

PEACEPOWER

*Berkeley's Journal of Principled Nonviolence
and Conflict Transformation*

Volume 2, Issue 1
Winter 2006

Cindy Sheehan: It's Time for Civil Disobedience



INSIDE: People Power in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Philippines
Israel/Palestine: No to Confiscation, Yes to Community
Forgiveness as Social Change • Was Gandhi an Anarchist?
The Path to Nuclear Disarmament • Conflict Resolution at Cal

PEACEPOWER

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What can you be for when you're against war?

In an era of war and violence, it is little wonder that peace activists seem frustrated and disillusioned. Finger-pointing and coffeehouse criticism, though perhaps temporarily satisfying, do little to provide concrete solutions to society's woes.

So how can we turn our critiques into a positive force for change? What can you be for when you're against war?

In this issue of PeacePower, we explore some substantive answers to this challenging question. We offer evidence that there are indeed productive ways to oppose the current trends of violence and oppression, and create a better world by building alternative organizations, advocating policy change, and rehumanizing conflicts.

In their respective articles, Eli Sasaran and Sarah Elizabeth Clark show how offering dignity and respect to others have transformed the lives of individuals, as well as broader societal conflicts, in the Philippines and South Africa. Also in this issue, Katt Hoban explains how UC Berkeley's new student-run Conflict Resolution and Transformation Center provides services such as mediation, workshops, and group facilitation to help students resolve conflicts. The Center can help ease tension and hostility in our relationships – and if peace begins anywhere, it begins at home (or in dorms, co-ops, fraternities, and sororities).

Attention from around the world is focused on the various conflicts in the Middle East. Dr. Johan Galtung of Transcend, a development and peace

network, explains that creativity, empathy and nonviolence can be utilized to propose realistic and transformative approaches to the conflicts in Israel/Palestine and Iraq. Dr. Michael Nagler, Tal Palter-Palman, and Matthew Taylor detail how a coalition of Palestinians, Israelis, and Internationals are implementing the power of nonviolence to oppose the injustice of land confiscation in Palestinian villages. Danielle Alkov shows us what nonviolent people-power is doing to change the nature of political debate in Lebanon.

Here at UC Berkeley and at campuses around the nation, antiwar and counter-recruitment activists, including Cindy Sheehan, are advocating for "College Not Combat." This burgeoning campaign opposes the direct violence that is the occupation of Iraq as well as the structural violence caused by cuts in social services at home. In a similar vein, the Nonviolent Peaceforce (www.nvpf.org) operates a nonviolent alternative to the army, and is currently on the ground in Sri Lanka. These positive visions for the future, of education and not violence, are a poignant example of what you can be for when you're against war.

We have not compiled an exhaustive list of constructive alternatives to war. In fact, we are only scratching the surface. Still, we hope to draw attention to the many efforts being made toward these noble goals. To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest innovations to be made in our age will not be in the field of violence, but in the field of nonviolence.

About Peace Power

What kind of power can persuade the British to leave India as friends, not enemies? What kind of power can move the hearts of white Americans to recognize the need for civil rights for African-Americans? What kind of power can persuade an air force pilot, ordered by a dictator to quell an uprising, to turn away from his target, unable to fire on a crowd of unarmed Filipinos? We call this Peace Power, also known as principled nonviolence. Rather than a negation of violence, peace power is a positive force for change and resistance. By renouncing the use of coercive force, it draws on the persuasive power people have over each other's hearts, or what Kenneth Boulding calls integrative power. It can also be described as "person power," the dedication of each individual when they convert a negative drive to a positive drive. When those who have achieved this individual dedication come together, they enact "people power." This is the power that can transform our selves, our relationships, our conflicts, and our world.

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Letter to the Editors

Dear Chelsea and Matthew,

What do we do when human beings perpetrate evil and take the lives of hundreds of innocent people? Do those who bomb nightclubs need to be apprehended in order to prevent a reoccurrence? Do we respond when hundreds of thousands are slaughtered? Do those who commit genocide need to be stopped? If so, how do we stop them? Is the use of force - either police or military - ever appropriate? If the use of force is needed, does it automatically spring forth from the head of Zeus, or is it something for which one must train?

These are the kinds of questions each of us must ask in our struggle for peace. One of the realities we face is that there is evil in the world; another one is that the peoples of the earth are divided into nations. As citizens of the U.S., we are blessed to live in a country where the freedoms of religion, speech, and assembly are taken for granted. We have the freedom to criticize our government or to participate in it. In many nations of the world a journal such as PeacePower would never see the light of day. So I laud the publication of your first issue; you are pointing us toward things that are good.

As a minister of the gospel, as well as one who serves in the State, I finish with a couple of thoughts. The first one was offered by Benjamin Franklin at the close of the Constitutional Convention in 1776. A woman approached the great statesman and asked him, "What have you come up with?" Mr. Franklin's response: "A republic, ma'am, if you can keep it." My second thought comes from the

Christian Scriptures: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Pe. 5:13-14).

May we use the tremendous freedoms we enjoy in our participatory democracy to ensure that those who are doing evil are the ones being punished and that those who are doing well are the ones who are commended. This takes great courage on behalf of all. I would even suggest that it is our divine responsibility. Faithful and moral living in our own nation may ultimately spread to others, as well. Blessings to you, and Peace, in the name of the Most High,
Rev. Roger VanDerWerken
LCDR, United States Navy

Dear Roger,

We appreciate and share your desire for security and peace. We have a different perspective on how to go about achieving these things.

When it comes to the difficult situations you have outlined, we can respond in several ways:

1) What are the conditions that led to the problem? These things do not happen in a vacuum. How might we address those conditions?

2) Why aren't we intervening earlier? For instance, while it's often asked "what should have been done to deal with the Nazis in the 1940s," we might also ask, "What should have been done at the end of World War I to ensure that the unfinished business and resentments of that war wouldn't consume the world twenty years later?"

WAS GANDHI AN ANARCHIST?

Visionary promoted decentralized, direct democracy as key to peace; power resides in the individual and in self-rule

Josh Fattal

Anarchy is about abolishing hierarchy. According to the original, Greek meaning of the word, Anarchy stands to create a world where there is no separation between the rulers and the ruled—a place where everyone rules themselves. (An-archy in Greek means without rulers.) An anarchic vision of society is nonviolent, self-managed and non-hierarchical, and Anarchist thinkers hold dear to the ideal of democracy—rule by the people. They suggest political confederations of local organizations; a “commune of communes” was how the 19th century Parisians Anarchists articulated it. Anarchists seek to dissolve power instead of seize it. Therefore, they seek a social revolution instead of a political one. The social revolution throws into question all aspects of social life including family organization, schooling, religion, crime and punishment, technology, political organization, patriarchy, environmental concerns as well as others. Anarchists are identified “as enemies of the State,” because they do oppose the existence of a hierarchical, top-down State.

Mohandas Gandhi opposed the State. The State is the military, police, prisons, courts, tax collectors, and bureaucrats. He saw the State as concentrated violence. “The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.” Gandhi recognized that the State claims to serve the nation, but he realized that this was a fallacy. “While apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, [the State] does the greatest harm to mankind.”¹

According to Dr. Dhawan, Gandhi was a philosophical Anarchist because he believed that the “[the greatest good of all] can be realized only in the classless, stateless democracy.”² While Gandhi advocated democracy, he differentiated between direct democracy and western democracy. Commenting on the parliamentary system, Gandhi says, “If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that

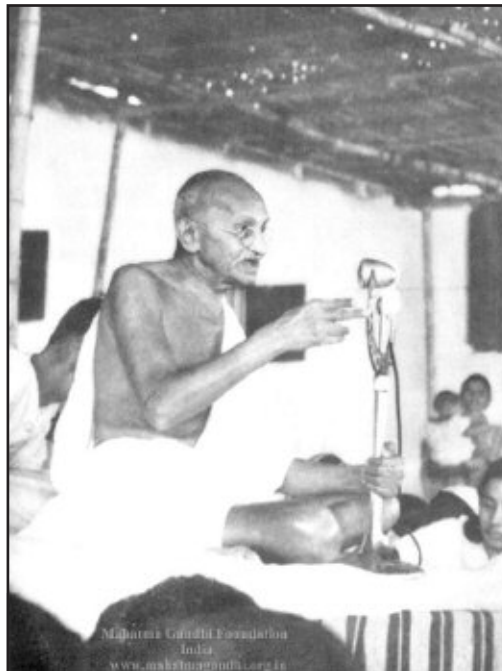
she will be ruined. Parliaments are merely emblems of slavery.”³ He had no more appetite for majority democracy of America, “It is a superstition and an ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority.”⁴ By centralizing power, western democracies feed into violence. Thus, he thought decentralization was the key to world peace.

In Gandhi’s view all the political power that was concentrated in the State apparatus could be dissolved down to every last individual. He stated “Power resides in the people, they can use it at any time.”⁵ Reiterating the idea of Anarchy, Gandhi said, “In such a state (of affairs), everyone is his own rulers. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbor.”⁶ Gandhi had no illusions about the enormity of the task, but he took it on anyways. He believed that by reforming enough individuals and communities, society at large will change. Gandhi’s concept of swaraj elucidates the connection between the individual and society.

Swaraj translates into “self-rule” or “autonomy”. For Gandhi, every individual had to take steps towards self-rule in their lives; then India would naturally move towards self-rule as a nation. Gandhi insisted, “Everyone will have to take [swaraj] for himself.”⁷ He continued, “If we become free, India becomes free

and in this thought you have a definition of swaraj. It is swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves.”⁸

Gandhi angered some of his cohorts by extending his notion of power and swaraj to the history of colonization. While acknowledging the British Empire’s cynical intentions in India, he places the responsibility of the disaster of colonization on the India people. “It is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost... to blame them for this is to perpetuate their power.”⁹ Because power resides in the people and they can only lose it by relinquishing their own power (often through coercion by others), petitions to the government get a new meaning with Gandhi. “A petition of an equal is a sign of courtesy; a petition from a slave is a symbol of his slavery.”



Gandhi speaks to leaders of the Congress Party, which he saw as a temporary phase of nationalism.
(<http://www.mahatma.org.in>)

Gandhi will petition the government as an equal and he used love-force to back himself up. "Love-force can thus be stated: 'if you do not concede our demand, we will be no longer your petitioner. You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed; we shall no longer have any dealings with you.'"¹⁰

The principle of swaraj ultimately leads to a grassroots, bottom-up, "oceanic circle" of self-ruling communities. In 1946, Gandhi explained this vision:

Independence begins at the bottom... It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs... It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without... This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbors or from the world.

It will be a free and voluntary play of mutual forces... In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be every-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose center will be the individual.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it."¹¹

In apparent contradiction to these ideals, Gandhi battled for national liberation and he expressed a lot of patriotism towards Indian civilization. He redefined the terms 'nationalism' and 'patriotism' to fit his vision. Nationalism, for instance, meant many different things. Gandhi said, "Every Indian whether he owns up to it or not, has national aspirations—but there are as many opinions as there are Indian Nationalists as to the exact meaning of that aspiration."¹²

"The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."

-Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi's nationalism stood to disband the Congress Party upon independence, "Its task is done. The next task is to move into villages and revitalize life there to build a new socio-economic structure from the bottom upwards."¹³ He also understood patriotism differently



A picture of Sevagram Ashram in Wardha, central India. Gandhi's ashrams were experiments in self-rule and small-scale community.
(<http://www.mahatma.org.in>)

than his contemporaries, "by patriotism, I mean the welfare of the whole people."¹⁴

But Congress did not disband after independence in 1947. Gandhi recognized that there would be a national government, and his anarchic, oceanic circle would not yet be possible. Nevertheless, he used the terms of nationalism to move towards the ideal of Anarchy. He advocated for a minimal level of State organization to fund some education programs and to promote his economic concept of trusteeship. Hence, Gandhi was a com-

promising Anarchist.

