

Nonviolent Resistance

Nonviolence versus Capitalism

by Brian Martin

War Resisters International

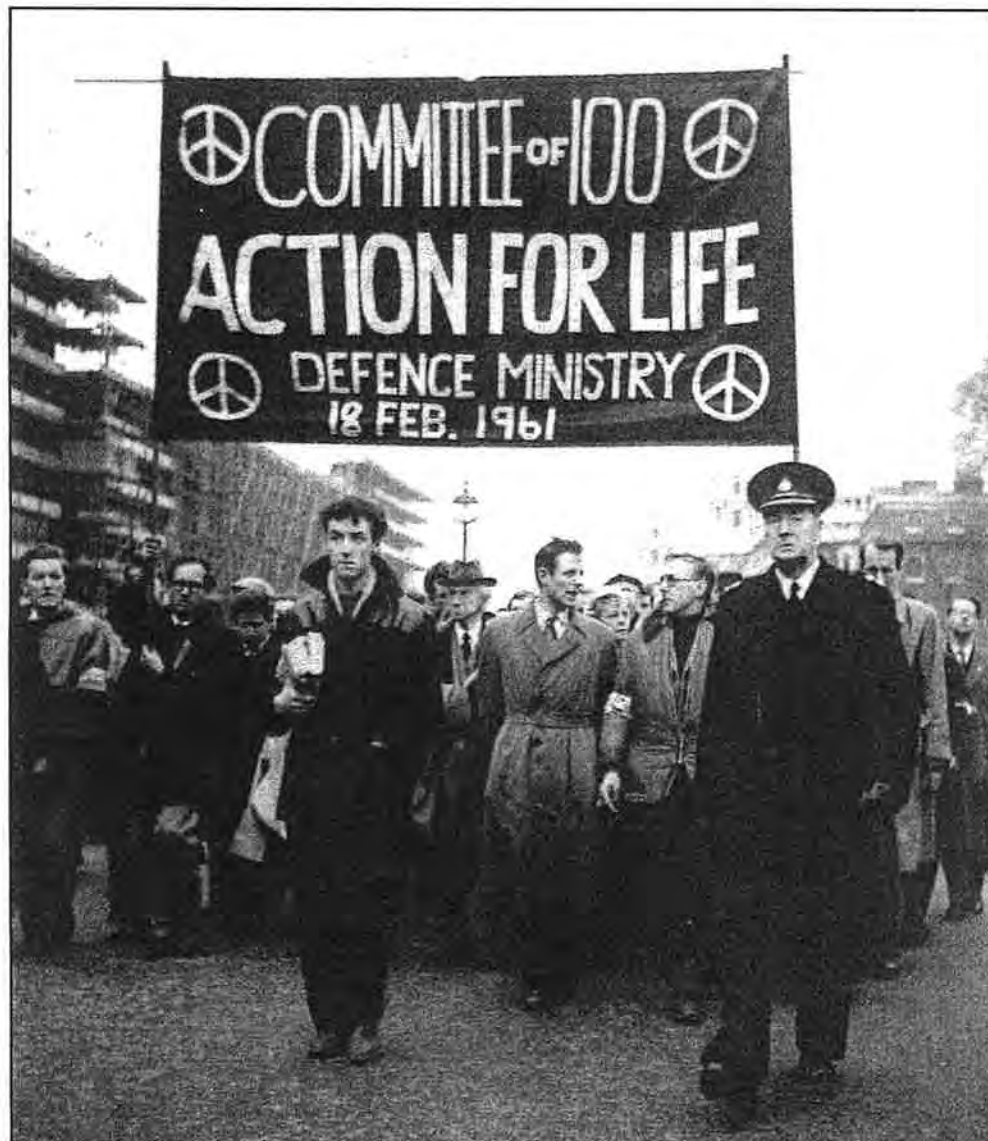
the book can be downloaded from
<http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/01nvc>

Brian has written many excellent books. This is his latest, and perhaps the most important so far. It has his usual virtues. His English is simple and clear, perfectly adapted to the transparent logic of his analyses and arguments. The work is the product of wide scholarship – he is an academic at the University of Wollongong in Australia – yet his writing has no academic pretentiousness. He writes for non-experts, not to impress other academics. His passion for fairness and decency is obvious, and he is never dogmatic or strident. He is outstandingly practical and realistic. He recognises the difficulties facing radical movements, and realises that the dreamt-of land is not just around the corner.

Many who aspire to make the world a happier place say that violence is necessary to achieve their aim. But I know of none of these who are ever specific about the nature of that violence. They do not say in what circumstances the violence is to take place, what form it will take, what its immediate purposes are, who exactly is to engage in it, what are the criteria by which it will be judged successful or not. Even Kropkie, writing against revolutionary violence in these pages last summer (14th July) argued that there would, ultimately, be a time for violence, “brief, joyless and productive”, without explaining anything about when that time would be or how it would be productive.

Some of the more reluctant advocates of violence argue that it is right and proper if it is the violence of the people rising up against their oppressors. But they do not explain what ‘the people’ is. Do people become ‘the people’ when they are a vast majority agreed on the same principles and on what should be done? In such a case, if the regime they live under is not a very brutal one, they will very like be able to make many of the changes they desire without recourse to violence. If it is a brutal one, their violence will be repressed even more savagely than resistance without violence would have been, and more blameless people than ever will suffer.

Or is ‘the people’ the working class alone? Let us leave aside the never-resolved question of what exactly the working class is. In the unlikely event of their violence ‘succeeding’, will they impose their model



of society by force on the reluctant remainder of the population? (The only real criticism I would make of the content of Brian's book is that he uses the terms ‘the people’ and ‘democratic’ in the same casual and vague way that nearly everyone else does).

The greater happiness and self-fulfilment of human beings in a community can only be achieved by the agreement of most people on humane fundamental principles. That agreement can and should only be achieved by persuasion. But there will be no persuasion so long as the champions of those humane fundamental principles engage in violence, and show that there is as much hate in them as there is in their opponents. They will promote fear, not peace and natural justice.

Brian summarises persuasively both the strengths and weaknesses of non-violent action. “Spontaneity is not a reliable basis for success or long-term change. An army could hardly be expected to be successful without recruitment, weapons, training and leadership. Why should non-violent action be fundamentally different?”

The dominant theme is that non-violence is both method and goal. Non-violent methods

without some idea of a non-violent society to replace capitalism are meaningless. On the other hand, you can't achieve a non-violent society through violence. But although capitalism is in the end based on violence, “for most of the time it is sustained by belief systems and everyday behaviours, so it is in the area of beliefs and behaviours that the most effort [in developing non-violent options] is needed, especially because capitalism has an unparalleled capacity to co-opt ideological challenges”.

The author examines the nature of capitalism, and sets out five principles against which he judges it. Later in the book, he uses them to assess non-violent alternatives as well.

1. Co-operation rather than competition should be the foundation for activity.
2. People with the greatest needs should have priority in the distribution of social production.
3. Satisfying work should be available to everyone who wants it.
4. The system should be designed and run by the people themselves, rather than by authorities and experts.
5. The system should be based on non-violence.

Brian briefly examines the failure of “conventional anti-capitalist strategies” – persuasion of the powerful, Leninism (armed struggle), socialist electoral strategy – and in the longest chapter of the book considers four non-violent alternatives to capitalism. These are sarvodaya, anarchism, voluntarism and demarchy (this last is particularly interesting to me, as it seems to offer the best way of preventing anybody acquiring power over others, which is one of the great dangers of democracy).

Most of the rest of the book is devoted to non-violence strategies, plans for non-violent action to transform capitalism into a non-violent alternative. Brian suggests a checklist for assessing different types of campaign.

1. Does the campaign help to undermine the violent underpinnings of capitalism or the legitimacy of capitalism or to build a non-violent alternative to capitalism?
2. Is the campaign participatory?
3. Are the campaign's goals built into its methods?
4. Is the campaign resistant to co-option?

In the light of these criteria, he examines workers' struggles, sabotage, environmental campaigns and social defence. The chapter on this last is particularly interesting. He points out that “no society has ever systematically prepared itself for social defence. A full-scale non-violent alternative to the military is yet to be tried”.

In the chapter entitled ‘Global issues’, Brian examines the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, genetically-modified organisms, and free software to illustrate the potential of ‘global-local’ campaigning. In his concluding chapter, he discusses small, local, individual ways in which one can challenge present attitudes and practices.


I have one mild complaint about the book's organisation. I think the author spends too much time telling the reader what he is going to write about and what he has written about – this is something that could be done better by expanding the chapter headings on the contents page.

Brian Martin has written an excellent survey of the faults of capitalism, of the sorts of community that might replace it, of the non-violent methods that could be used to achieve these communities, and of the problems involved. He also gives many valuable insights which there is not space to relate here. I recommend it strongly to everyone genuinely interested in the search for a better world.

It's good for a work like this to be published in a period when liberties are under even more threat than usual. The radical spirits who advocate and resort to violence should consider how irresponsible their violent acts are. Violent acts don't just work off the frustrations of those who commit them; perhaps violent activists don't mind ending up in prison, or worse, themselves. But they have no right to risk the welfare of fellow activists, or to bring their ideals of a better society into greater disrepute than ever. To indulge in violence is to play the game of bosses and governments. Nothing could be more stupid, or less radical.

Amorey Gethin

now available from Freedom Press



The Raven
number 42
on Marxism
£3 (post free) • 96 pages
Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP

(in Angel Alley)

84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

— opening hours —

Monday to Friday 10.30am - 6pm

Saturday 11am - 5pm



Books can be ordered from the above address.
A booklist is available on request.

Brian Martin, *Nonviolence versus Capitalism* (War Resisters' International, 2001. ISBN 0 903517 19 1. 187pp). Reviewed by BRIAN BURCH.

To my mind, Brian Martin is one of the most important theorists currently linking anarchism and nonviolence. His books, from *Social Defense* to *Social Change to Challenging Bureaucratic Elites*, serve as manuals, histories and encouragement for activists concerned with developing effective, nonviolent movements for positive radical social change.

