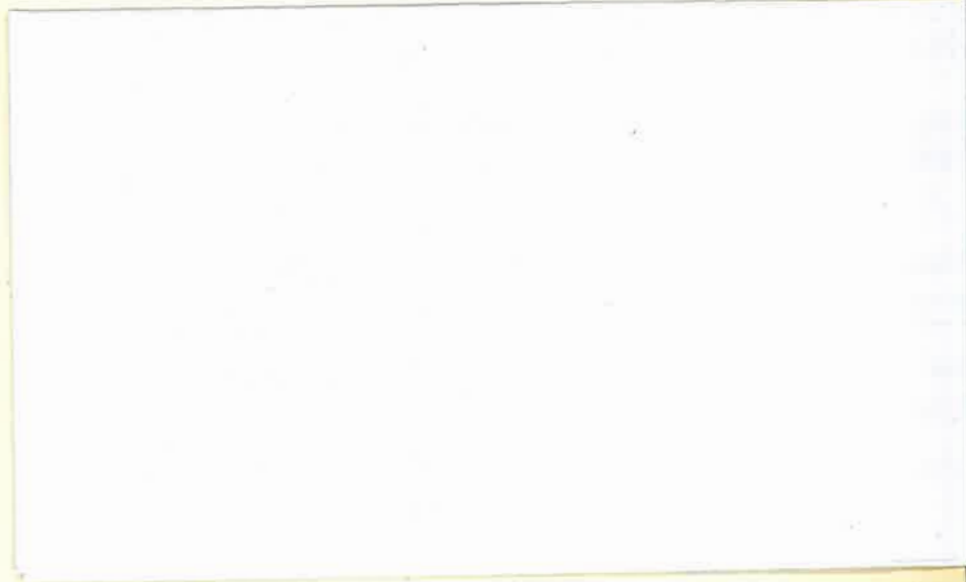


Articles of Peace
Celebrating fifty years of
Peace News

Edited by Gail Chester and Andrew Rigby



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Rock' exercise in 1982, is important for local campaigning and its long-term national repercussions.

Secondly, both politically and personally, the flowering of the women's peace movement is of the utmost importance. Women have always been active in the peace movement, and even before the women set up camp at Greenham Common in 1981, there was a specifically women's peace movement. Of course, like other movements, we have our divisions: some believe that women are 'natural peace makers' or have a special role as mothers, while others believe rather that feminists have a particular analysis of militarism and effective ways of working to bring to the struggle for peace. The very right of women to organise *as* women (either separately or in mixed groups) is frequently challenged within the movement. But it seems plain to me that the strength of women within the modern peace movement makes it possible for more women to join, and sustains those, like myself, who have been in it for many years. For the struggle against war and that for a just society are not, and never have been, divisible.

Nonviolent Resistance and Social Defence

by Howard Clark

Pacifist campaigners perennially have to face questions beginning 'What would you do if . . .' and, in particular on defence policy, 'What would you do if the country was invaded?' There are three main types of response. One is that a policy of active peace-making could reduce the likelihood of war — this can be seen as a form of 'preventive pacifism'. In contrast, military preparations — especially nuclear 'defence' — are often provocative and increase the chances of attack. A second line of argument challenges the need for national defence, arguing that governments tend to be more concerned with the defence of privilege than with the defence of people's rights. Existing bosses need resisting now in the same way as would hypothetical invaders. A third type of answer is actually to suggest that nonviolent methods of defence can provide an alternative to military defence and to give historical examples of the success of nonviolence.

All three tendencies can be found in 20th century pacifism in Britain, and each has at times been represented in *Peace News*. Perhaps the dominant tendency in *Peace News* in recent years has been to assert that the means used to disarm and dismantle the warfare State will be the means used to defend a nonviolent society; that a defence policy of nonviolent resistance begins now with defending social groups under attack and defending the whole of humankind against the nuclear threat. This kind of assertion has been made repeatedly in *Peace News*, but generally at the level of rhetoric. This article tries to look critically at the development of this position.

The Failure of 'Preventive Pacifism'

Many of those who have concentrated on 'preventive pacifism'

have put their faith in — and much effort into — establishing international institutions — forums where governments could negotiate and debate rationally. Pacifists were active in trying to establish first the League of Nations and later the United Nations as effective instruments of ‘international opinion’. Some went further, taking up ideas of world federalism, or looking for a supra-national authority. The failure — especially of the League of Nations — to achieve a world without war brought a profound disillusionment and a questioning of the practicality of a complete renunciation of armed force.