To Gandhi, ideas were worth having. He defended his vision of Anarchy in India on this point, "It may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought... Let India live for the true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it."¹⁵

By trying to understand Gandhi's worldview, certain questions jump out with contemporary relevance. First off, what is our culturally appropriate "utopian" picture of America or of the communities in which we live? Secondly, what practical steps can we make towards swaraj amidst the current global empire? Finally, if Gandhi is right that all power resides in individuals, and that power is derived from an "indomitable will" than how do we reclaim the latent power within us, both individually and collectively?

(References appear on page 31.)



CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Dr. Johan Galtung on Confederation in Iraq and a Middle East Community for Israel/Palestine

Alice Gavin

Trascend aims “to bring about a more peaceful world by using action, education/training, dissemination and research to handle conflicts creatively and non-violently.” It works, as a non-governmental, largely ‘virtual’ (internet based) organization, on programs from ‘peace journalism’ to ‘peace at the personal level.’ Most significantly, Transcend looks to apply its methodological theory of conflict transformation to ongoing international conflicts where current approaches are failing to bring these conflicts to a nonviolent end. Johan Galtung, director of Transcend and co-founder of the organization in 1993, is also a professor of peace studies and considered a key founding figure in the academic discipline of peace and conflict studies. Galtung articulates an important and optimistic vision of peaceful solutions to conflicts in the Middle East, where peace often seems a frustrating and impossible ideal.

Transcend in Action

Transcend’s “conflict transformation” approach relies on nonviolence, creativity, and empathy to facilitate an outcome where both parties move beyond their stated positions to create a new reality in their relationship. This represents a clear contrast to competitive diplomacy and war, the coercive approaches to conflict traditionally used on the international level, which often serve only to perpetuate bitterness and asymmetry.

Galtung’s successful role in a 1990s conflict between Peru and Ecuador illustrates the potential of the Transcend method. Asked to mediate between Ecuador and Peru in a longstanding conflict over a piece of territory in the Andes, Galtung proposed the transformation of the disputed territory into a binational zone and the creation of a park in the area with a peace monument. His proposals were implemented and the violence that had characterized this conflict for over 30 years promptly ceased. Galtung remarks, “They’ve been quarrelling over what trees to plant but very few countries go to war over that problem!” He makes the conclusion that “creativity was the missing dimension.” The proposal was also a success because the plan for joint management of the disputed territory led to equitable cooperation between



After fighting numerous wars over the Cordillera del Condor mountain region of the Andes, Ecuador and Peru utilized the Transcend approach to end their dispute and turn the area into a binational park.

the neighbors. The Ecuador/Peru transformation represents Transcend’s general theory in practice.

Iraq

Galtung applies these principled methods of conflict transformation in his suggested approach to the ongoing conflict in Iraq. His vision provides a model by which the world might arrive at a much longed-for peaceful solution. Galtung believes first and foremost that US troops should be withdrawn from the region. But in the attempt to move

Galtung suggests five steps for Iraq:

- 1) US out;**
- 2) an international conference;**
- 3) security by the UN/Muslim states;**
- 4) confederation (not federation);**
- 5) dual passports for Kurdistan.**

towards sustainable peace for Iraq this is only a very initial step. Applying the Transcend philosophy, Galtung outlines 4 further practical proposals. He argues, firstly, that an international conference is needed. Importantly, this conference would not be UN-sponsored because of the veto power that currently exists for the UN’s 5 permanent members and which prevents any real potential for consensus. Secondly, there needs to be a security arrangement. “This cannot be done by the UN Security Council alone,” he points out, “for a reason that has not entered US debate and which most Americans don’t know about: the veto powers are four Christian [US, UK, France, and Russia] and one Confucian [China] power. We live in a world with 1.3 billion Muslims. To believe that the UN Security Council has legitimacy in that part of the world is naive.”

Galtung argues that a security arrangement must thus come about from cooperation between the UN Security Council and Muslim countries represented by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Third, Galtung's suggests Iraq's political arrangement be in the form of confederation, rather than the federation the US government currently proposes. As part of the political arrangement Galtung also proposes the creation of Kurdistan, which includes autonomy for the Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Syria as well as Iraq. He makes the innovative suggestion that citizens of Kurdistan would then have dual regional passports – e.g. Iran/Kurdistan, Syria/Kurdistan etc – and thus no borders would have to be changed. Galtung looks finally to the economic aspect of the current conflict, dominated by issues of oil. He suggests a quota system whereby Sunnis would be given a share of the wealth generated by Iraq's oil, which is sourced in the Kurdish and Shiite parts of Iraq. What is important overall about this thinking is the very existence of such ideas. The US peace movement calls for the withdrawal of troops but beyond that there is little in the way of practical proposals for solutions to the Iraqi conflict. Successful conflict transformation and the achievement of sustainable peace require constructive, creative and realistic proposals.

Israel/Palestine

Galtung's vision for the peaceful transformation of the Israel/Palestine conflict sticks to what he terms Transcend's 'formula of creativity' and the important recognition of the 'need to enter a new element, a new dimension and way of thinking.' Based on the model of the European Community as it was created in 1958, Galtung suggests a 6-state solution. He proposes the creation of a Middle East Community including Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt along with Israel. These states would thus be brought into joint cooperation and dialogue. Galtung has stressed equal rights as a key to peace within this conflict, and proposes the creation of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem. Furthermore this stems, Galtung points out, from a fundamental principle in peace practice and theory: 'if you want something in relation to the other parties be willing to give that to the others too.'

The impetus for such transformation must, he asserts, come from civil society: autonomous movements and

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organizations created by the Israeli/Palestinian people themselves. Transcend is currently working with organizations of Israeli and Palestinian youth – the future leaders, Galtung suggests, of his envisaged confederation. The Israel/Palestine conflict is one for which Transcend's vision



Galtung proposes a Middle East Community including Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, with East Jerusalem as capital of Palestine. (Full text of proposal available at www.calpeacepower.org)

is particularly resonant. Galtung comments: "When I presented this model in Tel Aviv, three well known elderly Israelis came up to me with tears in their eyes and embraced me and said for the first time they had heard something which was both idealistic and realistic. That is the basic point of Transcend; you try to combine the ideal with the real. There are about 20 years to go to realize this – they will be 20 tough years."

Conclusion

Transcend believes that all conflicts are born equal and have the same right to transformation; no conflict is "higher level" than another. Whether the solution lies in a shared national park or the creation of a community of six states, this philosophy ensures that each conflict is addressed by Transcend in the same, principled, peaceful and creative way. Galtung's visions for the peaceful solution of these current violent Middle Eastern conflicts represent peaceful, realistic and therefore compelling alternatives.

Resources

Transcend: www.transcend.org

Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend by Johan Galtung, Carl G. Jacobsen and Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen

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BRING OUR CHILDREN HOME FROM IRAQ!

One Mother's Voice Makes a Difference

Cindy Sheehan

Camp Casey founder Cindy Sheehan spoke on the UC Berkeley campus on November 18, 2005. The following is an edited transcript of her remarks.



I'm a founder of Gold Star Families for Peace. When I became a gold star mother on April 4, 2004, it was the worst day of my life. The day we buried Casey, a gold star mom who had two sons killed in Vietnam handed me a gold star, like it was some

sort of demented Girl Scout badge. A military officer gave me a purple heart and a bronze medal - as if these could somehow replace my son's life.

The campus anti-war, counter-recruitment movement is so important because the way that we are going to stop this immoral war machine is by ending the source of human cannon fodder.

I'm glad to see so many young people tonight. The present belongs to people like you. My son was 24 when he was killed. He didn't get to have a future, so we have to work together so that we all have a future. And so that we won't have to apologize for the world we give to our children and grandchildren.

I want to live in a country that uses its words to solve problems and not always violence and killing. I want to be able to look at myself in the mirror every day. I don't know how these war criminals can look at themselves in the mirror. How do they shave? How does Condi brush her teeth?

Today was a terrible day in Iraq. At least 70 civilians were killed by car bombs. The killing goes on and on. John Edwards recently admitted that he had made a mistake in voting for the war, but he didn't say we should bring the troops home. That position still supports the war.

I can forgive anyone for making a mistake, even the one that killed my son, but if they perpetuate the war by their

silence, they have blood on their hands. What are the politicians doing to get our kids out of this nightmare?

John Kerry said in September he'd give a strong speech against Iraq. When I heard his speech, I was flabbergasted. He said, "Let's bring 20,000 troops home by Christmas." But there were 20,000 extra troops in Iraq for the special elections! That wasn't worth the breath it took him to give the speech. If you want a strong speech, hire me as your speechwriter!

I say: The war was illegal by our constitution or anything that measures legality, and it was immoral. After the invasion and occupation, now we find out that US forces have been using chemical weapons - those are war crimes!

If any other country were doing this, [the leaders] would not be in power, because in other countries they can do something about their leaders.

On September 24th, with hundreds of thousands of people supporting me, I went to Washington, DC to ask for a meeting with President Bush. I went to the front gate of the white house, and they pretended to call [him], and they said, "No, he won't meet with you." I said, "Fine, it's my constitutional and first amendment right. I have the right to freedom of speech, to peaceably assemble, and to petition my government for a redress of wrongs, and I'll sit here until he comes to redress my wrongs."

I had a chance to testify in court yesterday about it. When the prosecutor asked, "Did you have a permit," I said, "I don't need one! The first amendment says I have the right to petition my government for a redress of wrongs. It doesn't say anything about the number of people, I can't help it if 375 people sat down next to me."

Their little schemes are designed to shut us up. It was working for a long time. On February 15th 2003,

millions marched to stop the invasion of Iraq and we thought our voices didn't matter. Bush called it a "focus group," and I thought, "What would my voice add?" But that's what they want you to think. We have to demand our rights.



"I can forgive anyone for making a mistake, even the one that killed my son...."

Soon Congress will vote on extending the Patriot Act, and if it's approved, we have to start committing civil disobedience and violating the Patriot Act. When I say "we," I actually mean "I," because I can't encourage others to break the law. But it wouldn't be illegal to defy the Patriot Act, because the Patriot Act contradicts the constitution! The constitution says, "Congress shall make no laws prohibiting..."

You have to stop letting them take our voice away. I proved in August [at the Camp Casey vigil in front of President Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas] that one person's voice can make a difference.

We can't wait for other people to do it. We have to work to keep the rights we still have and get back the ones we lost. Some of our congressional representatives are acting courageously, like Barbara Lee and John Conyers. We have to support them.

For Rep. Jack Murtha, a war hawk, to say, "Bring the troops home in six months" is huge. People accuse me of playing politics with my son's life. No one asked me what party I belong to before they sent my son to Iraq. This isn't a matter of right and left, it's a matter of right and wrong. Right now 63% of America says, "The war is wrong, bring the troops home." It crosses red states and blue states. We're reaching all the people on the fence.



Cindy Sheehan marches with Rev. Jesse Jackson on September 24, 2005. photo by Jeff Simmermon

We're ready now to take back our democracy. Congress abrogated its responsibility in giving the President the power to make war, and we abrogated our responsibility as patriots and Americans. It's not patriotic to let the government kill innocent people, torture people, use chemical weapons, and invade a country that's no threat to us. We're not afraid of the people in the white house. They have no power over us, we the people have the power, and we're not going to let them continue. There are a lot of warmongering democrats – they are almost as responsible as the republicans.

This is a very dangerous but exciting time. It's the one time in history when we can change things. Change never comes from the top down, it's always bottom up. Where did the civil rights movement, the women's suffrage movement, and the anti-slavery movement start? Every true movement that has made lasting relevant and positive change started from the bottom up. We are here to tell the leaders at the top: "You work for us, we pay your salaries, it's time for a job review! We are not only an anti-war movement, we are a peace movement, because when we bring our troops home from this mess we will never let you do this to us again!"

“If it’s [renewed], we have to start committing civil disobedience and violating the Patriot Act.... It wouldn’t be illegal because the Patriot Act contradicts the constitution!”