With the rise of the anti-globalisation movements and the current responses to a western-based revenge war, *Nonviolence versus Capitalism* is a timely addition to his work, albeit an outgrowth of an article published in 1999.

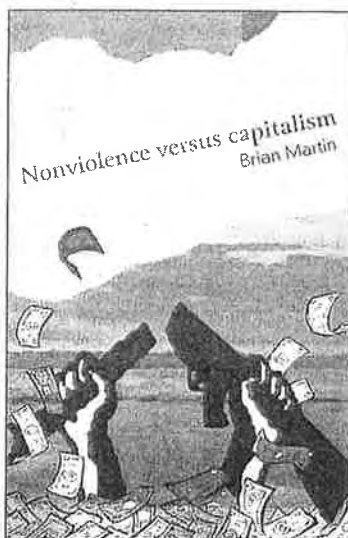
I read this book in a slightly different order than the material was presented in. I started with chapter six, "Nonviolence Strategy". This is an area that is all too often overlooked in discussions about nonviolence and has become more important at a time when advocacy of diversity of tactics, ie acceptance of violence as an expression of dissent, challenges nonviolent activists to be clear about what is demanded and how theory can be applied.

In this chapter, principals and guides for assessment of nonviolent strategies focused to oppose capitalism are explored and do serve, I think, as the real framework for appreciating the rest of the book.

In light of the current "diversity of tactics" argument, the chapter "Sabotage" is a very important addition to the debate. Looking at a tactic in light of long-term objectives is an important part of any movement for social change. There does seem some urgency as the numbers and strength of grassroots anti-capitalist dissent has grown dramatically over the past few years.

Moving from dissent to actually achieving social change does demand serious reflection on the methods of achieving social change. As sabotage has a long history in movements for social change from the Luddites to the ploughshares movements, to Earth First! monkey-wrenching to the current black bloc, considering the impact of this tactic on long-term objectives is an important but difficult task. My only concern was that the chapter was too short.

My two favourite chapters were practical ones – "Nonviolent Alternatives to Capitalism" and "Economic Alternatives as Strategies". The first looks at existing theoretical or practical alternatives to the current economic model that are decentralised and cooperative in



nature. The latter looks at proposed alternative institutions and structures as strategic options for movements in opposition to capitalism. The use of questions to help evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of any option are key tools. The same set of questions are used throughout the work, helping to show how to use these tools in response to different strategic concerns.

Brian Martin is careful to situate his ideas within broader contexts, both in terms of previous work on the topic and in terms of specific struggles against specific expressions of capitalism. In his chapters "Workers' Struggles" and "Environmental campaigns", for example, specific actions are examined in the light of strategic concerns, helpful bibliographies are provided, and analysis is provided from a specifically anti-capitalism, nonviolence perspective.

Brian Martin, although a university professor, doesn't come across in *Nonviolence versus Capitalism* as an academic – except as expressed through his research and careful identification of sources. Rather, his work seems to arise from the perspective of a long-time activist seeking ways to share insights that have been gained through experience. He is not preachy, but open to the possibility that he might be wrong. Like Gandhi, he seems to be experimenting with the true essence of nonviolence rather than asserting its truth. This recent book of his is essential for all those connected in any way to the current movements for social change.



Subcomandante Marcos (tr Dinah Livingstone), *Zapatista Stories* (Katabasis. 0 90487 236 X. £8.95). Reviewed by SARAH IRVING.

This manages to be both an utterly charming book, and to convey a serious message. Skip the introduction – it's fine, but you can get the explanations of Zapatismo

from a hundred other places. Maybe go back to it when you've read the stories. Which are marvellous.

Marcos is well-known for his writing, especially the eloquent communiqués which emerge periodically from the Lacandon jungle. These stories are a different breed – whimsical, funny, literary. Don Durito de la Lacandon, a beetle "knight errant" who represents the self-mockery of the soldier-intellectual Marcos, pontificates in a nevertheless educational fashion on the evils of militarism and neo-liberalism.

Old Antonio, Marcos's indigenous mentor; weaves tales of local life with the myths of the very human, fallible and amusing Mayan gods. And finally, a third section, "the young Zapatista children", tells of the devastation wreaked by poverty and oppression on the lives of indigenous Mexicans, but uses literary devices – like radio football commentary – to give the tales a highly readable lightness of touch.

So, definitely a great volume for anyone seeking an accessible introduction to Zapatista history and ideas – including kids. Or equally for those already knowledgeable on Zapatismo and looking for a fresh look at the subject.

The world ahead

Fredrico Mayor & Jerome Bride, *The World Ahead – Our Future in the Making* (Zed Books 2001. ISBN 1 85649 875 1. £16.95; £15 to PN readers mentioning this review. Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, Britain (+44 20 7837 4014; <http://www.zedbooks.demon.co.uk>)). Reviewed by VIJAY MEHTA.

How can we prepare for the 21st century without considering the four new contracts proposed in *The World Ahead*?

Mayor and Bride propose a new social contract. It requires that: the third industrial revolution and its accompanying globalisation work in an ethical manner; a new natural contract to coexist with the environment; a new cultural contract, whereby the intangible treasures of cultures will be enhanced and their conviviality promoted; and finally a new ethical contract, without which we shall never vanquish poverty and violence.

This truly remarkable book for the 21st century suggests that we must come up with new global solutions in a world in which problems are taking on increasingly global dimensions, and that we must turn a culture of violence into a culture of peace.

"Expect nothing from the twenty-first century. It is the twenty-first century that expects everything from you". Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Challenging the Structures and Values of Capitalism

Brian Martin (2001)

Nonviolence Versus Capitalism. London: War Resisters' International. 187 pp.

ISBN 0903517 19 1. Freely available on web at <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/01nvc/>.

In his usual, clear, concise, but comprehensive manner, Brian Martin has put together an analysis of nonviolence that points the concept toward unexplored territory for Western scholars and activists. Hitherto, the focus of nonviolence studies has centred on questions of resistance. The dominant influence has emanated from the work of Gene Sharp, especially his pioneering opus, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, in which he set forth his theory of consent and outlined dynamics of techniques that have filtered down into the training manuals of activists. How do people with the tools of nonviolence effectively counter unjust policies, oppressive domestic regimes, and foreign threats to a society's security? The goal is to effect changes - sometimes radical ones - but they do not challenge the fundamental way in which society is structured. Even nonviolently toppling an autocratic regime and establishing more democratic institutions will not lead to a revolutionary transition unless nonviolent principles of revolution, such as economic self-reliance and devolution of power, have been incorporated into the strategy and carried over into the new society. Confining nonviolence to the techniques of resistance may ameliorate conditions and make life more bearable, but there is case after case to demonstrate that the basic social system of beliefs and behaviour has remained untouched.

Seldom has nonviolent strategy been integrated into the proposal of an alternative vision of social arrangements that supersedes the existing system of capitalism. Without explicitly seeking to overthrow capitalism, there have been some isolated attempts to create nonviolent communities that defy the structures and values of capitalism. Gandhi, for instance, advanced the goal of *sarvodaya*, a society of village democracy and economic self-reliance. The Anabaptist upheavals of the 16th century led to the development of religious/pacifist enclaves of self-sufficiency. And novelist Leo Tolstoy drew on early Christian practices of nonviolence to advocate an anarchist lifestyle. Moreover, at the secular level a nonviolent way of life was recently introduced into an urban community in Philadelphia known as 'The New Society.' Yet none of these or any other nonviolent experiment was specifically designed

or imagined to provide a contender (like socialism) that would replace capitalism.

Martin notes the demise of violent revolutionary socialism as exemplified in Lenin's attempts to impose socialism via a vanguard party. He also records the attrition of electoral socialism, as it became increasingly more reformist, evolving into social democracy before reaching its present effete form of 'New Labour'. Gone are any pretenses of advocating socialist policies. Instead, the modern labour party competes with the other major party as a better and perhaps fairer manager of capitalism. With the two major socialist strands, both of which always relied on the violence of the state, lying in ruins with virtually no chance of revitalisation — and capitalism more globally pervasive, stronger, more oppressive and militarily more dangerous than ever — the case for exploring an overall nonviolent strategy to depose capitalism with the alternative of a nonviolent society has never been more urgent.

While such a project may initially appear to be 'tilting at windmills,' Martin's book is a good place for progressive-minded people to begin the long haul of debate. For those concerned individuals who can envisage something better than the exclusionary, anti-humanitarian and violence-obsessed world into which we are fast descending — indeed, some would say have already sunk — Martin's carefully crafted argument provides a grain of hope. He puts forward five basic principles that form the criteria of a nonviolent society and must be incorporated into the strategy for achieving it. They are

1. 'Cooperation, rather than competition, should be the foundation for activity.'
2. 'People with the greatest needs should have priority in the distribution of social production.'
3. 'Satisfying work should be available to everyone who wants it.'
4. 'The system should be designed and run by the people themselves, rather than authorities or experts.'
5. 'The system should be based on nonviolence' (pp. 49-50).

Since local situations and contexts differ, these principles do not comprise an ironclad formula that Martin feels must be followed in all circumstances. '(T)here is no automatic path to the "correct" action' (p. 184). As the above Principle 4 highlights, decisions should be determined by widespread participation. However, there may be occasions for the grassroots to defer to a small group when secrecy and specialisation are required to safeguard lives and enhance effectiveness. Thus, judicious balance, flexibility and nuance need to be built into the principles without rendering them meaningless.

The same applies to a checklist that Martin has

drawn up for activists to use in determining whether their nonviolent campaign is being conducted successfully against capitalism. The list contains the following:

- Does the campaign help to eliminate the violence built into capitalism, to undermine capitalism's legitimacy, and to provide a nonviolent alternative to capitalism?
- Does the campaign draw on a wide participation?
- Are the methods and goals compatible?
- Is the campaign immune from cooptation? (p. 109).

