no prior knowledge of the incident, the organization received many calls and letters of congratulation and GALZ bathed in reflected glory. Again, if such an incident had been attempted in Zimbabwe, the instigators most likely would have been shot immediately.

International publicity brings both positive benefits and problems. The attempts by GALZ to participate in the 8th Assembly of the World Council of Churches were unsuccessful: GALZ was excluded on a technicality. But the local and international publicity generated by the discussions leading up to the Assembly proved invaluable in exposing the hypocrisy of the Zimbabwean Council of Churches (ZCC). The issue of homosexuality and the church was widely debated over many months. GALZ won friends in the international church community, leading to the formation of the GALZ Fellowship Group.

International law

International law has provided the backbone for much of the work of GALZ. Zimbabwe is signatory to most of the major international covenants, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Although their contents have not been translated into local domestic law, these international instruments give GALZ the moral authority to formulate policies on lgbt issues that are in line with modern international thinking. GALZ made a formal submission to the Constitutional Commission in November 1999 which argued for the inclusion of a sexual orientation clause in the next Zimbabwean constitution. Most of the arguments were based on international case law,

borrowing extensively from the arguments that South African activists and lawyers had used for the inclusion of sexual orientation in their own post-apartheid constitution. Fortunately, there is still reasonable separation between the judiciary and the other branches of state. The Supreme Court is totally independent. The five judges who sit on its bench have a reputation to uphold, guaranteeing that they maintain international principles of impartiality.

GALZ's links with the international community are criticized by its detractors as proof of a gay plot to destroy Zimbabwean culture. Similar arguments are used against feminists and other progressive thinkers. GALZ is careful to ensure that all initiatives are home grown and to ask the international community only for support. After Outrage!'s attempted arrest of Mugabe, GALZ now asks to be informed of any planned action against Mugabe so that it can warn the community to take extra care.

Making links

International strategy and support is vital in GALZ's struggle against AIDS. Recently, GALZ linked up with a number of AIDS activists, including ACT-UP in Paris, with a view to engage in a joint campaign strategy for importing cheaper drugs for the treatment of AIDS. Bringing the international community on board for this project is vital for its success.

Communication with the international community, greatly facilitated since the emergence of the fax machine and the internet, has been vital to the struggle for lesbian and gay equality in Zimbabwe. At the same time, concerns have emerged recently. Increasingly, people are organizing around a gay identity that is borrowed from the movement that erupted out of the Stonewall rebellion in the United States that came at the end of the civil rights movement in the late 1960's. It is essential that GALZ develop our own strategies for combating homophobia in Zimbabwe and not follow blindly the strategies of our predecessors who emerged at a different time, in a different cultural context in another part of the world.

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Nonviolent struggle in Kosovo

By Howard Clark

Kosovo was not an obvious place for a nonviolent struggle. The Kosovo Albanian value system is based on a concept of honour closely linked with weaponry: take away the weapon, goes one saying, and you take away honour—a man's most important possession is his gun. The history is not one of unity but of clan rivalries, not organized collective resistance, but banditry and bloody rebellion. Then, the immediate political conditions seemed to lack many of the key features highlighted in research on nonviolence for effective nonviolent social defense against aggression:

- Human contact between the aggressors or their agents and the defenders can, at least, inhibit violence and, at best, might lead to desertion and disobedience in the ranks of the aggressor, thus making the 'instruments of oppression' unreliable. By 1989, there was already a strong ethnic polarisation in Kosovo. During the previous decade the Albanians had been the main object of the most intense of the hate campaigns orchestrated by Serbian nationalists.
- Dependence of the regime on the population, either economically or administratively, increases the power of the population's refusal to cooperate. In this case, the regime did not want anything from the population except for their departure. When miners went on strike to defend the territory's autonomy, there was some optimism that the organised power of workers could stop Miloševic. In fact, they were dismissed and for the next 10 years there was no real industry in Kosovo.
- Pressure on the regime by 'third parties' can alter the course of events. Initially, Slovenia and Croatia spoke up for Kosovo against Serbia, but they were not willing to be responsible for the part of Yugoslavia most in need of economic subsidies. As Yugoslavia disintegrated, the Albanians looked for international support, but met a powerful international consensus that Kosovo should stay part of what was left of Yugoslavia.

There is always a question about what options nonviolence offers in the face of an extremely ruthless opponent. Many have argued that nonviolence cannot be effective against a genocidal opponent. Genocidal or not, there's no doubting the ruthlessness of the Serb nationalism of this era, nor of Miloševic personally or the Belgrade regime. Rather than this being an argument against nonviolence, however, it provided one of the strongest arguments in favour. Kosovo Albanian analysts were convinced that the regime wanted to provoke a war in Kosovo, a crusade that would rally the Serbian people but also a situation in which without inhibitions it could ethnically cleanse Kosovo.

Objectives for nonviolence

In this situation what could be achieved? First, let me distinguish between long-term goals or aspirations and what have been called the 'functional objectives' of a strategy of nonviolent struggle. The principal objectives of the Kosovo Albanians were essentially 'defensive' - to stop the [Miloševic] regime from unleashing its most extreme violence and to maintain their own society. The ultimate goal was independence.

The first objective in this social struggle was maintaining the Albanian community and way of life in Kosovo. Because the population is predominantly young—about half are under 21 years old—education was central to the struggle. Rather than teach the new Serbian curriculum ordained by Belgrade, Albanian teachers continued to teach the Albanian curriculum adopted in the years of autonomy. When Belgrade stopped paying the teachers, they continued teaching until, after several months, police went to the

schools and shut out teachers and pupils. After weeks of daily demonstrations outside every school, teachers and parents began organising classes in private premises and the parallel school system began - a system with perhaps 20,000 teachers and 300,000 pupils.

The second objective was preventing war. Chiefly, this meant refusing to be provoked to violence. This goal was not highlighted when the nonviolent struggle began; with the miners' actions in 1988 and 1989. There was no concensus on this strategy in 1989, when the founders of the Democratic League for Kosova (LDK) contemplated the sacrifice of tens of thousands of lives for Kosovo's 'freedom.' However, early in 1990, nonviolence became a consistent policy. Initially this policy meant not just passive refusal, but included a commitment to 'name the violence.' One common form of demonstration were 'homages' in which people would stop working (or whatever they were doing) to join a five-minute promenade in the city center to mark a particular act of brutality. The most vital element of this work was rapid response and documentation. Whenever the police raided a village or a similar incident occurred, organizers from the Democratic League of Kosova (the LDK) or the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) would go to the scene to document the evidence and explain why there should not be a violent response.

The third objective was winning international support against the regime, trusting that international pressure would put a brake on Miloševic.

These three objectives defined the basic framework of struggle. In addition, there were particular contests that can be decisive in nonviolent struggle. One is the contest over legitimacy. On the negative side, Albanians denied legitimacy to the Belgrade regime, for instance, by boycotting the census and elections. On the positive side, they sought to vest legitimacy in Kosovar institutions, a task achieved partly by demonstrating continuity with the previous system. For example, the elected Assembly representatives, locked out of the Assembly building, stood on its steps in 1990 to declare the Republic of Kosovo. Then, demonstrations of popular will confirmed the Republic's legitimacy by holding an illegal referendum to assert Kosovo's independent status and illegal elections for a parliament. Both events, in autumn 1991 and spring 1992, respectively, attracted the participation of virtually all the Albanian voters in Kosovo and some minorities such as Muslim Slavs and Turks.

A second contest—some would argue the most important contest in nonviolent struggle —is the battle of wills between the regime and the population. Central to this struggle is building up the social solidarity of the population and awakening a sense of their own strength—a process we might call social empowerment. Initially, this process involved forming new organisations like the LDK and the CDHRF, plus independent trade unions, the League of Albanian Women, and the humanitarian network of Mother Theresa. Finding forms of action that showed defiance without demanding a high cost was also important. In 1990, these actions included signing a petition *For Democracy, Against Violence* (nearly half the adult population signed) and the rattling keys in tins at the start of the curfew to symbolize that Kosovar Albanians had the key to their own future.

For an influential minority within the movement, empowerment also involved reform of some of the worst patriarchal traditions of their own society. The most spectacular campaign in this regard involved the mass reconciliation of blood feuds. An estimated 17,000 young men were under threat from blood feud. During a two-year campaign carried out from 1990-92 by about 500 students and a few eminent older people, there were approximately 2,000 ceremonies of reconciliation. In these ceremonies, aggrieved families (those whose turn it was to kill) 'pardoned the blood,' doing so 'in the name of youth, the people and the flag.' Virtually no blood feuds continued. In the early days of

the nonviolent movement, there was a general effort to move away from patriarchal traditions and to become 'modern Europeans.' Movements like the blood feuds reconciliation campaign or the enthusiasm of volunteers in women's literacy programs kindled popular hope not only that things were changing, but also that they could play a part in shaping their own futures. To some extent, they saw themselves as another example of the popular nonviolence that had brought down the Berlin wall.