Civil disobedience in front of the White House in September, 2005 resulted in dozens of arrests of activists. photo by Matthew Bradley

RESOURCES

- Meet with Cindy: www.meetwithcindy.org
- Gold Star Families for Peace: www.gsfp.org
- Not One More Mother's Child by Cindy Sheehan
- Berkeley Stop the War Coalition: ucbstopthewar-subscribe@yahoo.com
- Campus Anti-War Network: www.campusantiwar.net
- Code Pink: www.codepink4peace.org

LEBANESE PEOPLE POWER OUSTS SYRIA

Peaceful means prevail in country with civil-war history

Danielle Alkov

Last spring the world witnessed massive protests in the streets of Lebanon. The protests, along with the contribution of a UN resolution and international pressure, led to Syrian withdrawal of its twenty-nine year presence in Lebanon. The protests drew thousands of Lebanese, and brought together people holding opposing perspectives on the issue of Syrian occupation. Although the people did not share the same vision for their country, they did share the method they took up to voice their beliefs. As Rami G. Khouri stated in an article in the Lebanese Daily Star, “That they all wave the Lebanese flag, rather than their factional banners, is an important indicator that... the forces of composure, compromise and peaceful consensus-building are stronger than any inclination to fight.” In a region that has experienced much violence in its past, this alternative is promising and shows that a transformation has occurred in Lebanon.

The violence that occurred in Lebanon’s recent past has roots that go back to the end of French imperialism. In 1943, a National Pact was created forming political representation based on religious affiliation. According to the French system, the country is to have a Maronite Christian President, a Sunni Muslim Prime Minister, a Shi’a Muslim

The destruction and misery caused by the civil war led the Lebanese people to seek a different manner of expressing their differences and it has proven a powerful force in bringing about change.

Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and a legislative assembly split between Muslim and Christian representatives based on population figures. This connection between religion and politics has led to much conflict in the country that escalated in 1975, when demographics radically shifted causing a change in political power as well. This



ignited a 15-year civil war which ravaged the country and was further complicated by the presence of Palestinian refugees who entered the country in 1948. Israel entered Lebanon in the late 1960’s after being attacked by Palestinians in Lebanon, leading to an

Israeli—Lebanese war. Once the civil war began, Syria intervened to restore the peace, but also had its own political interests in mind. The civil war was about religious, political, cultural and ideological discrepancies that were not always clear-cut and led to the rapid formation and disintegration of alliances during the struggle.

The protests last spring have an intimate tie to the former civil war because much of the protesting revolved around the issue of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon that began during the civil war. Syria justified a continued presence by claiming it stabilized the country. The wave of protests began after February 14th, the day former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated. Hariri supported the position of Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon as did UN Security Council resolution 1559 passed in September 2004. However, critics to this position, including Abu Khalil, question Hariri’s relationship with Syria. Khalil justifies his stance by citing such events as Hariri’s awarding the Key of Beirut to the head of Syrian intelligence in Lebanon in October 2002. During this event, while speaking about Syria, Hariri said, “Your presence among us resolved many of the problems and difficulties, and removed many of the obstacles that faced the state upon its rise.” Though Hariri’s intentions might be contested, his death did ignite the protests of those opposed to Syrian presence. These protests calling for Syrian withdrawal led other Lebanese to show their support for Syria and distrust of Western influence invading their country.



Lebanese civilians watch over a giant Hizbullah demonstration in March, 2005. (Naira Der Kiureghian)



Over 800,000 Lebanese took to the streets of Beirut on March 14, 2005, the one month anniversary of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The religiously diverse, peaceful crowd chanted “Freedom, Sovereignty, Independence” and supported a Syrian withdrawal. International media estimated it to be far larger than the competing pro-Syria rally.

The conflict in Lebanon is complex and has developed over decades but the Lebanese people have learned from their experience of violence. The destruction and misery caused by the civil war led the Lebanese people to seek a different manner of expressing their differences and it has proven a powerful force in bringing about change. The protests that occurred throughout the country gathered hundreds of thousands of participants and were organized by Lebanese on both ends of the spectrum regarding the issue of Syrian withdrawal. Pro-Syrian protests generally had an anti-Bush/anti-American sentiment and were primarily organized by the Hizbullah party and Amal. Those opposing occupation were represented by groups including the Free Patriotic Front, Taysar al-Mustaqbal (Tide of the Future), and National Liberation Party which tended to include more affluent members of Lebanese society. The protests brought together diverse groups of people unifying under a common cause.



Minister Rafik Hariri, was one of the speakers at the event. While she alludes to Lebanese enemies in her speech, she also mobilizes nonviolent rhetoric. She describes Syrians

One of the major protests pressuring for Syrian withdrawal occurred on March 14th when over 800,000 people gathered in Beirut at Martyr's square. Sidon MP Bahia Hariri, sister of the assassinated former Prime

as brothers and calls for the creation of a country of justice, equality, and dignity achieved through unity instead of division. “To those who fear that the Lebanese will be divided, we say that preventing division cannot be achieved by fear and retreat, but rather by going ahead toward concurrence, toward the truth, toward the future...we will not fall prey to divisions reminiscent of 1975.” Hariri speaks of a country where people with opposing views work together to achieve a solution in which all parties will gain. It is hard to tell if these words represent true principled nonviolence or if they are simply being utilized to gain support. However, Hariri makes a connection between the countries violent past and the promise of a nonviolent future. These ideals have the potential to make a strong impact on those who relate to what she is saying and wish to live in peace. Hopefully, this will spur the movement to act upon these ideals and make them a reality, taking nonviolent principles beyond the speech. This type

of thinking can prevent the country from falling prey to another war.

Those not opposed to Syrian presence in Lebanon similarly used protests to demonstrate their support of Syria and distrust of Western influence. On March 13th over 200,000 people gathered in Nabatieh, protesting against UN Security Council Resolution 1559 and to show loyalty to Syria. This protest was called by Hizbullah, Amal, and other pro-government parties and also included anti-Bush slogans on banners. Although the US media is generally biased against this side of the conflict, it is important to remember these groups used protest instead of violence and chose a constructive path as opposed to a destructive one. These groups were critical of US influence in favor of anti-Syrian sentiment, proclaiming that such US influence is intertwined with support of Israel.



The protests culminated in complete withdrawal of Syrian troops on April 26th, after a ceremony that was held at the Rayak army base close to the Syrian border. A monument was erected to commemorate Syrian military presence in Lebanon upon which both Syrians and Lebanese placed flowers. Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, dispatched a team to verify whether Syria had withdrawn all its troops from Lebanon in accordance with

US SEEKS TO CRUSH NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE IN IRAQ

Dr. Stephen Zunes

In a country wracked with violence, more than one hundred thousand Iraqis marched peacefully through the streets of Baghdad on January 19, 2004 demanding direct elections. Shouting “No to Saddam!” and “No to America,” the nonviolent throng – many of them linking hands – marched for three miles to the University of al-Mustansariyah, where speakers called for a political system based on direct elections and a constitution that realizes justice and equality. As with a similar march in the southern city of Basra four days earlier, many carried portraits of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani and other Iraqi leaders who opposed both the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein and the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of their country.

The pages of this magazine are full of examples of nonviolent actions that have reined in despots and ousted dictators. So could Iraqis – left to their own devices – have had the potential to topple Saddam Hussein? Quite possibly. Indonesia’s Suharto – who ruled the world’s largest Muslim nation for more than 33 years – had even more blood on his hands than Saddam, yet he was forced from power in a largely nonviolent uprising in 1998. Largely nonviolent insurrections have also toppled tyrannical leaders of other Muslim states, such as Sudan’s Jafaar Numeiri in 1985, Bangladesh’s General Ershad in 1990, and Mali’s Moussa Traore in 1991. Islam has traditionally emphasized a kind of social contract between the ruler and his subjects which gives the people the right, and even the obligation, to refuse to cooperate with authorities seen as unjust.

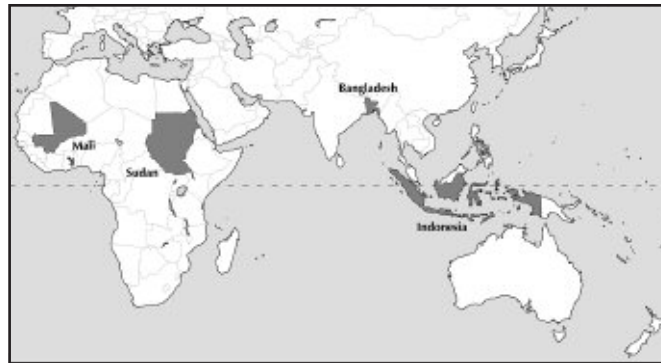
Ironically, in Iraq, it has been the US, Great Britain, and other Western nations that may have made the emergence of such nonviolent movements impossible. Most of the world’s successful nonviolent pro-democracy movements have centered in the urban middle class and industrial working class. In Iraq, however, thanks to the devastation to the country’s civilian infrastructure during the bombing campaign in 1991 Gulf War and the debilitating sanctions

that followed, the once-burgeoning middle and skilled working classes were reduced to extreme poverty or forced to emigrate. In their place emerged a new class of black marketeers who had a strong stake in preserving the status quo. Furthermore, the sanctions not only had serious humanitarian consequences – resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis from malnutrition and preventable diseases – but actually strengthened Saddam Hussein’s grip on power. By forcing the Iraqi people to become dependent on the regime for rations of badly needed food, medicine, and other necessities, the Iraqi people became even less likely to challenge it.

Since Saddam’s regime was ousted, continuing Western interference – both politically and economically – have created an environment in which nonviolent options become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to explore. For instance, the Bush administration strongly

opposed holding direct elections during most of the first year of the US occupation. Initially, the US supported the installation of Ahmed Chalabi or some other compliant pro-American exile as leader of Iraq. When it became evident that that would be unacceptable, US officials tried to keep their viceroy, Paul Bremer, in power indefinitely. When it became clear that Iraqis and the international community would not tolerate that option either, the Bush administration pushed for a caucus system where appointees of American appointees would choose the new government and write the constitution. When that was met in January 2004 by hundreds of thousands of Iraqis taking to the streets protesting the US proposal and demanding a popular vote, only then did President Bush give in and reluctantly agree to allow direct elections to move forward.

But instead of going ahead with the election in May 2004 that were called for by Ayatollah Sistani and other Iraqi leaders, US officials postponed the elections until January 2005. Because of this delay, the security situation continued to deteriorate so that by the time the elections finally took place the large and important Sunni Arab minority was largely unable or unwilling to participate. As a result, in most Sunni-dominated parts of the county it



Largely nonviolent insurrections have toppled tyrannical leaders of Muslim states, such as Sudan’s Jafaar Numeiri in 1985, Bangladesh’s General Ershad in 1990, Mali’s Moussa Traore in 1991, and Indonesia’s Suharto in 1998.

was physically unsafe to go to the polls due to threats by insurgents. In addition, the major Sunni parties – angered at the enormous numbers of civilians killed in recent months in US counter-insurgency operations – called for a boycott. The result is a government that is not recognized as legitimate by a key sector of the population – a result that will ensure that conflict in Iraq will escalate.

By contrast, in virtually all the cases where the dictatorship

was overthrown from within through nonviolence, elections came quickly and popular participation was widespread. While it is certainly true that transitions from autocratic to democratic governance are not always easy, none of the countries in which autocratic regimes have been ousted by nonviolent movements have suffered like Iraq. Since American and British forces occupied the country, tens of thousands of Iraqis – mostly civilians – have been killed. Malnutrition among children has doubled and childhood mortality has tripled. More than one million refugees have fled the country to avoid the car bombs, assassinations, kidnappings, martial law, deadly roadblocks, and artillery and air strikes from American forces. Lines for fuel can be days long. There are widespread shortages of food, medicine and basic services, and the prices for food and other necessities have greatly inflated. Over half the population is unemployed. In short, a lot more people are suffering and dying in the two and half years since the US invasion than in the two and half years prior to the US invasion.

And there is no end to the violence in sight. The torture of prisoners, the use of heavy weaponry against crowded urban neighborhoods, the shooting at cars filled with civilians at checkpoints, and related actions against innocents mean that the US is creating insurgents faster than its Army can kill them.