The experience of the Second World War, where small countries were overrun by a great power, strengthened the case for some form of ‘collective security’. In the event this led to the formation of military blocs, and ‘international order’ — after the Yalta agreements drawn up by Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill — became a matter of the rival superpowers each having its own ‘sphere of influence’. The alternative form of collective security, favoured by many with pacifist sympathies, was represented by the United Nations and the hope of some world government.

The idea of world government raised extremely divisive issues for pacifists, almost splitting the major British pacifist organisation — the Peace Pledge Union — in the late 1940s, when its Council unsuccessfully recommended a fundamental change of policy: a switch from rejecting *all* armies to accepting the legitimacy of armed force in the service of a world authority, such as the United Nations, and in enforcing international law. John Middleton Murry, editor of *Peace News* from 1941–46, even argued that the United Nations should be armed with nuclear weapons. Outside the ranks of the PPU, Bertrand Russell — a supporter of World Government — went so far as to suggest in 1948 that, while the US still retained its nuclear monopoly, it should threaten immediate nuclear war against the Soviet Union ‘for the purpose of forcing nuclear disarmament upon her’.¹

Among those who drew a different lesson from the Second World War was Roy Walker, who examined in particular the experience of Norway.² Norway’s foreign policy of positive neutrality during the 1930s, its commitment to support the League of Nations and its willingness to mediate between the great powers had been almost a model for pacifists. But the Nazi occupation of Norway showed that ‘preventive pacifism’ by one

or two nations could not guarantee their security — Churchill had no more intention than Hitler of respecting Norwegian neutrality. The lesson post-war Norwegian governments drew was to join a military alliance. Despite pursuing generally more enlightened and humanitarian policies than most European states, they have sought security through NATO. Walker, however, saw an alternative logic: a pacifist foreign policy needs to be backed up not by outside protection from the militarily powerful, but by a defence policy of nonviolent resistance.

The Failure of International Solidarity

Moving on to the second line of response — that national defence is actually defending the interests of a specific class — its most influential advocates were the anti-militarist socialists and anarchists before the First World War. Rather than worker killing worker in a quarrel between rulers, the Second International agreed to meet war with an international general strike. When the choice had to be made, however, in 1914, international solidarity in class struggle was found to be a much weaker force than nationalism, and workers were stampeded into a war to kill and be killed by each other. After this, anti-militarism ceased to be a major force within the international socialist movement, despite the efforts of pacifists and anarchists.

In the 1980s, the rhetoric of internationalism from below retains its appeal — especially in the European peace movements’ vision of people acting as if boundaries had ceased to exist and engaging in person to person peace-making, ‘detente from below’. Yet, as today’s anti-nuclear movements seem to recognise, the simple desire for greater security is a more fundamental motivation than internationalism, and in many countries — perhaps, above all, in Britain — the anti-nuclear argument has been popularised more in terms of national safety than of a vision which transcends nations and states.

An Alternative to War

For social change movements to co-operate successfully across frontiers, they need to have a programme which would make sense if it were carried out independently in each local situation. In the absence of an anti-war policy which could be unilaterally implemented in their own country, many First World War

socialists fell into line with the national mood. Some people — in Britain, Bertrand Russell, for instance — did suggest mass non-co-operation as a *future* alternative to military defence against invasion ‘after a generation of instruction in the principles of passive resistance’.³ But the idea had been neither sufficiently developed nor widely enough canvassed to be a real option.

By the 1930s, following the successful general strike against the Kapp Putsch in Germany (1920) and the nonviolent resistance to French occupation of the Ruhr (1923),⁴ and as awareness grew of Gandhi’s successful experiments with nonviolent action, there was a stronger current within pacifism which saw nonviolent resistance as a possible defence policy. Although the Spanish Civil War forced many pacifists to abandon their renunciation of all wars as impractical idealism, the works of the American Quaker, Richard Gregg,⁵ and the Dutch anarchist, Bart de Ligt,⁶ persuaded others that there were effective means of waging conflict which were consistent with pacifist beliefs.