The movement stagnates

From 1989 to 1993, the movement was largely successful. The parallel school system became well established and no longer confined to private premises: they regained the use of primary school buildings. A voluntary taxation system with some 1,000 tax collectors who worked without pay and at great personal risk raised the funds to pay school costs like teachers' salaries. A network of health clinics named after Mother Theresa offered free medical treatment.

Although Albania was the only state to recognize Kosovo's independence, the nonviolent struggle ensured a general international acknowledgement that the source of violence in Kosovo was the Miloševic regime. There were widespread denunciations of Serbian human rights abuses in Kosovo and, in 1992, the CSCE (the forerunner of the OSCE) set up what was intended to be a permanent mission to Kosovo, Vojvodina and the Sandzak. Many Kosovo Albanian men left the region, either to avoid the draft or to earn money to send home, but it was a great success that their families usually stayed in Kosovo and that many able people preferred to stay and see what they could contribute to their society and their struggle, instead of going abroad. In the early 1990s, almost everything was interpreted in terms of the social struggle. Even the thousands of small businesses that opened (mostly mini-markets or pizzerias) were evidence of the people's resilience. It was great for morale that the shops in Kosovo were usually better stocked than those in Belgrade because Albanians were so adept at trading and smuggling.

There was enthusiasm for nonviolence. Even some football clubs changed their names to show it. The general feeling was that time was on their side.

The sentiment changed because of external factors, like the war in Bosnia and the failure of foreign governments to act on the Kosovars' concerns, and because of internal factors. Internally, Kosovo needed a strategy and modes of organization that empowered the people whether external events developed favourably or not. Instead, the dominant form of organization became the dead hand of the LDK—an undemocratic organization that increasingly seemed more interested in controlling Kosovo Albanians than in social struggle. Meanwhile the main resistance action (maintaining the schools) became routine (with interruptions during Serbian repression). The leverage for change that people saw narrowed to LDK leader Ibrahim Rugova's lobbying of international diplomats. Having the population wait for international opinion to take effect was a recipe for stagnation. Where there had been a sense of empowerment, frustration began to surface by the mid-1990s. By 1997, it was quite common for people to talk of a 'loss of hope.'

Unfortunately, the policy of refusing to be provoked was taken to the extreme of avoiding any confrontation, including nonviolent protest. The teachers' union and the LDK put a moratorium on further demonstrations after the police brutality against the autumn 1992 education demonstrations. At the time, I saw the sense of this decision: the police behaved as if demonstrations were an invitation to beat Albanians at random. Also, there was a case for conserving energy and using the power of demonstrations with careful timing for maximum impact. But the LDK tried to block every demonstration for the next five years! The balance between self-restraint and patience on the one hand and willingness to engage in confrontation on the other was lost.

In a particularly noteworthy failure to take assertive action Rugova did not try to convene the 'parliament' after the police blocked its first attempt to meet. If holding elections in 1992 had been empowering, this popular power seemed more illusory each year that the parliament failed to meet. Convening it could have been a classic 'dilemma demonstration,' forcing Miloševic to let it meet or make the regime look bad by repressing it. The risks for the population would have been limited: the prime targets for repression would be just 130 people—the deputies elected to serve their people.

A second problem was that the parallel school system, the most extensive of the parallel institutions, became something that merely existed for its own sake, and not a base for further development. Indeed, the LDK itself neglected the need for self-organised constructive activity after the early years. Initiatives outside the LDK, like the Mother Theresa network and some small groups (mostly women's groups), showed that there was potential, but the LDK did little to counter the attitude that 'we can't do anything to improve our own daily life because of the Serbs'.

A third problem was that few people were interested in trying to influence Serbian opinion on Kosovo. As the majority in Kosovo, many Albanians wanted simply to overrule Serb desires and outlast Serb efforts to regain Kosovo for Serbia. Some scepticism toward the Serbian opposition was justified, but at the level of values it was important for Albanians to accept that today's enemies were yesterday and tomorrow's neighbours. At the level of strategy, Galtung's concept of 'the great chain of nonviolence' offered some long term prospects for influencing the regime. The theory behind the chain of nonviolence is that links with elements in the antagonist society benefit the oppressed society. Even if initial links are marginal, they connect with others in their society, reducing the social distance between oppressor and oppressed community. Ultimately, the links create a constituency that can wield influence in the oppressor society.

In my book, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, I discuss possible ways in which Kosovo Albanians could have had a strong strategy of empowerment, including forms of remobilization and constructive program as well as altering Serbian will. The discussion there is based largely on small initiatives that, with more active coordination, could have been taken up more widely. There is one real-life and large-scale example that exemplifies the undeveloped potential of nonviolence in Kosovo—the student protests of 1997.

UPSUP, the students' union, wanted to organise protests at the start of the 1996-97 academic year, but had been dissuaded by Rugova, who had just signed an 'agreement' on education. When there was no progress in the following year, UPSUP decided to go ahead with their protest plans. They began with a 'tester' action. In September, they urged students to join the evening promenades, the *korzo,* common in the region. More than only students responded and these evening strolls generated excitement and expectation that, at last, something was going to happen.

Rugova summoned the UPSUP leadership to ask them not to proceed: Serbian elections were due and it would suit some candidates to attack the protests. The UPSUP leaders replied that they had not only the right to education but also the right to demand it. They were going ahead. Then the UPSUP leaders were visited by a delegation of 12 high-level international diplomats from Belgrade who made the same argument as Rugova. This visit merely confirmed that UPSUP had found a way to get Kosovo on the international agenda.

UPSUP took enormous care to ensure nonviolent discipline for a march, which proceeded from the hill where the parallel university held most of its classes to the university buildings from which the students were excluded. Only students and their teachers marched, but the streets were lined with thousands of supporters. At the

bottom of the hill, Serbian police waited with all their paraphernalia of repression. For about 45 minutes the first row of marchers stood facing the police, refusing the police order to disperse. Then the police attack began, and the students still remained nonviolent—the marchers struggled to hold their ground as the blows rained down on them.

Later that day Rugova and the international diplomats all applauded the students for their nonviolent courage in the face of police brutality. Thanks to the Balkan Peace Team, a few Serbs from inner Serbia came to Prishtina to observe. Soon the Belgrade students' unions—veterans of the previous winter's daily demonstrations against Miloševic—sent messages of solidarity supporting UPSUP's demand for the right to education. They also sent their own delegation to support the next demonstration and begin dialogue meetings with UPSUP.

The UPSUP march demonstrated the potential for an empowering and nonviolent remobilization. Unfortunately, Kosova Liberation Army was becoming more active at the same time and, when the Serbian security forces responded with a military offensive—committing atrocities and mass murders—a decisive turn was taken for war.

For all its flaws, for eight years of Kosovo Albanian commitment to nonviolence created the opportunity for international action to prevent war—a phenomenal achievement. In 1997, a number of analysts believed that the elite in Serbia were ready to 'lose' Kosovo. Some of those who had fanned the flames of Serbian nationalism seemed resigned to their failure to re-Serbianize Kosovo and they looked for alternatives. Sadly, the armed 'threat' of the KLA changed all that and allowed Miloševic to unleash his campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The Movimento Sem-Terra in Brazil

By Dawn Plummer

Historical Roots of the MST

Brazil is one of the most unequal societies on the planet—1% of landowners own 44% of all Brazilian land (an area larger than the continental United States). Understanding the history and social implications of that inequality is essential background for understanding the situation of the landless in Brazil today.

Starting in 1964, when a military coup established an economic and political model for the county that persist to the present day, agriculture and agricultural policy in Brazil has undergone dramatic changes. Following that model, Brazil is subordinate to the interests of international finance capital at the expense of the Brazilian people, most notably, the Brazilian poor. In Brazil, the poorest of the poor historically have been *"os sem-terra"*—the landless, a nickname given to the social class of rural workers who work land without having title to it. They work as tenant farmers, agricultural workers on large *fazendas* (plantations) cultivating crops for export, or as migrant workers. In total, there are 4.8 million landless workers in Brazil today.

During the period of the military dictatorship from 1964 to 1984, Brazil fiercely pursued a new model of agro-industrial development with a goal of bringing about the "modernization" of Brazilian agriculture. Rural policies favored large-scale, export-oriented production to the detriment of small-scale, family farming. During these years of "modernization," the Brazilian countryside became the site of violent conflict, as socioeconomic inequality in the rural areas increased. Because the model of modernization preserved the historic concentration of land in the hands of the very few and very privileged (Brazil is one of the few countries in the world that has *never* undergone agrarian reform), the historic struggle over land intensified. Violent expulsion of working families from land became increasingly common as local elites sought to secure the interests of agribusiness and "progress" in the countryside. The result: millions of peasant farmers and their families were forced from their lands in Brazil's rural areas during the decades of military dictatorship.

The impact of these policies extended to all of Brazilian society, which underwent a profound transformation. Between 1965 and 1985 Brazil went from a 75% rural society to 75% urban. Literally half of the population migrated toward Brazilian cities in search of a better life, chasing the promise of salaried work in the rapidly industrializing urban centers. While some found viable work, many more did not, as the cities could not support the influx of workers brought by the massive rural-urban exodus. For masses of migrants, rural poverty became urban misery. The legacy of the "modernization" plans of the 1960's and 70's is found not only among the 4.8 million landless families in the Brazilian countryside, but it is also evident in the sprawling *favelas* (shantytowns) encircling every major Brazilian city, typically accounting for 25-50% of a city's total population.