Despite enormous odds, some Iraqis are continuing to resist war and occupation through nonviolence. During the first weekend in May, the city of Ramadi and surrounding towns were shut down in a general strike in protest of the US siege on the city of 400,000, assaults on civilian neighborhoods, and the random arrests of thousands of young men by American occupation forces. Adherence to the call for massive nonviolent protest was near total: The



In order to end the siege in Najaf between the U.S. and Iraqi government, and followers of the Shi'a cleric Muqtata al-Sadr, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani invited Iraqis to march on Najaf with him where he proposed a peace deal. As al-Sistani's convoy approached Najaf, many of his followers lined the road and held hands to keep people from getting in the convoy's way, as well as to protect it. Christian Peacemaker Teams (www.cpt.org)

streets were deserted, shops and other businesses were shuttered, the bazaars were shut down, and schools, universities and government offices were closed.

In addition to the continuing violence, detentions and lack of basic services, the primary grievance that Iraqis have expressed about the invasion and occupation of their country is the neo-liberal economic

system that has been thrust upon them.

Like many Arab governments, Iraq under Saddam Hussein squandered billions of dollars of the nation's wealth through corruption and wasteful military spending. Nevertheless, prior to Saddam's ill-fated invasion of Kuwait and the resulting war and sanctions, Iraqis ranked near the top of Third World countries according to the Human Development Index, which measures nutrition, health care, housing, education, and other human needs.

Not only has the US occupation failed to restore Iraqis to their pre-1991 standard of living, but most of them are poorer now than they were during more than a decade of sanctions following the devastating US-led bombing campaign of the Gulf War. Under Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) chairman Paul Bremer, radical changes were imposed upon the Iraqi economy closely mimicking the infamous structural adjustment programs shackled to indebted nations by the International Monetary Fund. These include:

- the widespread privatization of public enterprises, which – combined with allowing for 100 per cent foreign ownership of Iraqi companies – renders key sectors of the Iraqi economy prime targets of burgeoning American corporations;
- the imposition of a 15 per cent flat tax, which primarily benefits the wealthy and places a disproportionate burden on the poor;
- the virtual elimination of import tariffs, resulting in a flood of foreign goods into the country; since smaller Iraqi companies – weakened by over a dozen years of sanctions – are unable to compete, hundreds of factories have recently shut down, adding to already-severe unemployment;
- 100 per cent repatriation of profits, which severely limits

reinvestment in the Iraqi economy; and

- a lowering of the minimum wage, increasing already widespread poverty.

Recent polls show that less than 7 per cent of the Iraqi public supports these measures and more than two-thirds support a strong government role in the economy. The platform offered by the United Iraqi Alliance, the coalition which won the national elections in January, calls for the state to guarantee a job for every able-bodied Iraqi, to support home construction, to cancel debts and reparations, and use the nation's oil wealth for the country's economic development. They are goals that the Alliance is unlikely to achieve. To add insult to economic injury, the US-imposed interim constitution dictates that the economic 'reforms' imposed during the formal US occupation cannot be overturned except by super-majorities of the National Assembly and the presidential council which will be almost impossible to achieve. As a result, not only will such policies resort in continued economic hardship for the vast majority of Iraq's struggling population, but should the newly-elected government find itself unable to fulfill its promise to meet the economic needs of the population as a result of this externally-imposed neo-colonial economic structure, the credibility of Iraq's democratic experiment could be put in jeopardy.

This systemic attack on Iraq's economy, combined with serious damage to the country's infrastructure from years of sanctions and war, has understandably led to widespread resentment against the foreign occupiers. Since Iraq's highly skilled work force is more than 50 per cent unemployed, it is no surprise that overpaid foreign contractors from such firms as Halliburton – most of them performing jobs that Iraqis could do – have become targets of the resistance. Tragically, there is now a widespread feeling that the US is after Iraq's wealth and is putting the profits of well-connected American companies ahead of the livelihoods of ordinary Iraqis. This has fueled the very armed resistance that has rendered attempts at rebuilding the country – by any economic model – virtually impossible. As a result, Washington may have no more success in imposing its free market utopia on the Iraqis than Moscow had in imposing its socialist utopia on the Afghans.

In this economic transition, the Iraqis are not alone. While hundreds of millions of people throughout the world now have more individual freedom and more accountable

government as a result of the power of nonviolence, most of them have no more say over their countries' economic policies than do the Iraqis. In other words, while the use of nonviolent action against autocratic regimes may have had a remarkable degree of success in bringing about long-denied civil and political rights, they have been less successful in improving social and economic rights that could help to reinforce popular support for democratic governance and nonviolent change.

In the spring of 1997, seven years after the conclusion of the U.S.-Contra war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government which led to the end of that Central American nation's socialist experiment, tens of thousands of Nicaraguans engaged in a general strike to protest the austerity programs of the conservative President Arnaldo

Alemain's government. Former Sandinista soldiers and former Contras left their guns at home to work together to set up roadblocks and engage in street protests where they adhered strictly to a disciplined nonviolence. The government, in the face of massive nonviolent resistance, relented and the austerity measures were withdrawn. However, the US, through the



An Iraqi man gives a peace sign from a car on his way into Najaf. Christian Peacemaker Teams (www.cpt.org)

International Monetary Fund, forced the government to implement the austerity plan anyway. As Alejandro Badana, a leading Nicaraguan intellectual, told an American audience a few months later, "Will the people of the North allow the people of the South to succeed through nonviolence?"

This presents a challenge to those of us in the industrialized world who recognize the power of nonviolent action. For it is not enough to stand by on the sidelines and call on the oppressed to fight dictatorship and promote democracy and human rights where the worse manifestations of militarism, economic injustice and crimes against humanity take place. For the roots of much of this violence stems from the decisions of governments and economic institutions in advanced industrialized nations. Where active nonviolence is most badly needed, then, may not be in Latin America, the Middle East or anywhere else in the developing world, but here in Western democracies. And it behooves us not to just be observers and sympathizers, but active participants.

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No to Confiscation, Yes to Community

Palestinians, Israelis, and Internationals Start a Movement

Dr. Michael N. Nagler, Tal Palter-Palman
and Matthew Taylor

During the summer of 2005, the mainstream media congratulated Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on the removal of settlers from the occupied Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, the state of Israel continued its policy of unilateral, illegal land confiscation in the occupied West Bank, both to expand settlements and make room to build a wall (described as “Apartheid Wall” or “Annexation Wall” by Palestinians, “Security Fence” or “Separation Barrier” by Israelis, here referred to simply as “the wall”). In fact, Dov Weisglass, a primary architect of the Gaza plan, stated, “It supplies the amount of formaldehyde that is necessary so there will not be a political process with the Palestinians...Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda.”¹



The wall unilaterally confiscates Palestinian land and reduces the West Bank to a series of disconnected mini-population centers. Israel's military uses dozens of barriers to control movement.

Resistance by Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals is growing to Israel's illegal military occupation, providing a hopeful look at what might happen if activists adopted a disciplined, organized nonviolent process on a national scale in the occupied territories. Given that the Palestinians already have a significant legacy of nonviolence from the first Intifada, such a movement is plausible.

The Roots of Palestinian Nonviolence

The first Intifada (or “shaking off”) was launched against the Israeli military occupation in 1987.² Palestinians utilized civil disobedience and non-cooperation including tax refusal, mass demonstrations, hanging Palestinian flags, closing shops, boycotting Israeli goods, and worker strikes.³ In addition, Palestinians engaged in constructive programs to strengthen their communities. They formed a variety of professional and cultural associations, taught students in underground schools, planted victory gardens, planted olive trees, and organized agricultural cooperatives.⁴

The first Intifada was “largely” free from violence. However, stone throwing was practiced frequently. (See “The Controversy of Stone Throwing.”) As the first Intifada wore on, the commitment to nonviolence seemed to weaken and some elements of clear-cut violence entered the picture, such as when Palestinians used Molotov cocktails (petrol bombs) and injured or killed Palestinian collaborators to punish and deter further betrayal of their cause.⁵ Relative to the entire scale of the nonviolent activities, Sari Nusseibeh noted in 1989, “The voice of violence on the Palestinian side is still peripheral.”⁶ That said, even ‘peripheral’ or ‘minor’ intrusions seem to compromise the ‘purity’ of one’s nonviolence and the movement’s effectiveness.

One key factor in a nonviolent movement’s success is positive media coverage and the resulting international support. Time and again, we’ve observed that if a nonviolent movement includes violence, the media will focus almost exclusively on the violence. Thus, from a strategic standpoint, disciplined movements tend to be more successful, such as the Philippines People Power movement that ousted Marcos (see p. 20) and the Eastern European revolutions that brought down Communist regimes in the Czech Republic and Poland in the late 1980s.

Although it was not as disciplined as other movements, the Intifada was quite successful in many ways. The “David versus Goliath” imagery helped to generate international sympathy for the Palestinian cause. The Palestinians established the legitimacy of their aspirations in the minds

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NO TO CONFISCATION, YES TO COMMUNITY (CONT.)

of people around the world, built internal commitment and solidarity, created social structures, inspired left-wing Israelis to work on behalf of a resolution to the conflict, and achieved recognition of their political leaders. Unfortunately, the ensuing political process that led to the Oslo Accords in 1993 did not result in the end of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, but according to some, helped to entrench the conflict by deflecting international awareness away from the reality of Israel's ongoing illegal expansion of settlements. This result did not reflect a weakness in the effectiveness of nonviolence, but in a failure of nonviolent actors to follow through when it became clear that negotiations wouldn't succeed.⁷ This has, in fact, been a common failure in nonviolent insurrections post Gandhi.

Given that for many members of the Palestinian society, the first Intifada was an endeavor of strategic nonviolence (lack of available guns may have been the primary motivation to embrace nonviolence, not a belief in its power to reach hardened hearts), it was almost predictable that some Palestinians threw up their hands in frustration when the Oslo process failed to deliver them a state and began a struggle far more marred by the use of arms (the second Intifada, 2000-2005). Be that as it may, the results of that armed struggle and Israel's overwhelming response have been devastating to Palestinian society, especially in the occupied territories.

Nonviolent Resistance Today: Budrus and Bil'in

Despite the more prominent violent components of the second Intifada, many Palestinians have practiced strategic nonviolence to resist military occupation and the wall in



During the ongoing struggle in Bil'in, activists endure Israeli military violence and sit down together to block plans to confiscate the village's lands.

image: Jillyfish

recent years. The world, moreover, has taken notice of the Palestinians' plight. In July of 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that the wall is illegal and a violation of Palestinian human rights. Israel claims that the wall is needed to protect its people from Palestinian suicide bombers. However, the wall is being built on the Palestinian side of the "green line," thus annexing Palestinian land de facto.



In many places, the wall separates Palestinians from each other, from their lands, from school, from work, from their lives.

image: Amir Terkel

In 2004 the residents of Budrus village successfully utilized strategic nonviolence to oppose the separation wall slated for construction on their lands. The wall not only threatened to confiscate most of the village's agricultural lands, but also cut the villagers' access to water resources, schools, universities, employment locations, and family.

The residents of Budrus combined nonviolent political activism with a legal strategy that included daily and weekly demonstrations against the wall, and litigation against the Israeli government. The demonstrations brought together a coalition of supporters, including Israeli groups such as Ta'ayush and the Anarchists Against the Wall, international activists from the International Solidarity Movement, and members of both the Israeli Knesset and Palestinian Parliament. The political pressure from activists forced the Israeli Supreme Court to rule in favor of the Village of Budrus, and ordered the government to change the path of the wall to minimize the confiscation of Palestinian lands.

Recently, a similar coalition has converged on the village of Bil'in to oppose the land confiscation that will result from the separation wall's intended path. The demonstrations in Bil'in, which have taken place every Friday since Spring of 2005, usually include stone

throwing. Youngsters throw stones while standing behind the peaceful demonstrators, usually of the older generation, who tend to disapprove of the stoning. (See sidebar: “The Controversy of Stone Throwing.”)

While it has yet to achieve its stated objective of rerouting the wall to save land, the Bil’in resistance movement has chalked up some very important small successes, including moments of favorable media coverage. The Bil’in villagers have chained themselves to their olive trees, formed “human barrels,” conducted prayer sessions near the route of the wall, and even held a volleyball match that deterred soldiers from entering the village.⁸ In September 2005, famous Dutch pianist and Holocaust survivor Jacob Allegro performed a concert at one of the demonstrations. Allegro said his mission was to oppose injustice and bring together people from all sides.⁹ Co-author of this story Taylor attended one of these demonstrations in July of 2005 (his account is posted at: <http://calpeacepower.org/>).