The idea of meeting an occupier with ‘folded arms’ and ‘fraternisation’ gained ground. In retrospect, some of the writing of ‘30s pacifists is embarrassing. Wilfred Wellock, for instance, could not envisage the ruthlessness of the Nazi war machine. He wrote:

an invading army being greeted with kindness and hospitality, and a calm refusal to be anyone’s slaves, would be wholly unable to continue shooting down their hosts in cold blood. (PN, 27.3.37)

Not surprisingly, many pacifists remained sceptical.

Yet the actual experience of occupation indicated that conquerors are not uniformly unscrupulous, that they rely on the active co-operation of at least some, and the passive acquiescence of most of the occupied population, in order to carry out their policies. In the circumstances, nonviolence was often the most promising form of resistance. Many European pacifists were active in the resistance movements, and — especially after Dunkirk, when fear of invasion of Britain was at its height — British pacifists, too, looked urgently at techniques of nonviolent resistance.

Into the Nuclear Age

In the 1950s, inspired by the success of the independence

movement in India and the many instances of nonviolent defiance of Nazi domination, a new interest arose in the technique of nonviolent resistance as a means of defence. The most prolific and well-known exponent of these ideas was and remains Gene Sharp, right from the time he joined the staff of *Peace News* in 1955 to the present.⁷

In the nuclear age, however, not only pacifists saw the potential of nonviolent resistance as a defence policy. Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall and military historian Captain Basil Liddell-Hart were just two of the strategic thinkers who began to take a close interest. King-Hall’s personal crusade for a Royal Commission on Unarmed Defence was extensively reported and debated in *Peace News* in the mid-1950s. Editorially, *Peace News* criticised some of the terms in which King-Hall framed his alternative to nuclear deterrence. In particular, where he proposed to mount a massive propaganda campaign against Communism, *Peace News* urged a campaign in support of human rights wherever they were suppressed — East and West. But, in general, the paper in the 1950s was keen to promote nonviolent resistance as an alternative defence policy, a practical policy which could be adopted immediately without wholesale conversions to absolute pacifism or utopian social changes. At the same time, nonviolent direct action was being discussed and practised in real situations — most notably by the emerging anti-H-bomb campaign in Britain and the civil rights movement in the US.

Effectiveness of Nonviolence

Often war and violence are presented as a last resort — war after the failure of diplomacy, violence after the failure of peaceful protest. Yet often nonviolent tactics and strategy have been adopted pragmatically, as either the only possibility or the most effective form of action. Nonviolent movements have then grown up less out of pacifist principle than because other means offer no hope. This was the case with the US civil rights movement.

Although in the late 1940s and early 1950s pacifists had been active in the ‘freedom rides’ to de-segregate inter-state buses in the US, when Bayard Rustin — a Black field worker for the US War Resisters’ League — went down to Alabama in 1956 at the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott, he found:

not one of the Negro leaders in Montgomery was a pacifist when the

struggle began . . . When we present the total impact of pacifist philosophy . . . we may be asking the impossible. It is important for us to learn to create situations within which they can learn by doing. The *strategy* of nonviolence ought to be greatly emphasised. The principle of nonviolence will be accepted only when the strategy has been adopted. (PN, 25.10.57)

Rustin proceeds to tell a story of how some young blacks learnt by doing:

We called together the most violent young men, not to tell them it was not nice to have and use guns, but to point out the immediate social consequences of having them. It was a strategic discussion. We developed a technique of involving them in the core of the nonviolent struggle. About a thousand bicycles had been collected all over the State and sent to Montgomery and parked in a large field. We persuaded these young men . . . to protect these bikes without violence. They did so, and were finally prepared to dump their guns in the river.

(The one question overlooked in the strategic discussion was 'what would have ensued had the police caught us on that drive to the river, in possession of a truck load of weapons'!)

In Britain, pacifists were central to the embryonic anti-nuclear weapons movement. They were discovering the effectiveness of nonviolent tactics in arousing a public debate which the machinery of government had been determined to avoid. At the same time, they sensed the potential of nonviolent resistance as a defence strategy. Tony Weaver, who took part in the direct action at the Thor missile base at Swaffham in 1958, wrote to *Peace News* commenting:

Events at Swaffham have suggested that nonviolent resistance against this country's war preparations could provide a training ground now for the mass use of this weapon against an invader. For those whose minds think in terms of a deterrent, this could become a real alternative to the nuclear one, and a more realistic training than Civil Defence which lulls people into a false sense of security. (30.1.59)

Weaver's hope has been reiterated many times, in the pages of *Peace News* and elsewhere. Yet since the 1950s there has been a growing divergence in Britain between the practitioners of nonviolent action and those seeking to promote it as an alternative to military defence.