The Rise of the Landless Movement (MST)

Brazil's MST emerged out of this context and has developed into the most important social movement in the country. Indeed, the MST is the largest social movement in Latin America and one of the most successful land reform movements in the world. The movement is premised on the Land Statute in the Brazilian constitution—a set of laws that require that land in Brazil fulfill a "social function." According to federal law, land must either be cultivated for production (and worked in compliance with labor and environmental regulations) or held for environmental preservation. Otherwise, the land is "illegal." Thus, the statute effectively outlaws holding large tracts of land for speculation. The Land Statute was the product of decades of grassroots organizing and was finally enacted in 1965, a year after the military dictatorship seized control of the capitol. This Statute went to the root of land inequality, but as MST leader Ubiraci Stesko explains: "With the coup in 1964, the agrarian reform program was pigeonholed. The movements of the era and their leaders were assassinated, or exiled. From 1964 to around 1984, everything stood still; no settlements were made."

In 1978 and '79 sectors of the Catholic Church, following the tradition of liberation theology that affirms the rights of the poor and dispossessed, began to organize landless workers through the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT). By the mid-1980's, as the federal government prepared for transition to electoral democracy, the CPT and other segments of civil society began to discuss the need for an autonomous movement focused on the struggle for land reform. They hoped to unite the isolated local efforts that were erupting throughout the Brazilian countryside. In 1984, 1500 representatives from 16 of Brazil's 27 states met in Cascavel, Parana and the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Landless Rural Workers Movement) or MST was born. Organized around the slogan "land for those who work it," MST established three primary goals: 1) immediate access to land for landless families through nonviolent occupation of unproductive land; 2) national agrarian reform including both the redistribution of land and the creation of policies that would develop and sustain rural families. Because the first two goals could not be accomplished without fundamental changes to the structure of Brazilian society, the third goal was more general, but no less urgent: 3) a more just society. The movement began to develop an organizational structure that would allow it to mobilize landless workers to occupy and settle land according to the provisions of the Land Statute, but "The movement did not begin with the law to fight for land," according to an MST lawyer from the state of Pernambuco. "The movement began with the concrete necessity of workers for food, for work, for living conditions that are minimally dignified."

MST Enters New Era: New Challenges

Through its use of nonviolent land occupations and mass mobilizations, the MST has emerged as one of the most powerful players in the mounting global challenge to international financial institutions and their corporate agenda. By the time the Zapatistas took the international community by storm on January 1, 1994, with armed actions in the Mexican state of Chiapas, the MST commemorated ten years as an autonomous social movement. In its first decade, the MST had settled thousands of families nonviolently throughout the country and it continued the struggle for government-run schools and health clinics in those communities.

With the massacre of 19 members of the MST at Eldorado das Carajas in 1996, the movement entered a new phase. This massacre represented a culmination of persistent and escalating violence by local police, private militia, and military toward rural workers

of the MST. When the government failed to respond to these violent acts, the MST took their struggle to the international community. The National March for Justice Employment and Land Reform arrived at the nation's capital, Brasília, on April 17, 1997, and was greeted by more than 100,000 people. On the one-year anniversary of the massacre, delegations of marchers came from all corners of the country, having organized in just over a month's time. The Campaign Against Impunity, which included these efforts, attracted the attention of human rights organizations around the world. It gave rise to a new human rights sector of the MST and significantly elevated the struggle for land in Brazil before the international community. With over 1,000 rural workers killed in land conflicts since 1985, violence in rural Brazil has not yet declined, but the massacre at Eldorado das Carajas brought a new sense of international solidarity with the MST. With increased international attention came a greater expectation of accountability from the federal government to respect human rights.

As decentralized and local acts of violence became a less viable means of counteracting the MST, the federal government, together with others interested in maintaining Brazil's unequal land distribution, sought other ways of discrediting the MST. Perhaps the most persistent form of attack against the MST has come through the media which misrepresents and often fabricates stories to mislead the Brazilian and international public. A more insidious form of attack against the MST comes through infiltration by the intelligence agencies.

The MST suffered an economic blow with the removal of lines of credit accessible to small farmers. In April 1997, the World Bank proposed, and Brazil's federal government approved, a $90 million U.S. pilot program, known as the Cédula da Terra or "Land Bank," as a free market alternative to land reform through expropriation. The plan was this: large landowners would sell land to the World Bank at its market value; in turn, the World Bank would grant loans to landless farmers to purchase these same lands. The catch? The "invisible hand" of the market gives large landowners an incentive to sell only the most marginal territories—rocky, hilly land that is difficult to cultivate or otherwise develop. In effect, powerful landowners are compensated for their socially irresponsible, illegal landholdings—ultimately taking away the government's responsibility to its people.

Meanwhile, the landless—the supposed beneficiaries of the project—are left deep in debt. A pilot project reported that the majority of recipients of Land Bank loans did not even understand the terms of the loans granted. While the FHC government has insisted that the Land Bank was "a compliment to agrarian reform," critics suggest otherwise. "The World Bank started to do agrarian reform because the social pressure [for more dramatic change] would be too great if they didn't," explains sociologist Janaine Souza from Brasilia. "If they initiate the process of agrarian reform, they can claim that the process has already begun, and that you need to be patient until the process comes to completion. So they finance [the Land Bank], not with the intention of true agrarian reform, but to maintain social order."

As one MST leader says: "We defend the World Bank's money for agrarian reform, but to put it where? Into settlements, infrastructure, education. Why? Because 70% of peasants in Brazil are illiterate. Why doesn't the World Bank put this money into literacy for them? If that were the case, we would borrow and pay with no problem! It's not that the MST is against the World Bank's money. On the contrary, we favor it, but it should be applied transparently for social programs including health, education, production, agro-industry. But to use the public's money, or another country's money—including the American people's—to come to Brazil and put it toward large landowners and corruption? No way!"

The MST believes that free-marketers, supporting the international agro-business, will

claim that the inevitable failure of the Land Bank program is evidence of the economic lack of viability of today's family farms. In the meantime, the Land Bank pales in comparison to the overall improvements in standards of living on MST settlements brought about by MST education and literacy programs, health education, art and culture, courses and training in agricultural techniques, and access to credit and start-up capital through MST rural cooperatives. Many who would otherwise be unsympathetic to the MST's goals, including local business people and political leaders have recognized the MST settlements for their success and economic viability. An MST leader from Brasilia explains: "Agrarian reform settlements organized by the MST produce more than other settlements and have the best structure in Brazilian agriculture today. Why? Because we have developed a very strong process of internal agricultural cooperation. We educate peasants in a way that they learn how to organize production and survive in this exploitative economy at a level superior to others."

"Let's Globalize Hope, Let's Globalize the Struggle!" -Via Campesina slogan

MST has established itself as a key player in networks posing the greatest challenge to the current global economic order. These networks include the worldwide network of peasants' movements *Via Campesina,* the Latin America Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC), and the "anti-globalization" movement against corporate globalization and its "free trade" economic agenda that has manifest itself though a wave protests across the globe from Seattle to Genoa to Quebec City. The MST has also linked with an effort to organize working and poor people in the United States and Canada called the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign spearheaded by the Philadelphia-based Kensington Welfare Rights Union. The MST marched in the 400-mile *March of the Americas* in 1999 from Washington, DC to the United Nations in New York to protest poverty across the continent as a human rights violation. The MST has also been at the forefront in organizing the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Today, MST is at the forefront of the hemispheric, indeed international, effort to stop the passage of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The proposed trade agreement would bind 35 of 36 countries in the Western Hemisphere (except Cuba) under the dogma of neo-liberalism in a replica of NAFTA that would include 800 million people, creating the largest trade agreement in world history. At the anti-FTAA protest in Quebec City in April 2001, the MST was hard to miss. Members held a picnic with the notorious Jose Bové (of the French farmers group Confédération Paysanne) to denounce genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and performed MST songs on stage to show, once again, that the MST is a *cultural* movement. The MST is a leader in the fight against the FTAA.

As awareness grows in the "developed" world about food safety issues and organic foods, MST's critique of conventional agricultural production sidesteps much of the controversy. For members of MST, "organic" food is not a luxury or a marketing gimmick. It is a necessity for the farmer's health, the sustainability of the land for future generations, and for the health of the consumer. For family farmers, these three concerns are inseparable. "In the beginning, when we were working with agrochemicals, those who worked the fields were getting sick," recounts Jandyra Guarneri, the director of a 26-family MST farming cooperative in the state of Parana, in southern Brazil. "This is why we made the change to organic. There was no other way. The change was difficult technically, and expensive at first. But we saw an improvement in the health of the whole community—especially the children—as we began to consume foods produced without agrochemicals."

