

PEACEPOWER

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

*Volume 1, Issue 1
Summer 2005*

Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha: Then and Now



**ALSO IN THIS
ISSUE:**

**Meditation as
Education**

**The Disease
Called
Violence**

**The Israeli
Refusnik
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**Badshah
Khan: The
Muslim
Gandhi?**

**Abolish the
Death
Penalty!**

**Could
Nonviolence
"Succeed"
in Iraq?**

art: Rafael Matias Langer-Osuna

PEACEPOWER

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The Power to Transform a Culture

If you ask five pageant contestants the one thing they would wish for, at least four will say world peace. But if you ask five people what peace is, you will get at least six answers.

To paraphrase Johan Galtung, a founder of the peace studies field, “negative peace” is the absence of direct violent conflict, and “positive peace” is the presence of justice, community reconciliation, and sustainable relationships.

A beautiful vision, to be sure, but how do we get there? Is positive peace something that can be “achieved”? In the first issue of this publication, we begin the process of addressing these questions.

Our goal is to promote a greater understanding of principled nonviolence and conflict transformation at three levels: intrapersonal (within ourselves), interpersonal (in our relations), and paradigmatic (in our system of meaning and the way we view the world).

In this issue, Antonio Castillo and Eli Sasaran discuss practices to develop intrapersonal change – through meditation and a spiritual approach to peacemaking. Tal Palter’s analysis of the Israeli Refusnik movement mixes both intra- and interpersonal approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Guest contributor Tim Flinders discusses the world’s first nonviolent

army, a revolutionary approach to conflict that challenges the defunct paradigm that tries to convince us that the only way to defend a community or change society is through armed force.

But more than simply informing the campus community, we want to empower students to incorporate peaceful principles in their work for social change. Our focus on principled nonviolence is meant to inspire hope by showing a way out of war, injustice, and the logic of humiliation. We hope to provide a unique perspective, and open up a space for dialogue. We would love to hear your thoughts.

In their articles, many of our writers have included ways you can become part of the constructive process. One way to contribute is to join our team. We need writers, photographers, artists, and editors who are interested in conflict transformation, social change, nonviolence education and spirituality.

We are a group of students who are committed to articulating alternatives to violence and passivity. If you are worried about the state of the world, of your community, or of your heart, please join us. Together we can build a bridge to the future based on our greatest hopes and not our darkest fears.

In peace,

The Editors

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

Yours truly is probably one of the last sources a reader would expect to see in a budding "Cal Nonviolence Publication." Group leaders, however, thought that my input would be of some value, so here goes.

I am an ordained minister with the American Baptist Churches, USA. For the past year, it has been my privilege to attend the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley. In that context, I have been able to participate in a rich variety of theological offerings put forth by the Graduate Theological Union. Among my professors are Jesuits, Buddhists, Baptists, Unitarians, Presbyterians, and Lutherans. One of the courses I particularly enjoyed was UC Berkeley's "Theory and Practice of Nonviolence" (PACS 164A), which put me in contact with the editors of this new journal.

To back up a bit, the reader might be asking, "What in the world is a Baptist minister doing at the Jesuit School of Theology?" The answer to that question might surprise you: your tax dollars sent me here. For the past six years, I served as a Chaplain to United States Marines at Camp Pendleton, CA. Although I did not deploy to Iraq, I did participate in many Marine Corps training exercises, and ministered to numerous families who suffered great loss. Following my tour of duty with the Marines, the Navy Chaplain Corps (Chaplains who serve with Marines are actually members of the US Navy), sent me to JSTB to pursue a master's degree in Ethics. This summer, I will be assigned to the U.S.S. *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), the newest and largest of US Navy warships. I will be one of three Chaplains to the 6,000 sailors who serve on board.

As human beings, our greatest struggle is between good and evil. How do we respond to the evil that lurks within the depths of our hearts? In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna, ultimately, was engaged in a struggle with his lower self. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. found that the Sermon on the Mount "inspired the Negroes of Montgomery to dignified social action." For King, "Christ furnished the spirit

and motivation, while Gandhi furnished the method." As we "fight the good fight" for peace, let us not neglect things of the spirit. The Gita, the teachings of Christ, Gandhi, and King are among some of the wonderful resources that can guide us on our journey.

When the United States is at war, every citizen is at war. Some are closer to the action than others. Each of us is also engaged with a war within. May God help us to find peace, both internally and internationally.

Yours in Peace,
Rev. Roger VanDerWerken
LCDR, United States Navy

Dear Roger,

We are delighted to embark on this publishing journey with the blessing of a member of the military. It reminds us that nonviolence is about loving those who have different beliefs from us and who are choosing a much different way of making change in the world.

Although we do not feel we are personally at war with anyone, you remind us that indeed we are not separate from what's going on in Iraq. Not only does it affect us emotionally, economically, and spiritually, but we support it whenever we do not struggle with our own desire to dominate and our own tendency to believe in the usefulness of violence. To be peacemakers during a time of war we must enter fully into these internal struggles, but not forget that war calls not for more war, but for more peace.

We appreciate that, in your desire to see good in the world, you might see the state as an agent for this change. Can we expand our concept of citizenship to one of the entire planet - and everyone who lives on it?

Roger, we are glad to have you to dialogue with. Our hearts will be with you and the soldiers you are serving.

Peace,
Chelsea Collonge
Matthew Taylor

MEDITATION AS EDUCATION

Imagine school cultivating, not filling, your mind—with stress relief benefits along the way

Antonio Castillo

As students, we seldom realize how critical the contents of the mind are in shaping our lives. We often spend a lot of time involved in activities that clutter, rather than bring clarity, to our thinking processes. The university setting is an attempt to cultivate the mind. It is collectively acknowledged that by refining our mind we become better suited to make a meaningful contribution to the world. Is refining our minds simply the acquisition of information?

A different view of education might look at information as an ornament or a tool to enhance our contribution. But just as a tool can be used skillfully to perform a given task, the same tool can also be misused to create more problems. We all know many intelligent people who are loaded with information but seem to be a burden to those around them. Ideally we would use the information we acquire to help those around us flourish.

Professor Alex Filipenko, a renowned astronomer on the UC Berkeley campus, recently said that if you take the universe from its inception up till now, and compare that to a span of twenty-four hours, the human being has only been in existence for a mere two seconds. This provides a window for a very promising and gentle view of human nature. Humanity is yet in its infancy, and it may take us a while before we can learn to use the tools we develop in the most efficient manner possible. Yet it is a testament of the true nature of human beings that even amidst our consumer culture and its endless distractions, sensations, and activities, we still have an overwhelming need to feel something genuine.

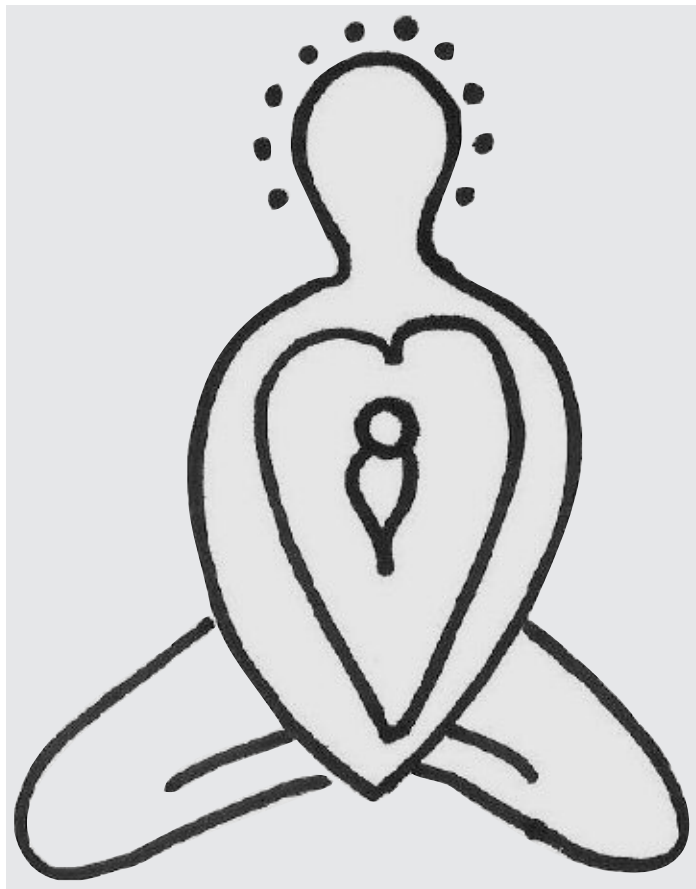
Although we are constantly encouraged to compete with one another and look out for our own well-being, we all recognize and admire those who have risen above the pursuit of recognition and have given themselves wholeheartedly to their fellow human beings. In our era, few represent this better than Mother Theresa and Mahatma Gandhi.

How did great figures like Mother Theresa and Mahatma Gandhi transform themselves from ordinary people into radiant beacons of light that show us the latent potential in every human being? My best guess is that the dynamic of the mind plays a big role in this transformation. Just as a

brilliant scientist transforms himself from a student to a Nobel laureate by toiling with the mind, so too can people transform themselves from an average student of law to a spiritually illuminated giant (as Gandhi did) by grappling with the thinking process itself. The effort required for personal transformation is the same; the process may be a bit different.

In cultivating the intellect, we work on putting information into our mind and manipulating that information mentally to serve a purpose. In meditation or inward prayer, we work on emptying the mind of all earthly distractions and turning our attention inward to find the source of radiance that lies within us. In every religion and every spiritual tradition throughout the world, there have been people who turn their gaze inward to cease

the restless activity of the mind and tap into the source of joy which we all long to discover. This is not an intellectual exercise, and the discoveries made in this domain are not fruits of mental activity. Rather, this is a spiritual exercise, and the discoveries made are fruits of “heart experience”. I put it in this way because this is essentially what happens



deep in meditation—we are gradually transformed through an experience that expands the reservoir of our capacity to love.

This is essentially what meditation is: learning infinite love. But as Martin Luther King aptly describes, the kind of love we develop by going inward is not what the Greeks called eros, or romantic love. It is not the touchy-feely love that most of us are familiar with; there is nothing sentimental about it. Neither is it the kind of reciprocal love we are accustomed to, where we love someone because they love us (Dr. King calls this *philia*). Learning to love is infinite because it seeks nothing in return and is derived from a recognition that inside each one of us lies a dormant spark that is capable of igniting a fire that will radiate warmth throughout the entire universe. This kind of love transforms the individual into love itself and consumes every selfish desire with a yearning to serve humanity.

How did great figures like Mother Theresa and Mahatma Gandhi transform themselves from ordinary people into radiant beacons of light that show us the latent potential in every human being?

Hundreds of studies conducted at more than 200 universities and research institutions in more than 30 countries demonstrate the profound benefits of meditation in the mind and the body. During meditation, the body gains a unique state of deep relaxation that dissolves accumulated stress and fatigue. Simultaneously, brain functioning becomes more orderly and as a result, the body becomes healthier and more integrated. Since the thought process is slowed down and concentrated during meditation, a more coherent style of brain functioning develops, resulting in more comprehensive, focused, and creative thinking. Among the practical benefits of meditation are:

- Stress relief
- Deepened relationships
- Improved concentration
- Overcoming bad habits
- Finding meaning in everyday life
- Freedom from past regrets and future worries
- Improved judgment and decision making
- Improved grades and work results
- Increased energy levels throughout the day
- Finding access to deeper resources
- Living up to high ideals

Students at UC Berkeley are known for their relentless striving. I am frequently amazed at the wide range of talent, intelligence, and capacities of the student body. If one person like Gandhi or Dr. King has the potential to create change, imagine what a vast community like ours can accomplish. If we work on facing our own negative states of mind and transforming ourselves inwardly, our collective capacities are unfathomable.

A Passage for Meditation

(In passage meditation, the meditator focuses on the words of a memorized passage as a means of cultivating one-pointed attention and slowing down the mind. The passage should illuminate a spiritual truth, as the words slip into the unconscious like seeds of wisdom that will manifest in daily life.)

“Prayer for Peace”
by Swami Omkar

Adorable presence,
Thou who art within and without,
above and below and all around,
Thou who art interpenetrating
every cell of my being,
Thou art the eye of my eyes,
the heart of my heart,
the mind of my mind,
the breath of my breath,
the life of my life, the soul of my soul.
Bless us, dear God, to be aware of thy presence
now and here.

May we all be aware of thy presence
in the East and the West,
in the North and the South.
May peace and good will abide among
individuals, communities, and nations.
This is my earnest prayer.

May peace be unto all!

Resources

PACS 94
Theory and Practice of Meditation
1-2 units (listed at <http://schedule.berkeley.edu>)
Meditation, Mysticism and the Mind DeCal
2-4 units (<http://meditate.berkeley.edu>)
Meditation by Eknath Easwaran
<http://www.nilgiri.org>
The San Francisco Zen Center
<http://www.sfzc.org>
Berkeley Buddhist Monastery
<http://berkeley.drba.org>

THE DISEASE CALLED VIOLENCE

Public health depends on consciousness, social justice

Sarah Clark

Our system is one of detachment: to keep silenced people from asking questions, to keep the judged from judging, to keep solitary people from joining together, and the soul from putting together its pieces.