Where the 1930s advocates of nonviolent resistance were

explicitly pacifist — Gregg relating nonviolent action to a moral philosophy and De Ligt to social revolution — in the late 1950s and early 1960s, *Peace News* writers such as Adam Roberts and Gene Sharp increasingly sought to divorce nonviolent resistance from pacifist philosophy.

Adam Roberts — who was on the staff of *Peace News* from 1962 to 1965 — felt a need to debunk some of the religiosity and moralism around nonviolence:

A belief in nonviolent action is often taken to mean a religious or utopian attitude (the devotees of which hold 'witnesses') or else a minority obstructionist attitude typified by some of the actions of the Committee of 100. I think nonviolent action should be seen as a weapon which can be used as a means of preserving our society and our values without involving the risk of mutual destruction in thermonuclear war. (PN 10.5.63)

Because it was unrealistic to expect agreed, multilateral disarmament, Roberts argued that unilateralism required a viable, disarmed defence policy. He repeatedly criticised the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament for failing to offer hope. Instead of simply asking people to renounce existing defence policy, CND should make nonviolent defence a major part of its platform.

How could such a defence policy be introduced? Here Roberts fell out with the activists. As a colleague on *Peace News* — features editor Michael Freeman — put it, Roberts and Sharp were offering nonviolent resistance as 'top people's defence', to be introduced by the political and even military establishment, rather than won from below. Freeman's review of the 1964 *Peace News* pamphlet *Civilian Defence*⁸ was trenchant. He warned that this theory:

could turn out to be a reactionary one: by emphasising national unity, it plays down the importance of internal social struggle; by emphasising nationalistic nonviolence, it ignores the international character of organised violence (military alliances, cartels, etc) . . . My own view is that, if revolutionary nonviolent action is ever to be generally adopted, it must grow out of people's present concerns. People have problems enough, without adding the hypothetical ones of invasion and coup d'état. If they can be helped to resist the injustice they face now in their own lives by taking action themselves, in alliance not with the Government or the military but with those who have common cause with them in fighting this injustice, then the basis for a mass movement of nonviolent direct action might be formed (PN, 13.3.64).



A key function of the Resistance in Europe against Nazi occupation was the dissemination of information. Here a Danish dental clinic was converted into a composing room; it could be restored at a moment's notice, with the typesetters becoming the dentist and his patients.

Roberts replied that there was no necessary connection between pursuing nonviolent action for social justice or domestic causes and developing a policy of nonviolent defence. Gandhian nonviolence in India in the cause of independence and social change had not provided an alternative to military means of waging international conflict. Indeed, at the time of the Sino-Indian border conflict, most 'Gandhians' in India, including Gandhi's 'spiritual heir' Vinoba Bhave, had rallied behind their government and army just as readily as most First World War socialists put national interest before class interest.

Increasingly, the Roberts-Sharp circle hoped that the ideas of civilian resistance as a defence policy would gain acceptance in military circles. Sharp, from having been one of the mentors of the anti-nuclear civil disobedients of the 1950s, by the 1980s downplays the role of the peace movement and seems to believe that nonviolent direct action against military policies is more likely to hinder than promote the adoption of civilian defence. Sharp's political trajectory — from campaigning politics to putting his faith in the willingness of the military and governments to listen to expert advice — bears out the warnings of some of his 1960s critics.