The movement has articulated its opposition to GMO's with the same clarity. The

uprooting of "experimental" fields of GMO soybeans planted by Monsanto in the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul sent a message that reverberated through all of South America: the cultivation of GMO crops will not be tolerated by the MST. GMO's have not undergone sufficient testing for their long-term effects, nor have they been subject to public debate. Further, they pose a real threat to both small producers *and* consumers. By contrast, the MST has championed seeds as the heritage—and therefore common property—of humanity, not corporations. The MST's vigilance in their resistance to GMO foods serves as an inspiration to their allies and sympathizers throughout the world, including those in the U.S. and Canada. "They [the activists of the MST] are so far ahead of us down there," says Niel Ritchie of the Minneapolis-based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, about the Brazilian anti-GMO campaign. "We have so much to learn from their public relations effort, how they've managed to educate and communicate with the public on this issue."

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Self-Employed Women's Union, South Africa

By Khoboso Nthunya

Introduction

Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) is an independent trade union established in 1993 to represent the interests of self-employed and survivalist women engaged in the informal sector of the South African economy. SEWU is not affiliated with COSATU (South Africa's main labor union congress) because its members are women from different political parties. Pat Horn, a trade unionist, established SEWU when she realized that national and municipal governments, like the public at large, did not recognize the informal sector. Consequently, women workers in this sector were harassed by municipal authorities: their goods were frequently confiscated, their voices were not heard, and they had no bargaining power. They were not treated with dignity or respect.

Horn visited the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, and inspired by her visit, established SEWU with help from volunteer unionists in the formal sector. A steering committee was formed and, in June 1994, SEWU was launched with 45 members. The steering committee quickly disbanded and handed over authority to a committee of SEWU members and Horn was employed as secretary/organizer/coordinator.

SEWU's main goal is the empowerment of self-employed women to organize themselves to demand recognition and support for the work they do. SEWU organizes women in different categories, including street vendors, home-based workers, subsistence farmers, cardboard collectors. Its members live in both rural and urban areas.

SEWU assists its members develop skills in leadership, negotiation, and lobbying so that they can address the relevant institutions and people directly with their concerns. SEWU also provides advice and assistance with problems such as lack of childcare, health issues, and social security. SEWU also facilitates members' access to a wide range of other organizations that provide social, legal, financial business, counseling services, and skills training. Increasingly, SEWU in involved with research into street vendors, home-based workers and the South African informal sector in general, a function that complements its grant-seeking work to obtain funding from government and international organizations to improve the situation of women working in the informal sector.

Currently, the key issue for SEWU is negotiating with municipal authorities in urban areas for better facilities to street vendors including toilets and clean tap water, shelters, storage, affordable overnight accommodation, safety, child play centers. In most areas, SEWU has had success, but in other areas negotiations continue. SEWU staff engage in the negotiations with members from the affected areas.

Economic difficulties

It is very difficult to organize the informal sector. There are many challenges, but SEWU works to overcome most of them. For survivalist street traders, time away from their sites, during trading hours, means lost income. The intense demands of work in the informal sector create the most basic barriers to establishing up and maintaining any trader's organization. Going to meetings—even taking time to talk to an organizer in the streets—is problematic. At the same time, the informal sector is vital to the country's economy. Street traders generate other informal employment:

- Barrow boys transport street traders' goods in wheelbarrows and supermarket

trolleys between the trading site and the place where the goods are stored overnight;

- Street traders hire taxis to transport them and their goods to and from various places;
- General assistants help the owners of trading sites by minding the stall when they are away and, in exchange, they are allowed to share the site and to sell their own goods there

In addition to the difficulties created by economic conditions, SEWU's members also struggle to overcome the legacy of poverty, oppression, and other social issues. Among SEWU members, twelve percent have had no formal schooling at all. Another thirty-four percent obtained a level of education lower than Std 4; forty-eight percent obtained a level of education between Std 4 and Std 6; and seven percent obtained matric. SEWU supports its members efforts to obtain different skills. We encourage members to shift from traditional female tasks and learn skills like carpentry, block making, bricklaying, electricity, plumbing etc. We also support literacy skills for our members.

Women who received training in brick making, bricklaying, electricity, and upholstery are making their business viable. Among our members' most pressing problem is finding funding because it is difficult to obtain bank loans. Currently, our members get soft loans from the Land Bank and SEWU helps its members until their businesses are self-sustaining and able to develop other groups.

In addition to addressing economic and work-related issues, SEWU also conduct workshops for its members about South Africa's Constitution, their rights, and the HIV/AIDS prevention campaign. During transition from apartheid, many people were affected by violence. Some families lost their breadwinners, other close relatives, and even their homes. Most of our members live with trauma from political violence and the government counseling programs cannot reach all the areas where its services are needed. SEWU has a counseling effort that involves its members in memory cloth project.

After eight years of organizing, SEWU had offices in three provinces: Kwa-Zulu Natal, Western Cape and Eastern Cape with immediate plans to open two more in Orange Free State and Mpumalanga. By 2004, SEWU hopes to cover all nine South African regions. SEWU has achieved some of its goals, but a lot of work remains while the informal sector grows each day.

Democracy In Seattle's Streets

By Christopher Ney

It was in Chile, as an international observer of the 1988 plebiscite that voted Augusto Pinochet out of office, that I first saw the dramatic transformative power of nonviolence. I saw it the second time in Seattle during the protests of the meeting of the World Trade Organization.

The Seattle protests relied, not on state power, but on the strength of well-organized people's power. On November 30 and the following days, decentralized nonviolent direct action won the day, transforming a city (and changing the perceptions of the world) by defeating one of the most powerful bureaucratic financial institutions ever created.

Simple Intent, Complex Design

The direct action plan was as simple in its intent as it was complex in its logistics and design.

The plan was to surround the WTO meeting sites with a human blockade, preventing delegates from entering and forcing the cancellation of the meeting. Protesters gathered at 7:00 a.m. on both sides of the convention center where the WTO meetings were to take place. In a cold and driving rain, my group marched from Pike Place Market on Seattle's waterfront toward the city center. We passed streets blocked with dumpsters, garbage cans and yellow plastic strips that looked like police crime scene tape but read, "Unseen Crimes."

Affinity groups peeled off to construct high- and low-tech barricades at downtown intersections. (High-tech barricades included tripods-tall, three-pole structures with someone sitting at the top, which can't be dismantled without harming the person-and lock boxes, pipes made of plastic or steel in which protesters lock their hands, making it difficult for police to separate people standing in a line.) My group marched to the Paramount Theater, where U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky was to hold the WTO's opening press conference at 9:30.

We found a line of buses blocking the street, with a small opening guarded by Seattle police in modest riot gear. Strictly low-tech, using nothing but our bodies, we locked arms at the only opening in the bus line, in front of the police, and prepared to hold that ground all day. From high on a hill with a wonderful view we watched the city as the rain slowed. The King County Sheriffs guarding the nearby bus depot were friendly and talkative, in contrast to Seattle police. They joked that they had the easiest job, and we commiserated about our common inability to leave our posts for bathroom breaks. When a stymied delegate looked as if he might try to break the barricade violently, the sheriffs quickly moved in to protect the protesters.

At 8:00 our tactical coordinator heard via walkie-talkie that the blockade was in place, securely surrounding the meeting site and preventing delegates from entering. At 9:30, Barshefsky canceled the opening press conference because no one could enter the Paramount Theater. The opening plenary was also canceled. We, the people, had stopped the WTO!

Gas, Spray and Bullets

No one could believe the police weren't arresting the blockaders. But around 10:30 we smelled and felt the presence of tear gas or pepper spray. Cloth soaked in a solution of water and baking soda helped block the mild but noticeable effects on my nose and lungs. A little later, we heard that police had used rubber bullets in addition to tear gas and pepper spray (and also that the police were jamming the tactical teams' walkie-

talkies with repeated sexual obscenities). As the day wore on, we smelled and felt the chemical presence more intensely. We walked to the other side of the convention center, where students from two different campuses were in lock boxes. They told us that the cops had been good to them all day, "except in the morning when they pepper-sprayed and tear-gassed us!" Although the chemicals inflicted real pain, the barricades held.

Back at our site near the Paramount theater, sometime around 2:00 p.m., we saw "hard shell" riot police in SWAT uniforms and body armor approaching. Later in the day, we would see more hard shells and mounted police break through human barricades to escort delegates inside-but the first hard shell group had a different mission. I tried to get close to find out what they were doing. They were very edgy, intently focused on their task, which (as we learned a little later) was to monitor the movements of a group of anarchist youth. The group arrived about 10 minutes after the police. They approached our line, then turned and left; the hard shells disappeared with them. Later, I wondered how it was possible that at 2:00 in the afternoon, police could track this group so effectively that they arrived 10 minutes before the anarchists, yet only a few hours later could not deter them from breaking windows and setting fires. Did the police actually want violence to occur?

Honeycomb of Activism

The Direct Action Network, which planned the blockade and other protests, is a loose-knit coalition of West Coast-based nonviolent direct action groups. It organized the actions out of an old warehouse-turned-dance-club in the residential neighborhood of Capital Hill, now known as the Convergence Center. During the two weeks that preceded the WTO protests the building was a honeycomb of protest activity.