Helpful as this checklist may be, Martin admits that it may take decades or centuries to transform capitalism into a humane system. Instead of taking the historically proven disastrous course of an attempted quick revolutionary fix, he proposes that activists 'think of strategies that bring short-term improvements while contributing to long-term change' (p. 108). He sums up his nonviolent position with the modest observation:

Rather than saying that we live in a capitalist society, it may be better to say that we live in a society with many capitalistic aspects. The goal then is to oppose and replace the damaging capitalist aspects while promoting positive noncapitalist aspects. The challenge is to make this a sustainable process (p. 185).

While I find it difficult to dispute this call for staging a persistent and intelligent nonviolent campaign against the iniquitous aspects of capitalism, there seems to be a necessary ingredient in his scheme that is missing. And without this ingredient the proposal lacks a degree of credibility. I am referring to the fact that there is no theoretical exposition of a universal, cohesive class or group around which an opposition can be realistically mobilised. Where is the class basis for a transition to a new paradigm? Where are the people whose interests are so adversely affected by global capitalism that they stand out clearly as the prospective agents of change? On the face of it, the obvious candidates (the environmentalists, globally downtrodden, organised labour) manifest too many cross-cutting cleavages, or struggle in desperate isolation, or must contend with a declining constituency. Hence their roles as revolutionary agents to challenge capitalism and its commodity-driven paradigm are extremely problematic.

Despite featuring separate chapters on 'Environmental campaigns' and 'Global issues', Martin has failed to outline why and how these aggrieved victims and their sympathisers will gain a collective consciousness to give voice to their class predicament. Yet until a designated group or class can be singled out and mobilised to spearhead the nonviolent revolution, Martin's principles and checklist regarding goal and action — while very useful guidelines to observe — will not in themselves provide the hope to galvanise a movement and the theory to indicate its direction.

Still, what he has done is to take nonviolence along a new and promising scholarly route, by offering practical signposts for activists to consider. He, I am sure, would be the first to concur that he has only built a platform from which to launch the necessary fuller debate and programmes of action to follow.

RALPH SUMMY
The University of Queensland

Global Democracy Difficult but not Impossible

Duncan Kerr (2001)

Elect the Ambassador! Building Democracy in a Globalised World. Pluto Press, Australia. ISBN 1-86403-132-8 9 (pbk). pp. ix+194. \$32. 95

All citizens who share or hope to share in the democratic government of their nation, also have rights to share 'in the democratic control of international affairs'. The idealistic thesis of Duncan Kerr's concise examination of the structures, strategies and stumbling blocks of globalisation is founded on the experience and insight gained as an international lawyer specialising in constitutional and administrative law, and as Attorney General and Minister for Justice in the Keating Labor Government. Kerr, before the November election, was Opposition spokesperson on Justice and Customs, Population, Immigration, Multicultural Affairs, the Environment and the Arts. From these perspectives he confronts the question posed by the rise of the One Nation Party: 'Why do people who have won the democratic right to choose their own leaders feel powerless and alienated?'

Elect the Ambassador! suggests how and why this has happened, and also suggests ten practical proposals towards halting the erosion of democratic processes in the era of globalisation. Needed even more urgently as scepticism and cynicism corrode Australian public political confidence in 2002, the book succinctly explains the most significant ramifications of globalised economics and politics to enlighten even a reader without any prior knowledge of economic and political theories. Argued with balanced detail, and reinforced by undisputed facts and figures, *Elect the Ambassador!* is more than a reliable text-book (which it is). It offers hope and inspiration to those caught between frenetic belief in the new cargo cult called globalisation and paranoid rejection of the globalised world.

As a social democrat, Kerr acknowledges the threat that globalisation poses to many social programs pursued by social democratic parties (state provisions

Review Article

Nonviolent Struggle in a Globalising World

JASON MCLEOD

(La Trobe University)

Technology for Nonviolent Struggle

Brian Martin (London: War Resisters' International, 2001), 160 pp.

Nonviolence versus Capitalism

Brian Martin (London: War Resisters' International, 2001), 187 pp.

Brian Martin's two latest books, *Technology for Nonviolent Struggle* and *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism*, make insightful and original contributions to the fields of nonviolence and social defence, which will benefit academics and activists alike. Brian Martin was born in the USA in 1947 and initially trained as an applied mathematician. A prolific author, he has written numerous books and articles on science, technology and nonviolent action since the late 1970s. In fact, the creative tension sparked by Martin's ability to straddle multiple disciplines in the fields of science, technology and the humanities has produced enormous practical and theoretical insight, particularly in the area of social defence: the nonviolent means of defending a community or a 'way of life' which aim to replace the military and encompass both defence against repression as well as struggles to build a society without oppression. Brian Martin is currently an associate professor in science, technology and society at the University of Wollongong, Australia.

Technology for Nonviolent Struggle

Martin's central argument in *Technology for Nonviolent Struggle* is that, like armed struggle or war, nonviolence has a significant technological dimension that all too often is overlooked. Martin argues that nonviolent action is an extremely powerful way of bringing about social change, 'indeed so powerful that it can be a possible alternative to military defence' (p. 7.). He goes on to say that although research and development by those in the science and technology fields has been overwhelmingly orientated towards the military, technology can be reoriented, converted and created to support nonviolent action. This stands in direct contrast with popular images of nonviolent activists opposing technology. Gandhi's simplicity and his insistence that spinning is a means for achieving Indian independence, for instance, are often used to argue that nonviolent activists are somehow inherently opposed to technology. Actually, Gandhi was not opposed to technology *per se*, but technology that concentrates wealth and power in the hands of fewer people and technology that robs the ability of the masses to meet their own needs. The point in this is that technology is never neutral and all technology has certain biases. For instance, though a knife can be used for many different purposes including many useful ones, it would be hard to imagine a nuclear warhead or a landmine having a variety of socially useful purposes. At the same time the purpose of some technology can be adapted. Martin

points to the internet, for example, which was originally developed by the US military and now is one of the most participatory forms of media available.

I was surprised to read the extent to which technology had played significant roles in nonviolent struggle. In Czechoslovakia, a sophisticated radio network was used 'to broadcast messages of resistance, to warn about impending arrests, to counsel the use of nonviolent methods, to tell where troops were headed, and to call a meeting of the Czechoslovak communist party' (p. 75). Similarly, in 1961 technology decisively influenced the outcome of a coup staged by French generals in Algeria, angry at the French president de Gaulle's support for Algerian independence. When French conscripts in Algeria, loyal to de Gaulle, heard his passionate broadcast urging troops to refuse to cooperate with the coup, on their transistor radios, many stayed in their barracks or turned up to duty but failed to do anything. At the same time one-third of fighter pilots flew their planes out of the country. 'The coup collapsed after four days without a shot being fired against it' (p. 75). Nonviolent resistance movements have also used other types of communication technology successfully. Audio cassettes containing speeches by Ayatollah Khomeini and other religious leaders galvanized resistance in Iran during the struggle to overthrow the Shah (p. 79) and video footage of the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor, smuggled out of the country and aired around the world, was decisive in turning the Indonesian occupation into an international 'public relations disaster' (p. 80).

Martin also systematically looks at the role of other communication technologies and techniques in nonviolent struggle, including newspapers, leaflets and the underground press, telephone and fax, the post, conversations and meetings, and computer networks. Martin highlights the role technology can play in nonviolent strategy and the way technology can be used strategically to strengthen the 'centre of gravity' of the resistance: the sum total of social resources that support the nonviolent struggle. Although repressive technology can undermine this centre of gravity, technology can certainly reinforce the ability and will of the defence to conduct the struggle and undermine the opponent's centre of gravity by persuading the opponent's supporters and passive third parties (often through intermediaries) to withdraw their support from the opponent (p. 66). This is essentially what happened in Czechoslovakia, Algeria and East Timor.

Of course many of these examples have been discussed extensively in the literature. What Martin does, however, is link the role of technology in nonviolent struggle to communication and nonviolence theory, discussing how technology aids or limits the dynamics of nonviolence in bringing about change. Drawing on the theory of Habermas and insights from Galtung, Weber and other theorists, Martin argues that 'communication technologies that foster or enable dialogue are more useful for the purposes of nonviolent action than those that inhibit dialogue' (p. 92). However, in situations of unequal power, where dialogue in the absence of domination is simply not possible, technology can communicate the message and integrity of the nonviolent resisters as well as the repression of the opponent to third parties who may be persuaded to support the resisters. This was certainly the case with the famous nonviolent raid on the Dharasana salt works by Gandhi's followers in 1930. The eyewitness reports by journalists like Web Miller that were broadcasted around the world were enormously successful in undermining the legitimacy of British rule in India. Martin concludes that in situations of unequal power, 'communication between intermediaries is often more effective than direct communication between unequals' (p. 92). The crucial thing is to make both the nonviolent resistance and the repression visible.

Martin not only focuses on the importance of communication with the opponent and third parties, but also emphasises the importance of communication among the resistance and assesses the role technology can play in this, arguing that the 'denser the interlinkings

of the communication network, the greater the ease of dialogical communication' (p. 93). He concludes by suggesting that 'one-directional media are selectively useful for oppression and network media are successfully useful for resistance to oppression' (p. 95). The critical factors when assessing the usefulness of communication technologies for nonviolent resistance against repression are accessibility, ease of use, the difficulty for dominators to control communication, and the ability for large numbers of people to develop the skills to decentralise communication (p. 95).

In addition to resisting repression, attention is also given to the role of technology in building a society free from oppression. Technologies that can be decentralised, are accessible, easy to use and support self-reliance will most usefully aid nonviolent movements working towards a society that is socially just and ecologically sustainable. Unfortunately, *Technology for Nonviolent Struggle* does not detail the types of technology that could facilitate greater movement towards local community-based self-reliance. However, Brian Martin does make it clear that more linkages need to be created between people active in the fields of sustainability and those committed to active nonviolence.

Attention is also given to recent dramatic advances in militarized technology that pose a number of challenges for nonviolent activists. This technology presents new challenges to nonviolent action, and more coverage of this point would have been helpful. Martin does, however, devote substantial space to identifying the priorities and obstacles to further research and development on technology and social defence and shows how scientists and engineers have prioritised violence over nonviolent defence and other socially usefully areas of research. With a budget even one-tenth of that devoted to military research and development, enormous advances in nonviolent struggle could be made. In this regard the book certainly promotes the expansion of nonviolent struggle to a variety of professions, particularly those in the fields of science and engineering. One can only hope they read it.