News reports have revealed Israeli military abuses, including undercover Israeli provocateurs who sneak over to the Palestinian side and cast the first stones (so as to provide the Israeli military a pretext to open fire). Independent media have captured Israeli soldiers severely



Holocaust survivor Jacob Allegro performs a concert at Bil'in "to oppose injustice and unite people from all sides." image: Gush Shalom

beating and abusing activists, and then provided videotapes to refute Israeli military lies in court, including false accusations of protestor violence.¹⁰ The Bil’in resistance has made its way into the pages of *Haaretz* in Israel and *The New York Times*, providing a venue to expose the realities of the separation wall and Israeli military abuses of Palestinian human rights to the people who most need to learn about them: Israelis, US Jews, and international civil society.

Oppression is an inherently unstable force. In the face of determined nonviolent resistance, the oppressor often finds himself drawn into using ever-escalating levels of violence until inevitably something “snaps,” the resistor gains in strength, and eventually the whole system falls apart. This paradox of repression played out on September 9th, 2005, when the Israeli military placed a blanket curfew on the entire village of Bil’in and attempted to block the weekly protest from occurring at all. According to Gush Shalom, the soldiers tried to arrest activists and used tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets to intimidate Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals. Yonathan Pollack of Anarchists Against the Wall, a central organizer of the weekly Bil’in protests, had this to say: “The army tried to break the people of Bil’in and prevent by brutal force their right to protest. They especially wanted to prevent the



Together, Palestinian and Israeli women unite at Bil'in to oppose the wall.

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arrival of Israeli supporters whose presence denies the army the freedom of rampage. The result was the total opposite. Today there came to Bil'in many more Israelis than on other Fridays. Not only did [the army] not prevent the march, but it got further [closer to the route of the wall] than before."¹¹ The Israeli military must have realized it made a massive strategic blunder by overreacting, as the *New York Times* reported that new commanders who arrived within the next month "decided it was foolish to try to shut down Bil'in or even to confront villagers and protesters near the village."¹²

Principled Nonviolence in the Palestinian Resistance

As powerful as media coverage can be in influencing international opinion in favor of the Bil'in struggle, perhaps we should not overlook the individual moments of "conversion" that occur when a resistor's courage reaches an oppressor's heart. We have heard reports of at least two off-duty Israeli soldiers or military employees who have come over to the village to join the people's struggle, and we suspect that as the Bil'in demonstrators grow in their dedication to nonviolence, their creative experiments will yield more goodwill and sympathy from the soldiers they face.



Palestinians at Bil'in march every Friday to protest the injustice of confiscation of their farm lands.

As Palestinians seek ways to reach and convert the hearts of Israelis who support the occupation, they enter the realm of principled nonviolence. The nonviolent actor draws much of her power from the ability to resist the act, not the person in opposition. Stories abound of Palestinians, both leaders and common folk, who embrace this deeper level of nonviolence. For instance, Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer relates the tragic yet beautiful story of a Palestinian woman who saved an Israeli soldier from being stoned to death by an angry group of Palestinian

youths. Only later, after offering the soldier coffee and providing sanctuary

in her home, did the woman find out that moments before she saved the soldier, he had shot her son to death. In further research, Abu-Nimer discovered that this deep sense of heart unity that the mother shared with the soldier was far from isolated. A Palestinian named Ahmad told Abu-Nimer, "Religion and custom enable us to preserve our humanity.... This is why nonviolence is important to us. We will never become like the Israelis and hate our enemy; we will offer him hospitality. The soldier could come back again, and the woman would offer him coffee again."¹³ It is in the homes, mosques, and churches that Palestinians embrace nonviolence through acts of kindness and deep faith in God and humanity.

Obviously, not all Palestinians share Ahmad's views about respecting the humanity of Jews. However, Abu-Nimer found that Palestinians frequently disclaimed hatred of the Israelis. Some of the comments he heard included, "We refuse to hate them; it robs us of our humanity; we will not become like them," and "at the funeral of my nephew [killed by soldiers], there was one soldier weeping; that is why we do not hate them." Many expressed respect for the Israelis as "worthy opponents" and not "dehumanized others."¹⁴ It is these attitudes of respect and rehumanization of the adversary that provide a path to convert feelings of anger and bitterness into a positive desire to reconcile. Abu-Nimer notes, "If the oppressor recognizes these attitudes in the oppressed, the sense of threat is reduced and the willingness to resolve the conflict is increased."¹⁵ While it may be the case that Israeli soldiers are "dominant" given their superior firepower and authority, many of them are frightened to the core during live confrontations with the Palestinians, and it is the positive attitude Abu-Nimer identifies that provides the soldiers a dignified climb-down to engage with the Palestinians as fellow human beings.

According to Gandhi, when an oppressor cannot be reached by logic alone, one must appeal to the oppressor's humanity by acceptance of self-suffering in order to reveal the true nature of the oppression in a clear, unmistakable way to the oppressor and to the world. Abu-Nimer notes that the above positive attitudes of the Palestinians during the first Intifada contributed to a willingness to "bear more suffering than the opponent without retaliating in kind." This willingness seems apparent to us among many of Bil'in activists, who maintain their dignity without retaliating when the Israeli soldiers use excessive force.

Building the Movement

The grassroots resistance in Budrus and Bil'in could be a small but essential component of a large, but not yet fully articulated nonviolent movement that is starting to take shape in Israel/Palestine. A number of on-the-ground organizations such as Holy Land Trust, Sabeel, and the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions can help pro-

vide the organizational backbone for such a movement. A conference entitled “Celebrating Nonviolent Resistance” on December 27, 2005 in Bethlehem will provide a possible nexus for organizations and activists to coordinate their efforts.

Even if nonviolence is used to change the shape of the conflict, to truly create a situation of reconciliation will require deep and systematic work at all levels of Israeli and Palestinian society. In the long run, “Nonviolence is not meant to be a tidy compartment, the habit of an occasional activist, a musing on the margins of ‘the real world.’ Nonviolence is and must become a science, a way of life, a worldview, finally, a culture.”¹⁶

RESOURCES

Anarchists Against the Wall:

www.af-north.org/wall.htm

Celebrating Nonviolent Resistance:

www.celebratingnv.org

Gush Shalom: www.gush-shalom.org/english/

Holy Land Trust: www.holylandtrust.org

Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions:

www.icahd.org

Sabeel: www.sabeel.org

The Controversy of Stone Throwing

Stone throwing was one of the more controversial aspects of the first Intifada and remains a part of Palestinian resistance today. It is mainly practiced by Palestinian youths age 10-20 (called the *shabab*). Some Palestinians have argued that stone throwing is more an act of defiance than an intention to injure (the literal meaning of *himsa*, violence), saying that stones (in most cases) cannot hurt well-equipped helmeted soldiers. The shabab resort to stone throwing to protest the presence of the army on their lands. For Palestinian youngsters suffering from a deep feeling of humiliation and hopelessness, this simple yet concrete act of resistance is often a way to survive psychologically, by reclaiming a feeling of empowerment in an otherwise forlorn and depressive environment. Accordingly, different scholars note that stone throwing falls into a gray area between violence and nonviolence. Dr. Abu-Nimer refers to it as nonlethal force or unarmed resistance.¹⁷ Unfortunately it does have a real potential to injure. During the time we visited the holy land in the summer of 2005, one Israeli soldier reportedly lost use of an eye due to a stone. Even if such incidents are rare, the mainstream media tends to focus on them.

In Bil'in, the debate about stone throwing takes place during rallies and everyday life. After one of the weekly demonstrations in July of 2005, for example, a long discussion took place between Palestinians, Israelis, and international activists about stone throwing in particular and nonviolence in general. Some of the activists argued — correctly, in our view — that stone throwing provokes the army. Additionally, they stated that the violent conclusion of each demonstration is the only part that gets media coverage, and draws public attention away from any meaningful discussion about the issue of the wall. In conclusion, although the village council affirmed a desire to stop stone throwing, they simultaneously justified and understood the youths' need to release their anger through throwing stones.

The history of nonviolent movements suggests that the adults, who already model more deeply committed nonviolent action, could challenge the youths to do something useful, powerful, and consistent with the resistance — something that could divert their rage and defiance into more constructive, less ambivalent channels. For instance, the youths could be asked to join the adults at the front of a march and carry out their defiance with courage and dignity — hopefully even offering a measure of respect to Israeli soldiers as they do so. Nonviolence begins with the internal conversion of a negative to a positive drive, and engaged mentorship could help youngsters to make this journey.



Media coverage of the first Intifada (1987-1992) often focused on young Palestinians throwing stones at tanks and Israeli soldiers. image: In dymedia

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A CONSISTENT ETHIC OF DIGNITY

The Philippines People Power Movement

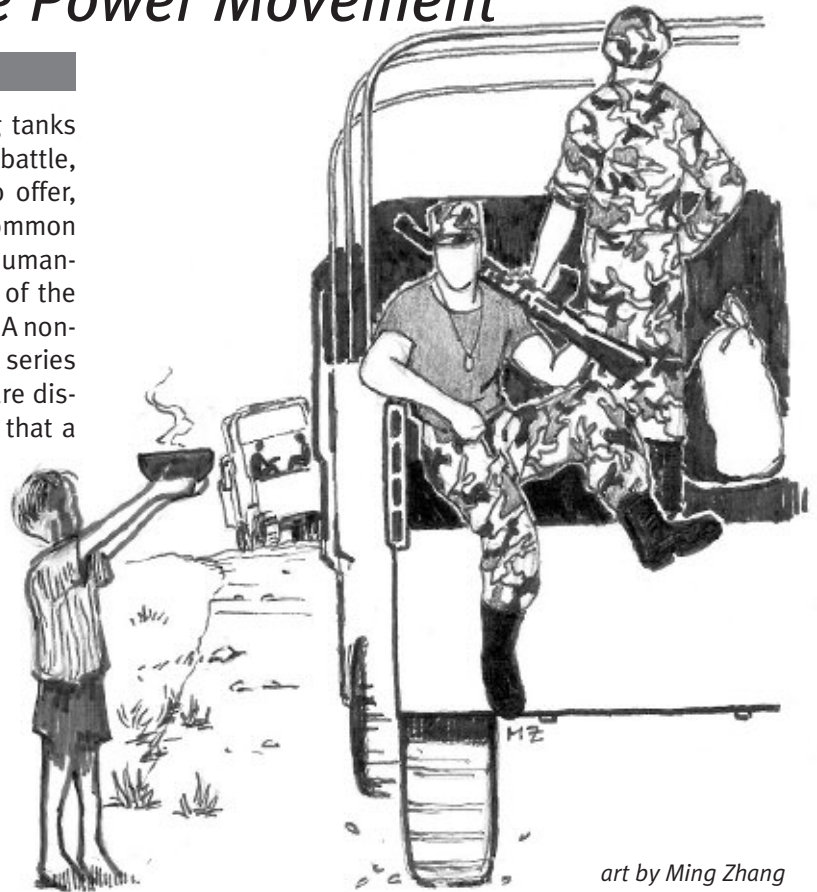
Eli Sasaran

How can one kneel and stare down rumbling tanks and hundreds of soldiers trained for military battle, especially when all one has is supplies of food to offer, words for conversion, faith and hope in their common humanity, and prayer to the possible source of that humanity and power? This was the “nonviolent moment” of the human crisis in the Philippines of February 23, 1986. A nonviolent moment creates the clearest moment over a series of actions when the forces dependent on violence are displayed in contrast to the power of nonviolence, so that a deeper truth of the situation is exposed. Individual persons within a communal tradition generated this scenario as they gathered together and chose to adhere to *alay dangal*, which means “to offer dignity.” I shall explore their story to illuminate the potential of ‘offering dignity’ as a guide for the practice of nonviolence.

President Marcos had ruled as a dictator since 1972. Before the nonviolent moment of 1986, various organizations had given years of trainings in the methods of nonviolent resistance for the marginalized people. It was these poor and voiceless people who most suffered from their dignity being ignored. Both ethical and pragmatic principles motivated this preparation.