When I arrived November 27, I saw as many as 100 people at a time learning about nonviolence through discussion and role play in one room. In another, activists used the same techniques to plan legal strategy. In the alley outside, others learned about blockades and constructing tripods. In the far corner of the largest room, artists and activists worked day and night to make props, signs, banners and puppets. A medical clinic took care of the sick and distributed free condoms, information about sexually transmitted diseases and tips for dealing with tear gas and pepper spray. Volunteers prepared nutritious vegan meals, feeding up to 1,000 people a day. A large sign in the dining area read, "We got bugs in the wall, bugs on our phones, bugs at our actions, we don't need bugs in our food. Please wash your hands." At the front orientation table people answered questions, gave out direct action information packets, asked for donations, kept a sign-in sheet, recruited volunteers and sold T-shirts. Organizers maintained security and kept one room locked for luggage.

WRL representative to War Resisters' International Vivien Sharples and I participated in a training on high- and low-tech blockades-from human knots to steel-pipe lock boxes-and in a legal training to prepare for arrest and jail. Organizers prepared clear "jail solidarity" guidelines: Carry no identification and do not give your name; refuse to allow the group to be separated; demand equal treatment for all; demand that all arrestees be issued citations (not felony or misdemeanor charges). Protesters were advised to plead not guilty to all charges and demand court-appointed attorneys and jury trials if those conditions were not met.

All that activity happened without an office, without staff, without funding, without an executive director. The Direct Action Network paid $4,000 to rent the Convergence Center, but the benefit of sharing and developing skills with all those young activists was priceless. It was anarchism at its best, a decentralized effort that happened below the radar screens of both the more mainstream protesters and the police-even though DAN's media savvy had brought far more press attention than usual to the preparations. The

day before the action, the Seattle Times' list of upcoming events included the "Nonviolent Blockade to Shut Down the WTO"-and the information that a prior training was encouraged and could be gotten at the headquarters of the Direct Action Network. One of Seattle's two mainstream newspapers was telling its readers to get nonviolence training if they wanted to participate in civil disobedience!

The Convergence Center and DAN represented a remarkable coming together of movements and efforts, some of which, like the Ruckus Society (which held a special training camp to prepare for WTO), Rainforest Action Network, Global Exchange, Center for Campus Organizing and War Resisters League had been working on these issues for years. DAN also gained from recent campus-based activism including animal rights, environment and anti-sweatshop campaigns.

Speaking Truth

Much of the post-action press coverage focused on the protesters' alleged lack of information about the WTO. Apparently, the reporters who wrote those stories hadn't heard exchanges like the one I witnessed between a demonstrator and a delegate from the European Union who claimed that he wanted to break the barricade and enter the Convention center "to convince your government [the United States] to accept protections for European farmers."

The protester asked how the WTO could be beneficial when it overturned labor and environmental standards. While the delegate tried to explain that he thought the WTO could be reformed, the protester asked about one of the WTO's controversial rulings, which overturned local laws requiring shrimp trawlers to have equipment protecting dolphins from the trawling nets.

"Perhaps [the protections are] a burden to industry," replied the delegate. "Do you know how much such devices cost?" asked the protester.

The delegate admitted he didn't. The protester did: "50 dollars," he said.

The conversation went on for 30 minutes, during which the protester offered well-reasoned and well-informed arguments supported by statistics and analysis. And that was only one of hundreds that took place that day, as delegates, blocked from entering the convention hall, were met by protesters with questions and comments. The nonviolent blockade afforded protesters the kind of access that corporations and lobbyists pay thousands of dollars for; it was the best kind of lobbying, not in the marble halls of power, but in the streets-streets that were like a carnival.

Or a liberation zone. There were dancers, puppets, clowns, street theater, radical cheerleaders, people dressed like turtles and cows and butterflies, people on stilts and lots of music. There was a young man in a Boy Scout uniform who claimed some of his merit badges were for civil disobedience and blockade-making.

It may have been the closest I will ever come to a general strike, and I saw it in the only U.S. city that has actually ever had a one-day general strike. At the end of the day, as we walked, tired but satisfied, through downtown Seattle streets still filled with the stench of pepper spray and tear gas, we chanted again the words that captured the spirit of the day: "This is what democracy looks like!"

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Swadhina

by Saswati Roy

Sumitra, Champa, Samprada, Sushama, Kalabati, Salma are some of the tribal women living in remote corners in the state of Orissa in India who we have met during our recent visit to their villages. The women's organization with which I work, Swadhina, has been encouraging and promoting women's groups in these villages for the past five years. These women live in distant villages located in hilly forest regions. Their lives are integrally linked to the forest, which has been their source of food, fodder and wood for fuel. They worship nature and in sickness collect medicinal herbs from the forest. The western model of modernization, a development ideology pursued in India since independence in 1947, has ruthlessly damaged and destroyed vast tracts of forest in the interest of larger development projects. The results have been disastrous, leading to the erosion of a life support system and the uprooting of a large section of the tribal population from their ancestral lands. Already poor, they lost control of and access to a wide variety of resources on which they depended.

Modernization has led to the disappearance of people-based practices such as agro-forestry and food gathering. This deprivation has affected the lives of women in specific and adverse ways, dramatically increasing their daily drudgery. Such displacement, non-access, non-possession, non-entitlement has forced entire communities into mute acceptance.

Supporting Women's Organizations

Women have always been invisible, forgotten, unrecognized. Through modernization, they have lost the most and gained very little. Swadhina emphasizes that women organize at the grass roots and helps them develop their analytical power. Using that power to identify and analyze the issues that affect their lives, the women take action around these issues. So, in each village where Swadhina works, there is a village-level women's organization which plays a pivotal role in local development. Through repeated training sessions, the women learn about social issues and develop leadership skills. Gradually they gain confidence and assume responsibility for all the development activities in their village. The process of empowerment starts in their minds, in their attitudes, value system and judgement. When Swadhina ultimately withdraws from the community, the women continue to work as local village-level organization.

Strengthening Local Systems

Development that is driven by macro-economics has waged an unabating war on the poor through the depletion of natural resources and the marginalization of people who are already poor, especially women. The appropriation of the world's resources has taken place through the merciless extraction of mineral wealth, reduction of biomass and biodiversity, gradual disappearance of indigenous knowledge, and destruction of self-sustaining ecological systems.

The much-promised benefits of development have never trickled down to the people, instead development has created multiple forms of dependence. The challenge today is to strengthen self-sustaining local systems, and reestablish people's faith in their own abilities and the wealth of indigenous knowledge for self-development.

Sustainable agriculture

Following the development model, agriculture has been commercialized, with promotion of cash crops and the introduction of machines and use of chemicals—additional factors that also result in dependence. By contrast, Swadhina promotes the concept of farming

for health. Women are encouraged to grow new varieties of nutritious vegetables and fruits at their homes, satisfying the health needs of the family, and at the same time, earning money by selling the surplus. Community nurseries, jointly owned by the community and developed on a piece of land offered by the villagers, are promoted and will continually supply seed and saplings to the families.

Dhai ma - the health worker

Women have greater understanding of and knowledge about the indigenous health care system, a resource fast vanishing in the era of professional health care practices. Our oldest health worker in the Dhenkanal area is popularly known as Dhai ma. She is a very old and experienced midwife who has carried out many deliveries in and around her villages. When we met her at Markata (STATE??), she was as active and smiling as ever, but she does not know how to sign her name.

Despite being illiterate, she was selected and trained by Swadhina to work as a health worker because of her expertise as a midwife and her profound knowledge of health issues. Dhai ma later participated in training sessions and learned more about safe methods of delivery. Soon health workers from other villages started to accompany her during deliveries and she trained them. Now at least six women who had no previous experience in health care are working as expert midwives in this region. In return for their service, they get cloth, vegetables and rice, and sometimes cash. These women now have the skills and confidence to sustain themselves through their service to the community.

Promoting haat

Promoting weekly village markets, locally called *haat*, is one Swadhina's main projects. So far, five rural markets have been started through Swadhina's initiatives. These *haat* have been organized in villages where the nearest regular market is several kilometres away. Villagers had to walk to reach them. A *haat* caters to local needs and provides a forum where villagers can buy and sell their local produce. Both women and men run the shops in these markets. Usually the women's committee of the village where the *haat* is located secures permission for a lease from the local administrative authority.

Economic self-reliance

Economic independence is one of the stepping stones towards overall empowerment. Swadhina tries to ensure that economic activity fits within the local context and does not impose alien economic ventures on women. Generally, after identifying what skills the local women have and the availability of raw materials, the women's groups decide themselves which type of activity they will pursue.

Again, any effort at economic self-reliance has to be embedded in people's own culture, for culture gives meaning and a sense of direction to peoples lives. Development is, indeed, an inner process directly linked to specific cultural values. Thus, any economic activity for the tribal community has to be collective, because, for tribal people, collectivism is the essence of life—and sharing is a cherished value.