—Eduardo Galeano

To be human is to engage in relationships with others and the world.

—Paulo Freire

The 20th century was one of the most violent periods in human history. According to the World Health Organization's, World Report on Violence and Health (2000), an estimated 191 million lost their lives directly or indirectly as a result of conflict—and well over half of them were civilians. Although violence has been a seemingly inextricable aspect of human existence, it is becoming increasingly clear that it has now become a threat to life on a global scale. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General of the WHO stated in the introduction to the 2000 Report, "We must challenge the notions that acts of violence are simply matters of family privacy, individual choice, or inevitable facets of human life. Violence is a complex problem related to patterns of thought and behavior that are shaped by a multitude of forces within our families and communities, forces that can also transcend national borders" (p. ii). Only a shift in human understanding, a movement to a higher and more integrated level of meaning, can help us be more effective in slowing down the epidemic of the disease we call "violence". A healing and transformative approach to violence therefore, requires thinking broadly and comprehensively, and most importantly, from the point of view of prevention—focusing simultaneously on the individual and the social causes of violence.

Violence is a disease because it is not inherent to the human condition, and both its causes and its effects are highly contagious—they spread from person to person, from family to family, from nation to nation, even across generations. The causes of violence are multiple and interconnected: they are simultaneously social, environmental, psychological, individual, systemic, philosophical, political, and spiritual (Bloom, 2004).

Most human suffering seems to be a consequence of "structural violence", the physical and psychological harm to the individual that results from exploitative and unjust social, political, and economic systems (Levy, 2000).

Indeed, structural violence has been shown to be far more deadly than violence caused by armed conflict. A world-wide study carried out by Kohler and Alcock in 1976 found that 14 to 18 million people die every year from the effects of poverty (a form of structural violence), while about 100,000 die from armed conflict (Bloom, 2004).

Rethinking Violence

The knowledge we are gaining about the effects of violence in all its forms challenges the deeply ingrained system of structural violence that forms the bedrock of our civilization. At the end of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant declared that "The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere" (Bloom, 2004). Unfortunately, our current paradigm is still one of separation, and therefore one of suffering; we simply assume that violence, oppression, and exploitation are unavoidable and normative, and as Sandra Bloom states, "we move into the future inevitably re-enacting a traumatic past" (2004).

The remedy against all forms of violence begins within the individual. It is necessary to cultivate within ourselves and others the ability to change the way we think about ourselves and the world we live in. To stop the infection of violence we must understand another's suffering as our own and commit ourselves wholeheartedly to changing social structures that condone violence.

Abraham Maslow created a hierarchic "Human Needs Theory" in which the most basic are the physical needs for food, water, clothing, and shelter. Once these "lower order"

needs are satisfied, people are able to devote their efforts to satisfying nonmaterial, or "higher order" types of needs such as security, autonomy, respect, bonding, and finally, the ability to make progress toward one's full potential—for fulfilling or actualizing one's true self (Chetkow-Yanoov, 1997). Generally, each of these needs must be satisfied in order to become a fulfilled person. If the most basic human needs are not satisfied, personal and social problems, such as an increased susceptibility towards conflict and violence, tend to develop (Chetkow-Yanoov, 1997).

Critical Consciousness

Mahatma Gandhi possessed a deep understanding of this social dynamic and developed the Constructive Program in order to address the physical needs of the

Violence is a disease because it is not inherent to the human condition, and both its causes and its effects are highly contagious.

Indian people in addition to cultivating their inner life. Arne Naess, in *Gandhi and Group Conflict: an Exploration of Satyagraha*, states, “One may say that Gandhi’s strategy included as a preliminary step the lifting up of people from the status of nonentities to a level where self-realization was conceivable as an aim” (p.109)...where a life without violence was a conceivable aim. The Constructive Program was designed to build India from the bottom up, and address both individual and national problems simultaneously. According to the Mahatma, “Complete Independence through Truth and Nonviolence means the independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, color or creed” (Gandhi, 1941). Gandhi’s great success was to empower in each individual the ability to challenge not only the oppressive British system, but also the individual’s oppressive mental construct. “The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them” (Gandhi, 1938).

The field of public health is beginning to learn from Gandhi’s two-fold approach:

to gain a deeper understanding of individual and societal factors contributing to violence, in addition to addressing larger social constructs and systems (i.e. health service delivery, law enforcement, government) which facilitate violence and oppression. In the U.S. today, “crime remains one of our most critical indicators of the state of our personal and collective being” (Weiss, 1996). A recent youth violence prevention program in Los Angeles has integrated a broader understanding of personal and collective violence with the more traditional systems-oriented public health approach. This program demonstrates a public health approach to violence prevention very similar to Gandhi’s Constructive Program in that it required a comprehensive effort from all segments of the community, and began with a focus on the needs of the individual and their education. Social support and community action were also developed—all three efforts striving toward, and in many ways achieving, structural change and an eventual shift away from the idea that violence (both personal and structural) is legitimate.

The Los Angeles Violence Prevention Coalition was formed by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services in 1991 and consisted of more than 400 members with expertise in various categories of violence and violence prevention (Weiss, 1996). The Coalition was based on a multidisciplinary approach that used the specific talents and skills of its various members’ disciplines—from medicine to business, from the academic community to law enforcement. The Coalition adopted and maintained three goals with specific objectives: (1) To reduce the availability and accessibility of firearms, (2) To change community norms so that violence is not acceptable, (3) To create

and promote alternatives to violence (Weiss, 1996). Goals 1 and 3 address environmental and structural correlates of violence, whereas Goal 2 requires a shift in consciousness. Billie P. Weiss, the Executive Director and cofounder of the Los Angeles Violence Prevention Coalition stated, “We will not solve the problem of violence in our communities by putting 100,000 more police officers on the streets, or by constructing more prison cells, by extending the death penalty to more crimes, or by executing more rapidly those convicted of capital offenses. Solutions to the problem of community violence will be found in the reestablishment of a sense of community ownership of the streets and neighborhoods, such that every resident exercises a positive governing influence, and in rebuilding decayed neighborhoods” (p.206). The Violence Prevention Coalition has continued to gain strength and popularity and has initiated

new programs in recent years such as the Youth Violence Prevention Peace Coalition, a countywide coalition of youth dedicated to working together to find peace solutions to violence in their communities (Weiss, 1996).

Violence is a complex phenomenon, and public health is striving to establish new ways to understand and address that complexity. The public health approach to violence prevention requires a comprehensive effort from all segments of the community, beginning with the individual and involving education, community action, social support, and structural change. However, to achieve lasting peace, there must be an accompanying shift in our collective consciousness. We must reconsider the collective story we tell about violence.

The Most Vital Question

We have the tendency to ignore the obvious, to become fatalistic about what we do not understand, and to accept, because of familiarity, what should not be acceptable. The increasing disparity between rich and poor individuals and nations, the unlimited expansion of arms, the exploitation of earth’s resources, and the frightening volume of interpersonal and collective violence, is not acceptable. A new paradigm is emerging, a different way of viewing human nature, the sources of violence and conflict, and the way to address those issues. The remedy for the disease of violence lies within us. Violence is a failure to understand the interconnected nature of all human experience, and a failure of social responsibility. We have a responsibility to challenge those experiences, beliefs, and values that continue to promote war, violence, and destruction. The question remains: What steps can we take as individuals, as families, within each group, each social service system, each social organization or institution to increase the resistance of the social body to violence in all its forms and to increase the likelihood of peace?

(For full length article and bibliography, see calpeacepower.org.)

To stop the infection of violence we must understand another’s suffering as our own and commit ourselves wholeheartedly to changing social structures that condone violence.

WOMEN'S CENTURY OF PEACE

A Constructive Vision, from Afghanistan to the World

Sayed Habib

The little girl was selling dried fruits out of a cart on the streets of Kabul. My sister approached her and asked how old she was and why it was that she wasn't in school. The girl said she was 13 and that her mother was sick and her father was killed in the war so she had to work like her other two siblings. When my sister bought something from the girl, she opened up about how happy she was to be able to go outside the house and work. She said that she rarely went outside fearing she would be beaten or taken away by the Taliban. My sister was quite surprised at her tenacity and sense of optimism in her disposition despite her misfortunes.

My sister recently went to Afghanistan almost 20 years after immigrating to the U.S. It was one of her dreams to go back to Afghanistan, but traveling there was too risky a couple of years ago for anyone, let alone for a woman. I was expecting some horror stories about how poverty stricken and diseased the people might be because of the constant violence. While there is some poverty and malnutrition, much to my surprise, people are picking up what they are left with and are getting on with life. I think that it is a sign of relief for people of Afghanistan to have relative peace after 25 years of turmoil which started with the Russian invasion in 1979, followed by constant civil war, and then the infamous Taliban which the U.S toppled in 2002. Afghans have a resilient and courageous spirit about them that has sustained their hopefulness. That hopefulness comes from their decision to put violent animosities to rest and embrace the changes—though the changes may seem miniscule by our standards here, it is an incremental and forward-looking one by their war-weary souls. The conclusion my sister made from her observations was that people wanted to simply live their lives free of any violence. After a generation of people has been exposed to such a violent environment, the hope for a peaceful change seemed almost unachievable. But there has been some progress toward peace and nonviolence by women in particular. It has given them a chance to participate in a meaningful capacity. Although, they are far from reaching their goals, the debate alone has shed light to the plight of women in Afghan society. Women are demanding that they be allowed to work in order to liberate themselves from dependence on handouts and other less reputable means. Led by a few brave women active in politics, women are able to voice their opinions about their plight and how to

make it better.

While there is relative peace, there needs to be a solid foundation for peace to be long lasting. For one, women should be given a bigger representation in the government. Women make up a larger segment of the population, but they are still browbeaten by the local warlords while the central government contemplates women's role in policy making and in society. If more women were allowed equal rights in owning property and running their own businesses, there would be less poverty and unemployment. Women in the rural areas and various other areas are still afraid to walk on the streets by themselves fearing the worst. Gandhi grappled with the same issues in 1941 when

**There needs to be a solid foundation
for peace to be long-lasting.**

he wrote the Constructive Programme handbook to inform the people of India on how to build long-lasting and self-sustained social programs and discontinue their reliance on the British for economic and social well being. It is a 30 page handbook that gives us more valuable instructions about nonviolence than many larger books about the subject. Gandhi emphasizes the role of women in rebuilding and reconstructing a country. It is just as relevant to Afghanistan today as it was and still is to India. Gandhi Writes:

Woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no hand. In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his. But as every right in a non-violent society proceeds from the previous performance of a duty, it follows that rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual co-operation and consultation they can never be imposed from outside. Men have not realized this truth in its fullness in their behaviour towards women. They have instead considered themselves to be lords and masters of women instead of considering them as their friends and co-workers. (CP 16)

A large number of men in Afghanistan think that women are helpless creatures that have to be protected from exposure to society because of cultural and religious reasons, but it goes deeper than that. In Afghanistan women are referred to as *siya-sar* which means dark or black mind in a literal sense. Men and some women use this term in a normal everyday conversation. It is supposed to be a polite term to refer to women as helpless beings who have no mind of their own and so they have to be kept in a certain

(continued on page 30)

THE ISRAELI REFUSNIK MOVEMENT

From Conscientious Objection to a Nonviolent Peaceforce

Tal Palter

General, your tank is a powerful vehicle
It tramples the forest, it crushes a hundred men.
But it has one flaw:
It requires a driver.
General, your bomber is strong.
It flies faster than the storm, it loads more than an elephant.
But it has one flaw:
It requires a mechanic.
General, man is very useful.
He knows how to fly, he knows how to murder.
But he has one flaw:
He knows how to think.

—Bertolt Brecht, a German anti-Nazi playwright and poet.

The poem was used in a Yesh Gvul flyer.

In June 1967, the Six-Days War ended in Israel's triumph over its neighboring Arab states. No matter how one perceives this war, whether as a war of self-defense or a war of aggression, annexing the territories and establishing settlements was a clear choice Israel made. The seizure and administration of these Palestinian territories has required a harsh military occupation, which includes different practices that many soldiers find immoral and unjust. The second Al-Aqsa Intifada, and the Israeli response to it under Ariel Sharon's government brought about the cruelest and most oppressive regime Palestinians have ever faced; killings, targeted assassinations, curfews, house demolition, tree uprooting, the segregation wall, and other human rights violations have created a new wave of *refusniks* (conscientious objectors) Israel has never faced before.