The roots of the movement included using role-plays for training, the development of consumer collectives that created an indigenous economy outside of the dominating transnational institutions, and massive organized protests that shut down sectors of society such as transportation and built the confidence of the populous. Nonviolent discipline was maintained despite harassment and threats by the police, who attempted to provoke the activists toward violence. This demonstrated the government’s preference for violent confrontation over facing nonviolent power. Intimidation and violent force are more familiar to most governments, and violent protests tend to legitimate a violent response in the eyes of most populations.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) and the Catholic Church were key players in motivating, organizing, and training the populace. Hildegard Goss-Meyer was a famous trainer with IFOR in the islands. Catholic teaching upheld human dignity with a strong ethical objection to killing, and provided a network of people through Christian Base Communities. From these perspec-



art by Ming Zhang

“I used to hate the military and the police, but on Sunday I found myself preparing sandwiches for them.... I remembered all the times when I cursed them during rallies and was amazed now that I walked so far and worked so hard for them.”

-Yolanda Lacuesta

tives, nonviolent action left open the possibility for reconciliation rather than merely being a tactic to usurp power. Furthermore, they taught that human dignity was an unalterable, inextinguishable, and equivalent value given (i.e. inherent) to each human. Regardless of what we have, such as money, power, intelligence, looks, etc., or what we do, such as generosity, justice, murder, sin, etc., human dignity remains unaltered, inextinguishable, and equal for each human. We are encouraged and perhaps drawn by gratitude to both illuminate and live in accord with this gift of dignity in all people by our choices, but this does not increase our gift of dignity. Yet, the people of the Philippines were largely experiencing economic and political oppression, which ignored their dignity and left the oppressors living in discord with their own dignity. Thus,

from the perspective of *alay dangal*, 'to offer dignity,' both groups were suffering and as a community were in need of restoring their sense of human dignity. The power of nonviolence activates this restorative and liberating process.

After election fraud in the 1984 parliamentary elections, months of non-violent protests and organizing arose to set the tone for the 1986 elections between Marcos and Cory Aquino. The Catholic Bishops called for a nonviolent struggle for justice against Marcos that led to civil disobedience and work stoppages. On February 22nd of 1986, some military leaders announced their revolt against Marcos but were badly outnumbered and stuck in highly vulnerable bases. Through radio, Cardinal Sin called people to bring food and supplies to those revolting, while encouraging other soldiers to defect. Soon 40,000 supporters, including women, men, children, elderly, nuns, priests, and seminarians, had gathered around the bases forming a human barricade, displaying many religious artifacts, convicted with hope for reconciliation, and many active in prayer. Risking their own lives, they offered their own willingness to suffer as a message to the hearts of the soldiers. Although Marcos ordered his remaining loyal troops to move in on the camps, when they took aim with guns and tanks many troops broke into tears and retreated to an empty field. As startled troops were met with gestures of friendship, defections escalated and Marcos' entourage fled February 25th.

Bringing food and supplies to those revolting, while encouraging soldiers to defect were both ways of acting in accord with their own dignity and "offering dignity" to each group. They were not trying to humiliate their opponent, since such action is not in accord with the gift of dignity. They were trying to help their opponent, the government and its loyal soldiers, to step out of the embarrassing role of depending on violence and threat power, which is in discord with their own gift of dignity and mistakenly assumes they could diminish another's gift of dignity by continuing the oppression.

Not only did the people attempt to illuminate the dignity of



image: Freedom House

"The world is best reconstructed by valuing the people and human lives, by reaching out in joy and dialogue. That is Filipino people power. This will be our contribution to human progress and peace."

-Fr. Jose Blanco S.J., Founder, Aksyon Para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (Movement for Peace and Justice)

all participants in the conflict, but they also evoked actions in accord with dignity. Thus, we may consider the power of nonviolence as 'illuminating and evoking dignity'. Catholic Cardinal Bernadin of Chicago coined the term a "consistent ethic of life" to refer to a moral framework for discerning various social issues. A paradigm of nonviolence may help refocus this framework toward considering a "consistent ethic of dignity." Clearly violations of dignity, injury and deaths would have been much greater if violence was the chosen recourse. Regarding the choice of nonviolence, Cardinal Sin adds, "It was two million independent decisions. Each one said, in their heart, 'I will do this,' and they went out." Michael Nagler calls this "Person Power," and when this unfolds within the context of a community committed to dignity, the energy for transformation of hearts and societies cultivates an ever-expanding horizon of love in action.

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<http://tinyurl.com/getjz>

ARE YOU AN ARTIST?

We want you for PEACEPOWER magazine!
 email: art {AT} calpeacepower.org

the UN Security Council resolution.

Syrian withdrawal did not magically end the conflict in Lebanon but instead raised many difficult issues about Lebanon's future. The UN is actively pursuing an investigation on the murder of Hariri and has placed pressure upon Syria to cooperate. The investigation is being led by German prosecutor Detlev Mehlis, and has identified suspects believed to be involved in the assassination. This investigation has created tension in Lebanon that has manifested itself in car bombings targeted against leaders and communities. Syrian withdrawal has also had political effects with worldwide support for free elections in Lebanon. These elections took place in May and June and the 128 legislative seats were divided among Saad Hariri's anti-Syrian bloc (72 seats), the Amal-Hezbollah alliance (35 seats), and the Free Patriotic Movement (21 seats). The question of Syrian and US influence in Lebanon remains unresolved. The country remains divided on many key issues and as one Lebanese man and founder of the Lebanese Political Journal stated, "Our national unity has a long way to go. The lines of division run deep and cannot be solved by small political patches." The future of Lebanon is fraught with uncertainty, but if the people continue to adopt ideals of resolving differences through conversation and protest they will not succumb to the violence of their recent history.



Lebanese musician Marcel Khalife performed during the civil war to keep people's spirits alive.

The country has the backing of various Lebanese intellectuals and artists in their nonviolent efforts. Many espouse nonviolent ideals and have helped bring their country through tough times and deal with cultural discrepancies between Middle Eastern and Western cultures.

"...Preventing division cannot be achieved by fear and retreat, but rather by going ahead toward concurrence, toward the truth, toward the future..."

-Sidon MP Bahia Hariri

Once such man is musician Marcel Khalife, who was born in Lebanon in 1950 and has traveled throughout the world giving solo performances on the traditional oud instrument. During the civil war he "performed in abandoned Beirut concert halls, intent on keeping people's spirits alive during a time of utter despair ... singing the great poetry of the Middle East, making it accessible and meaningful to sufferers on both sides of the war." Khalife makes

his traditional music available to all Lebanese to uplift the people. Today, he focuses on the cultural realm, sensitive to Western influence in Lebanon and the effects it has on Lebanese culture. Influential figures such as Khalife can play an important role in transformative struggles by giving hope to the people and keeping

them on a nonviolent path.

Lebanon is currently undergoing many critical changes and has yet to resolve some important issues. Last spring demonstrated a hopeful prospect to the coming challenges the nation will face, as people were able to channel dissent into protests and speeches instead of succumbing to arms. Whether or not principled nonviolence or strategic nonviolence was mobilized is hard to say, and most likely the movement represented a combination of the two. The biases of the corporate media do not aid in this analysis and it can thus be hard to resolve from a distance. The mobilization of the international media and influence of foreign countries undoubtedly played a major role in Syrian withdrawal and will continue to be important in the realization of a stable outcome. Hopefully, the people will continue to use nonviolent methods to solve the next set of conflicts they encounter and perhaps then, it will be easier to analyze whether nonviolence was embraced strategically or spiritually. Either way the efforts of the people were significant and inspiring and cannot be overlooked.

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DISARMING OUR HEARTS & THE WORLD

Confronting nuclear weapons requires a new way of being

Chelsea Collonge

On June 21, 1999, Dr. Steven Younger gave a talk that included information about the W-76 warhead, a thermonuclear weapon seven times as powerful as the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima:

“The W-76 warhead is the backbone of America’s strategic nuclear deterrent. There are lots of these things out there. They are out there right now on submarines, submarines moving very quietly. We don’t know where they are. The bad guys don’t know where they are. Thirty minutes, however, and they can deliver this type of weapon to just about any target on earth.... Now they’re intended to prevent other countries, other states, other national entities from doing something that really isn’t in our national interest. You get people’s attention when you threaten the existence of their nation.”

Younger, a top nuclear weapons scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, was speaking to his colleagues, all University of California employees at the UC-managed lab. The United States currently has 1500 W-76 warheads on active duty, while the firepower of its total arsenal of 10,000 nuclear weapons is 400 times that of all explosive power used during WWII. Not even counting the nuclear arsenals of the seven other countries that possess nuclear weapons, the US has enough firepower to destroy the entire world.

How can we counter this specter of ultimate violence prowling through our waters? How can we counter the dehumanized attitudes of intelligent people who talk of making other countries “go away”? As Einstein said, “The splitting of the atom has changed everything, except our way of thinking.” By offering destruction on such an overwhelming scale, the nuclear bomb numbs our ability to comprehend it; this psychic numbing leads to nuclear entrapment, in which the very horror of the bomb removes our ability to struggle against it. But are we truly entrapped?

Gandhi answered this question in 1946 with a resounding no. “Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and nonviolence? Has not the atomic bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins (nonviolence and truth) constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world.”¹ Adam Michnik, leader of the

Polish nonviolent movement that helped end the Cold War, made a similar point: they had “discovered the political equivalent of the Atom bomb”—for People Power had done what an A-bomb couldn’t do, namely to bring about freedom and justice for Poland.

Ultimate Violence

The violence of nuclear weapons goes beyond their destructive megatonnage; these weapons are also a window into our society’s most violent ideas and patterns. Nuclear weapons are the epitome of technocratic modernity, which Gandhi condemned in favor of decentralized economic forms that limit technology to serving basic human needs. They also represent our society’s powerful commitment to untruth, both in the undemocratic secrecy of national security and in the lie of militarism: that safety can come from the ultimate threat. C. Wright Mills noted that because proponents of nuclear security believe in a radical separation of means from ends, “the major cause of WWII will be our preparation for it.” Violence begets violence, a dynamic we see today when the threatening postures of the nuclear weapons states encourage other countries to seek nuclear weapons as a deterrent, bringing proliferation of weapons and escalating conflict to the international scene.

Nuclear weapons are also the epitome of idolatry; as Jonathan Granoff writes, “The most offensive expression of the violence that grows from the heart bereft of peace is the threat to use nuclear weapons and ultimately destroy all life on the planet earth in order to exalt a human creation, a nation state.” Throughout the Nuclear Age, the U.S. government has sacrificed the health and safety of its own citizens—the Navajo uranium miners, families living downwind of the Nevada Test Site, and the “atomic veterans,” servicemen exposed to nuclear tests—suppressing human security in the name of national security. During the Cold War the US engaged in the height of dehumanizing enmity with the Soviet Union. By refusing to see ourselves in our opponent, Americans neglected to see our own goodness and own evil reflected in the Soviet Union; so we aligned ourselves with our own enemy in an arms race that held the whole world hostage.

Living under the threat of nuclear annihilation for 60 years has also had a violent effect on our psyches, as the process of psychic numbing desensitizes us to reality. Gandhi wrote in 1946, “The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the allied arms but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see.... A slave holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND NONVIOLENCE (CONTINUED)

his deputy in the cage holding the slave.... The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs even as violence cannot be by counter-violence.”²

Disarmament and Nonviolence

The combination of physical and psychic violence embodied in nuclear weapons makes it critical for the nuclear abolition movement to use nonviolence not only as a tactic of resistance, but also to show another way of being in the world.

The nuclear disarmament movement of the past 60 years has a strong record of using nonviolent resistance. In 1955, a handful of people joined Dorothy Day in open flouting of mandatory national “civil defense” drills, meant to prepare the populace for nuclear war. In 1961, 2,000 people demonstrated and brought an end to compulsory participation. Numerous Ploughshares activists have hammered and poured blood on missile silos and warheads. In the early 1980s, several thousand people participated in direct actions to shut down Livermore Lab. These acts have been critical—for when destruction has been civilized, civil disobedience is more important than ever.