Nonviolence versus Capitalism

Given the recent re-emergence of a mass grassroots movement against corporate-led globalisation and neoliberal economic policies and the reality that this movement has been influenced by, and incorporated elements of, nonviolent action and nonviolence theory into its organisation and tactics, the publication of *Nonviolence versus Capitalism* is indeed timely. Martin argues that 'nonviolent action is the most promising method for moving beyond capitalism to a more humane social and economic system' (p. 2). Martin begins by summarising the success of nonviolent action and the theory that supports it. He analyses the strengths and problems of capitalism from the standpoint of nonviolence strategy and reviews conventional anti-capitalist strategies, particularly state socialism and socialist electoral strategies. Martin's beginning point for outlining the contribution nonviolence could make to dismantling capitalism is to firstly discuss the various alternatives to capitalism. He then looks at building up an activist-relevant theory from there. Alternatives to capitalism are assessed against a set of five principles: cooperation, identifying people with the greatest needs who should have priority in the distribution of social production, satisfying work, a system that is designed and run by people themselves rather than authorities or experts, and, lastly, the principle that any alternative to capitalism should be based on nonviolence (pp. 48–50). Various nonviolent strategies and campaigns against capitalism are then assessed and evaluated against the following strategy checklist: Does the campaign help to undermine the violent underpinnings of capitalism, or undermine the legitimacy of capitalism, or build a nonviolent alternative to capitalism? Is the campaign participatory? Are the campaign's goals built into its methods? And is the campaign resistant to cooption? (pp. 108–112.) These principles and the nonviolent strategy checklist

certainly make a valuable contribution to nonviolent campaigns. Martin continues by discussing and evaluating a range of strategies used against capitalism including workers' struggles, sabotage, environmental campaigns, social defence and economic alternatives as strategies. Global campaigns against capitalism including the campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, campaigns against genetically modified organisms and the campaign for free software are also discussed and examined.

The major problem of capitalism from the viewpoint of nonviolence is that capitalism is a system of organised violence, backed up by the state: the laws, police, courts, prisons and ultimately the military. Martin acknowledges that, except for a few activists and theorists who have advocated and struggled for nonviolent revolution, capitalism has been neglected by many nonviolence writers and theorists who have used nonviolence more to reform capitalism than to oppose it. Martin explains that one reason for this has been that nonviolent action has been based on the 'consent theory of power' (pp. 35–39).

The consent theory of power works best when there is an obvious oppressor, but this is not the case in this context. Although there may be direct domination of workers by a single employer, more often than not power under capitalism is diffused. The consent theory of power, particularly the analysis popularised by Gene Sharp, also neglects the role of structures in maintaining oppression. The other problem is that capitalism is extremely resilient. Not only does it coopt and commodify dissent, but the system of exchange built into capitalism, based on markets for goods, services and labour, strengthens capitalism because each party is both giving and receiving. Because of the system of ownership and exchange built into capitalism and the way this is reinforced by the power of the state, 'there are few obvious "opponents" who by their actions could change the system' (p. 14). Despite its shortcomings, however, Martin argues that the consent theory of power is well suited to nonviolent activists because it 'immediately implies that individuals can make a difference' simply by withdrawing their consent and cooperation from oppression (p. 39). To address the limitations of the consent theory of power, Martin proposes that a nonviolent analysis of capitalism needs to incorporate both a structural analysis of capitalism as well as in-depth research that analyses local systems of power (p. 39).

The alternatives to capitalism outlined in Chapter 5 (*sarvodaya*, anarchism, voluntaryism and demarchy) are certainly not exhaustive; however, the principles by which alternatives and strategies are assessed provide a useful framework from which an analysis and strategy of action can be developed and evaluated. The key advantage of nonviolent strategies for dismantling capitalism is the degree to which the goals of any nonviolent strategy are contained in the means. My major criticism of *Nonviolence versus Capitalism* is that Martin's analysis of capitalism is quite general. The way capitalism is manifested at the level of individual attitudes and behaviours and local communities is not adequately examined. Nor are strategies at the level of individuals, communities and small collectives discussed in much detail. Martin acknowledges this limitation. There is also only limited discussion about how capitalism interlocks with and reinforces other systems of oppression. However, Martin does make the point that 'there is no need to decide which issue is most important. All systems of domination need to be challenged and transformed. Capitalism is certainly one of them, and that is sufficient rationale for developing a nonviolent strategy against it' (p. 63).

The only other comment I would add concerning the two books is that neither contains an index or bibliography, which certainly would have been helpful. On the positive side Brian Martin has made both books available for free on the Internet—a globalising technology that can aid nonviolent struggle and a nonviolent action that undermines the commodification of knowledge and information built into capitalism. To access the books, go to www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/.

failed to seize the significance of the events as they took place echoes the criticisms offered throughout situationist literature.

The texts by Vaneigem and Debord do not focus on May 1968 (both were written years earlier), but give the reader a chance to get to know the writings of these two men, the most significant authors of the movement. "The Totality for Kids" (also more accurately known as "Basic Banalities") reveals the scope and perspective of Raoul Vaneigem's writing. Vaneigem is the more — dare I say it? — "spiritual" of the two, focusing on alienation in human relationships (to work, to each other, to oneself). His work is literary, scholarly, and speaks in a language thick with metaphors. He makes frequent references to the "mythologies" of policies or organizations, or writes in terms of "the sacred" and "sacrifice." His work remains as politically significant as any produced by the SI, but couched in terms unusual for political theory. This preoccupation can be seen in his later work as well, from *The Movement of the Free Spirit* to *Pour une internationale du genre humain*.

Debord writes on the Watts riots, and attempts to provide an analysis of the events as a truly revolutionary, spontaneous moment. Reading Debord in the context of commenting on concrete events — as opposed to more abstract, general political theory — is a good way to work up to the later *Society of the Spectacle*, a dense but very important work.

Beneath the Paving Stones closes with a smattering of documents produced by various organizations during the events of May, providing insight into the thoughts and actions of student committees of the time. The book is also peppered with photos and illustrations from those days, some inspiring shots of massive demonstrations and some notable poster designs.

So, while not an original work — many of these texts are already available elsewhere — this is a fine collection of situationist writing, and a well-selected anthology. Some of the translations suffer a bit from not having been revised since their original publication in the early 1970s (even Ken Knabb, who translated much of the work, has updated his translations since then), but on the whole they are quite readable, and certainly worthwhile.

Beneath the Paving Stones: Situationists and the Beach, May 1968. Edited by Dark Star. San Francisco: AK Press, 2001. 120pp.

Brian Martin

Nonviolence Versus Capitalism

Reviewer: Camy Matthay

Brian Martin's new book *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism* is a powerful and cogent argument for the value of using nonviolent action as strategy for moving beyond capitalism.

Why should we move beyond capitalism? The choir of anti-capitalists could list hundreds of reasons. Environmentalists will tell you how it is undermining biological diversity, depleting resources, scarring the earth, and destroying traditional cultures. Moralists and socialists will tell you that it is producing economic inequality on a massive scale. Labor activists will call attention to the lack of control workers have over their wages and working conditions. Prison activists, at least here in the U.S., will tell you that the high percentage of people incarcerated is the default of a system that creates poverty. And the list goes on. Even apologists who point out how capitalism spurs great achievements falter when many of these achievements are compared with humane objectives they've eclipsed.

Consider the cliché about the country that could send men to the moon but couldn't solve the problem of homelessness. It rankled, but then, here we are thirty-three years later living with the same conditions that "helped" so many Americans tolerate those sorts of astonishing disparities.

Of course, it is untrue that we cannot solve the problems of homelessness and other bad things — and solve them forever — here in the U.S. and everywhere else on the planet. It is just that we will not. We don't know how to expend our resources in a humanitarian way because capitalism focuses our attention in a singular way that has become so omnipresent we wear it like our skin. Homelessness, hunger, injustice — we've been living with these conditions for so long that we accept them as inevitable like SUVs, clear cuts, sweatshops, dioxin, earnings-per-share, scented kitty litter, and CEOs. The arrangements of life we have become accustomed to are not givens even though people socialized under the current competitive, selfish culture find it difficult to think outside the box, to imagine other possibilities. I clearly remember my own shock and delight when my 4 year old son asked me why libraries for clothes didn't exist. And why not? Why not experiment with new arrangements in life?

We live under many hegemonic illusions. We need to have it explained to us that capitalism is almost synonymous with violence — even requires violence. We would do well, Martin writes, to see the overriding system as clearly as we can, to understand how capitalism keeps itself in business. And, since we don't sail away from the status quo on analysis or doctrinal purity, we must figure out which alternatives are worth pursuing. Social change has to develop in an open way from real situations. "It is no good just being against capitalism without an idea of what is going to be better," writes Martin. We need to have some grasp — however tenuous — of where we are going, of what is going to be better.

If the goal is a world with far less suffering, a nonviolent future, it is imperative that these dreams are shared and refined in concrete terms. In light of this, Martin presents descriptions of four alternative systems that are explicitly constructed on non-violent foundations. His examples include: Sarvodaya, the Gandhian ideal of self-sufficient village democracy (a lifestyle being practiced by over six million people in India and Sri Lanka), an anarchistic model of decentralized direct collective control over all the affairs of life and relationship, voluntaryism — a spin off of libertarianism that is based on cooperative relationships in a market economy, and demarchy — a sociopolitical model which presents a non-coercive and localized solution to the participation dilemma associated with direct democracy.

Martin then evaluates these alternatives against conditions he believes a non-violent society should fulfill. These conditions or principles are: cooperation; altruism (that's my word — Martin says "people with the greatest needs should have priority in the distribution of social production"); satisfying work; inclusivity (Martin says "the system should be designed and run by the people themselves, not by authorities or experts"); and nonviolence. This list is not set in stone or exclusive though it probably includes the most salient and powerful principles. Martin points out, for example, that the principle of nonviolence alone would be "quite sufficient to rule out most [formal market] economic systems, real or ideal." A statement so stunning and fertile I felt like Alice after she had dropped into the bunny hole.