Coalition of Conscientious Objectors

Starting in 2001, *Shministim* (high school seniors) Israeli Youth Refusal Movement, *Courage to Refuse*, *Refusers Parents' Forum*, and *Refusers Solidarity Network* launched a remarkable conscientious objectors movement in Israel. The *Shministim* organization was established in 2001 by a group of high school seniors who were supposed to be drafted into the army at the end of that year. These students looked for new ways to express their opposition to the Israeli occupation. They decided to adopt a radical

approach never used before by a group of high school seniors, and wrote an open letter to Sharon expressing their reasons for refusing to serve in the military in August 19, 2001. The letter opens, "We ... are about to be called to serve in the IDF [Israeli Defense Force]. We protest before you against the aggressive and racist policy pursued by the Israeli government's [sic] and its army, and to inform you that we do not intend to take part in the execution of this policy... Therefore we will obey our conscience and refuse to take part in acts of oppression against the Palestinian people." The *Shministim Letter* immediately received full coverage in all of the Israeli media, and in a number of Palestinian, American, and European newspapers and TV shows. One of the harshest responses came from the then Minister of Education, Limor Livnat from the Likud Party, who said that these students were an insignificant minority that did not distinguish "between an aggressor and victim." Left wing politicians rejected the refusal letter as well, under the claim that it threatened to break down the fundamental fabric of Israeli society. Nevertheless, numerous responses of support arrived from Palestinians,



"I, Lieutenant David Zonshein, an officer in an elite paratroopers unit, served the State of Israel in Lebanon and the territories for 10 years. For years, I participated in oppressions which included horrible things with my soldiers, which their goal was to eternalize the occupation and the settlements, under the premise of security at home and in my country. NO MORE! I refuse to serve in the occupied territories – for the benefit of the State of Israel!"
—*Courage to Refuse*

Parliament in Strasbourg, France, on March 10, 2004, where they spoke

about their own experiences and their views on the military's role in the occupation.

Israelis or foreigners who thought that conscientious objection has been a legitimate way to promote peace. Although the letter's first endorser was imprisoned for refusing the draft in January 2002, this did not weaken the movement but made it stronger. The *Shministim* movement created a new wave of refusnik students, and today this group works on mobilizing more conscientious objectors through raising domestic and international awareness to the Israeli occupation.

Combined with *Shministim*, the foundation of *Courage to Refuse* established the Refusnik Movement as a force of significant opposition to government policies in the territories. On January 25, 2002, a group of 52 officers and soldiers published the *Combatants Letter*, which expressed their reasons for refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Captain David Zonshein and Lieutenant Yaniv Itzkovits, the initiators of the letter, were then officers in an elite unit which took part in fighting in Lebanon and in the occupied territories. They also had served for four years in compulsory service and eight years in the reserves. During service in the Palestinian territories, Zonshein and Itzkovits came to believe that Israel was violating the Oslo Accords by expanding settlements and maintaining an immoral and unjust occupation of the Palestinian people. Facing this reality, Zonshein and Itzkovits decided that they could not continue their service in the occupied territories. Therefore, they initiated the refusal letter and established *Courage to Refuse*, which as of March 2005 included 635 refusniks. In *Breaking Ranks*, Ronit Chacham writes, "Courage to Refuse movement...[hoped] that their letter would act as a wake-up call...[T]hey now felt a strong need to persuade their fellow Israelis that the ongoing occupation did not serve a defensive purpose and was depriving Palestinians of their rights. They challenged the belief, widely held in Israel, that their country had to protect itself in this way against Palestinian determination." Additionally, *Courage to Refuse* promotes new refusals, supports jailed members and their families, and holds demonstrations against the

Israeli government. Furthermore, refusniks speak in high schools, universities and other forums to promote an end to the occupation, in addition to meeting parliament members and U.S. congressmen. In an important milestone for the movement, refusniks and parents of jailed refusniks appeared at the European

about their own experiences and their views on the military's role in the occupation.

Courage to Refuse has been more successful than *Shministim* primarily because for many Israelis it was easier to accept and support former soldiers, who had already served in the army, as conscientious objectors than high school seniors who had not completed their duty to the state. Although ex-soldiers refusniks have already committed the atrocities that they have been trying to stop, whereas the students have been trying to avoid committing them at all, the part of the Israeli public which supports refusal views the ex-soldiers in a more positive light. Another factor that contributes to the success of *Courage*

to Refuse is that its members cannot be dismissed as being radical leftists because many of them are not a part of the radical left. For these reasons, *Courage to Refuse* has been able to change how the Israeli public perceives the military occupation and open up a debate about its necessity, legality, and morality.

The *Pilots Letter* helped promote conscientious objection as a legitimate tool for opposing the military occupation, and altered Israelis' perception on its moral applications.

The Second Phase

The second phase of the *Refusnik* Movement was launched by the *Pilots Letter* on September 27, 2003. In this letter, Israeli air force pilots wrote, "We...are opposed to carrying out attack orders that are illegal and immoral of the type the state of Israel has been conducting in the territories...We... refuse to take part in Air Force attacks on civilian population centers...These actions are illegal and immoral, and are a direct result of the ongoing occupation which is corrupting all of Israeli society." Yonatan Shapira, one of the letter's initiators, explained that the Shehade incidence, wherein an air-strike targeted assassination killed the target in addition to 14 civilians, nine of them children, raised many concerns for himself and his group. Additionally, the Commander of the Air Force, Dan Halotz, was quoted as saying that it does not bother him that civilians were killed in the attack and that it should not bother his men. This statement led Shapira and his co-signers to refuse carrying out immoral orders such as this one, because they felt the army lost its moral grounds when soldiers and officers stopped caring for civilians' lives. The *Pilots Letter* shocked Israeli society because it came from the most respected and adored group in the army in particular and in Israeli society in general. The pilots were highly criticized by many Israelis and were released from service the following month. Nevertheless, the *Pilots Letter* helped promote conscientious objection as a legitimate tool for opposing the military occupation, and altered Israelis perception on its moral applications. In response



to the *Pilots Letter*, Gila Svirsky expressed her hope for peace: “This letter is a blessing. May it catalyze a speedy end to the occupation, and presage the dawn of reason and, ultimately, peace—in the Middle East and everywhere.”

The last noteworthy milestone in the *Refusnik Movement* came from *Sayeret Matkal*, the Israeli Defense Force General Staff’s Elite Special Operations Force, which is well known for its famous members Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu. On December 21, 2003, 13 *Sayeret Matkal* soldiers and officers signed a refusal letter stating, “We...have also chosen to join the front in the way we have been trained...We say to you today, we will no longer lend our hands to the subjugation taking place in the territories.” In this letter the undersigned expressed their solidarity with the *Refusnik Movement* and why they felt obligated to join it. Since the submission of the Combatants, Pilots and *Sayeret Matkal*’s refusal letters, new refusniks, from almost every army unit, have either written their own refusal declarations or joined these existing groups. These hundreds of new refusniks strengthen the movement tremendously. Arik Diamant describes the influence of the Refusnik Movement and how the movement’s message has resonated and influenced the political arena: “For the love of their country and respect for the most fundamental Jewish values, hundreds of soldiers refused to cross the 1967 borders and were consequently sent to prison. But their message went through, and today, three years later, Sharon recognizes the refusal movement as one of the reasons for leaving Gaza.” Additionally, Michal Levertov writes,

At the end of 2003, many political analysts were crediting the refusniks’ campaign with the revival of the Israel left...The Refusniks ‘moved from Israeli society’s margin to its center’ the daily Maariv wrote. In 2002, David Zonshine, a captain in the paratroops, was nominated as ‘person of the year’ by the daily Yediot Ahronot. He didn’t win the title then, but in moving from the fringes to the forefront of Israeli political and public discussion, Courage to Refuse won big in 2003 as a generator of a new, saner, spirit.

Furthermore, Zonshine and the organization he established, *Courage to Refuse*, formed one of the category nominees for the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Although Zonshine did not win the Nobel Peace Prize, these recent developments point out the tremendous success that the *Refusnik Movement* has had in shifting public opinion



According to Yonatan Shapira, an initiator of the Pilots Letter, “We... refuse to take part in Air Force attacks on civilian population centers.”

against the military occupation and its methods.

Into a Peace Army

While the *Refusnik Movement* is a remarkable landmark in the Israeli peace movement, it does not provide an alternative to the Israeli Defense Force as an institution that addresses conflicts. Hence, the next section will present an alternative to the Israeli army in the form of a peace force. Additionally, I will detail the new organization’s core principles and stages of development. Itamar Shahar wrote in his refusal declaration the following statement: “Initially, I thought it might be possible to try and improve these circumstances to a degree, but ultimately I understood that the only way for an ordinary soldier to defend the wellbeing of all concerned, Palestinians and Israelis, is by refusing to take a hand in the occupation apparatus.” As Shahar claims, changing the army’s social practices is impossible because violence is rooted in the army’s structure and system of meaning. Hence, there is an urgent need to establish an alternative organization to replace the military system all together.

This substitute organization would be a nonviolent peace force which would serve as a Civilian-Based Defense institution for the benefit of all the people in the region. The aims of the peace force would be threefold, similar to the aims of the Gandhian Shanti Sena (Peace Army). (A peace army was established by Badshah Khan and the Pathans in the North-West Frontier Province and it opposed the British colonial occupation of India. This army included 80,000 soldiers and was called the Khudai Khidmatgars, described on page 18 of this issue and in the book *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam* by Eknath Easwaran.)

CONTINUED ON P. 30

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM:

The fashioning of a “new consciousness” in Southern African-Americans through the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Brittney Shepherd

“**P**sychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery.” —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The fashioning of a new consciousness and a newfound self-respect within Southern blacks’ mentality was a key element in the adoption—or rather in the understanding—of nonviolent principles present within the Civil Rights Movement. The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955, based on the tenets of constructive program, was one of many factors that brought forth this new consciousness in the minds of Southern African Americans. Furthermore, the ultimate success of the Bus Boycott helped encourage future participation and dedication to nonviolence during the Civil Rights Movement.

Before delving into the logistics of the boycott and its contributions to the rest of the movement, let us first understand the importance of constructive program and the foundation that it provides. The basis of constructive program within a social movement, or within any community, offers a possible solution to the ensuing problems present within the community. Gandhi offers this definition: “Civil disobedience, mass or individual, is an aid to constructive effort and is a full substitute for armed revolt” (Gandhi, 1941; 3). As alluded to in the name “*constructive program*,” it *constructs* something positive despite the subsequent negative problem. It is the basis for nonviolence in that it is the conversion of a negative state into a positive state.

Four important aspects of constructive program can offer some insight into the importance, or downright necessity, of this indispensable foundation to the Civil Rights Movement. First, within constructive program, everyone can participate—everyone from the oldest man, to the youngest child, and at times, as in the case of the Civil Rights Movement, the oppressor. This notion of working together creates a community which functions as a whole for a common purpose. “Working together creates a sense of shared destiny and unity, as almost nothing else does” (Nagler, 2001; 187). Secondly, constructive program offers a solution that can be worked on everyday—further incorporating the dedication to nonviolence and the move-

ment into the realms of daily life. Here, the nonviolent actor is permitted to be active within the movement *of his own free will*, without “hav[ing] to wait for the right time, weather, circumstance or depend on a big turnout on some special occasion” (Nagler, 2001; 188).

Furthermore, this model works towards a goal that is proactive (Nagler, 2001; 189). It is within this element of constructive program that the basic element of nonviolence is best displayed—truth; truth is where one finds strength to continue in one’s cause. And lastly, constructive program defeats the dependency model of the oppressor over the oppressed. It turns dependency around and therefore discredits the power relations that reign. It offers a restructuring of power and allows the exploited to see their own power within the situation—but not their power over the exploiter, rather their power to re-vindicate the

power dynamics, discontinuing an unhealthy dependency on the exploiter. More simply stated: they experience the power within themselves.

Arne Naess states that participation in constructive program “foster[s] that *minimum*

of self-respect which was indispensable for meaningful participation in nonviolent campaigns” (Naess, 1974; 109). The main idea is that through a restructuring of ideals and power, the nonviolent actor is able to not only fashion a new position in the movement, but also a new mentality rooted in truth and love. This mentality incorporates all those involved within the struggle, including the oppressors.

The mental formation of the modern civil rights movement is an illustration of re-articulation processes or re-valuation processes. As we stated earlier, in order to win mass support for the tactics of direct action and nonviolence, it was necessary to replace the established cultural norms through which blacks, mainly Southern blacks, had previously sought to ameliorate the impact of racial oppression such as feigning ignorance or diverted humility. Blacks now tired of this old regime and these laborious tactics now aimed to oppose the system of segregation with righteous and disciplined action; nonviolent resistance grounded in constructive program offered the solution.

First, Southern blacks needed a jumpstart. The decision made by Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955 to peacefully

Constructive program offers a restructuring of power and allows the exploited to see their own power within the situation.

reject the powers of segregation was the first cornerstone of the ensuing boycott and resulting mentality of unity within the Southern black community.

“Rosa Parks acted spontaneously when she refused to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery in December 1955; yet it is also true that she had shortly before returned from a leadership seminar at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, the South’s principal training center for union organizers” (Lynd, 1995; xxviii).

Here, as Rosa Parks invokes the power of nonviolent

tactics, we see that the prevailing movement was secured within the principles of nonviolence in the minds of the organizers. It is good to note the spontaneity of the movement as well as the structured elements that preceded it in the minds of the organizers in order to understand the developing consciousness and unrest with the problem at hand.