The disarmament movement has also included constructive programs, such as the creation of Nuclear Weapons Free cities and Nuclear Weapons Free Zones throughout the world (almost the entire Southern hemisphere is a NWFZ, with countries prohibiting nuclear weapons passing through their waters). It has also reached out to people once considered enemies, building what Johan Galtung would call the Great Chain of Nonviolence, in which people influence those who are in a position to influence the opponent. Examples are former Cold War planner George Kennan, former Strategic

Command head General Lee Butler, and former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara—people who can act as a bridge because they are involved in both the national security community and the nuclear abolition movement.

Conscientious objection has played a huge part in the disarmament movement, which has relied on numerous whistleblowers in the nuclear industry risking their jobs



Nevada Desert Experience participants make a pilgrimage from Las Vegas to the Nevada Test Site during Easter Week of 2004. (Josh Kearns)

and freedom, such as Mordechai Vanunu, who revealed Israel’s secret nuclear arsenal to the world and spent more than 18 years in prison. Many university students working for nuclear abolition engage in counter-recruitment of science and engineering students who are thinking of working for the nuclear weapons labs, collecting signatures for a Scientists’ and Engineers’ Pledge to Renounce Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Peace Boat

This summer I had two beautiful opportunities to experience anti-nuclear peacemaking. The first time was in the desert outside the Nevada Test Site on August 6th, the 60th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Hundreds of people gathered alongside the Western Shoshone people, on whose sacred land the test site lies, to reclaim the desert as holy ground and trespass into the Test Site in protest.

My other beautiful experience this summer was on the Peace Boat, a Japanese cruise ship that organizes global voyages for peace education. I was one of seven Anti-Nuclear Youth Ambassadors from seven nuclear weapons states on the Peace Boat’s 50th anniversary voyage in Northeast Asia. The voyage came right on the 60th anniversary

of the end of WWII and was a joint effort by Korean and Japanese people to examine the legacies of that war and do truth and reconciliation work.

The voyage also came in the context of the North Korean nuclear crisis and the 60th year of the hibakusha, the atomic survivors, which is why we antinuclear youth were invited. It was so moving to be involved in the kind of citizen diplomacy we saw a lot during the Cold War, aimed at building trust and cooperation among nations by building trust and cooperation among people. We also worked together to create a 2, 5, and 10 year plan for disarming our countries and creating a new system of collective security, in which trust and cooperation combine with international law to create a world in which countries recognize that none are safe until all are safe.

Despite the power of the nuclear establishment and the entrenched ideologies of those working within it, it is important not to give up hope that people can and will exercise transformative agency. To keep this hope and to reach out effectively, it is essential to recognize the basic human needs that nuclear weapons work fulfills for the scientists, and to recognize that they are trying to serve their country.

This belief is very much linked to the emphasis on Person Power within nonviolence. Granoff writes, “I believe that the mystery that placed the power of destruction in the binding forces of the atom has placed the healing power of love in our hearts and further gifted us with the courage and wisdom to use that power effectively.” In the words of Henry Wieman, we must “split the atom of human egoism.” This is why it is so important for disarmament activists to embody nonviolence as a living alternative to militarism. Instead of nationalism, we need a “species mentality”; instead of nuclear competition, a recognition of interdependence; instead of arrogance, humility and a recognition of human fallibility. In other words, we must work on disarming our own hearts as we work to disarm the world.

Nevada Desert Experience

One organization that brings this element of principled nonviolence to the anti-nuclear movement is Nevada Desert Experience (NDE). Since 1981 NDE has organized people to go to the Nevada Nuclear Test Site, site of almost 1,000 nuclear bomb explosions, to learn about nuclear weapons testing and engage in faith-based resistance using active nonviolence. The message they send is less about facts and opinions than it is expressing something deeply personal and trying to embody a nonviolent way of being as they work for a less violent world. NDE has cultivated respectful relationships with the sheriffs at the Test Site (who are in charge of making arrests) as well as with test site workers and nuclear weapons scientists.

NDE combats Untruth through witnessing – bringing out into the open what the government would prefer to remain hidden—the cancers caused to downwinders by the testing, the environmental damage, the security failures. Through their presence and their concern, NDE participants dissolve the great Untruth that nuclear weapons are nothing to worry about; by focusing on the survivors they break through the psychic numbing brought about by alienating numbers and overwhelming threat.

By inviting people into an antinuclearist spirituality, NDE helps to create a new culture that enables creative imaging of a nuclear-free world and resistance to the current nuclear system. It helps to create a new faith, a faith in the



The peace walkers talk to the sheriff's officers while preparing to “cross the line” into the Test Site, replacing the secrecy of nuclear weapons testing with intimate witness. (Josh Kearns)

preciousness of the earth and the possibility of change, which at the same time leads people to new social practices with each other. These social practices, in turn, show the possibility for new social relations in the form of collective security, therefore replacing faith in nuclear weapons, as well as technocracy in general.

In their pamphlet *Notes on Nonviolence*, NDE defines the desert as a place for intimate contact, and for inner work. “We stand on the same ground, physically and morally, as do our friends in the immediate circle and the circle it represents, the world. We share the circle with friends and opponents alike. We cannot separate ourselves from those with whom we disagree. The violence to which we object is found within us.”

The desert is a place of growth: “We will try to practice that which we advocate: truth, gentleness, love of God, love of one another, love of the earth.” But it is also a place of suffering. As Dom Helder Camara, Brazilian priest and champion of the poor, said: “We must have no illusions. We must not be naive. If we listen to the voice of God, we make our choice, get out of ourselves and fight nonviolently for a better world. We must not expect to find it easy; we shall not walk on roses, people will not throng to hear us and applaud, and we shall not always be aware of divine protection. If we are to be pilgrims for justice and peace, we must expect the desert.”

Implications for the Movement

As in the Cold War, today we continue to face “a choice between nonviolence and nonexistence,” as Martin Luther King Jr. put it. But since the fall of the Soviet Union, the

CONTINUED ON P. 31

CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Students Helping Students Solve Conflicts

Kathryn Hoban

You and your roommate have not spoken to each other in nearly a week. When you cross paths, you somehow find a way to avert your eyes. You grit your teeth when she's around, and you don't talk about your feelings because you fear that once you unleash your emotions, you'll turn into an angry monster. The tension you're experiencing is palpable—and completely normal. You are experiencing conflict.

Conflict often feels unbearable, miserable and impossible to approach. For some people, engaging in conflict is so undesirable that they would rather live with the uncomfortable situation than attempt to make a change. Dealing with conflict is then perceived as an extreme option only resorted to in dire situations, when the relationship breaks down. Rather than seeing conflict as the point of destruction for a relationship, we can seek out opportunities for growth. When conflict is addressed early, and in a way that affirms the relationship, conflict can be a positive experience and a way to develop a deeper understanding of each other's perspective. Conflict can be constructive.

A Transformative Approach

Transforming conflict from a negative, uncomfortable situation, into a constructive opportunity for growth is the mission of the Conflict Resolution & Transformation Center (CRTC), a new student-led institution at U.C. Berkeley. Through mediation services, educational workshops, and group facilitations, CRTC works with students to alter the role conflict plays in our lives. Developed and run by students, CRTC seeks to work with students and student groups from all cultural backgrounds to create a space in which disputes can be resolved and relationships can be built, strengthened, or salvaged.

While it is certainly the case that CRTC seeks to help students find a resolution to conflicts, our approach goes deeper. We empower the parties to work together to reframe the conflict, understand the source, and engage in a collaborative dialogue to address

underlying relationship dynamics and cultural issues. This transformative approach can help people find new ways to empathize with each other as they overcome the emotional strains they experienced during the conflict.

Conflict: A Part of Daily Life

Conflicts in our personal lives can take place in any relationship—with friends, former friends, housemates, or even mere acquaintances. Maybe a person living in the apartment next door frequently plays music too loud for your taste. Or, maybe your roommate's boyfriend is driving you

crazy, and he's over all the time. Perhaps there's a person living on your floor who makes comments that you experience as demeaning to your culture. These are just some examples of problems that can arise between people, escalate, and make life uncomfortable. In situations like these, sitting down with a mediator and the other person can help to ease tension, and provide a forum for expressing your needs. When students call the center, they will speak with one of our case managers, explain the situation, and get more information about mediation. The case manager will talk with the other party, and make arrangements for mediation if all people involved are willing to participate. From the beginning to the end, the mediation is completely confidential. Mediators guide the process of

CRTC works with students to alter the role conflict plays in our lives.



CRTC facilitates workshops on general topics such as communication, or specific issues such as race and gender.

the mediation, but the parties involved create the resolution.

Student groups such as clubs, co-ops, fraternities, and sororities encounter conflict all the time! It's only natural that when working or living together issues will arise, such as disputes about the group's goals, power dynamics, resentments, and feelings of under-appreciation. When a student group is in conflict, CRTC can assist in a number of ways, depending on the degree of the conflict's escalation. Even if your group is not experiencing conflict, we would love to work with you to explore your group's dynamics, and develop a greater understanding for how you interact. Workshops can be designed specifically to fit the needs of your group. Together, we can build a safe environment, in which group members can feel comfortable exploring some of the deeper issues that affect the relationships within the group, like gender, race, and communication styles. Also, CRTC can assist student groups by encouraging open dialogue and being attentive to the group's ways of interacting throughout the course of the discussion. Of course, personal conflicts also deeply affect the whole group. In such cases, mediation may be helpful in addition to the other, more group-oriented, services.

Academically, CRTC seeks to assist students in making group projects for classes a more positive experience. We offer workshops aimed at exploring the issues that arise during group projects, like time scarcity, differing levels of engagement, varying expectations, and working styles. Through participating in our workshops, groups talk about such issues and the ways they'd best like to approach them if they arise.

Building a Program

Through participating in the PACS 154: Multicultural Conflict Resolution class taught by Edith Ng and Anita Madrid, several students developed a passion for conflict resolution and its community-building capacity. Starting in Fall 2004, Farhad Salehian encouraged other members of the class to work with him in developing a student conflict resolution center on campus. A year later, students trained in mediation, case management, and facilitation have begun offering their services to the campus community, and CRTC officially launched in Fall 2005.

We invite interested students to work with CRTC, learn more about conflict resolution, be trained as mediators and facilitators, build and lead workshops, and be a part of a practical peace movement on campus. Multi-culturalism is at the core of the CRTC philosophy, so we encourage students from all cultural backgrounds to join in our process of building relationships on campus.

Our goal to empower students to reframe the role conflict plays in our lives, to affirm relationships, and to improve dynamics. Ultimately, we want to be a resource for individuals to more deeply experience their own and others' humanity.

CRTC Services

Our services are designed to be useful to students in all areas of life—personal, extracurricular, and academic.

- **Mediation:** During a mediation session, the parties in conflict sit down in a room with a panel of 2-3 trained, impartial mediators. Each party gets a chance to speak without interruption about their perspective on the situation, their concerns, and their needs. The mediators will ask additional questions that invite each party to help clarify. This creates an opportunity for the parties to hear and understand each other. Eventually, the mediators will facilitate a respectful dialogue between the parties and seek an outcome that both empowers the parties and, if desired, heals the relationship. The mediation session is confidential and is not legally binding in any way.

- **Facilitation & Collaborative Problem Solving:** Facilitations and collaborative problem solving can be like mediation, but with a larger group of people. We endeavor to understand divergent perspectives within the group and create a maximally safe and respectful environment. Our facilitation style can be fully customized to the needs of the group. In both mediations and facilitations, CRTC members are impartial and committed to promoting a healthy discussion between all the parties.

- **Workshops:** Through participation in workshops designed and led by the CRTC, students can learn new ways to approach relationships, group dynamics, communication, and much more. CRTC offers short (30 min) to long (full-day) workshops that can address very generalized issues, such as respectful communication methods, or very specific topics, such as race and gender dynamics in a student group.

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THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

Inner Healing is a Path to Social Revolution

Sarah Elizabeth Clark

Twelve years ago, near Cape Town, South Africa, four South African men, Easy Nofemela, Ntobeko Peni, and two others, murdered Amy Biehl, a white American Fulbright scholar. When South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission granted the men amnesty for their crime in 1998, Amy Biehl's parents supported the decision.

