

PEACEPOWER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About Peace Power

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