Now that the movement had sparked a beginning, let us explore the elements of constructive program that are present within the boycott based on the previous framework. As to the element of participation, from the beginning of the movement there is an amazing collaboration of both leaders and citizens. Students of Alabama State College willingly hitched rides while the “sidewalks were crowded with laborers and domestic workers, many of them well past middle age, trudging patiently to their jobs and home again, sometimes as much as twelve miles” (King, 1958; 430). Nearly all ministers offered to drive a shift of the carpool. It is important to notice the multitude of participants in the boycott here. The avenue of protest was not limited to the young, able-bodied, idealistic youth of the state college, but included the elderly, children, men and women. The ability to participate and integrate themselves within the protest, literally in the path of the protest, allowed African Americans of Montgomery to understand



Rosa Parks art by “Undiminished” Hao Li

that the success of the boycott lay within their own powers. Despite years of impenetrability into active resistance against segregation, Southern blacks had found a measure where everyone could participate. There was a fusion of the entire black Montgomery community all the way from prominent ministers, the NAACP, black taxi drivers, to grandmothers. Understanding that the success of the boycott lay within their own hands, or rather feet, Southern blacks formulated a newfound sense of fulfillment, of purpose. This unity within mind and action was a basis for success within constructive program. This consciousness would only further propel adherence to nonviolence within the minds of Southern blacks.

As to the second element, transportation, whether it be to a job, or to the downtown market, affected everyday life of nearly every black Southerner. Furthermore, because the actual course of the bus boycott was one that affected the every day lives of Southern blacks, commitment to the movement was further solidified. Dedication can be seen as these nonviolent resisters continued to walk for almost a year on a daily basis in diligent protest. The commitment to working everyday on a common goal, within a common community, with a determination to unify oneself with all urged Southerners forward in their quest, day in and day out until:

“(1) courteous treatment by the bus operators was guar-

anteed; (2) passengers were seated on a first-come, first-serve basis—Negroes seated from the back of the bus toward the front while whites seated from the front towards the back; (3) Negro bus operators were employed on predominantly Negro routes” (King, 1958; 436).

The idea here is that progress is achieved with every step that is taken—bringing the Southern black closer and closer to their victories, internally and externally. The act of walking had become symbolic; symbolic of the history of struggle, symbolic of the present movement, and symbolic of the future that the world held for the black Southerner.

The proactive aspect of the Montgomery Bus Boycott lies mainly within the symbolic nature of the protest beyond merely the physical nature. As black Southerners “substitute[d] tired feet for tired souls” (King, 1958, 437), truth seeped from the soles. Blacks of the South, or of the entire nation for that matter, could no longer endure the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, or emotional demands of segregation. If they opted to walk until all these problems were solved, then so be it. But it seemed for right now, within the consciousness of the black South, the ending of segregated buses would be sufficient. Its higher symbolic connotation would carry farther as well. This basis of constructive program offered a clear understanding of both principle and action within the minds of the nonviolent protestors.

The most influential element of constructive program on the emerging consciousness of the Southern black was the restructuring of power relationships—most notably the dependency relationship. As the statement by King reads at the very beginning of this paper, the psychological freedom gained through a sense of self-worth derived from love of all—the oppressed and the oppressor—is the strongest tool you can have in your fight, or rather your journey, with nonviolence. Southern African Americans had “no alternative but to protest... we come here tonight to be saved from that patience that makes us patient with anything less than freedom and justice” (King, 1958; 435). King states that the prevailing relationship between blacks and whites in the South has been one of dependency where blacks have accepted their ‘inferiority’ to whites and often have resigned to tactics, which accept the violence that is used against them. Now, within the realm of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, this relationship of dependency has been completely eliminated as Southern blacks reject an imposed system where they are continuously subjected

to hatred and violence, and instead adopt their own system—which thrives. The previous relationship therefore that existed between white and black Southerners is restructured, allowing for a redefinition of self for the black Southerner. If he was no longer defined as ‘inferior,’ what exactly was he then? He was “...somebody...a person...a man with dignity and honor” (King quoted in Naess, 1974; 114). This mentality would provide the needed strength to continue with the quest

Southern African-Americans “substituted tired feet for tired souls” according to Dr. King.

for equality.

In the end, the most important factor that sprung from the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott was the realignment of the self within the minds of Southern blacks. Through the different elements of nonviolence, provided by the framework of constructive program, Southern blacks were able to “grapple with a new approach to the crisis in race relations” (King, 1958; 450). This new approach offered a means to gain unity, to gain strength, to gain momentum in the struggle for equality. As Southern blacks experienced a realignment of the legislation

The relationship of dependency has been completely eliminated as Southern blacks reject an imposed system of hatred and violence.

surrounding their bus system, they also experienced a realignment of their own minds to that of a more powerful, a more purposeful mind. In the larger social scene, the Montgomery Bus Boycott offered a glimpse of hope of what could be achieved through not only the tactic of constructive program, but also through the creation of a new attitude, a re-evaluation of sorts. Martin Luther King had this to say about Montgomery: “One can never understand the bus protest in Montgomery without understanding that there is a new Negro in the South, with a new sense of dignity and destiny” (King, 1958; 468). It is this ‘new Negro’ geared with an understanding of nonviolence that later enters into the Civil Right Movement with her head high and heart pure.

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THE PINCH HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD

Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha 75 Years On

Matthew Taylor

The climactic phase of India's independence struggle began on March 12th, 1930 when Mahatma Gandhi marched out of his beloved spiritual community, the Sabramati Ashram, vowing never to return until India was free from the British colonial system. He was accompanied by 78 hand-picked colleagues who had developed a deep devotion to the pursuit of Truth and nonviolence, and lived on a daily basis the principles of egalitarianism, co-operation, equitable distribution of resources, respect for all faiths, and simplicity.

Their mission: to obtain salt from the beach at Dandi, 241 miles away.

An Experiment in Truth

Britain was the mightiest empire the world had ever known, and India its "crown jewel." Gandhi was leading a vast "experiment in Truth": he was using the power of his heart to usher the oppressive British regime out of India as friends, not enemies. Gandhi and his fellow seekers implemented two primary methods to accomplish this seemingly impossible task.

The first, constructive programme, consisted of indigenous, local, self-reliant projects such as cotton spinning, education, Hindu-Muslim reconciliation and unity, and adoption of a national language. Gandhi believed that by relying on themselves, Indians would rebuild their civilization, and by doing so, liberate themselves from their dependence on British services, commodities, and structures.

Gandhi's second method, obstructive programme, complimented the first and was designed to firmly, clearly, and respectfully communicate to the British that their rule was unwelcome. Non-coopera-

tion included general strikes and boycott of foreign cloth. Civil disobedience was enacted by intentionally and openly defying morally repugnant laws.

Holding Fast to Truth

By the time he had reached the beach at Dandi over one month later, thousands had joined the march. Gandhi meant to challenge the unjust British monopoly on salt production, which made it illegal for any Indian to prepare

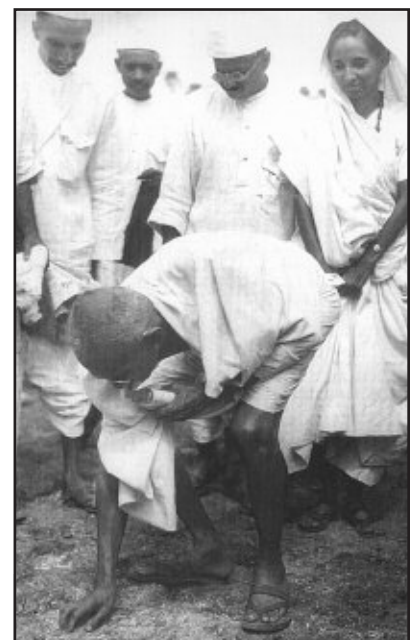


1930 photos courtesy of Mahatma Gandhi Foundation



their own salt. In a tropical climate, salt is a necessity of life. Gandhi believed that his movement implemented a firm stance to right a wrong using right means. He coined the word "Satyagraha" (literally, "holding fast to Truth") to reflect this philosophy of righteous nonviolent struggle.

When Gandhi bent down to pick up a pinch of salt, the Salt Satyagraha was launched, and civil disobedience began as Indians nation-



Gandhi breaks the salt laws at Dandi beach, April 6, 1930.

THE PINCH HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD (CONTINUED)



Over 2,500 Satyagrahis prepare to “raid” the Dharasana salt works. May 21, 1930



After the salt march, Gandhi wrote a letter to the Viceroy expressing his firm determination to raid the Dharasana salt works. He was arrested and bundled off in the middle of the night - and the raid went on without him!

wide produced and sold salt. The Salt Satyagraha movement was both obstructive, in that it opposed a structure of violence imposed by the British, and constructive, in that it encouraged Indians to self-reliantly produce their own salt.

As part of the obstructive programme, Gandhi believed that there comes a time in a nonviolent movement when one must be willing to accept self-suffering to reach the hearts of the oppressors when their minds are closed to reason. Gandhi was meticulous in his attempts to respectfully dialogue with the British regime about his concerns, and only began a Satyagraha movement when he was convinced there was no other way to reach the British on a deeper level.

Thousands were arrested, including Gandhi himself, and the jails packed. On May 21, 1930, over 2,500 Indians

“raided” the Dharasana salt works, a salt production facility controlled by the British regime. Column after column of Indians advanced toward the gates and were severely beaten by the native police under British direction. Not one of the Satyagrahis raised a hand to defend himself as the clubs rained down, fracturing skulls. Many lost consciousness, and several perished. In the Gandhi movie, the scene was famously encapsulated by a Western reporter: “Whatever moral ascendancy the West once held was lost here today.” The Indians accepted this suffering on behalf of the Truth they clung to of ending colonial rule.

While the Salt Satyagraha did not “succeed” in its short-term, situational objective – the salt laws were not repealed – it worked on a deeper level. British public opinion was deeply affected by the Dharasana nonviolent moment, which shockingly revealed the violence inherent in the British colonial system. Ultimately, this led to India’s independence in 1947.



Tushar Gandhi (middle) organized a re-creation of the salt march on the 75th anniversary. On his left is a man with a striking resemblance to the Mahatma!



Marchers from all over the world united for a positive vision.

Salt March 2005

On March 12th, 2005, Tushar Gandhi set off to retrace his great grandfather's footsteps, accompanied by 78 companions. I was only able to participate for the final six days. By the time I joined, the crowd had swelled to many hundreds. A fascinating hodgepodge of seekers had converged on this small stretch of Gujarat, India. We marched for unique personal reasons, yet many of us were united by a common vision: to more deeply understand and connect to Gandhi's legacy.



Pakistanis from the Northwest Frontier Province, dressed in the red garb of Badshah Khan's Khudai Khidmatgars (see story page 18).



A statue of Gandhi collecting salt.

In addition to the hundreds of Indians, there was a contingent of Pakistanis, many from Badshah Khan's Northwest Frontier Province. A colleague of Gandhi's, Khan organized the world's first nonviolent army, comprised of 80,000 Muslims who successfully opposed the British (see page 18). Also, there were internationals from 11 countries, including Ireland, China, and New Zealand.

While some of us walked for spiritual reasons, others seemed drawn to the political aspect. The Congress Party co-sponsored the event and organized a massive rally of (reportedly) 300,000 people to see Prime Minister Singh and Sonia Gandhi (unrelated to the Mahatma). Their orange and green flags often blanketed the horizon.

In the end, more than a few of us experienced the 75th anniversary march as a renewal of faith. Contemplating the countless movements that have incorporated the teachings and example of Gandhi, such as the US civil rights movement and the Philippines People Power movement that led to the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, I believe we have just begun to realize the power of active love to transform conflict and catalyze positive social change. On the salt march, we took small steps toward a beach, and on behalf of a new direction for humanity.

Resources:

The 75th anniversary salt march: www.saltmarch.org.in

The Mahatma Gandhi Foundation: www.mahatma.org.in

The story of Gandhi's personal transformation: [Gandhi the Man](#) by Eknath Easwaran

A MUSLIM GANDHI?

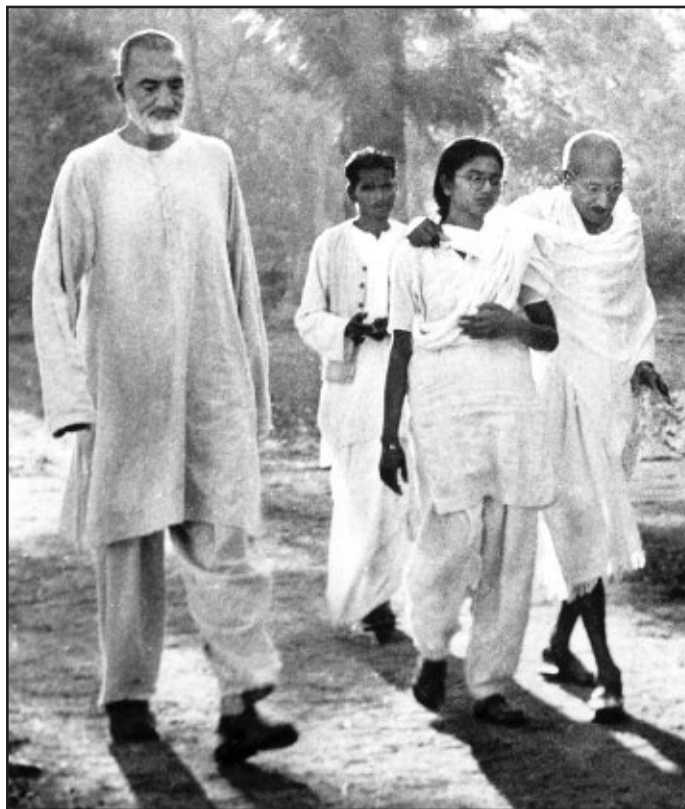
Badshah Khan and the World's First Nonviolent Army

Tim Flinders, Guest Contributor

This year marks the 75th anniversary of an unprecedented yet almost entirely unknown event in the history of nonviolent resistance. In the main square of the city of Peshawar, in modern day Pakistan, several hundred nonviolent Pashtun resisters were shot and killed by British-led troops as they peacefully protested the arrest of their leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Badshah Khan to his followers, and later known in India as “the Frontier Gandhi.”