But our job is not over simply when income starts to be generated. We believe it is very important to see how the income is used. Swadhina encourages women to save money in a group fund, from which they can apply for loans for starting small businesses or to cope with an emergency situation in their family. Formation of the savings fund, run and managed by the women themselves, has brought immense relief to the women and, through them, to the whole community. They have now been released from the clutches of the local money lenders who have exploited and oppressed poor villagers for years.

Shakhar Marandi: the shopkeeper

Now many women in the villages have started their own businesses by taking out small loans from the group fund. Sakahar Marandi is one of the women we met while visiting Chanchipada, a village in Mayurbhanj in Orissa. When we met her at the village market she was busy running her small shop. Shakhar is a 28-year-old tribal woman who had attended school for a few years but left after the primary level. Last year she was hospitalized with a tumor that had to be operated on immediately. She needed around Rs3000/- for the treatment. She applied for a loan to her village women's savings fund. Though she had saved only Rs500/- in the fund herself, the women's committee approved the loan. The operation was successful. Today, she is completely healed and has slowly repaid the loan. Later, she took another loan to start the shop where we met her. Shakhar is a proud and confident woman, running her shop and shedding her inhibitions and shyness.

Promoting outdated values

The blind rush toward industrialization and modernization has led to a severe deterioration of values. Harmony has been replaced by conquest, cooperation by competition. Being the best by pushing others aside becomes the norm. The values of fellowship, concern for others, feeling with nature and other noncommercial approaches are ridiculed as outdated. But, any attempt at social and economic empowerment is bound to fail if it does not simultaneously promote the values that ultimately will sustain and strengthen the process of empowerment. Women working together in production groups stress the value of sharing as a group—as opposed to the dominant capitalist value of individual profiteering. Yet even these organizations can degenerate and become institutions that abuse power, so the value of accountability is also imperative.

The basket makers at Masharda

At Masharda village in Mayurbhanj we met a group of 19 women who are bamboo basket makers by tradition. The Kalandi community to which they belong is considered to be untouchable. Each of these women got a loan of Rs100/- with which they purchased bamboo. It takes a long time for them to understand and learn the maintenance of a production record and cost and profit calculations. But it is not business and profit that brings them together; rather, they are investing in social relations. While working together in the open fields they share with each other the joys and sorrows of life. This is also the time when important information is shared—like the next date for the pregnant mothers check-up. While we were there, two women signed up for the next check-up. In Masharda, Bharati Kalandi, the convenor of the team, is a very active and efficient woman who diligently keeps records of every deposit in each member's savings pass book.

Hope

Empowerment does not happen overnight. It takes a long time to reach a state of refinement in our inner lives through nonviolent means. It can never be measured by material possessions. After our visit to the villagers we came back to our respective homes with the firm belief that the women we met will inspire many more women toward economic empowerment—a qualitative improvement in women's lives. They feel confident in the dignity of being themselves, they enjoy the right to be themselves, and they are not successful solely in the generation and accumulation of material wealth. Together, with their newly-felt inner power, they refuse to be passive victims. Rather, they actively create and shape their own future.

For additional information:

Raff Carmens *Autonomous Development* (Zed Books 1996) was a useful source in preparing this article.

The Intifada: from violence to more violence

By Dr Marwan Darweish

Overall situation

The thrust of the peace process that resulted in the 1993 Oslo agreement was to bring the Palestinians and Israelis to an interim negotiated settlement. It set out steps that focused on building mutual trust between the two peoples. After the signing of the Oslo agreement, which included the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), there was a gradual implementation of the terms of the agreement and the beginning of Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories. Before the assassination of Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, hopes were high that a settlement was possible and a move from interim negotiation to final status negotiation would soon follow. The golden era of the peace process did not last long. At the high point in 1995-96, support for the peace process peaked at 80% and support for violence against Israeli targets dropped to 20%.

The implementation of the agreements slowed or halted altogether after Rabin's assassination. The delays eroded the level of trust towards both the Israeli government and the PNA, signs of that erosion began to manifest themselves in Palestinian society. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the Oslo Agreement did not immediately address the issues that are major causes of conflict: the status of Jerusalem, an end of occupation and the recognition of a Palestinian state, the situation of Palestinian refugees, economic improvement, guaranteed access to water, and the Israeli settlements. Throughout this entire period, new Israeli settlements were created continuously while existing settlements were expanded.

The September 28, 2000 visit of right-wing politician Ariel Sharon, then the leader of the opposition party, to the *al Haram al Sharif* in Jerusalem sparked the second Intifada of Al-Aqsa in that month. The visit enraged a Palestinian public already disillusioned by the failure of the peace process over a period of several years to produce an end to Israeli military occupation. Within a few days, there were widespread and violent confrontations with the Israeli army in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—and within Israel—resulting in many casualties and deaths, initially among Palestinians. These confrontations were the start of a process of escalating acts of violence and increasing repression—a violent cycle of action-reaction that continues to this day.

The characteristic of this Intifada in contrast with previous Palestinian confrontations with the Israeli occupation is the extraordinarily high number of civilian casualties within both the Palestinian and Israeli societies. This was due to an excessive use of violence and the Israeli military assault in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It has been argued that the use live ammunition in the first months of the Intifada by the Israeli forces, causing many deaths and injuries and the use of arms by Palestinians have terrified the Palestinian street, deterring them from joining popular protest.

Militarization by the PNA

After the first four months, the uprising took a turn away from popular grassroots protest to sporadic armed struggle—later to low-level guerrilla tactics including suicide bombing. While there is no symmetry between the occupier and the occupied—the relationship is one of that between oppressor and victim, the militarization of the Intifada by Palestinians has been a strategic miscalculation. The violence of the powerful Israeli occupation army using live ammunition, tanks and helicopter gunship and even F-16 fighter jets, demonstrates who has the military power. Militarizing the second uprising has been ineffective in fighting Israel and is even counterproductive because of the might of the Israeli retaliatory measures. The struggle became even more difficult when attacks started to target civilian and not concentrate on targets within the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The militarization of the uprising did provide the PNA security forces with an opportunity to prove their significance at a time when had not been paid for several months due to a lack of funds. In January 2001, the PNA security forces executed two Palestinians, for the first time, for their collaboration with the Israeli intelligence service. This incident highlights again the crucial role of PNA security in maintaining order. The empowerment of the security forces in Palestinian society over civil and political movements has given them the upper hand—a seemingly free hand to abuse their power. As a result, many sectors of Palestinian society are excluded from participating actively in the uprising, undermining the democratic process. The exclusion of civil society organizations has had a particular impact on the participation of women and secular organizations and shifted power toward religious groups. In fact, the PNA has put enormous pressure on NGOs and tightened its control through the introduction of laws and regulations. Since the Oslo agreement in 1993, political parties have been sidelined, leaving the PNA to make decisions on all aspects of Palestinian life.

After 1993, the NGO sector grew significantly in number but not in its influence on Palestinian society. There was a general withdrawal from activism by NGOs and political parties who were unable to sustain the same level of engagement that they had during the Intifada. The flow of funding from international organizations to Palestinian NGOs and the imposition of their agendas and work methods further damaged their reputation and their credibility in Palestinian society. NGOs became like "shops," aiming in reality to make a profit and secure income for their staff. They became oriented toward and driven largely by funding agencies and their externally-decided priorities.

As a consequence, civil society failed to develop a credible opposition against both the corruption within the PNA and the struggle against Israeli occupation. In fact, many civil society organizations were benefiting from the situation. Using its financial resources the PNA was able to secure jobs for the "boys" in the PNA institutions and to offer employment in the various security forces. In this way, the PNA led by Arafat was able to co-opt the opposition in civil society.

Nonviolence and empowerment

The use of armed confrontations with the Israeli army represents a failure to learn from the past—most recently the 1987 Intifada. Nonviolent action during the first Intifada robbed Israel of its military superiority over the Palestinian civilians and caused serious damage to the image of Israel internationally. Grassroots participation and the formation of popular committees were both sources of empowerment for the whole population. Mutual support systems established in local neighborhoods helped Palestinians face the hardships caused by army-imposed closure of the West Bank and Gaza. These systems also proved invaluable by inspiring confidence in the security they

provided for people living the Intifada day-to-day. By contrast, it is very difficult to develop strategy of action against the occupation during the current Intifada, even though there is already process of disengagement form Israel.

The corruption within the PNA ranks and the public mistrust towards the Palestinian leadership has created an atmosphere of apathy and feelings of hopelessness. The PNA has failed to convince the public of their transparency or accountability.

Internationals working in Palestine are some of the few to call for nonviolent action against the Israeli occupation. Over the past year they have arranged some very successful, if small scale, actions. And in many situations Palestinians and Israelis from the peace camp organized sit-ins and other protest activities. My own experience of these actions has been that they are very powerful and render the army completely powerless. Attempts by the military to use stun bombs, tear gas and physical violence against protesters proved chaotic and pathetic, while in other situation the Israeli forces were brutal with the protesters. During the last few weeks during March and April 2002, joint demonstrations organized by Palestinians from Israel and Israeli Jews were meet with a vicious response by the Israeli security forces. The role of the international solidarity movement with the Palestinians in recent months has been critical in helping provide protection and aid for the civilian population. It is important to strengthen this movement and form a joint strategy based on nonviolent civil action. The work of the international solidarity movement with the Palestinians is more important than at any time in the past.

