

Nonviolent Action in Fiction

Brian Martin

Have you read any good books or short stories lately that deal sensitively and perceptively with nonviolent action? Over the years people have given me a number of recommendations. Nonviolence is a key theme in some of these books and stories, whereas in others it is less central. (Erik Frank Russell's novella is the only item dealing with civilian-based defense.) No doubt there's much more; this list only touches the surface of English-language fiction. It would be good if someone could put together a reader of top quality fiction dealing with nonviolence. Fiction is often more convincing than reality.

- ◆ Malcolm J. Bosse, *Ganesh* (Harmondsworth: Puffin Books, 1984). Recommended by Alexandra Perry.
- ◆ Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate*

War (London: Fontana Lions, 1978). Recommended by Alexandra Perry.

- ◆ Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (New York: Berkley, 1976).

- ◆ Marilyn Kaye, *Lydia* (London: Lions Teen Tracks, 1988; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987). Recommended by Alexandra Perry.

- ◆ Munro Leaf, *The Story of Ferdinand* (London: Reprint Society, 1955). [A story for little children.] Recommended by a friend of Robert Burrowes.

- ◆ Jean Merrill, *The Pushcart War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1973). Recommended by a friend of Robert Burrowes.

- ◆ R. K. Narayan, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981 [Michigan State University Press, 1955]). Recommended by Mary Cawte.

- ◆ Katherine Paterson, *Lyddie* (New York: Puffin Books, 1992). Recom-

mended by Alexandra Perry.

- ◆ Christopher Pike, *See You Later* (New York: Pocket Books, 1990).

Recommended by Alexandra Perry.

- ◆ Mack Reynolds, "Survivor," *Analog Science Fiction / Science Fact*, July 1966, pp. 127-139.

Recommended by John Zube.

- ◆ Erik Frank Russell, "...and then there were none," in Ben Bova (ed.), *Exiles: 3 Novellas* (New York: St. Martin's Pres, 1978), pp. 28-101.

Recommended by E. G. Vikingur.

- ◆ Dr. Seuss, *Yertle the Turtle and Gertrude McFuzz* (Great Britain: Cubs, 1979 [1950]). [A story for little children.] Recommended by Alexandra Perry.

- ◆ Joan Slonczewski, *A Door into Ocean* (London: The Women's Press, 1987) Recommended by a member of the Australian Nonviolence Network.

- ◆ Brian M. Stableford, *The Florians* (London: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1978 [1976]). Recommended by John Zube.

Defense Needed Against Current Occupation

Joe Maizlish

The best preparation for future nonviolent civilian-based defense against coups and attacks is to strengthen our skills, ourselves and our society by dislodging the occupation we already suffer. And there is one: an occupation by a mindset which justifies extremes or inequality and centralized decision-making, an approach to social problems which mistakes suppression for problem-solving, and a system which prefers military responses to facing the need for change. In a sense, a coup has already occurred and is advancing every day. Even the newly-famous militias sense that something is wrong with violent centralized power, (and they would do well to examine the nonviolent way of struggle).

Economic Occupation

Consider: funds are taken from us (by payment or seizure)—foreclosing

the possibility of our applying them to constructive personal or community uses—and are used for military spending, corporate welfare and

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policing the increasing inequality. Military spending not only furthers the ideology and machinery of violence, it distorts employment and economic patterns, subsidizes high-tech development, concentrates profits and power and protects foreign

governments which repress their own people.

One result of this system is that the U.S. spends almost 40% of the world's total arms budget and accounts for 30% of the world's consumption. This is **military-based offense**. Civilian nonviolent action to change it is civilian-based defense of this land and indeed of this planet. What Henry Thoreau wrote 150 years ago about domestic slavery and foreign military action applies today:

...when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact, that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

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