That they were gathered peacefully in the first place, unarmed, is astonishing in itself since these were Muslim Pashtun from the Northwest Frontier Province of India, members of one of the most violent tribal societies in the world. Khan had persuaded them to lay down their guns and knives and become members of his nonviolent army, the Khudai Khidmatgars, “Servants of God,” and join Gandhi’s civil disobedience movement against British rule.

Badshah Khan was born in 1890, a member of a wealthy and aristocratic Muslim family. Educated and inspired by British missionaries, he began opening schools among the



Khan with Gandhi on an evening walk. (J. V. Metha)

impoverished and mostly illiterate Pashtun villagers of the Frontier Province while still in his early twenties. In 1919, he led demonstrations against British rule and was imprisoned for three years in unusually harsh conditions that almost broke his health. Undeterred,

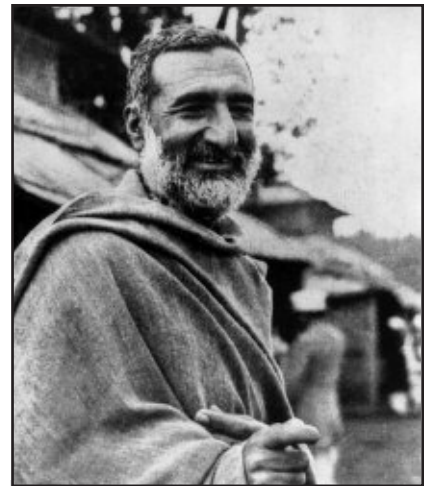
he continued devoting himself to education and reform work among the Pashtun, and claimed to have visited all 1000 villages over a period of about ten years.

Khan was a devout Muslim who claimed to draw his nonviolence directly from Islam. “There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pashtun like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence,” he wrote. “It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca, but we had so far forgotten it that when Gandhi placed it before us, we thought he was sponsoring a novel creed.”

In the late Twenties, after a long period of fasting and meditation, Khan came up with the idea of a “nonviolent army” of Pashtun tribesmen who would renounce violence and the code of revenge deeply embedded in Pashtun society. They wore red military uniforms (and were called “Red Shirts”), took an oath forswearing violence, retaliation and revenge, formed regiments, trained and drilled, and devoted themselves to village uplift, education and reform. When Gandhi declared Indian Independence in 1930, he ignited a massive civil disobedience movement across India in which thousands were jailed, beaten and some killed.

On the remote Northwest Frontier, the repression was far worse. The British regarded the Pashtun tribes as savages. They sealed the borders to the province and unleashed a campaign of violent repression unmatched during the civil disobedience movement. “Red Shirts” were publicly stripped and beaten (shades of Abu Ghraib), their property confiscated, their crops burnt. Through it all, they remained nonviolent. Some Khudai Khidmatgars chose suicide rather than allow themselves to be publicly humiliated. But repression only gathered more recruits to the cause. At its height, Khan’s Khudai Khidmatgars numbered more than 80,000.

On April 23rd, 1930, the British arrested Khan and a mass demonstration filled the main square of Peshawar to protest his arrest. In a moment of panic, British-led troops began firing into the crowd. In his study of nonviolence



Badshah Khan (D. G. Tendulkar)



The Khudai Khidmatgars (“servants of God”): the world’s first nonviolent army.

photos courtesy Nilgiri Press

Gene Sharp, formerly of Harvard University’s Center for International Affairs, describes the scene: “When those in front fell down wounded by the shots, those behind came forward with their breasts bared and exposed themselves to the fire one after another, and when they fell wounded they were dragged back and others came forward to be shot at. This state of things continued from 11 till 5 o’clock in the evening.” An estimated two to three hundred Pashtun were killed. One regiment of soldiers refused to fire on the unarmed Pashtun and were court-martial and sentenced to long prison terms.

But Khan’s nonviolent Pashtun army remained nonviolent. Even Gandhi found it remarkable: “That such men who would have killed a human being with no more thought than they would kill a chicken or hen should at the bidding of one man (Khan) have laid down their arms and accepted nonviolence as the superior weapon sounds almost like a fairy tale.”

When a truce was signed two years later, Indians were given the right to elect their own provincial governments for the first time. Khan’s brother, Dr. Khan Saheb became the first prime minister of the Northwest Frontier Province. Badshah Khan himself remained apolitical, choosing to focus on village reform. He became a close confidante of Gandhi’s and can be seen in many photos, the 6 foot 4 Khan towering over the diminutive Mahatma.

In his biography of Badshah Khan, *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam* (Nilgiri Press, 1995), Eknath Easwaran writes: “Badshah Khan based his life and work on the profound principle of nonviolence, raising an army of courageous men and women who translated it into action. Were his example better known, the world might come to recognize that the highest religious values of Islam are deeply compatible with a nonviolence that has the power to resolve conflicts even against heavy odds.”

India received its independence in 1947, and Khan’s province became part of Pakistan. His close ties to Gandhi and the Indian Congress Party aroused suspicions and his movement was suppressed. Khan himself served another fifteen years in prison for protesting various military dictatorships. In 1962 he became Amnesty International’s first “Prisoner of the Year” and was the first non-Indian to receive the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honor. In 1985 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and died at home near Peshawar in 1988, at the age of 98, having served thirty years in prison.

Tim Flinders’ writings on nonviolence can be found in [Gandhi the Man](#) and [Nonviolent Soldier of Islam](#). (Visit www.nilgiri.org for info on these books.) He has recently completed a screenplay on the life of Badshah Khan.

PARTING TODAY'S RED SEA:

Integrative Power, Transformation, and Compassion in the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

Matthew Taylor

Power – and its potential for transformation and compassion – resides at the heart of the story of Exodus. In a dramatic moment, Moses leads the oppressed Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt, only to be halted by the seemingly impenetrable Red Sea. Then, the power: the Red Sea parts, and the Jews walk toward their freedom and self-determination. As autonomous people, the Jews are transformed by this power, and also they are implored to embrace compassion, when God reminds the angels that the Egyptians “are God’s children” too.

Today, Jews must part a modern Red Sea – the psychosocial fear, anger, and mistrust that divides Palestinians and Israelis – to claim a different kind of freedom, one of communal reconciliation and cooperation for life sustenance.

If we are to take the parting of the sea as a metaphor in the context of an oppressed people’s struggle for freedom, then maybe our inquiry into its applicability to today’s challenge could engage the questions of power, transformation, and compassion. What is the power symbolized by the parting of the red sea? What does this power make possible?

The Three Faces of Power

Imagine it: The sea stretches in infinity before you. One wave so strong it could pick you up and carry you like a twig to shore. An undertow so powerful it could drag you to the depths, helpless and drowning. Your mortal strength seems powerless against the currents and tides. What force could possibly “part the sea?” What force could bring about freedom for an oppressed people? What force could facilitate reconciliation in a seemingly “intractable” conflict? What *is* that power?

Peace researcher Kenneth Boulding talks about the “three faces of power” – threat power, exchange power, and integrative power. He defines each as follows:

Threat power: “You do something I want you to do, or I’ll do something to you that you don’t want me to do.”

Exchange power: “I do something you want me to do, and in return you do something I want you to do.”

Integrative power: “I do something authentic (from my heart), and in the process, I have faith that we will end up closer in our relations.”

Many of us are familiar with threat power – it’s dramatized in violent Hollywood movies, enacted by armies and police forces, and studied at the military science and political science departments of Universities. We are also familiar with exchange power – it resides in our wallets, drives the world’s economy, and is studied at economics and business schools. Integrative power, to say the least, is less well understood.

Could threat power or exchange power “part the sea”? What power could bring about the kind of reconciliation that would enable long-term healing and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians? If integrative power is the one at work here – and the one we need to harness right now – let’s examine how this kind of power has operated in other modern freedom struggles.

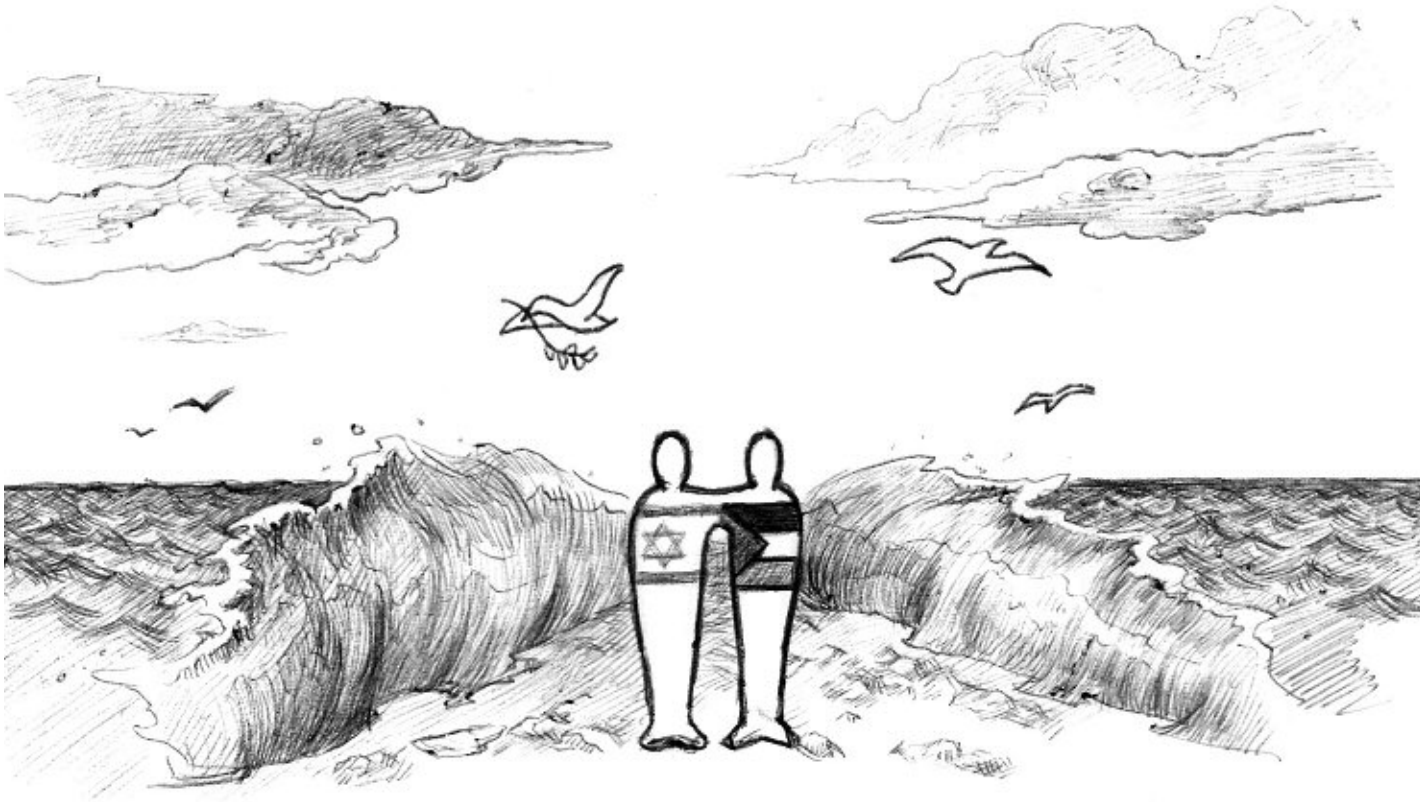
Gandhi and Integrative Power

In May of 1893, a young Indian attorney named Mohandas K. Gandhi was ejected from a train in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa for one reason: he was not white. Though holding a first-class ticket, the train operators decided he was not fit to occupy a first-class cabin seat, based solely on his skin color. Gandhi made a decision that changed his life, and history. He decided to transmute his anger, remove all hint of vengeance or reprisal,

Integrative Power: “I do something authentic (from my heart), and in the process, I have faith that we will end up closer in our relations.”

and positively approach this insult as one against all humanity. He concluded that *all* parties involved were demeaned by this unjust situation. He set out to free oppressed and oppressor alike from the structure of violence.

Gandhi converted a negative drive of anger and resentment into a positive drive of universal love and determination for social justice. In the process, he unleashed an indescribable power inside *himself*. This personal *conversion of a negative drive into a positive drive* is precisely what the sea’s parting symbolizes – the power unleashed by an individual’s spiritual love, a source of limitless strength. This is the “greatest power [humans] have been endowed with.” If the sea is a barrier, the parting of the sea can be seen as our personal ability to surmount the most difficult obstacle when we unleash an internal positive drive. Gandhi said of this conversion, “I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted



art by Peter Zhang

into a power which can move the world.”