In 1967, *Peace News* co-editor Bob Overy used the occasion of the publication of *The Strategy of Civilian Defence*⁹ to attack the 'nonviolence salesmen'. Contributors to the book included *Peace News* writers such as Roberts himself, Sharp, Theodore Ebert and April Carter. They drew on the history of nonviolent resistance to the Nazis and to totalitarian Communist rule to present nonviolent action as a credible alternative defence policy which did not require a philosophy of nonviolence or a commitment to pacifism. Overy denounced this as a diversion from the pacifist's real purpose of developing nonviolence as a strategy for transforming a war-making society. Commenting on the debate 11 years later, he reiterated his position:

What I object to is civilian defence as a half-way house, in which the attempt is made to strip nonviolence of much of its radical content in order to make it acceptable to the powers-that-be . . . The two basic points of my article still stand for me. First, civilian defence aims to convert the wrong groups in society to nonviolent action. There is no short cut. Our priority should be to build a nonviolent revolutionary movement which will radically transform the institutions and practices of our society. Second, we should not permit nonviolence to be stripped of its positive spiritual and social content.¹⁰

This episode in 1967 virtually ended the debate in *Peace News* — apart from brief flurries of interest in 1973 and 1977. Instead, arguments shifted to the effectiveness of nonviolence as a form of protest or as a means of social change.

Nonviolence on the Defence

By the late 1960s, with the rise of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, advocates of nonviolent protest were on the defensive in Britain and elsewhere. For many on the left, in the student and 'underground' movements, the term 'nonviolence' was discredited. When Che Guevara died in Bolivia, he was seen not as the victim of a futile attempt to export a Cuban model of revolution, but as a romantic hero. In the US, urban Blacks rioted and militants denounced the compromises of Martin Luther King and armed themselves. The Tet Offensive in Vietnam showed the world that the military might of the US could be defeated. And when, in Paris in May 1968, a student revolt threatened to bring down De Gaulle, a revolution catalysed by youth and students throughout the Western world seemed on the agenda.

The contagion spread to Northern Ireland, where the civil rights movement and its radical student wing, People's Democracy, challenged the discrimination inherent in that society. Their nonviolent protests opened up new possibilities of change, but this nonviolence could not be sustained in the face of fierce loyalist reaction.

By 1970, it had become impossible to organise a large, nonviolent peace demonstration in Britain. When the US invaded Cambodia, despite all the efforts of the organisers, the march degenerated inevitably into a clash between a section of the demonstrators and the police. Although the Stop the Seventy Tour campaign against links with apartheid sport, explicitly called for nonviolent action, fighting broke out on most of its demonstrations.

Anti-racism, Anti-fascism

One of the most difficult arenas of activity for white people committed to nonviolence in 1970s was anti-racism and anti-fascism. Here street-fighting macho rode high. Several groups tried to find nonviolent responses which did not rely on the machinery of State or on a Smash the Fash mentality. The

Manchester Gay Libertarians in 1974 argued that:

the main strategy of opposition must be through involving people in their everyday situations, both at work and in the community; through women's groups, black groups, gay groups organising themselves; by coherent libertarian politics which cease to split the 'personal' from the 'political' and which reject *all* authority, whether from the right or the 'left'. (PN, 4.1.74)

The Birmingham Counter-Fascist Group took this further in its 1976 pamphlet on an alternative approach to countering fascism. This urged whites to 'get in touch with our own (internal) "fascist"... Nonviolence is about learning to communicate with our own worst selves.' Such an approach led two years later to a *Peace News* pamphlet, *Taking Racism Personally* whose principal editors were Brenda Thompson and Keith Paton, one of the prime movers of the Birmingham Group.

In Bradford, the Manningham Defence committee — a predominantly white group consisting of gays, feminists, counter-culture types and some students at the Bradford School of Peace Studies — called a 'carnival sit-down', at which 129 people were arrested in June 1976. Its style was consciously nonviolent — an attempt to show that 'it is possible to have fun and be positive and peaceful when making a political point'. (Unlike the Birmingham group, however, it also looked for State action to 'enforce the Race Relations Act — ban the NF'.)

Having an overwhelmingly white readership and feeling on the periphery of anti-racist, anti-fascist activity, *Peace News* — not for the first time — lacked a social base for developing nonviolent strategies. It therefore had to fall back on reprints, on experience from elsewhere (usually from the US), and on imagination. When, in 1976, it reprinted an account from *Race Today* of an evening patrol in East London by an Asian vigilante group in cars, *Peace News* supported Black people's right to self-defence, but warned of the dangers of escalation. It also referred back to a 1973 article about a strategy adopted in Philadelphia to make the streets safer — a community walk,¹¹ which not only involved women more but helped build more community feeling. After the battle of Lewisham in 1977, when the police tried to clear a route for a National Front march which anti-fascists and the local community were trying to block, *Peace News* printed a fantasy about 'Mashiwel', in which in similar circumstances, the local community decided not to confront the

National Front but to 'cold shoulder' them by shutting up shop for the day — a nonviolent tactic successfully employed by Catholics in Dungiven in 1969 when Loyalists marched through.