My conclusion is that given the brutal use of force by the Israeli army and total dehumanization of the Palestinians it would be completely unrealistic and dangerous for Palestinians alone to use nonviolent action. However, there is a great potential for this approach only if it is used jointly and in cooperation with the Israeli peace movement and the international solidarity activists with Palestine.

There is no doubt that there is no military solution to Palestinian-Israeli conflict and that the only way forward is through negotiations. However, this dialogue must recognize the Palestinians' need for freedom and justice.

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The Tibetan Nonviolent Resistance: Empowerment in an Extraordinary Situation

By Senthil Ram

Profile of a political prisoner

Jigme Gyatso is a monk from Gaden Monastery in Chinese-occupied Tibet. He was born in Bhartha villag e in Gansu Province in 1962. Although he was his parent's only child he decided to become a monk. During the mid-1980's he briefly visited India to receive a religious initiation. Upon his return to Tibet he joined the Gaden Monastery where he became involved in pro-independence activities. He distributed independence leaflets and pasted posters on the walls around Gaden Monastery and Lhasa city. In 1988-89 Jigme became the leader of a secret youth organization called 'Association of Tibetan Freedom Movement.' He was able to distribute freedom leaflets to visitors at the monastery as he worked at the administrative section. On 17 January 1992 Jigme organized one of the major demonstrations that took place in Lhasa that year. Many of the demonstrators were arrested and detained by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) and officials of the anti-riot department. Jigme was not arrested that time, but officials of PSB suspected his involvement and kept him under close surveillance. Unable to withstand these restrictions, Jigme left the monastery.

In 1993, an arrest warrant was issued for Jigme and another member of the Association, Jamyang Tsultrim, citing them as 'wanted splittists.' As part of their desperate search for Jigme, the authorities often summoned and questioned his friends, and even tortured them brutally. On 30 March 1996 Jigme was arrested in a restaurant belonging to Jamyang Tsultrim located in front of the famous Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. Jigme was taken immediately to the anti-riot department. He was tortured during the interrogation. Later, he was moved to Gutsa Detention Centre and detained for one year until March 1997. At the Gutsa interrogation cell, Jigme faced severe interrogation sessions.

After six months in detention, he was caught sending a letter to another political prisoner. Following this incident, his hands and legs were chained. He was subjected to additional torture when his story was broadcast on 'Voice of America.' On May 1997, Jigme was formally tried. He refused any legal representation because he felt it would be futile. During the trial, Jigme accepted all the charges against him. When the trial court asked him whether he regretted his deeds, he replied, "No, my acts are peaceful and nonviolent." He also pleaded that all the charges and penalties imposed on his friends should be transferred to him. Finally he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment on charges of 'disseminating counter-revolutionary propaganda,' incitement and having illegally formed the 'Association of Tibetan Freedom Movement.' As soon as he was transferred to Drapchi prison he was placed in solitary confinement because of his alleged involvement in the prison protests.

Monks, nuns and monasteries in action

Jigme's story is just one case of a Tibetan monk who used nonviolent action to oppose the Chinese occupation forces and protect the Tibetan culture. Today there are hundreds of political prisoners, like Jigme, suffering inhuman torture for exercising their human rights and peaceful expression of opinions. The monks and nuns, who played an important role in the religion and politics of traditional Tibet, organized and took part in most of the protests actions. Since the young, unmarried monks and nuns were the first to feel the oppression of Chinese policies against Tibetan culture and religion,

monasteries became a central point in the nonviolent protests. They confronted the communist policies through various protests actions drawn from Buddhist religious practices. Protests were mostly small peaceful demonstrations—distribution or display of information material calling for the respect of human rights, protection of Tibet's unique culture and seeking freedom for Tibet. Thus, the monasteries in Chinese-occupied Tibet became a unique institutional base for the nonviolent resistance.

Almost ten years after the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the first nonviolent protests took place in 1959. Subsequently, the Dalai Lama, the religious and political leader of Tibet, and more than half a million Tibetans left the country and took refuge in India. Despite the economic reforms, subsequent decades witnessed growing discontent and suffering among ordinary Tibetans. Finally this situation led to a series of nonviolent protests starting in 1987. The Buddhist monks and nuns belonging to prominent monasteries—Drepung, Sera and Ganden—staged many pro-independence demonstrations, alarming the Chinese authorities. The first major case of civil disobedience took place in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, on 27 September 1987 as an immediate reaction to the Chinese rejection of the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan announced in the US Congress. Since that time, there have been widespread nonviolent protests and demonstrations reported. During the period from 1987 to 1992 some 140 demonstrations took place. Numerous pamphlets and posters demanding independence were distributed. Hundreds of Tibetans were arrested. More than monks, nuns, and youth lead the movement—the lay Tibetan population and the elderly organized some of the most creative and boldest actions. Nonviolent actions were reported in urban areas around Lhasa and as well as in remote ethnic Tibetan areas. While the suffering of ordinary Tibetans triggered these protests, the increasingly violent repression by the Chinese authorities fanned nationalistic sentiment and sustained the nonviolent protests.

Classic instances of Tibetan resistance

Religion has formed the backbone of the Tibetan resistance to the Chinese policies that are designed to control and slowly destroy the Tibetan religion. Tibetans creatively converted their rituals into political protests. The 1987 protests widely used the ritual of circumambulating a holy site, called *khorra*. The Jokhang temple and the surrounding Barkhor area in Lhasa became protest sites where monks circumambulated during the demonstrations. Similarly, a group of lay people transformed their prayer into protests when performing *mani* (recital) for those killed during the 1987 demonstrations. In 1989, a large number of Tibetans at *khorra*, burned incense, lit butter lamps, released *windhorses* (prayers written on small squares of paper designed to float in the wind) and threw *tsampa* (roasted barley flour, Tibetans' staple food) to celebrate Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize award.

When the monks in Rato monastery were asked to write a self-criticism, they refused to confess and played with the paper, making paper airplanes. Another monastery used their training in Buddhist dialectics—a form of debate—to argue the point that since Tibet was part of China it must also be possible that China is part of Tibet. In another incident, the Chinese authorities asked the monks to remove the Tibetan flag from a flagpole at the Sera monastery. The monks replied, "Since it is not ours why should we take it down?" Usually the price for non-cooperation or non-compliance is expulsion from the monastery plus arrest, beatings, and even torture—which sometimes results in death.

Posters, the most widespread form of nonviolent action, are normally put up at dawn throughout Tibetan areas. In March 1991, the poster campaigns were so prevalent in Lhasa that the Chinese authorities established special night squads to capture Tibetans writing them. The posters carried slogans like 'Tibet is free,' 'Chinese quit Tibet,' and

'Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama' in Chinese, Tibetan, and English. In July 1992, Lobsong, a monk from Dunbhu Choekar Monastery, with eight friends and four others painted pro-independence slogans on the wall of a local bank and along the main public streets in Chideshol, Lhokha Prefecture. Street songs assumed greater importance after the Chinese invasion since they were used not only as a vehicle to express widespread defiance, but also as a source of inspiration for Tibetans involved in resistance. In 1993, fourteen nuns who were detained in Drapchi prison secretly recorded songs written and sung by them. These songs talked about their love for Tibet, support for the Dalai Lama and Buddhism, and for freedom in Tibet. It was passed outside and distributed widely among Tibetans.

Educational materials that seek to inform Tibetans about their political history and current world events are printed by hand or with wooden printing blocks. Some books, brochures and audiocassettes are also obtained from the exile community in India and distributed in Tibet. Among the most popular items are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Dalai Lama's autobiography and his Five Point Peace Plan, all of which circulate widely in translation. One of the most important strands of political thinking to emerge in Tibet was a document, "The Meaning of the Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet," written by monks belonging to Drepung monastery. The authors envision "a democratic government for Tibet embodying both religious and secular principles." This pamphlet was later made into woodblock copies and distributed in the villages around Lhasa. The monks were later arrested and found guilty of various 'counter-revolutionary' offenses, including one who was sentenced to 19 years in Drapchi prison.

Some protest actions are more direct: farmers in rural areas sometimes block roads to delay travel. In June 1993, farmers of Snuggling village blocked the traffic on the main road, greatly upsetting the Chinese waiting for supplies in a nearby village. In the same month, the villagers from Sungrabling, Gonkar County, Lhoka prefecture blocked the main road to prevent police from raiding the monastery after a pro-independence protest. At times, the nameplates of government buildings—symbols of Chinese authority—were replaced with pro-independence posters. A monk from Lhoka region removed Chinese posters banning independence demonstrations and replaced them with pro-independence leaflets. In another incident, the Chinese flags in the schools of Rekong, Malho prefecture, Qinghai province, Karze prefecture, Sichuan province were torn down and Tibetan flags were replaced. In 1988, students at the University of Lhasa elected a Tibetan student as 'Student of the Year,' even though he had been imprisoned for five months over suspicion of killing a police officer during a demonstration. On 10 August 1994, thirteen nuns jailed at Trisam prison refused to come out for their monthly visitation as an act of solidarity with two other nuns who were denied visitation for unintentionally splashing of water on a Chinese man. Thus, Tibetans have demonstrated their unity of purpose through a range of creative and powerful nonviolent actions, mostly drawn from their daily religious practices and culture.