The first words in *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism* are: "Nonviolent action is the most promising method of moving beyond capitalism to a more humane social and economic system." How does he justify this claim? Not on moral grounds — though Martin understands that that alone is enough for some people — but on the grounds that the most prominent alternatives to capitalism that were pursued in the 1900s, namely, state socialism and social electoralism, were tried and they consistently failed. Furthermore, since socialist

alternatives rely, as capitalism does, on the power of the state, and hence, ultimately on violence for control of society, nonviolence deserves a chance.

As unfashionable as it may be to say so in "left field," I think it is absurd to claim "that the ends justify the means" when the means fracture trust in the expectation of a more stable and less destructive future. I'm with Bertha von Suttner, the Nobel Peace laureate who said nearly a century ago: "Only a fool would try to remove an ink spot with more ink, or an oil spot with oil; how can anyone believe that blood stains can be removed by shedding more blood?"

One might even ask what use it is to achieve a cooperative classless society or any socialist alternative, if political and economic stability is maintained by the threat of state violence? One form of domination would simply replace a previous form. Under these conditions of social control, would it mean anything then if the commissars of the new order claimed their system was more enlightened?

Violent strategies, in multiplying suffering to achieve their goal, are unlikely to achieve a less destructive society since they are known to perpetuate cycles of violent retribution. Those who argue that these conditions "are only natural" fail to recognize that cooperation, community, and freedom are also conditions of nature from which we evolved — powerful ones that perhaps should be universally recognized as inalienable. Under capitalism, however, cooperation, community and freedom are subjugated to the ideology of individual material gain. These conditions are suppressed not only because they cannot be commodified, but because they are beautiful and compelling enough to derail people from the mainstream agenda.

Unlike violent strategies where many social ills are not addressed until "after the revolution," in nonviolent strategy, features of the sought-after goal are built into means so that, as Martin wrote, "if one believes in a cooperative, egalitarian, nonviolent economic future, in which priority is given to serving those in greatest need, then a nonviolent strategy cannot be too damaging, because it incorporates those features in its methods...its methods are compatible with its goal."

Additionally, unlike military or guerrilla tactics that typically place a premium on recruiting or drafting young men, anyone regardless of their age, gender, or fitness can volunteer. Responsibility for the "movement" would be with the people themselves, rather than authorities or experts.

Nonviolent action is also a multipurpose approach to social change, i.e., it can be effectively used against other systems of domination, such as state repression, racism, patriarchy, and the domination of nature. And, since more of the population can be mobilized in a participatory fashion than in "legitimate" violent channels, changes are likely to be more lasting and more transformative.

The most valuable part of *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism* may be the suggestions Martin offers on how to assess the anti-capitalistic merits of various campaigns such as environmental issues, workers' rights, etc. Though Martin admits that a campaign might be extremely important even though it doesn't directly oppose capitalism, his method of assessment, which he condenses into a few sobering questions, is for a specific anti-capitalistic purpose and as such has tremendous value to those who are interested in determining whether or not a strategy merely tweaks the status quo by subtractive and additive reforms, or promotes revolutionary changes that would effectively challenge the underpinnings of capitalism. A strike for higher pay, for example, can be valuable to exploited workers but it does not challenge the asymmetry of power in the relationship between employers and workers. A strategy aimed to give workers control over what they produce and what they would charge for their labor, however, is quite different since it challenges, among other things, the legitimacy of hierarchical relations. In a similar critique of nonviolent strategy, Martin points out how "withdrawal of consent as a nonviolent tactic can be used to change relationships to means of production, but revolutionary change is not just a matter of withdrawing consent from a particular factory owner, but of withdrawing consent from ownership itself."

Although factory owners, corporate directors, CEOs, etc., may be the master thieves, they are nonetheless not the capitalist machine. We are all both guests and hosts in the Market-Economy Hotel. Expending energy to modify the behavior of those in the penthouse has proven to be generally useless (e.g., see Michael Moore's film *The Big One*). Identifying and killing those who dominate and exploit is a "clear the slate" strategy that presents troubling problems not the least of which is the fact that it attracts extremists who, under some illusion of being in possession of the "true way," practice a kind of despotic self-righteousness.

At this late date, bombing the shit out of the Hotel is tantamount to collective suicide. What is really going to matter is how carefully the hotel is dismantled, and if the numbers of people effectively challenging the legitimacy of capitalism can reach a tipping point. This is no small thing, not only because of the difficulties associated with challenging intricately distributed systems of domination, but because technocratic societies produce a surfeit of info-tainment and disinformation. In fact, the system for producing "unreality" has become so pervasive that critical thinking about the whole commodity system is foreshortened. Desires for wealth and material items, which most modern people subjectively feel, are carefully molded by the system to maintain the constant economic growth which capitalism requires.

Beyond the mystifications of consumerism, capitalism is also sustained by belief systems including property, entitlement, individualism, as well as everyday

behaviors including selfishness, status enhancement, the pursuit of autonomy, and so on. The media, culture, state education, etc., all support this psychological environment because it enhances the goals of the capitalist system.

As desires are homogenized, other ways of organizing economic and social life are extinguished. Even more threatening is that in affluent societies, as Hans Magnus Enzensberger pointed out, "what is in danger of being abolished is not exploitation, but our awareness of it... That this state of affairs is readily accepted and voluntarily endured is the greatest achievement of the mind industry." Indeed, as Jerry Farber put it: "Capitalism is institutionalized selfishness, institutionalized blindness, institutionalized theft. The blindness, naturally, we don't see. And the theft is so thoroughly disguised that most of the victims will fight for their right to be robbed."

Much understanding is required to challenge a system of domination capable of promoting the most artful deceptions in its own self-interest. Perhaps the most important thing that is going to matter in the struggle against capitalism, its votaries, and the blindness it instills, is numbers. That is, numbers of people who are enchanted enough with the possibility of a more humane social reality (than the one capitalism has constructed) to be true to the task of developing local initiatives that are designed with respect to collectively addressed questions such as "How would I really like to live? In what kind of society (or non-society) would I feel most comfortable? In what kind of system can individuals live up to themselves?"

The struggle ahead will be difficult. Not much help could be expected from those who have been the greatest beneficiaries of capitalism. Mainstream people tend to dismiss opportunities to have what Hundertwasser called "an organic mode of life" because it is too alien, "it starts much too inconspicuously... there is no *éclat*, no quick fix, it grows very slowly like grass... and that does not correspond to our social order which expects performance, output, result, and immediate success." Many individuals who have been the most dedicated to anti-capitalistic ideology have tended to be hostile to nonviolent strategy. I've suspected, as Martin does, that in many cases the antagonism is likely due to the absence of a privileged place for anyone in nonviolent strategy. Many socialists as well as many members of vanguard parties perceive nonviolence as weak and even "antirevolutionary," since revolutionary strategy, ever since Lenin, is assumed to involve violent overthrow of the ruling class. A Marxist I know — not so much in defense of violent means, but to denigrate nonviolent strategy — said to me: "You think that when push comes to shove, the class that rules will just gladly hand over the reigns of power?" This question, while revealing the presumption that nonviolence is akin to moral persuasion — something like making obsequious appeals to the rich at cocktail parties, when posed rhetorically, does no justice to intelligent civic dialogue.

The answer I could have offered — with a deep bow to Karl Polyani — goes something like this: Prior to the market, exchanges were deeply embedded in social life, in culture, and were often determined by kinship relations, by rites of passage and stages in the life cycle, by gift relationships, by religious rites and ceremonies, by social standing, by long-standing trade agreements between geographical regions and so on. All these relationships are retrievable, inventible, and fluid enough to be adapted to local needs and conditions. New ways of organizing social life are within our grasp, but they cannot be forced — neither by legal prescription, coercive ideology, or moral scolding... They must just be compelling enough for people to volunteer to live that way.

True to my own experience, if you create a context where you can offer people a glimpse of this: basic life support, community, cooperation, and freedom, you will awaken in them a longing for forgotten harmonies so powerful that they cannot be ignored. This dimension of life, so different than the construct of civilization we were born to — and that so many of us are discovering — is like a contagion in our souls.

Nonviolence is a *method of waging conflict*. It is not mere passive resistance, far more than a precautionary principle, and no more neutral than a gun.

Given the events of Sept. 11th 2001 and the raging inferno of discussions it provoked about violence, retribution, and injustices, this book — as a workbook of nonviolent theory and strategy — is uncannily timely. And yet, a text on nonviolence would have been just as timely 10 years ago, 1000 years ago — hell, ever since we stepped out of the “Garden.” The particular merit of Martin’s argument today is in application against the tyranny of capitalism. Although nonviolence has been used extensively in all sort of settings, against state repression, military dictatorships, colonialism and racism, and although a number of social movements have made nonviolent action an integral part of their campaigns, capitalism has never specifically been targeted.

This is an auspicious time: transitional or terminal, I am still undecided. But Martin’s book has given me hope, and he has earned my infinite respect, in that his book — the writing itself — models the faith in human rationality that I believe would be a principle feature of a post-capitalistic world. That is, a world that has removed all removable injustices, extended civil associations beyond coercive institutions and states, and accepted the necessity to defend a biocentric ethic which takes Life more seriously than individual gain.

Nonviolence Versus Capitalism by Brian Martin. London: War Resisters’ International, 2001 ISBN 0903517 19 1 (Available free on the web in html and pdf at: <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/01nvc/>)

Working on this issue

Cindy Milstein is a faculty member at the Institute for Social Ecology (www.social-ecology.org), a board member for the Institute for Anarchist Studies (flag.blackened.net/ias), and a columnist for *Arsenal: A Magazine of Anarchist Strategy and Culture* (www.azone.org/arsenal). She can be reached at cbmilstein@aol.com. **Jason Adams** comes to us by email. His submission on the World Social Forum was to be printed in *Z Magazine*, but found a home here. **Howard J. Ehrlich** is the editor of SA and is also a member of the editorial group of the Baltimore Independent Media Center. He is presently working on a collection of his political essays.