Gandhi made it his mission in life to right the wrong utilizing integrative power. Thus began a 40-year freedom struggle for Indian civil rights in South Africa and home rule in India. Gandhi’s movement involved dialogue, self-sacrifice, constructive work to rebuild India’s indigenous economy and cultural civilization, and willingness to nonviolently oppose injustice – always with an eye to an integrative process and outcome. Gandhi’s steadfast commitment to right means and right ends, and the ultimate goal of friendship with the oppressors, is reflected by British historian Arnold Toynbee’s comment, “Gandhi made it impossible for us to go on ruling India, but he made it possible to leave with dignity.” Indeed, Gandhi and his followers had done something authentic, and moved closer in relations with the British.

In addition, the parting of the Red Sea demonstrates what *becomes possible* when a negative drive is converted to a positive drive. To India’s numerous “realist skeptics,” Gandhi’s plans to use integrative power to usher out the British as friends seemed about as plausible as parting the Red Sea! To one skeptic who said, “You know nothing of history; this can not be done,” Gandhi’s response was, “You know nothing of history. Just because it has never happened does not mean it is not possible.” Of course, now history demon-

strates that integrative power can bring about mass social change and freedom for both oppressed and oppressor. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a second example: his conversion of anger against white supremacy and segregation to a positive dream for white, black, Jewish, Christian, and Native American fellowship inspired a nation.

What do Gandhi’s and King’s struggles have to do with Judaism, and today’s “Red Sea”? The answer is that these ocular demonstrations of *actual integrative power* can both inform our understanding of the biblical metaphor *and* the moral lessons we derive for approaching today’s conflicts.

“I am a believer in the truth of all the great religions of the world. There will be no lasting peace on Earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate but even to respect the other faiths as our own.” –Gandhi

“They Are My Children Too”

After the sea is parted and the Jews successfully cross over the dry seabed to freedom, the pursuing Egyptian army is swallowed whole and drowned. This event seems to offer no positive metaphorical implications for Gandhi’s or King’s movements, both of which intentionally sought to love, free, and befriend oppressors, never to harm. (When India suffered an atrocity of outright mass murder by British soldiers at Jallianwala Bagh, Gandhi’s approach was conciliatory, even to the perpetrator of the killing: “What General Dyer did we may all do if we had his irresponsibility and opportunity. To err is human and it must

be held to be equally human to forgive if we though being fallible would like rather to be forgiven than punished and reminded of our misdeed.") Gandhi clearly believed in separating the oppressor from their agenda by opposing the unjust actions but not hating the people who carried out the actions. Retributive violence is not a sustainable, integrative approach to our problems.

The next part of the story has significant implications. According to Talmud, as the angels began rejoicing when the Egyptians were drowned, God said, "My children are sinking in the sea, and you sing songs?" Here, God is stating that all humans are of equal worth; none is more precious than the other. Gandhi worked tirelessly for social justice, promoting uplift and equal rights for the oppressed classes of India. Previously known as "untouchables," he called them "Harijans," or "children of God," and promoted alleviation of their oppression which in many ways was comparable to the social stigma African-Americans faced in Dr. King's day. Gandhi also sought fellowship between persons of all faiths, and said, "I am a believer in the truth of all the great religions of the world. There will be no lasting peace on Earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate but even to respect the other faiths as our own.... I am a Hindu. I am a Muslim. I am a Jew. I am a Christian. I am, after all, a human being, and I am connected to all my fellow human beings!"

We Are All Chosen

So the three main lessons we can derive from the parting of the sea are: 1) conversion of a negative drive to a positive drive unleashes an individual's greatest power, 2) when this power is born, the unimaginable becomes possible, 3) all human beings are of equal worth in the eyes of God. All three of these lessons were demonstrated in the persons of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – their words, their actions, and their movements. Centering our approach in both recent historical success stories of integrative power, and our highest moral vision, how can we part today's "Red Sea": heal the Holy Land and transform the Palestinian/Israeli conflict?

First point: conversion of a negative drive to a positive drive begins *in the individual*. Thus, we who are parties to this conflict – Israelis, Palestinians, the diaspora – can make *individual decisions* to convert our anger at the injustice we see every day into a positive drive to heal the wounds, love one another, and seek the humanity in each other. We can be angry at the structures that cause pain, but offer love and dignity to the people, including and especially those who drive the structures.

Some might ask: How does an individual decision

matter in such a vast social problem?

We might study Gandhi's movement and note that, while millions of Indians followed Gandhi during the "high points," at times the movement shrank to only 40 or so of his most committed colleagues. What this means is that the dedication level of *each individual* might have been *the crucial factor* in history's most powerful Empire leaving India on cordial terms. Without the 40, what would have happened?

Second, we can draw upon past real-world examples to envision a radical transformation, both in the *process* and the *outcome*. Gandhi set out to do something so radical that few could even imagine it.

Just like the skeptics who doubted Gandhi's plans to escort the British out as friends, some might believe Israelis and Palestinians cannot be friends. We can only answer that Israeli/Palestinian communal reconciliation *is* possible, and inevitable when the idea begins to gain traction in the minds of people. Gandhi's manifesto "Hind Swaraj" (or "Indian Home Rule") had a catalyzing effect on India, and a serious peace manifesto ("The Integrated People of the Holy Land" perhaps?), supported by dedicated individuals (see point one)

could lead to a transformational process and outcome. Non-Governmental Organizations who specialize in processes of reconciliation could be available when those "dedicated individuals" help mobilize a pro-reconciliation movement.

Third, can those of us who are Jewish be courageous enough to expand our ideas of "chosenness" into a new egalitarian peacemaking vision? If we are to believe in the truth of Gandhi's and King's work for human equality, then we might ask ourselves, how can we create a collaborative process and outcome where every Palestinian and Israeli is equally valued? How can we transform our thinking from "**we** are chosen" to "**we are all** chosen?"

What if we were to believe that Palestinians and Israelis have been *chosen to make peace with each other and to demonstrate to the world the power of love to heal conflict*? We cannot erase the past; we can transform the present and build a future together. While some might see the world as it is now, our vision, like Gandhi's and King's, can be one of the world *as it should be*. For this, in fact, is what the unpronounceable Hebrew word for God literally means: God as God was, as God is now, and as God will be, in the *best way* God can be.

If we are to walk through today's Red Sea – together, arm in arm, sisters and brothers – what kind of personal power do we each need to harness?

What if we were to believe that Palestinians and Israelis have been chosen to make peace with each other and to demonstrate to the world the power of love to heal conflict?

CAN NONVIOLENCE “SUCCEED” IN IRAQ?

Chelsea Collonge

The challenge is to speak out, rise up, and act against the unilateral American display of unbridled military power, as well as against acts of violence by some Iraqis toward that same American might..... This double critique arises out of the Qur'anic view that to save the life of one human being—any human being—is to have saved the life of all humanity, and to take the life of a single human being, any human being, is as if to destroy all of humanity [Qur'an 5:32].

—Omid Safi, from *Twilight of Empire*

What good is nonviolence in a situation of aching, complex violence backed by a country with crushing power at its disposal? As a peacemaker, I have come to terms with the fact that nonviolence may not be able to correct and heal the situation in Iraq—even with a sustained effort, it might not “succeed.” However, in the long run, nonviolence always works to foster conditions for peace. Violence never does, and its short-term “success” is also uncertain.

Whether embodied or simply used, nonviolence is a potent form of resistance that uses power other than that of military force. This includes the power of getting in the way, of making a situation ungovernable for an oppressor, as well as the power of rehumanizing a situation, offering dignity, and winning allies.

Advocating nonviolence is different from condemning those who choose to use violence in situations of extreme injustice. I cannot support the resistance as long as elements of it kill and maim people, because to me being antiwar is about protecting human life. But my job as an American is to tell my government—not the Iraqi people—what to do. As Martin Luther King Jr., said: “I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today, my own government.”

What I *can* do is point out the *potential* of nonviolent resistance. Nonviolent Civilian Based Defense was effective in Czechoslovakia during the “Prague Spring” uprising of 1968 against occupying Soviets, and it involves the withdrawal of economic and social cooperation by the people. Nonviolent protests have happened all over Iraq since the occupation began; this April, a huge demonstration called by Moqtada al-Sadr demanded an end to occupation and a speedy trial for Saddam. More so than the insurgency, these demonstrations send a clear message that is more likely to be heard as moral and legitimate. Another nonviolent episode happened last August, when Iraqis in Najaf succeeded in protecting the Shrine of Ali through nonviolent interposition, allowing both Iraqi militias and US soldiers to back off with dignity.

Iraqis may feel that they don't have the choice to be non-

violent, because US soldiers will respond violently—but US soldiers crack down on violent resistance as well. One of the strengths of nonviolence is that it makes an armed power less powerful by provoking an obviously illegitimate use of force, thus eliciting outside support and pressure. The insurgency, on the other hand, provides a seductive excuse for US troops to remain in Iraq—“to prevent chaos.”

An additional benefit of nonviolence is the way it can involve and empower a wider segment of the Iraqi population, including women and children. This is important because revolutions carry the seed of future government—one that may not be respectful of the rights of all people.

There are also many foreigners doing nonviolent intervention in Iraq. Before the war started, Voices in the Wilderness—a Chicago-based group that is facing massive fines for smuggling humanitarian supplies into Iraq during the economic sanctions—was part of 500+ people who acted as “human shields.” They camped out at water treatment facilities and hospitals as the war started, to draw attention to America's illegal bombing tactics and to stand in solidarity with their Iraqi friends. UK Human Shields was swamped with upwards of 10,000 applications to process, even though American shields were expecting up to 12 years in prison and thousands of dollars in fines.

Christian Peacemaker Teams are still in Iraq, monitoring conflict situations, documenting human rights abuses, and advocating on behalf of detainees. Like the Code Pink delegations and American Friends Service Committee correspondents, they serve as an important link between Americans and Iraqis, humanizing each side to the other. Along with the few humanitarian aid workers and NGOs that remain in Iraq, they are accepting suffering and danger to send a message that their lives are no more valuable than the lives of Iraqis. Some have died, like Marla Ruzicka, a 28-year-old Californian who founded an organization to count and assist civilian casualties of war (CIVIC) and was killed in a suicide bombing several weeks ago.

Nonviolence is also a powerful tool in the hands of Americans who want to end their country's occupation of Iraq. Domestic civil disobedience and direct action have long been important elements of antiwar movements. Principled nonviolence, with its focus on non-alienating communication and respectful dialogue with opponents, is also crucial for reaching out to the broad base of Americans who, if feeling safe enough to open their minds to new knowledge, can be persuaded to oppose the war.

Finally, nonviolence is crucial to all struggles against war and imperialism because of its powerful, consistent, and nonpartisan argument against militarism, as well as its focus on demonstrating a new vision in the world. With its emphasis on just means, nonviolence dissolves the logic of destroying a nation in order to save it (read: “delivering” democracy to Iraq).

(continued on pg. 30)

A NEW VISION OF JUSTICE

Restorative Justice is more effective than the Death Penalty

Sujal Parikh

As one whose husband and mother-in-law have died the victims of murder assassination, I stand firmly and unequivocally opposed to the death penalty for those convicted of capital offenses. An evil deed is not redeemed by an evil deed of retaliation. Justice is never advanced in the taking of a human life. Morality is never upheld by a legalized murder.

—Coretta Scott King

Last December Senegal became the latest country to stop capital punishment, joining 119 other countries and twelve states that have become abolitionist in law or practice. In March the United States took a step in the same direction when the Supreme Court ruled that individuals can not be executed for crimes committed when they are under the age of eighteen. Until then, America stood as one of the only nations that still openly executed minors. Despite this progressive step, the United States remains among the top four countries in terms of annual executions, alongside China, Iran, and Viet Nam.

The death penalty is an outdated and ineffective attempt at justice. While costing tens of millions of dollars more than other methods of justice in California alone, it fails to reduce crime or provide protection to the populace. Decades of analysis by criminologists have shown that the death penalty is not a greater deterrent than other methods of justice, and some studies indicate that it may increase murder rates. For example, after Robert Harris was executed at San Quentin in 1992, the homicide rate in Los Angeles was higher for eight months. Taking only efficacy of the criminal justice system into account, the death penalty is a gross misuse of

resources; it wastes hundreds of millions of dollars nationally that could otherwise be used on more constructive programs such as offender rehabilitation and victim compensation.

Beyond a simple cost-benefit analysis, executions demonstrate an utter lack of regard for life. Capital punishment, which is simply state-sanctioned retributive murder, reinforces the same disrespect for life as homicide. Michael Nagler points out in *The Search for a Nonviolent Future* that the death penalty sends a message “about the expendability of human life – and the impossibility of bringing a violent person back into the community.” Every time we execute a member of our local, state-wide, or

national community we reinforce the notion that taking a human life is justified to achieve the ends we seek. Moreover, we attempt to rectify the injustice of one crime by committing another; we try to soothe one family’s anguish by killing someone else’s child. Far from solving anything, this only adds to the pain caused by the initial crime. While failing to deter crime, capital punishment does succeed in deterring respect for human life.

