## PEACEPOWER

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# Building the Alternative

Imagine you're an alien looking down at the earth during the first months of 2003. You see that one country is preparing to attack another, with large movements of weapons, ships, and planes. You also see millions of people gathering in the streets all over the world. Are they protesting the war? Or are they parading in celebration?

This exercise makes us wonder: how can our antiwar efforts have a direct impact on the war machine? Nonviolent action is most successful when it does not rely solely on a message that can't be seen or touched, but directly confronts and interacts with the people and forces mobilizing for war.

But there is a type of action that seems invisible, but without which obstructive action alone will never work in the long run. It's the broad collection of alternatives to the war system that people are building as we speak, alternatives which appear in this issue of PeacePower.

Pieternel de Bie and Amy Elmgren report on a type of peacebuilding that is essential to future generations: peace education, from critical theory to peace games. On a national level, the campaign to establish a Department of Peace, described by Carrie Brode, would invest federal money into research and institution-building for alternative ways to resolve conflict and avert war.

Marilyn Langlois, Fred Jackson, and Jerlina Love explore peacemaking efforts in violence-torn communities in Northern California. Matthew Taylor introduces us to Combatants for Peace, a group of former Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants who work together for a two-state resolution to their conflict. Lorenzo Porta writes about "the oasis of peace," a village where Arab and Jewish people live in a cooperative community.

Gandhi had a name for this building of nonviolent structures within the shell of our militaristic society - he called it Constructive Program. Dr. Michael Nagler's article on Gandhi's birthday enumerates Gandhi's vision for alternatives to the violent systems of modern society. Anna Key's article applies ideas of constructive program to economic development in African villages in Malawi, and Chelsea Collonge brings to life an example closer to home: student co-operative housing.

None of these efforts will ever be visible from outer space, but we hope they will build the capacity for transformations of individuals and society, or at the very least speak to your heart through this issue. Enjoy!

#### **About PEACE POWER**

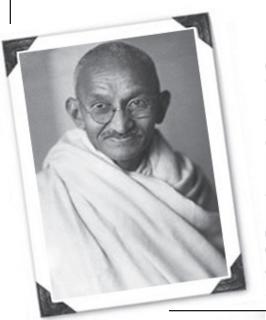
What kind of power can persuade the British to leave India as friends, not enemies? What kind of power can move the hearts of white Americans to recognize the need for civil rights for African-Americans? What kind of power can persuade an air force pilot, ordered by a dictator to quell an uprising, to 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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