Earl Coleman turned to writing full time ten years ago at the age of 75 (although he’d written and been published all his life). Since then he’s been published widely and been nominated for Pushcart twice for short stories. **Kingsley Widmer**, our most prolific contributor and advisory editor, is a literary critic now in retirement from San Diego State University. **Michael Bacon** lives and writes in New Jersey where he works with the homeless and people with AIDS. He made his first appearance in SA in 1985.

Tom Coyens makes his first contribution to SA in this issue. He is a graduate student at the University of Leuven, Belgium working on a dissertation about immigrant anarchists in New York City. He is currently living in Williamsburg where he and friends run an infoshop. **Lawrence Taylor** is currently a researcher with the Departamento de Estudios Culturales, at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. His work focuses on the history of the US–Mexico borderlands region and the Mexican Revolutionary period from 1910–1920.

Dave Westby is the author of *The Growth of Sociological Theory* and is one of our advisory editors. He has been studying social movements since the days of SDS. **Linda Pinkow** has been involved in alternative media for more than 20 years. She currently produces news and anarchist infotainment programs on WMBR in Cambridge, Mass. **Richard Kostelanetz** has published *Political Essays* (Autonomedia) in addition to *Radio Writings* (Further States of the Art). **a.h.s. boy** is an Associate Editor and designer of *Social Anarchism*, and tech geek for the Baltimore IMC. **Camy Matthay** is a writer, activist and unschooling mother who lives in Brooklyn, Wisconsin. She has been trying to make up her own mind for at least 20 years. She has never worn nylons.

freedom cannot be a possession of many. Since Machiavelli, it has been the usual practice of all states inspiring to "greatness" to rely and depend on methods of deceit and diplomacy. There is no doubt that economic power certainly helps one to gain other forms of power.

The key to social development is not to be found in class struggle alone. On any long-term view of the matter, success or failure of traditional a society depends, among other things, on a change in the cultural climate of society. The modern age is reputed to have a rational temper.

He attributes fame in the history of our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to a single factor of the foundation of parliamentary democracy. Of course, Gandhi wanted to build Indian democracy on the theory of oceanic circles. He thought that village should be a basic unit of development. People's active participation must become a key process of all development plans and programmes including implementation and evaluation.

In large democracies, power gets centralised, the administration and judicial processes become cumbersome and complicated, and the bureaucracy gets the upper hand. This has led to corruption in public life, and the smothering of people's initiative by the soulless power of the state, Professor Rostov of Texas University regards the survival of Indian democracy as the most important phenomenon of the post-war era.

The message of the book is that in the process of liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation [LPG], poor people have been marginalised. The spinning of situation should not be allowed to go out of control.

The essays contained in the book are thought-provoking and give a graphic understanding of the past, the present, and the future. However, they lack in academic rigour which has been the forte of Professor Amlan Datta. There is a lot of repetition which could have been avoided by a systematic classification and editing.

Despite this deficiency, the book provides an excellent analysis and provides a thoughtful material for policy-makers, politicians, Gandhian activists, and people at large. Some of the warnings given in the essays, if heeded, will help us not only to fight but to rise above a lower level of our decadence and degradation to which we have reached now. Let India not become a caricature of the noble democracy which our forefathers strove to bring to life. There is a pressing need to continually recharge people to respond to the changing need and demand of dynamics of society. His advice is be open to ideas and concepts. The practice of meditation will create spirituality and mental peace. This will enable us to overcome a negative approach to life.

In the process of civilising man has reached a stage where all the niceties of life are judged according to their utility. Thus men have become mere objects of utility. According to Professor Giriffith: "The art of politics is to persuade people that they are making decisions while ensuring that they do not." Technology enhances this illusion further. In his *Dynamics of Culture*, Sorokin has mentioned that in the past 900 years most of the countries were involved in warfare 50 per cent of the time. Fighting,

according to him, seems so natural with the human temperament that no amount of education can cure this universal malady. The book tells us not to reduce ourselves to narrow nationalism but to rise to universalism to consider the whole world as a single family. There is no scope for despair in our goal to achieve universal brotherhood, harmony, and peace.

K.D. Gangrade

Brian Martin, *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism*, War Resisters' International, London, 2001, Pp. 167

Who, after all, thinks that the road to Heaven is paved with blood?

Brian Martin's new book, *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism*, is a powerful and cogent argument for the value of using nonviolent action as a strategy for moving beyond capitalism.

Why should we move beyond capitalism? The choir of anti-capitalists could list hundreds of reasons. Environmentalists will tell us how it is undermining biological diversity, depleting resources, scarring the earth, and destroying traditional cultures. Moralists and socialists will tell us that it is producing economic inequality on a massive scale. Labour activists will call attention to the lack of control workers have over their wages and working conditions. Prison activists, at least in the United States, will tell you that the high percentage of people incarcerated is the default of a system that creates poverty. And the list goes on. Even apologists who point out how capitalism spurs great achievements falter when many of these achievements are compared with humane objectives they have eclipsed.

If the goal is a world with far less suffering, a nonviolent future, it is imperative that people's dreams are shared and refined in concrete terms. In the light of this, Brian Martin presents descriptions of four alternative systems that are explicitly constructed on nonviolent foundations. His examples include: Sarvodaya, the Gandhian ideal of self-sufficient village democracy (a lifestyle being practised by over six million people in India and Sri Lanka), an anarchistic model of decentralized direct collective control over all the affairs of life and relationships, voluntarism—a spin-off of libertarianism that is based on cooperative relationships in a market economy, and demarchy—and a socio-political model which presents a non-coercive and localized solution to the participation dilemma associated with direct democracy.

Martin then evaluates these alternatives against conditions he believes a nonviolent society should fulfil. These conditions or principles are: cooperation; altruism (that's my word, Martin says "people with the greatest needs should have priority in the distribution of social production);

satisfying work; inclusivity (Martin says "the system should be designed and run by the people themselves, not by authorities or experts"); and nonviolence. This list is not set in stone or exclusive, though it probably includes the most salient and powerful principles. Martin points out, for example, that the principle of nonviolence alone would be "quite sufficient to rule out most [formal market] economic systems, real or ideal." This is a statement so stunning and fertile that I felt like Alice after she had dropped into the bunny hole.

The first words in *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism* are: "Nonviolent action is the most promising method of moving beyond capitalism to a more humane social and economic system." How does he justify this claim? Not on moral grounds—though Martin understands that alone is enough for some people—but on the grounds that the most prominent alternatives to capitalism that were pursued in the 1900s, namely state socialism and social electoralism, were tried and they consistently failed. Furthermore, since socialist alternatives rely, as capitalism does, on the power of the state, and hence, ultimately on violence for control of society, nonviolence deserves a chance. As unfashionable as it may be to say so in "left field," I think it is absurd to claim "that the ends justify the means" when the means fracture trust in the expectation of a more stable and less destructive future. I am with Bertha von Suttner, the Nobel Peace laureate who said nearly a century ago: "Only a fool would try to remove an ink spot with more ink, or an oil spot with oil; how can anyone believe that blood stains can be removed by shedding more blood?"

One might even ask what use it is to achieve a cooperative classless society or any socialist alternative if political and economic stability is maintained by the threat of state violence? One form of domination would simply replace a previous form. Under these conditions of social control, would it mean anything, then, if the commissars of the new order claimed that their system was more enlightened?

Violent strategies, in multiplying suffering to achieve their goal, are unlikely to achieve a less destructive society since they are known to perpetuate cycles of violent retribution. Those who argue that these conditions "are only natural" fail to recognize that cooperation, community, and freedom are also conditions of nature from which we evolved—powerful ones that perhaps should be universally recognized as inalienable. Under capitalism, however, cooperation, community, and freedom are subjugated to the ideology of individual material gain. These conditions are suppressed not only because they cannot be commodified, but because they are beautiful and compelling enough to derail people from the mainstream agenda.

Nonviolent action is also a multipurpose approach to social change; that is to say, that it can be effectively used against other systems of domination, such as state repression, racism, patriarchy, and the domination of nature. And, since more of the population can be mobilized in a

participatory fashion than in "legitimate" violent channels, changes are likely to be more lasting and more transformative.

The most valuable part of Brian Martin's book is the suggestion which Martin offers on how to assess the anti-capitalistic merits of various campaigns such as environmental issues, worker's rights, etc. Though Martin admits that a campaign might be extremely important even though it does not directly oppose capitalism, his method of assessment, which he condenses into the form of a few sobering questions, is for a specific anti-capitalistic purpose and as such has tremendous value to those who are interested in determining whether or not a strategy merely tweaks the status quo by subtractive and additive reforms, or promotes revolutionary changes that would effectively challenge the underpinnings of capitalism. A strike for higher pay, for example, can be valuable to exploited workers but it does not challenge the asymmetry of power in the relationship between employers and workers. A strategy aimed to give workers control over what they produce and what they would charge for their labour, however, is quite different since it challenges, among other things, the legitimacy of hierarchical relations. In a similar critique of nonviolent strategy, Martin points out how "withdrawal of consent as a nonviolent tactic can be used to change relationships to means of production, but revolutionary change is not just a matter of withdrawing consent from a particular factory owner, but of withdrawing consent from ownership itself."

Beyond the mystifications of consumerism, capitalism is also sustained by belief systems including property, entitlement, individualism, as well as by everyday behaviours including selfishness, status enhancement, the pursuit of autonomy, and so on. The media, culture, state education, etc., all support this psychological environment because it enhances the goals of the capitalist system.

Much understanding is required to challenge a system of domination capable of promoting the most artful deceptions in the own self-interest. Perhaps the most important thing that is going to matter in the struggle against capitalism, its votaries, and the blindness it instils, is numbers. That is, numbers of people who are enchanted enough with the possibility of a more humane social reality (than the one capitalism has constructed) to be true to the task of developing local initiatives that are designed with respect to collectively addressed questions such as "How would I really like to live?" "In what kind of society (or non-society) would I feel most comfortable?" "In what kind of system can individuals live up to themselves?"