An alternative to our current – and mostly ineffective – methods of retribution can be found in the field of restorative justice, described by Prison Fellowship International as “a process whereby parties with a stake in a specific offence resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.” More specifically, it seeks to address the effects of crime on the criminals, their victims, and the community as a whole. Restorative justice gives offended individuals a voice in the resolution process, rather than simply focusing on the legal and prison systems. In doing so, it uses prevention of crime and reparation of harm as a measure of efficacy, rather

While failing to deter crime, capital punishment does succeed in deterring respect for human life.



Painting of Malcolm X by Kevin Cooper. Many death row inmates look up to Malcolm X, who said, “I believe in human rights for everyone, and none of us is qualified to judge each other and that none of us should therefore have that authority.”



Monica Hahn and Michelle Simon hold paintings done by Kevin Cooper, who was scheduled to be executed in February 2004 in California despite evidence of his innocence and of racial bias during his trial. Activists, community members, and politicians in California and around the world mobilized to save Kevin. The State of California has continued pursuing executions, the most recent being Donald Beardslee in January, 2005.

than the harshness of a penalty imposed on an offender. An example of a restorative justice program is victim-offender mediation, which brings people on both sides of a crime together with the help of a mediator so the offender can take responsibility for the crime. Together, all parties involved can develop a way to address the effects of the transgression. The ultimate goal of restorative justice is to reintroduce the transgressor back into society in a manner that is safe for everyone. Instead of dehumanizing offenders by characterizing them as permanent monsters that should be segregated from others, restorative justice emphasizes each person's ability to change for the better. It gives us the possibility of "bringing a violent person back into the community."

Though temporary imprisonment may be appropriate for certain crimes and certain offenders, it should be used in conjunction with other methods of rehabilitation. By constructively addressing less egregious crimes, we can reduce the numbers of offenders that go on to commit more serious transgressions. Rather than wasting our resources on ineffective methods that do nothing to address the needs of people affected by a crime, we should develop ways to reduce recidivism and help victims and the community recover from a crime's effects. The

most wasteful of our current methods is capital punishment, which undermines other aspects of the criminal justice system, and more importantly, inculcates the idea that life is expendable.

Gandhi quipped that an eye for an eye will leave the world blind. The first step in a new vision of justice is abolition of the death penalty.

Resources

Campaign to End the Death Penalty
<http://www.nodeathpenalty.org>

Amnesty International, USA
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish>

Prison Fellowship International

Centre for Justice and Reconciliation
<http://www.restorativejustice.org>

The Search for a Nonviolent Future
 by Michael Nagler

WE ARE ALL PRO-LIFE

Re-examining the abortion debate to find common ground

Carolyn McMahon

Imagine mobilizing the passions of each side of the abortion debate toward a collective goal. The potential power of such an alliance would be incredible.

Still, for many, it is difficult to overcome the stigmas of today's politically disputed debate. Abortion. The word drips with connotation. Arguably the most polarized, hotly contested issue in contemporary society, the abortion question has reshaped the American political climate as well as individual minds alike.

Inflammatory dialogue and provocative claims create a seemingly irreconcilable divide. "Pro-Choice" and "Pro-Life" labels euphemize the fundamental issue at hand and pull the sides farther apart. Tragically, as they yell to overpower their opposition, each loses the ability to listen. Communication breaks down all together. The potential for progress deteriorates.

So the question remains: how can we transform this hostile conflict? Within a composed dialogue, it is critical that conviction on every side of the issue remains intact and never marginalized. How might we arrive at some collective discussion while addressing the sincere, fervent opinions of all involved?

First, it is of great importance to recognize the complexities of each position. "Pro-Choice" and "Pro-Life" categories oversimplify. Each side incorporates varied ideologies and reasons for their support. Aligning itself with the

anti-abortion position, the Christian Coalition of America (CCA), bases its position both on respect for the dignity of human life, and also on a broader adherence to generally nonviolent practices. An interesting juxtaposition stems from the group Feminists for Life, an organization that aligns themselves with the 'pro life' side based on feminist concerns.

The "Pro-Choice" group proves equally diverse, with women arguing for government protection of their fundamental rights, to libertarians claiming that abortion ought not to be a concern of the government at all. Still, taking away inflammatory rhetoric, the underlying goals of each interest remain remarkably similar. Indeed, many of the published concerns and goals of each organization are scarcely distinguishable.

All emphasize the need to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies. All insist upon respect for the mother, and medical and psychological counseling for them, and in recognizing the extremely difficult position of pregnant women, seek to help. In the fundamental concerns of seemingly irreconcilably opposed groups, common concerns abound. The groups all value life and respect it; the conflict comes from how to go about implementing and institutionalizing such sentiments. The issue can be simplified to a trite question of the degree to which each life is valued; some sides lean towards the life of the mother, while others favor that of the yet-unborn child.

Imagine the power that would result from a coalition of all

Mission Statements of pro-choice and anti-abortion NGOs are surprisingly compatible

Planned Parenthood	"We believe that respect and value for diversity in all aspects of our organization are essential."
NARAL Pro-Choice America	"better access to more effective contraceptive options and better access to other kinds of reproductive health care and information...works to reduce the number of abortions."
Birth Choice	"What do <i>you</i> really want...Becoming fully informed empowers you to make an intelligent, thoughtful, confident choice."
Feminists for Life	"no woman should be forced to chose between pursuing her education and her career plans and sacrificing her child" "believe in the strength of women and the potential of every human life"
Catholic Church's Project Rachel	"aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and ... does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision." "one-on-one spiritual and psychological care for those who are suffering"

Please see resources on next page for the websites where you can read the mission statements in their entirety.

sides. A united force of such powerful concerns could do wonders. Consider a practical application. Each interest agreed on the need for improved sex education. While they may differ in their methods, the CCA pushing for abstinence programs, and NARAL encouraging more explicit contraceptive education, still in addressing the national ethos, one that in their minds encourages and de-values sex, the groups agree that a shift in education must occur. So perhaps in an attempt to find more compatible positions, it is necessary for each to step back even from the education level and attempt to agree on a question of society's attitude toward sexuality, and by extrapolation toward pregnancies. It is very conceivable that the religious right and spiritual left would agree to work together to alter media and popular culture's degradation of modern sexuality.

In uniting to implement such programs, not only would each obtain some of their goals, but in the process would begin to re-humanize the conflict. With cooperation, individual articulation and genuine concerns would replace violent slogans and outspoken figureheads. Increased dialogue would allow for an increased likelihood to find common ground, which will ultimately lead to a more fruitful engagement of the issue. We must each respect dissenting views and listen to others if we hope to reverse the trend of hostility and work toward our

We must each respect dissenting views and listen to others if we hope to reverse the trend of hostility and work toward our productive goals.

productive goals.

Such sentiments are not mere theoretical proposals. A group called Search for Common Ground helped to mediate a dialogue between each side of this very conflict. During a 1993 abortion conference, representatives from a wide breadth of interests came together in a discussion which produced three joint-authored statements. The diverse group came to consensus on issues such as making adoption more accessible, preventing teen pregnancies, and alleviating societal pressures in school and the workplace which prompt many women to resort to abortion. Written policy plans concerning adoption, teen pregnancy prevention, and clinic activism serve as tangible proof of the real benefits of civil discussion. The conference hoped to increase productive, peaceful dialogue in the abortion debate. With combined efforts, they hope to have increased

power to push forward legislative reform which will forward their combined goals: promoting respect and dignity of both potential mothers and children.

Still, more important even than an immediate solution to the problem, it is imperative to mitigate the violent nature of the abortion debate. For a debate about respect and love of life to take such a vicious, aggressive form is truly paradoxical. These fundamental concerns for respect and life must even extend to individuals seen in opposition.

Resources

Search for Common Ground:
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/us/us_life.html

Planned Parenthood Federation of America:
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/portal/files/portal/aboutus/mission.xml>

NARAL Pro-Choice America:
<http://www.prochoiceamerica.org/about/>

Birth Choice:
<http://www.birthchoice.net/home.html>

Feminists for Life:
<http://www.feministsforlife.org/who/aboutus.htm>

Catholic Church, Project Rachel:
<http://www.hopeafterabortion.com/>

Join the Conflict Transformation Resource Center!

We are a group of dedicated students who will offer mediation, preventative education, facilitation, and other services to the Berkeley campus. Do you want to join our team? Do you want to help build a vibrant, sustainable program to address conflict in a proactive manner? We are looking for dedicated volunteers interested in learning and practicing:

- mediation
- intake and case management
- workshop building
- and much more!

If you are interested, please email: [calmediate {AT} softhome.net](mailto:calmediate@softhome.net) (replace {AT} with @) and let us know how you would like to be involved!

Also, sign up for our decal class, which will be listed online at decal.org for Fall 2005. Search for "Campus Mediation and Conflict Transformation." Our web site: <http://ocf.berkeley.edu/~conflict/>

BREATHING PEACE

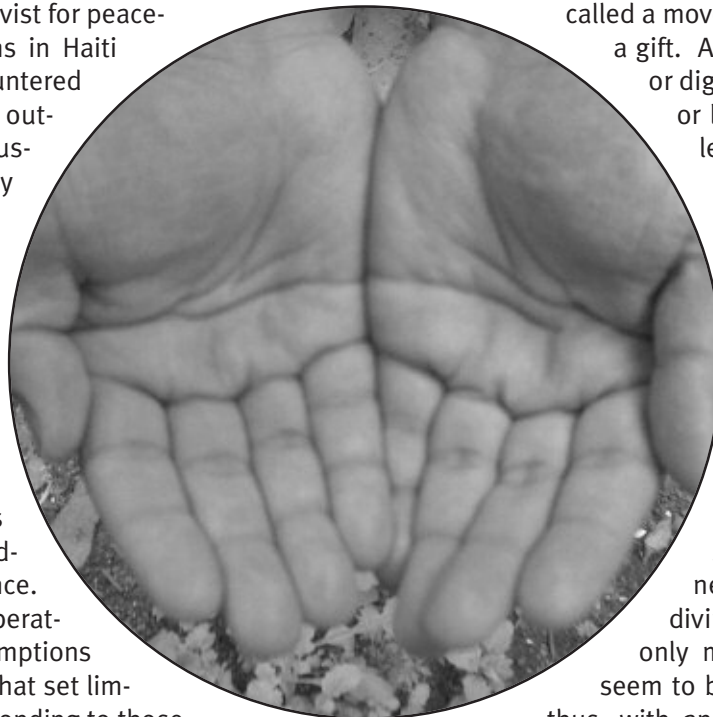
What does spirituality have to do with being an activist for peacemaking?

Eli Sasaran

What does our “breathing” have to do with cultivating peace? What does spirituality have to do with being an activist for peacemaking?

Allow me to share a personal story of my time in Haiti to illustrate “breathing peace” and the relationship of spirituality to being an activist for peacemaking. I spent five months in Haiti during 1999. When I encountered the tragic poverty and the outcasts, questions of social justice intensely arose in my mind. As a middle class citizen of the U.S., I was dumbstruck and confused. It was only when I turned to and transformed my style of meditation and prayer into a more contemplative listening, that I was drawn beyond the construction of finite thoughts or questions into a sense of greater boundlessness and interdependence. In other words, spirituality liberated me from ingrained assumptions about the “deserving poor” that set limits on my giving, and for responding to those in need as a way of “being gift” in an interdependent cosmos. I was now asking “how I can empower” along with “what structures are preventing the movement of gift?”

These questions born of direct experience invite us into deeper reflection. The peace I, and perhaps many of us, seek is a “way of life.” It is not a mere momentary flash of light that stirs us to dream of what might come in the far-off future. Nor is it merely an instrument for temporary calm, while we continue to participate in the dehumanization, oppression, injustice, and violence that suffocate our vitality. Peace is a “way of life,” a “breathing” that moves deeply within and throughout all of life.



The peace I, and perhaps many of us, seek is a “way of life”...a “breathing” that moves deeply within and throughout all of life.

In terms of describing the logic of breathing peace, we can reflect on what seems to be a common experience. For instance, it seems that my life was not created by my own power, but rather that some other power (whether parents, God, or ultimate mystery, etc.) had moved or “given” me life. This movement of giving or offering that led to my life

seems to imply that my humanity is reasonably called a movement of gifting, or simply put, a gift. As a gift, my nature has a value or dignity that can never be changed or lost by what we do or have, at least in terms of being created as a gift.

Although this dignity seems inherent, the value of our dignity may be experienced at different levels depending on how we are sensed as a gift. For instance is our being from mere biological forces, parents, God, or ultimate mystery, etc. and is our being for mere survival, consumption, reputation, happiness, love, participation in divine life, etc? Nevertheless, not only myself, but all humans would seem to be at least created as gift, and thus, with an unalterable dignity. Further, animals, plants, and perhaps all that is, except God or the first mover, has been created as a gift, and thus seems to share in a kind of cosmic dignity. Humans, as self-conscious gifts, have a unique role to play in both affirming the cosmic dignity and cultivating the general movement of gift in the cosmos.