Classification of Tibetan nonviolent actions

For more than a decade the Tibetan people have resisted Chinese occupation of their homeland by various nonviolent actions. While these actions added new dimensions to the Tibetan struggle, the techniques and types of nonviolent methods employed by Tibetans were not widely known. Therefore, I have attempted to document the nonviolent actions that are reported frequently in *Tibetan Review* (a monthly magazine published from New Delhi). In addition, I interviewed ex-political prisoners who are in exile in India and incorporated the information provided by them. Gene Sharps' classification of 198 nonviolent methods was used as a scheme for categorizing the

nonviolent actions. After classifying the actions, it appears that Tibetans have repeatedly used 11 of the 38 broad categories offered by Sharp. These actions include formal statements; public communication; group representation; symbolic actions; pressure on an individual; drama, arts and music; processions; honoring the dead; public assemblies; actions by consumers; and psychological intervention. This long list of actions demonstrates that nonviolent actions are not uncommon in Tibet. The following table presents the classifications and the number of actions performed between 1985-1997.

The first comprehensive analysis of Tibetan nonviolent action was done by peace researchers Katherine Kramer and Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan in 2000 entitled *Truth is Our Only Weapon*. From their study it is clear that the Tibetans conceived new types of action in addition to using some of the well-known nonviolent actions. These new types of action were based on Tibet's unique culture and tradition. Together, these actions were categorized into three groups: nonviolent protest and persuasion, nonviolent non-cooperation and constructive program. The importance of this analysis of nonviolent actions lies in identifying the acts of resistance overlooked by other observers.

Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion Methods followed by the Tibetans, 1985-1999

Year	Formal Statements	Greater Communication	Group Representations	Symbolic Acts	Pressures	Arts& Music
1985	10	4	1	8	1	2
1986	16	3		4		3
1987	12	5		5	1	6
1988	12			2		2
1989	27	12		7	3	7
1990	19	7		1	1	4
1991	18	1		10	1	8
1992	22	2		5	2	8
1993	20	5	8	6	3	
1994	13	5	1	1	3	5
1995	15	7		2	1	3
1996	26	23	2	4	1	8
1997	26	3	2	7	3	7
1998	28	5	10	8	1	17
1999	13	4	1	8	7	12
Total	277	86	25	78	28	92

Year	Processions	Honoring the Dead	Public Assemblies	Consumer Actions	Psychological Intervention
1985	1		5		
1986	2	2	5		
1987	4	1	5		1
1988	1		10		1
1989	3		8		
1990	1		1		
1991	1		3		
1992	5		6		
1993	3		3	1	1
1994	4		4		1
1995	6		2		
1996	17		13	3	2
1997	23		19	2	
1998	17		14		4
1999	20		19		1
Total	108	3	117	6	11

Source: Documented from the *Tibetan Review* (New Delhi), 1985-1999, on the basis of Gene Sharp's Classification of 198 Nonviolent Methods in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 3 Vols. (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).

Protest actions include the Poster Campaigns mentioned above, plus graffiti, producing and distributing pamphlets, leaflets or books. Demonstrations—the most dramatic include disrupting sessions of the state-sponsored 'Patriotic Re-education Campaigns'— also display symbols like Tibetan national flag and the Dalai Lama's photograph (a violation of the law, indicating support for the Dalai Lama's leadership), chanting pro-independence slogans or singing political songs. Protesters also organize lengthy processions or peace marches and sometimes form human blockades to prevent the entry (or exit) of Chinese officials. Religious rituals have also become instruments of resistance, among them demonstrative funerals, Buddhist rituals (accepted and controlled by the Chinese are repeatedly followed by popular protest), and boycott of the religious festivals organized by Chinese. Finally, strikes—known as *hartals*— have been organized by the Tibetan business community, and even by monks who temporarily close monasteries to express dissent.

Beyond public demonstrations of discontent, many Tibetans have taken their resistance to occupation a step further and engaged in non-cooperation with Chinese officials. At its most basic level, non-cooperation involves direct refusal to obey the oppressor's orders and non-compliance marks the act of not carrying out the given orders. Among the tactics employed are hunger strikes, silence (especially in non-cooperation with the police), removal or destruction of symbols of Chinese authority, possessing banned materials, and making public statements against government policy. Following Gandhian practice of nonviolence, the Tibetans also support a constructive program of positive action. These acts include collecting information, communicating with outsiders, organizing underground groups, petitioning for redress of grievances, and listening to banned radio broadcasts for information about the activities of the Tibetan government-in-exile and international solidarity with their struggle.

Uniqueness of Tibetan nonviolent resistance

While expressing their grievances, the Tibetans clearly made a distinction between the Chinese people and the government policies. This was particularly true of the series of peaceful protests in the 1980's that targeted the policies of Chinese government, not the Chinese people. Therefore, Tibetan resistance shares a characteristic of nonviolent struggle that differentiates between the evil and the evildoer. In addition to this central characteristic, there are three unique attributes of Tibetan nonviolent resistance: they are highly symbolic, loosely organized and frequently spontaneous actions.

Most of the nonviolent protest and persuasion methods originated from the Tibetan religion and culture are very *symbolic* in nature. Tibetans used these symbolic gestures either alone or in conjunction with other nonviolent actions. As a symbolic resistance to the Chinese ban on Dalai Lama's photographs, street vendors in Lhasa placed empty picture frames on their stalls alongside photographs of permitted lamas. In many homes, Tibetans placed a plain sheet of paper in a frame to symbolize the Dalai Lama. Further, monks and nuns wore badges to signify their support for the Tibetan independence and the Dalai Lama. These actions require less time to plan and perform—and planning does not attract the attention of the Chinese intelligence officials. Given the unfavorable conditions that exist in Tibet for nonviolent action, these symbolic nonviolent actions have become very powerful in arousing sympathy—almost equal in effect to direct nonviolent actions practiced under more favorable conditions in democratic systems.

Secondly, the Tibetan protests are not always well-organized protests. Considering the extensive Chinese intelligence networks and the lack of freedom of communication it has become difficult for the Tibetans to organize large-scale nonviolent actions. Most of the protests are organized by two or three people who come together on short notice and are joined by others at the time of action. Though there was not much coordination among

the countless demonstrations, monasteries in the most remote places planned their own actions on hearing of protests in Lhasa. Therefore it has become very difficult for the Chinese forces to suppress such small-scale but powerful protests. Lastly, the spontaneous nature of the Tibetan protests is significantly different from nonviolent actions in other parts of the world. Barring a few— like those in Lhasa in 1987 and 1989 — the majority of Tibetan protests were spontaneous ones that took place without large-scale provocation. Whenever the oppression became unbearable, Lhasa witnessed protests. Since opposition sentiment is widespread, the protests have become an effective vehicle for resistance among Tibetans. By contrast, the spontaneity frustrated Chinese forces because they could not anticipate the timing of the protests or prepare to restrain them.

Empowerment in an extraordinary situation

The fact that Tibetans have continued their resistance against the Chinese occupation for nearly half a century is a sign that they are empowered continually by their own nonviolent action. Now even the lay Tibetans are very aware of their human rights, including freedom of peaceful expression. For more than two decades they have used every opportunity to present evidence of gross human rights violations in Tibet to international agencies and visiting tourists. Most importantly, the protest actions have renewed the Tibetan identity and pride and created solidarity under repressive conditions. At the same time, this empowerment increased Tibetan political conscience and strengthened the resistance. The revived Tibetan nationalistic feelings and the accompanied nonviolent actions have contributed significantly to the ongoing Tibetan struggle to protect the unique Tibetan culture and promote the basic human rights. The Dalai Lama, an advocate of Gandhian and Kingian nonviolent action, is guiding this nonviolent struggle from exile in India by mobilizing international political, popular, and media support.

The nonviolent action of Tibetans, apart from communicating their opposition to Chinese government policies, expressed their grievances to the Chinese people in an appealing way. The Chinese government's violation of the right to express political opinions as guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and brutal suppression of peaceful protests were subject to widespread condemnation, damaging their reputation internationally. More importantly, the Tibetan nonviolent resistance elicited sympathy among third parties who are not related to the conflict and mobilized their support to the Tibet cause. This resulted in a number of governmental and non-governmental initiatives supporting Tibet. Further, the International Tibet Support Group movement used the protests in Tibet as evidence of the grave situation and demanded the immediate international nonviolent intervention. In the aftermath of Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement in China, the peaceful protests in Lhasa captured the attention of global media and created widespread awareness to the issue. Thus, the nonviolent resistance in Tibet communicated the genuine desire of the Tibetan people for independence in many ways and supported the Tibetan government-in-exile to lead the freedom struggle of seven million Tibetans by placing before the international community the issues of morality, nonviolence, truth, and justice.

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