Nonviolence is a *method of waging conflicts*. It is not mere passive resistance; it is far more than a precautionary principle, and no more neutral than a gun.

Given the events of 11 September 2001 and the raging inferno of discussions it provoked about violence, retribution, and injustice, this book—as a workbook of nonviolent theory and strategy—is uncannily timely. And yet, a text on nonviolence would have been just as timely even

ten years ago, 1000 years ago—hell, ever since we stepped out of the “Garden.” The particular merit of Martin’s argument today lies in its application against the tyranny of capitalism. Although nonviolence has been used extensively in all sorts of settings, against state repression, military dictatorships, colonialism and racism, and although a number of social movements have made nonviolent action an integral part of their campaigns, capitalism has never specifically been targeted.

This is an auspicious time: transitional or terminal, I am still undecided. But Martin’s book has given me hope and he has earned my infinite respect, in that his book—the writing itself—models the faith in human rationality that I believe would be a principal feature of a post-capitalistic world, that is, a world that has removed all removable injustices, extended civil associations beyond coercive institutions and states, and accepted the necessity to defend a biocentric ethic which takes life more seriously than individual gains.

Camy Matthay

R. Sooryamoorthy and K.D. Gangrade, *NGOs in India: A Cross-Sectional Study*, Greenwood Press, West Port, 2001, Pp. xiv+189

The volume *NGOs in India: A Cross-sectional Study* by R. Sooryamoorthy and K.D. Gangrade is a definitive work on the present status of the voluntary organisations by two of our eminent sociologists who have rich experience of teaching, research, and field work with a number of scholarly contributions to their credit. The book under review is global in its sweep with a special focus on India. The authors have waded across a mass of Indian and foreign literature on the subject and have presented their analysis and findings in ten chapters, one appendix, and a number of tables and figures. The treatment of the theme is encyclopaedic in nature as the authors have drawn heavily on the experience of the NGOs not only from India but also from all the major regions and countries of the world including the Arab and former Communist states. The varied experience of the countries at different stages of development in the various spheres of voluntary activity, particularly in rural development, child welfare, and women empowerment has been systematically woven in the texture of the volume making a dependable reference tool for the scholars, policymakers, and field workers. The term “NGO” (Non-Governmental Organisations) was coined by the United Nations in the 1960s. It refers to any local, regional, national, or international organisation not established by any government. The concept is synonymous with voluntary organisations and voluntarism. The uniting link between the individuals who form a voluntary association is some common purpose that can be achieved through group action.

The role of Mahatma Gandhi in the social segmentation of India is of historical significance as he not only established a number of voluntary organisations but also provided an integral philosophy for voluntary social work along with a code of ethics for workers engaged in voluntary organizations. The voluntary organisations set up by Mahatma Gandhi contributed to the awakening among the masses and gave strength to the freedom movement.

The period since Independence has witnessed the sudden growth of voluntary organisations. According to one estimate, there were one million NGOs in the country in 1997.

The socio-economic backdrop of the country has served as a fertile ground for the phenomenal growth of the NGOs. The growth is not geographically uniform. Some states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Gujarat, and Kerala are ahead of highly populated states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Acharya Vinoba Bhave’s *Bhoodan* and *Gramadan* movements attempted to transform rural India in the light of Gandhian principles. The Government of India embarked on a number of projects to encourage voluntary work. The First Five-Year Plan document conceded that a major responsibility for organising activities in different fields of social welfare like the welfare of women and children, social education, community organisation etc. fell on private voluntary agencies. Fund allocation to voluntary organisations grew plan after plan. The Government set up the Central Social Welfare Board to promote voluntary social welfare in the country. The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development was created to train voluntary workers. The CAPART (Council for Advancement of People’s Action of Rural Technology) is promoting voluntary efforts in rural development. The advantages of the voluntary agencies are many. In comparison to government efforts in this respect, NGOs are in a better position to personalise the provision of services they offer to the people. Their proximity to people and their sensitivity to the needs of the community is of much help. They are capable of bringing people together and motivating them to take active part in the development process. They use resources economically and appropriately vis-à-vis government.

In spite of these credentials, the activities of the NGOs have become a matter of dispute. The term has acquired a pejorative connotation, inasmuch as voluntarism is now being likened to comfortable living, money, and a secure job. The hallmarks of voluntarism, austerity, and simplicity have lost their value.

Funds and resources of the NGOs are a sensitive issue. Foreign contributions to the NGO sector in India has become a bone of contention. Most of the NGOs receiving foreign funds here become self-employment ventures of the founder and his team. A number of NGOs have been blacklisted by the Central Social Welfare Board.

The NGOs in India have been facing a number of problems. A considerable number of them have withered away. There have been internal



The rape of women is now seen as a sickeningly “normal” accompaniment to war, tied integrally to warfare as yet another form of effective domination. As precisely this kind of instrument of control and terror, rape in wartime seems to have spread in the 1990s, asserts Goldstein, having occurred in the context of countless numbers of violent conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Algeria, and Indonesia, among many other countries.

As an academically-oriented text, *War and Gender* lacks the kind of lyrical grace and creativity that a work encompassing such a broad range of subtopics could have benefited from. But as a tool for understanding the weight, complexity and magnitude of the role of gender in perpetuating and feeding the existence of war, Goldstein's work is no less worthy of attention.

Silja J.A. Talvi is a Seattle-based freelance journalist. She is a regular contributor to publications ranging from the Christian Science Monitor to In These Times, and is co-editor of LiP Magazine.

Nonviolence Versus Capitalism

By Brian Martin

London: War Resisters' International, 2001

Review By Camy Matthay

Brian Martin's book *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism* is a cogent argument for the value of using nonviolent action as strategy for moving beyond capitalism. Though Martin knows that some people adhere to nonviolent strategy on moral grounds, Martin is saying that even if one lacks these convictions, that it is still possible to support a path based on nonviolence for pragmatic reasons alone.

Martin's reasoning is based on the grounds that the most prominent alternatives to capitalism that were pursued in the 1900s—namely state socialism and social electoralism—were tried and they consistently failed. Furthermore, since socialist alternatives rely on the power of the state, these strategies differ very little from capitalism in their ultimate dependence on violence for control of society. One form of domination would simply replace a previous form.

Under these conditions of social control, would it mean anything then if the commissars of the new order claimed their system was more enlightened?

Nonviolent strategy—if only by default—deserves a chance. It is the most promising method of moving beyond capitalism to a more humane social and economic system and has the great merit of integrating the ends with the means.

To dismantle the capitalist system, Martin points out that we need to understand how capitalism keeps itself in business and we need to have some grasp—however tenuous—of where we are going, of what is going to be better. Thus, if the goal is a world with far less suffering, it is imperative that we refine our dreams for a nonviolent future in concrete terms.

In light of this, Martin presents descriptions of four alternative systems that are explicitly constructed on non-violent foundations. His examples include: (1) Sarvodaya, the Gandhian ideal of self-sufficient village democracy (a lifestyle being practiced by over six million people in India and Sri Lanka), (2) an anarchistic model of decentralized direct collective control over all the affairs of life and relationship, (3) voluntarism—a spin off of libertarianism that is based on cooperative relationships in a market economy, and (4) demarchy—a sociopolitical model that presents a non-coercive and localized solution to the participation dilemma associated with direct democracy.

Martin evaluates these alternatives against conditions he believes a cooperative, egalitarian, nonviolent society should fulfill. These conditions or principles are: cooperation; altruism; satisfying work;

inclusivity (i.e., “the system should be designed and run by the people themselves, not by authorities or experts”); and nonviolence.

The most valuable part of *Non-violence Versus Capitalism* may be the suggestions Martin offers on how to assess the anti-capitalistic merits of campaigns involved with environmental issues, worker’s rights, etc. Though Martin admits that a campaign might be extremely important even though it doesn’t directly oppose capitalism, his method of assessment, which he condenses into a few sobering questions, is for a specific anti-capitalistic purpose and as such has tremendous value to those who are interested in determining whether or not a strategy merely tweaks the status quo by subtractive and additive reforms, or promotes revolutionary changes that would effectively challenge the underpinnings of capitalism.

A strike for higher pay, he points out, can be valuable to exploited workers, but it does not challenge the asymmetry of power in the relationship between employers and workers. A strategy aimed to give workers control over what they produce and what they would charge for their labor, however, is quite different since it challenges, among other things, the legitimacy of hierarchical relations.

In a similar critique of nonviolent strategy, Martin points out how “withdrawal of consent as a nonviolent tactic can be used to change relationships to means of production, but revolutionary change is not just a matter of withdrawing consent from a particular factory owner, but of withdrawing consent from ownership itself.”

It is worth noting that although factory owners, corporate directors, CEOs, etc., may be the master thieves, they are nonetheless not the capitalist machine. We are all both guests and hosts in the

market-economy hotel. Expending energy to modify the behavior of those in the penthouse has proven to be generally useless. Identifying and killing those who dominate and exploit is a “clear the slate” strategy that presents troubling problems not the least of which is the fact that it attracts extremists who, under some illusion of being in possession of the “true way,” practice a kind of despotic self-righteousness. Lastly, bombing the top floor of the hotel is tantamount to collective suicide.

What is really going to matter in the years ahead is how carefully the hotel is dismantled and if the number of people effectively challenging the legitimacy of capitalism can reach a tipping point.

Martin does not underestimate the difficulties associated with challenging intricately distributed systems of domination; he is aware that technocratic societies produce a surfeit of disinformation

and info-tainment. He also understands how—beyond the mystifications of consumerism—capitalism is sustained by belief systems including property, entitlement, individualism, and everyday behaviors including status enhancement, the pursuit of autonomy, and selfishness.

Again, in the struggle against capitalism, Martin emphasizes that what is going to matter is numbers, i.e., enough people who are enchanted with the possibility of a more humane social reality to be true to the task of developing local initiatives where important questions can be collectively addressed questions such as: “How would I really like to live?” “In what kind of society (or non-society) would I feel most comfortable?” “In what kind of system can individuals live up to themselves?”