Linda Biehl, Amy's mother, wrote in an article called "Making Change" in the Fall 2004 issue of Greater Good magazine, "Easy and Ntobeko needed to confess and tell the truth in order to receive amnesty, and there was a genuine quality to their testimony. I had to get outside of myself and realize that these people lived in an environment that I'm not sure I could have survived in. What would you do if you had been oppressed for generations?"

She continues, "I do think forgiveness can be a fairly self-ish thing. You do it for your own benefit because you don't want to harbor this pain, you don't want to hold this cancer in your body. So you work through it. The reconciliation part is the hard work. It's about making change."

Today, Easy Nofemela and Ntobeko Peni work with Linda Biehl at the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in Cape Town, a charity that supports youth education and anti-violence programs in South Africa.

How is this possible? How on earth was Linda Biehl able to forgive the men who murdered her daughter? Why



Truth and Reconciliation chair Desmond Tutu (L) and committee member Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela at the TRC hearings. Photo: IRIS FILMS, www.irisfilms.org

would she ever want to? Why does this move and inspire us? What can we learn from this amazing story and from others like it?

The process of forgiveness is not merely sentimental, it is extremely transformative. It is transformative because it creates a new relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Through the act of forgiveness, an individual is able to overcome his or her victimhood, feel empathy for

their 'enemy,' and ultimately re-humanize the person who did them wrong. As we will also see, the act of forgiveness on community, national and international levels can even promote a new political world

order based on cooperation and dialogue, rather than threat and violence.

Forgiveness as Liberation

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of the architects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, writes that a recent issue of the journal *Spirituality and Health* had on its front cover a picture of three U.S. ex-servicemen standing in front of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. One asks, "Have you forgiven those who held you prisoner of war?" "I will never forgive them," replies the other. His mate says: "Then it seems they still have you in prison, don't they?" (Tutu, p. 272)

To forgive those who have wronged you is an act of great inner freedom, and though very difficult, it is also very necessary. In the act of forgiveness we declare our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to change (Tutu, 2004, p.12). Forgiveness gives both the perpetrator and the victim the chance for a fresh start.

But what happens if the perpetrator does not offer contrition or seek forgiveness? Must the victim be dependent upon this request before he or she can forgive? Archbishop Tutu answers with an emphatic 'no.' If the victim could forgive only when the culprit confessed, he explains, then the victim would be locked into the culprit's whim, locked into victimhood, no matter her own attitude or intention (Tutu, p. 272).

For victims of crime, forgiveness is not condoning or excusing the crime. It is letting go of the power that the offence and the offender had over them. It means no longer letting the offence and the offender dominate.

Love the Sinner and Condemn the Sin

Forgiveness can be extremely difficult. But, it becomes a little bit easier when one is able to separate the perpetra-

"Forgiveness is not just an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude."

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

tor from the crime. The person is not evil, their act was evil. Peace philosopher Cheyney Ryan states, “When we forgive another what we accept is not what they have done or the acts that have injured us, but them. Forgiveness rests on a separation of doer and deed, the sinner and the sin.” (Hastings, p. 221.)

If perpetrators were to be dehumanized as monsters and demons then, as Archbishop Tutu explains regarding the TRC, “we were thereby letting accountability go out the window because we were then declaring that they were not moral agents to be held responsible for the deeds they had committed. Much more importantly, it meant that we abandoned all hope of their being able to change for the better.” (Tutu, p. 83.) If people who commit crimes are dismissed as monsters, they cannot, by definition, engage in a process so deeply meaningful as forgiveness and reconciliation.

Remembering and Forgiving

“If forgetfulness is the enemy of justice, so also is it the enemy of forgiveness.” (Shriver, 2003, p.30.) People should not be asked to “forgive and forget”. On the contrary, it is important to remember so that we do not let atrocities happen again. As noted earlier, forgiveness does not mean condoning what has been done. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the pain, the hurt, and the truth (Tutu, 2004, p. 12). Forgiveness means taking what happened seriously and not minimizing it. It tries to understand the perpetrators so as to engender empathy. In the words of Archbishop Tutu, one who forgives tries to “stand in their shoes and appreciate the sort of pressures and influences that might have conditioned them” (Tutu, p. 271).

If we intend to move on and build a new kind of world community, there must be a way in which we can deal with a sordid past. If we do not, the process of healing will be subverted by the potential risk that some awful atrocity of the past would come to light that could undermine what had been accomplished thus far. If we do not, we will experience again, for example, the willingness of a Serb to kill a Muslim in revenge for ancestors who fought the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.

Political Forgiveness?

When we move from the interpersonal to the sociopolitical realm, forgiveness becomes more complicated. Yet it is only in making such connections between the political and the personal that there can be transformation in our institutions.

Donald Shriver defines ‘politics’ simply as how humans get along with each other in spite of their conflicts (Shriver, p. 3). Seldom has any major political thinker considered forgiveness an essential servant of justice or as indispensable in the initial formation of political associations. Eventually, if opponents are not simply to go to war again with each other indefinitely, former enemies must find a

Nine Steps to Forgiveness

by Fred Luskin

- 1) Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation is not OK. Then, tell a couple of trusted people about your experience.
- 2) Make a commitment to yourself to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and no one else.
- 3) Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciling with the person who upset you or condoning the action. In forgiveness you seek the peace and understanding that come from blaming people less after they offend you and taking those offenses less personally.
- 4) Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts, and physical upset you are suffering now, not from what offended you or hurt you two minutes—or 10 years—ago.
- 5) At the moment you feel upset, practice stress management to soothe your body’s flight or fight response.
- 6) Give up expecting things from your life or from other people that they do not choose to give you. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, friendship, and prosperity, and work hard to get them. However, these are “unenforceable rules:” You will suffer when you demand that these things occur, since you do not have the power to make them happen.
- 7) Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you.
- 8) Remember that a life well lived is your best approach. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving power over you to the person who caused you pain, learn to look for the love, beauty, and kindness around you. Put more energy into appreciating what you have rather than attending to what you do not have.
- 9) Amend the way you look at your past so you remind yourself of your heroic choice to forgive.

way of living together. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., “We must either learn to live together as brothers, or we are all going to perish together as fools.” (Shriver p. 5.)

Forgiveness in a political context, then, is an act that joins moral truth, forbearance, empathy, and commitment to repair a fractured human relation (Shriver, p.9). Such a combination calls for a collective turning from the past that neither ignores past evil nor excuses it, that neither overlooks justice nor reduces justice to revenge, that insists on the humanity of enemies even in the context of their dehumanizing deeds, and that values justice that restores community above the justice that destroys it (Shriver, p.9). Political forgiveness would begin to break the cycles of vengeance and violence that have plagued us for centuries.

CONTINUED ON P. 30

THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS (CONTINUED)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In South Africa, the world saw evidence that such a forgiveness process is possible. The post-apartheid government, headed by Nelson Mandela, established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to move the nation beyond the cycles of retribution and violence that had plagued so many other countries during their transitions from oppression to democracy. The TRC's work is superbly documented in the film "*Long Night's Journey into Day*."

The Commission granted perpetrators of political crimes the opportunity to appeal for amnesty by giving a full and truthful account of their actions and, if they so chose, an opportunity to ask for forgiveness. The Commission also gave victims of political crimes a chance to tell their stories, hear confessions, and thus unburden themselves from the pain and suffering they had experienced (Tutu, 2004, p.10).

The justice presented by the Commission was in the spirit of ubuntu, wherein the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, and a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offence (Tutu, p.55).

In order for South Africa to heal and become a more humane place, Archbishop Tutu reiterated, "we had to embrace our enemies as well as our friends" (Tutu, 2004, p.10). The same is true the world over. Our own dignity can only be measured in the way we treat others.

After Forgiveness, What's Next?

Once the wrongdoer has confessed and the victim has forgiven, it does not mean the process is complete. In



Reconciliation is a long process with ups and downs.

Photo: IRIS FILMS, www.irisfilms.org

South Africa, the process of reconciliation has been placed in considerable jeopardy by the enormous disparities between the rich, mainly white, and the poor, mainly black. (Tutu, p.273)

The huge gap between the haves and the have-nots, which was largely created and maintained by apartheid, poses the greatest threat to reconciliation and stability.

Reconciliation is a long process with ups and downs, not something accomplished overnight. According to Archbishop Tutu, "the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has only been able to make a contribution. Reconciliation is going to have to be the concern of every South African...."

It has to be a national project to which all earnestly strive to make their particular contribution—by learning the language and culture of others; by being willing to make amends; by refusing to deal in stereotypes

by making racial or other jokes that ridicule a particular group; by contributing to a culture of respect for human rights, and seeking to enhance tolerance—with zero tolerance for intolerance; by working for a more inclusive society where most, if not all, can feel they belong—that they are insiders and not aliens and strangers on the outside, relegated to the edges of society.

To work for reconciliation is to want to realize God's dream for humanity—when we will know that we are indeed members of one family, bound together in a delicate network of interdependence." (Tutu, p.274.)

What Archbishop Tutu speaks of is nothing short of creating a new world paradigm. Reconciliation—personal and societal transformation—is the end of a process that forgiveness begins, but it also sets the stage for a new way of living. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Forgiveness is not just an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude."

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LETTER TO THE EDITORS (CONT. FROM P. 3)

3) *We can articulate a new paradigm of common security, which relies on cooperation at the international level. An opponent who is unable to attack you may make you somewhat secure, but a former opponent who does not want to attack you, and wants to be your partner, makes you secure in a more meaningful, deeper and more reliable sense. (See mettacenter.org for more on common security.)*

4) *Gandhi's Shanti Sena, or "Peace Army," is a potential full-scale alternative to utilizing violence to achieve peace. See www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org. Let us encourage warriors to seriously train to join such organizations.*

We look for guidance not to the world as it is, but as it should be. Only a world in which our common identity as human beings supercedes the importance of all other forms of identification (national, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural) can possibly thrive in the future.

It is true that people are capable of evil acts, and they are also capable of good ones. How might we go about developing the potential for good? And when people do commit evil acts, might we refer to the legacies of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. for guidance on how to reach the hearts of oppressors when their minds are closed to reason? You mention freedoms. We wonder what will result in us regaining the freedoms we've lost in the US over the past six years?

According to Prof. Michael Nagler, "The letter you reference from Peter represents an extreme position within the range of Gospel commentary on authority -- extreme and arguably counter-Christian. Jesus most conspicuously did not submit himself to the Rabbinic authorities of his time (any more than the American colonies of 1776 submitted to George III!). His 'submission' to the Roman-Temple authorities who executed him was intensely subversive. 2nd.Samuel argues strongly that people shouldn't even have a king."

We hope that we will find within our hearts the impetus to do what is right, even and perhaps especially when that includes civil disobedience, a high act of patriotism when the cause is just.

*Blessings to you as well,
Chelsea Collonge and Matthew Taylor*

WAS GANDHI AN ANARCHIST? (CONT. FROM P. 5)

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DISARMING OUR HEARTS (CONT. FROM P. 25)

nuclear threat has fallen out of people's consciousnesses, and we no longer see the kind of mass civil disobedience that were common during the 80s, when people feared for their lives. The nuclear abolition movement today will only grow and be sustainable if it is motivated not by fear but by love for the world, and by the desire to embody something better. As King said, "I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation.... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality."

Spend your winter break on holy ground at the Nevada Test Site during NDE's immersion trip January 8-13, 2006. To join this experiment in nonviolence, please contact:

nde_august@peacenet.org

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Peace
If I could change the world
I'd dismantle all the bombs
If I could change the world
I would feed all the hungry
If I could change the world
I would shelter all the homeless
If I could change the world
I would make all people free
I can not dismantle all the bombs
I can not feed all the hungry
I cannot shelter all the homeless
I cannot make all people free
I can not because there is only
one of me.
When I have grown and I am
strong I will find many more
of me.
We will dismantle all the bombs
we will feed the hungry
we will shelter all the homeless
we will make all the people
free.
we will change the world
me and my friends
all together, together
at last.

JoJo age 11



Visit Jojo's memorial website at:

http://tf.org/tf/violence/gunmem/white_joshua.shtml