In light of this experience, it seems that being gift and having unalterable dignity create a certain orientation to life. When one affirms such an orientation by seeking the depths of our being and the implications for some kind of “way of being” in the cosmos, we enter into the realm of spirituality. We seem to awaken and create a space for the movement of spirit, understood as being of the self

but also more than the self. A certain flow, sometimes sensed as a movement of love, gradually affirms, invites, and guides the inner and outer dynamic of life. Such spirituality is the “breathing” that moves deeply within our being and throughout our life. We move

more by way of principle than by strategy, as means and ends become one and the same. For instance, if our “end” is a nonviolent loving society then our “means” is nonviolent love.

In this spirituality, we may “breathe” peace and become peacemakers by seeking to live in accordance with being a gift. To live in accordance would seem to include: valuing one’s self, since one is a gift; living with gratitude and attention to the source of one’s being, especially through meditation and prayer; realizing that all people are also gifts; affirming the common cosmic dignity of all existence by caring for the whole environment; being willing to offer oneself (time, effort, skills, playfulness, etc.) as a gift to others, especially to those who suffer from a lack of gifts in their life; and being willing to practice both forgiveness and reconciliation in order to restore broken relationships so that one can try to be gifts again in a new way after we have fallen short. As a peacemaker, one would also be a gift of love even to those who hurt, injure, or want to kill; not to weakly allow them to hurt, but to strongly resist them with the power of love that is willing to suffer in order to challenge the logic of humiliation. One seeks conversion rather than destruction. One would try to be a mirror for the violent one of who they really are deep down, that is, a gift, in order to expose their violence and restore them to the way of gift, even if it means giving one’s life. As a peacemaker, one would similarly challenge all systems of non-gift, i.e. oppression, that fail to value and cultivate the gift of each person.

However, to live in discord with being a gift seems to be acting possessive, as if one made and solely owns one’s self. If one were possessive, non-gift, then one would feel a lack of security and worth; and sense the same lack of worth in others. For instance, if one lacks a sense of worth then one would tend not risk being vulnerable, i.e. being a gift, in a relationship, and thus struggle to experience friendship or love. One could easily get caught up in being possessive of ideas, methods, things and even people for one’s own benefit. One could easily develop a habit of reactivity and fear by trying to falsely defend oneself or others by the “way of violence,” which disregards others, oneself, and the cosmos as gifts that offer and empower rather than anxiously cling to and destroy.

In closing, with the light of these reflections on living as a gift I invite us to return to the experience in Haiti where

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spirituality liberated me from ingrained assumptions about the deserving poor and for responding to those in need as a way of being gift. When one begins to consistently ask questions such as “how I can empower” along with

“what structures are preventing the movement of gift,” one is responding to the invitation to “breathe peace.” Along with the practice of mediation or prayer, one is drawn deeper into this spirituality of peacemaking within the horizon of gift, dignity, and non-possessiveness.

“What If?” Scenarios

Let’s challenge ourselves to creatively imagine alternative responses to violence! You may participate in the dialogue by emailing: whatif@calpeacepower.org Submit a direct response for our next publication, or write your own “what if” scenario.

What if... Someone starts yelling at you and putting you down? Rather than responding out of anger, hatred, or a sense of humiliation, try to respond with empathy, love, and dignity. One can maintain a firm tone of voice by transforming the logic of humiliation into an invitation for conversion. One could say, “I’m disappointed you feel it’s necessary to put me down in order to express or maintain your dignity.” Also, “my dignity is not dependent on your approval. Perhaps you can share the source of your anger, and we can discuss the issue with a hope for understanding and reconciliation.”

What if... Someone starts pushing and punching you? If someone starts pushing and punching you, one way to respond is to think merely of physical defense and to respond out of a kind of self-preservation or possessiveness. However, another option is to consider the good of our whole person and of all people involved; to act in light of us all being gifts. One could protect the body by covering up, blocking, or holding the other. At the same time conversion-seeking, dignity-illuminating statements could be made. “How do you think the others watching this are effected?” or “Is this the deepest desire of your heart?” or “I still love you and am willing to forgive you.” or “You are a child of God, and God loves you” etc. One could also take challenging and inviting positions, such as lotus meditation or prayerful kneeling. Once one gets their attention, perhaps a conversation can be engaged. But throughout the ordeal, a willingness to suffer would remain constant as a way to clearly expose the violence, and thus, have the best prospect at seeing truth.

The first goal of the peace force would be to prevent any outbreak of violence in the region. Secondly, if violence did break out, the peace force would use nonviolent methods to bring the situation under control in order to start a process of conflict transformation and find a peaceful solution to the disagreement. The third goal would be to create a situation in Israel and Palestine in which war and violent conflicts would be outlawed.

In this context, the growing number of refusniks, who currently withhold their support and cooperation from the army, would eventually lead to the collapse of the military establishment. Until the collapse of the military establishment, the refusniks should aim to institute the alternative organization with themselves as the core group of members. Additionally, the peace force lines would be open to any volunteer, man or woman, Israeli or Palestinian. The organization's mission statement would include resolving conflicts nonviolently, promoting peaceful solutions to disputes, acting to guarantee common security for all human beings, and intervening in the midst of violence as a nonviolent third party (Nonviolent Third Party Intervention is used today by the Peace Force, and Peace Brigades International). The peace force members must believe, accept and be trained in the discipline of nonviolence in order to present an alternative model of conflict resolution to the violent approach of the military. In addition, the members would have distinctive and recognizable uniforms, so that in a time of conflict the peace force would be able to act freely without being hurt by either side of the disagreement. The peace force should also establish local cells, which would operate in every community and assist them in acquiring the ability and techniques to solve problems on their own. The local cells could also work as mediators in disputes, educators for peace, or organizers of peace rallies. By adopting these roles as the organization's social practices, the peace force would also serve as a peace keeping and peace building institute in Israel and Palestine. This peace force model, which provides peace making, keeping, and building services, can be and should be implemented in other areas of conflict around the world. Doing so would allow different communities to resolve their conflicts in a nonviolent and peaceful manner.

Resources

Courage to Refuse:

<http://www.seruv.org.il/defaulteng.asp>

Refusers Solidarity Network:

<http://www.refusersolidarity.net/>

Shministim:

<http://www.shministim.org/indexenglish.html>

Kidron, Peretz. Refusenik! Israel's Soldiers of

Conscience. New York: Zed Books, 2004.

Desai, Narayan. Shanti-Sena in India. Varanasi: V.N.

Bhargava, Manohar Press, 1962.

Nonviolence Peace Force: <http://www.nvpf.org>

way to make sure they do not do something bad out of their helpless ignorance. I was quite shocked to learn that the word *siya-sar* had such a degrading connotation. I had used it myself without knowing what it meant because I have heard others use it in everyday language. I am told by some that the word is not really derogatory but a sort of "endearment" term that is supposed to be mindful of women's role in society. The role of women in society should never be degraded to such terminology and most would agree. It is difficult to erase such terms from society's mind when women are constantly undermined in their status as human beings.

Despite all this, progress is being made. Women business entrepreneurs and educators are returning to Afghanistan from the all over the world to rebuild and reconstruct society by employing other women and empowering them to be self-sufficient and rely less on handouts. Women's clinics are being built which, of course, are in need of women's help. Schools are being built and expanded to accommodate space for girls. Programs such as these are stepping-stones to a better future for women. I believe that women have to be empowered before true peace is acquired in Afghanistan and other places.

Everyone should take a lesson from the women of Rwanda after the genocide of 1994 and see how they have rebuilt a country after an atrocity that was compared to the Jewish Holocaust. Women's representation in the government in Rwanda is unmatched compared to any other country. Their efforts have started many programs that educate and empower women in a society that 10 years ago had no rights, including a vital economic right, the right to property. Women are educated in numbers that are unprecedented for that country.

I have great hopes for the future. We must not forget the plight of women in Afghanistan and around the world. It has been too long in earthly terms for half of the population of the world to be uninvolved in bringing about peace and justice in the world. I am an optimist and I think that there will be significant changes in women's role in the future and I would like to dedicate this century to women and call it "Women's Century."

COULD NONVIOLENCE "SUCCEED" IN IRAQ (FROM P. 23)

The spirituality of nonviolence—that all humans are interconnected and that their lives are of equal worth—is a powerful force for peace. Marla Ruzicka, upon leaving her work in post-Sept. 11th Afghanistan, wrote, "My heart broke and I made a commitment to ensure that no more innocent Afghans had to suffer." What if all Americans made that kind of commitment?

Besides the organizations above, check out www.globalexchange.org/countries/mideast/iraq/links for more info on Iraq.

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July 20-23, Berkeley, California

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Our goal is to create a Network of Progressive Spiritual Activists who champion a New Bottom Line, so that institutions are judged efficient, rational and productive not only to the extent that they maximize money and power, but also to the extent that they maximize love, generosity, nonviolence, social justice, peace, ecological sanity, and awe and wonder at the grandeur of existence.

Workgroups and workshops on: the economy, nonviolence and anti-war activism, reproductive rights, sexuality, the environment, the media, globalization, law and social change, spiritual politics and the separation of church and state; and on building a spiritual politics within and between civil rights, feminist, gay rights, labor, and green movements.

Sponsors include: The Peace and Conflict Studies Program of UC Berkeley, the University Religious Council, the Tikkun Community, the Pacific School of Religion, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Pace e Bene Catholic Fellowship, DragonFly Media, and Beyt Tikkun Synagogue.

For more info, to register, or to volunteer, please visit www.tikkun.org, call our office, 510.528.6250, or email: jordan@tikkun.org or joe@tikkun.org. (Replace {AT} with @.) Do not miss this transformative opportunity!

Want to Learn More About Principled Nonviolence and Conflict Transformation?

African-American Studies 124:

Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Using the thought and actions of Martin Luther King, this course examines the major events of the Civil Rights Movement. Reading includes original works by King as well as secondary sources with a special emphasis on African American religion, nonviolence, and integration. (Fall '05: MWF 10-11A, 126 Barrows)

PACS 150, Conflict Resolution

This course will investigate theories of individual and group conflict as a conceptual framework for practical application. Students will engage in practice as parties to conflicts and as third-party interveners. The course will look at the sources of conflict, including multicultural aspects, and will emphasize the opportunities for growth and development in conflictive incidents. (Fall '05: TuTh 11-12:30, 200 Wheeler)

PACS 154, Multicultural Conflict Resolution

This course will investigate the special issues involved with facilitating resolution of cross/multicultural conflicts. Topics will include cultural contrasts (e.g., values, communication, and problem solving styles), mediator (facilitator/negotiator), credibility, cultural (including gender) contributions to conflict resolution and unique ethical dilemmas. Course includes field immersion, conflict resolution process evaluation and design, and the opportunity to participate in mediation of a cultural mediation. (Spring '06)

PACS 164A, Introduction to Nonviolence

An introduction to the science of nonviolence, mainly as seen through the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. Historical overview of nonviolence East and the West up to the American Civil Rights movement and Martin Luther King, Jr., with emphasis on the ideal of principled nonviolence and the reality of mixed or strategic nonviolence in practice, especially as applied to problems of social justice and defense. (Fall '05: TuTh, 11-12:30, 213 Wheeler)

PACS 164B, Nonviolence Today

The development of nonviolence since the Civil Rights movement. Nonviolent theory and practice seen in recent insurrectionary movements (freedom struggles), social justice struggles, nonviolent intervention across borders and protection of the environment in the emerging world of global corporatism.

(**Summer '05:** MTuW 10-12:30P, 175 Barrows. Also Spring '06).

More info at: <http://ias.berkeley.edu/lec/mnagler/pacs164b/>

Peace Power Decal

Want to join? We need writers, editors, photographers, artists, layout, web designers. Fall decal listed at calpeacepower.org

Conflict Transformation Resource Center Decal

Want to help build a conflict transformation program at Berkeley?

Get trained in mediation, communication, facilitation, and preventative education. We will have a fall decal, see ad p. 27.

GTU*: Spirituality & Nonviolent Social Transformation

The course will explore the quests of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dorothy Day for justice through the method of nonviolence. What were the influences--e.g., Emerson, Thoreau, Tolstoy, DuBois--that helped shape the zeitgeist of their times? What is essential to an effective nonviolent campaign? What were the faith foundations of these extraordinary leaders? What were their relationships to their communities? How did they manage to keep their resolve in times of disappointments? (Spring '06, SKSM, T, 02:10PM-05:00PM)

GTU*: Christian Social Ethics

This course will consider the tradition of Roman Catholic Social Teaching and modern social ethics. Issues to be treated will include Christian interpretations of violence and nonviolence, war and peace, terrorism, global and domestic justice, human rights, bioethics, and ecological ethics. In assessing these issues, we will consider the interpretative perspectives of a consistent life ethic, liberation theology and Christian feminism. (Spring '06: CDSP:222, M/TH, 11:10AM-12:30PM)

GTU* is Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union, www.gtu.edu

**ALSO IN THIS
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Women's
Century of
Peace**

**Compassion
in the Israeli/
Palestinian
Conflict**

**A Coalition on
Abortion?**

**"Breathing
Peace":
Spirituality in
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**Retrospective:
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**Editor's Note:
Our Vision**