Nonviolence, Martin reminded me, is a method of waging conflict. It is not mere passive resis-



Copyright 2002 Elizabeth A. Streeter

tance, far more than a precautionary principal, and no more neutral than a gun.

Martin's book has given me hope, and he has earned my infinite respect, in that his book models the faith in human rationality that I believe would be a principle feature of a post-capitalistic world.... A world that has removed all removable injustices, extended civil associations beyond coercive institutions and states, and accepted the necessity to defend a biocentric ethic that takes Life more seriously than individual gain.

Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy

A Book of History & Strategy

Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy; edited by Dean Ritz

Apex Press, 2001; 336 pp.

Review by Tom Stephens

The members of POCLAD, the Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy, have compiled a superb book of essays from the late 1990s, entitled *Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy*, for people to read and for transnational corporations to suffer such consequences. The taboo subject of the book is what contributor Greg Coleridge succinctly describes as "the illegitimate authority of corporations to govern, and the dangers this poses to democracy." For political activists in the service of social justice, labor rights, environmental quality, and peace, it's a tremendous breath of fresh air.

If you read this book, you'll learn from corporate anthropologist Jane Anne Morris that social justice activists too often "follow the gambling addiction model," doing the "same old thing" over and over again and fooling ourselves that it might work next

time, largely because our minds have been colonized by corporations. How much more comfortable, to respond to every e-mail petition sent your way, write your congressional representatives and local newspaper editors regularly, and send checks to NGOs, rather than reading and learning about the unsightly transnational 900-pound gorillas running our world into the ground.

Richard Grossman is a co-founder of POCLAD, and author or co-author of one-third of the 72 essays in the book. If you read this book, he may undermine most of what you thought you knew about regulatory and administrative laws (what he calls "a stacked deck, granting corporations legal clout while disadvantaging peoples, communities and nature"). Grossman also describes some of the broadest consequences, when "activists toe the line of managerial prerogative and other claimed corporate property rights," which may fundamentally change the way you think about the nature of the society we live in and what should be done about it: "Today corporations exercise governing roles as they direct massive amounts of capital, control jobs, production, trade, technology and property. They dominate our elections, write and pass our laws, educate our judges in jurisprudence, shape public policy debate."

The essays are grouped into eight parts, from "Starting Point" to "Point of Departure." There is considerable overlap, and repeated discussion of a few controversial and interrelated concepts, such as corporate "personhood" under the Fourteenth Amendment, the judicial transformation of American law to favor property rights in the late 19th century, and the key relationship between "regulating" corporate behavior and "defining" corporations. Amid this flowering of history, theory, and the politics of law, the editor has tried to or-

ganize the diverse viewpoints and subject matter in a logical progression from abstract ideas to concrete actions.

This book contains over 300 pages of critical analysis regarding corporate history and ideology, a wealth of thought-provoking information, and the essential gist of the POCLAD program. Some of the most important essays include:

- "Taking Care of Business; Citizenship and the Charter of Incorporation," by Richard L. Grossman and Frank T. Adams, is an extended excerpt from the authors' 1993 pamphlet of the same name
- "Corporations and the Public Interest; The Development of Property Concepts in the U.S. 'Just Us' System," by Karen Coulter, does an outstanding job of reframing concepts like "property," which are usually taken for granted, although in reality their meaning and importance are fundamental, contested legal and political issues for generation after generation
- "Revoking the Corporation," by Richard L. Grossman, sounds a call for "citizen authority over the subordinate entity which is the modern, giant corporation."
- "Asserting Democratic Control Over Corporations; A Call to Lawyers," by Richard L. Grossman and Ward Morehouse, runs down some of the prominent corporate legal doctrines that have enabled corporate domination of democracy, and calls on peoples' lawyers to strategically "resist corporate harm-doing in ways which begin to weaken all corporations"
- "Some Lessons Learned," by POCLAD, condenses their several years of education and agitation into seven broad points underlying all the essays in the book

The whole project stems from a sophisticated understanding of power, what it is, where it comes from, how to get, keep and use it, and how important it is, that is too

Nonviolence versus capitalism

Review of *Nonviolence versus capitalism* by Brian Martin (London: War Resisters' International, 2001). 187 pp.

Book available free on the web at <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/01nvc>

People have always fought against capitalism. The tradition of anti-capitalist social action ranges from cottage workers smashing the factory machinery that threatened their livelihoods in the late 1700s, through Marxist revolutions, anarchist movements, socialist electoral campaigning, to indigenous peoples resisting the appropriation of their land and resources. Even the act of placing a 'no junk mail' sticker on a letter box can be a form of resistance. From this perspective, social action against capitalism is not a radical or exceptional activity – it's a normal human response to a situation of extreme injustice and oppression.

Anti-capitalist movements have often drawn on the rhetoric and imagery of class struggle, including armed struggle, while the language and concepts of nonviolence have been less prominent. However, there has been an enormous range of nonviolent action against many aspects of capitalism. Gandhi declared that poverty was "the worst form of violence". His campaigns in India, which kickstarted nonviolent movements throughout the twentieth century, had a strong anti-capitalist constructive program based around village democracy and economic self-reliance. A number of workers' campaigns (such as the United Farm Workers' struggle in the United States) have had an explicit nonviolent philosophy. Strikes, boycotts, work-to-rule, factory occupations, worker's cooperatives, environmental campaigns, squatting, defacing of billboards, and direct action against genetically engineered crops are just a few samples from the global smorgasbord of nonviolent action against capitalism.

Mass protests in Seattle, Washington DC, Melbourne, Genoa and elsewhere during the past few years have shown that the level of public anger about capitalism, and the level of desire for a just and humane economic system, is as strong as ever. In this context, Brian Martin's new book *Nonviolence versus capitalism* is a timely contribution to debates about the direction of anti-capitalist campaigning. This book deserves a place on the shelf of every campaigner for positive economic change, because of its broad survey of anti-capitalist strategies (including many brief case studies) and its thought-provoking discussion of their potential contribution to change. Brian's checklist-style format for analysing the strengths and weaknesses of campaigns can be easily adapted by activists to suit local conditions or specific political frameworks. The author's concise and intelligent summary of key features of capitalism and a variety of nonviolent alternatives is a pleasure to read.

The book presents challenges for activists of many different political hues. For nonviolence theorists, a key challenge is to make sense of capitalism as a system of power. Nonviolence theory tends to assume that oppressive power structures contain a clear distinction between an elite "oppressor" group and other opposing groups. Nonviolent strategy then focuses on how to consolidate the sources of power of the opposition, while undermining the sources of power of the oppressors. Brian points out that this ruler-subject model does not fit capitalism well. Although there are clearly people who benefit enormously from economic injustice (Bill Gates), and institutions that play key roles in entrenching exploitation (the IMF), much of the oppression in capitalism is built into the system of exchange in which individuals may be both buyers and sellers, and in which participation and ownership are dispersed. Withdrawing cooperation from an oppressive individual or institution does not necessarily undermine the system of exchange. Nonviolence needs an updated theory of power which deals with these complexities.

For socialist activists, the challenge is to reassess the extent to which nonviolence can contribute to achieving goals of economic justice and equality. Brian is upfront about his view that, despite being the most powerful challenge to capitalism to date, Leninism and socialist electoralism have in the long term not proven to be successful strategies against capitalism. Clearly this is due in part to the ability of capitalism to coopt and destroy alternatives, often at massive human cost. However, Brian also argues

that it is due to the way in which Leninist and electoral strategies have relied on violence (including state power) and on party elites to implement change. He comments that the long-standing tradition of socialist organising and campaigning at the grassroots provides a framework that is highly compatible with nonviolence. Nonviolent tactics have always been seen as one element of socialist revolutionary strategies. It may be time to consider whether a broader nonviolent strategy, which undermines rather than reinforces militarism and state power, may provide a way forward for socialism.

One of the empowering features of nonviolence (which it shares with feminism) is that it sees social change occurring through personal choices as well as through political campaigning. Decisions about what work to do, how to spend time, what housing situation to live in, what (and how much) to own, are all political decisions that affect the operation of capitalist economies. From a grassroots perspective, large-scale changes in the patterns of people's economic choices must be an essential part of a transition to a non-capitalist economic system. A disappointing aspect of *Nonviolence versus capitalism* is that it contains relatively little discussion of the dynamics of these types of 'cultural' changes, nor of how best to encourage and support individuals and communities to make alternative choices against the huge pressures of the dominant system.

Another aspect of the book where I would argue for a slightly different approach is in the type of analytical questions which are asked about campaigns. Brian poses questions along the lines of "Is the campaign participatory?", "Are the campaign's goals built into its methods?", and "Is the campaign resistant to cooption?" These questions tend to result in an assessment of the utility of particular types of campaigns in challenging capitalism. However, the discussion often suggests that it is not what campaign is undertaken, but how it is undertaken that determines whether its impact is revolutionary or reformist. From an activist point of view, then, a more useful set of questions may be "How can this campaign be made maximally participatory?", "How can this campaign be made maximally resistant to cooption?", and so on.

Despite predictions of imminent collapse, capitalism has survived and extended its grip on peoples around the world. As we enter the twenty first century, it seems that a robust strategy for winding back capitalism and creating alternatives must incorporate many different methods, perspectives and visions. In the words of Barbara Ehrenreich, "*This is a time when people looking for change don't have some kind of precise model to inform that struggle for change. Everyone has some responsibility to start imagining, dreaming, inventing and visualizing the kind of future we would like.*" It is also vital for anti-capitalist activists to communicate, coordinate, and cross-fertilise each other's work and thinking. Brian Martin's book is a great contribution to this discussion, placing nonviolence on the anti-capitalist map, and putting economic change firmly on the agenda for nonviolent activists everywhere.

Mark Planigale
February 2002

Mark Planigale has been involved in organising social change campaigns on environmental, indigenous and anti-militarist issues in Melbourne since 1991. Most recently, he has been active with the nonviolent affinity group Black & Blue in opposing the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. He has a long-standing interest in strategies for creating nonviolent economic systems.