Pat Arrowsmith was one of the few pacifists involved in the summer of 1978 in countering the National Front's use of a corner of Brick Lane, East London, as a base for attacks on local Bengalis. After the first sit-down by Asians, Blacks and white anti-fascists in Brick Lane, Pat Arrowsmith criticised the timidity of many pacifists in discussing responses to the National Front, and in particular the idea that nonviolent action against the National Front *necessitated* intensive nonviolence training.

If people with a commitment to nonviolence are serious, then rather than sitting back thinking 'only we can do it', we should be out joining in such events, with nonviolence; by helping encourage the one, we spread the other. (PN, 28.7.78)

Others active in anti-fascist work were less optimistic. Sophie Laws and I were stewards on a 'nonviolent' counter-demonstration to the National Front in York where Socialist Workers not only threw sexist taunts at the National Front, but had to be physically restrained from trying to attack them. Even though the Front threw stones at us, we succeeded in curbing any physical retaliation. Laws observed that this was seen as 'imposing our "womanly", "poofy" nonviolence on them [SWP]'. My report concluded:

on counter-demonstrations to the NF, we don't have much choice but to secure people's agreement to nonviolence, and get [factional] minorities to stick to it, or to stay out of united fronts dominated by street-fighting men . . .

But is it worth the effort? It's difficult enough to have a nonviolent demonstration of any sort which will communicate with rather than antagonise non-participants, let alone having to tame the SWP as well. And how can we begin to raise questions about fascism — questions about masculinity, women's oppression, sexual repression, authoritarianism and the family — when working with 'comrades' who glory in their manliness? (PN, 21.10.77)

Training, Affinity Groups and Anti-nuclear Energy

From 1969 to 1971, George Lakey and Lynne Shivers from the Philadelphia Life Centre enthused many British pacifists with the methods of nonviolence training. This promised to

help us regain their capacity to organise more ambitious nonviolent protest. Initially, training focused very much on how to be able to carry through an action nonviolently — both responding nonviolently to police provocation and restraining violent elements among the protesters. But training also tried to provide structures of support for activists, where — in the safety of a 'role-play' — they could test their reactions and anticipate problems which might crop up in a situation.

The first apostle of 'training for peace' in Britain had been Richard Gregg, another American Quaker. His 1936 pamphlet *Training for Peace*¹² concentrated on building up group morale through singing, folk-dancing and manual work, as well as personal and group understanding through study sessions, readings and meditations. The 1970s training was also a product of its time, featuring co-operative games, including trust and sensitivity exercises taken from encounter groups. The key word became 'empowerment'. But the emphasis of training sessions was less on individual preparedness for action than on the group — improving group decision-making processes, building group spirit, sharing skills and experiences, making sure that every voice in a group was heard, and countering patterns of domination which many groups take for granted — for instance, domination by the more self-confident, articulate, experienced members and by men. However, in the absence of a protest movement committed to nonviolence, pacifists were on the margins, and there was little demand for nonviolence training until the late 1970s when, following the Windscale Inquiry, the British anti-nuclear energy movement turned to nonviolent direct action.

Peace News had been reporting nonviolent action against nuclear power from around Europe since the occupation of Wyhl, West Germany in 1974, and *Peace News* co-editor Mike Holderness had taken part in the traumatic 1977 demonstration at Malville when French riot police killed one demonstrator and maimed four others. At the same time as Mike Holderness was analysing how events at Malville had taken their disastrous turn, other *Peace News* contributors — Sheryl Crown, Martin Jelfs, Peter Jones and Jo Somerset — wrote of their extraordinary experience at the first US occupation of a nuclear power site, Seabrook. The Clamshell Alliance which occupied Seabrook functioned through a system of 'affinity groups', small groups

each of which trained for nonviolent action and each of which appointed a spokesperson to take part in Alliance decision-making. Here, it seemed, was a form of organisation which could maintain nonviolence and at the same time encourage participation in decision-making.

In 1978, the Torness Alliance adopted a similar framework for its campaign to stop construction of a nuclear reactor on the Scottish coast, 30 miles from Edinburgh. The nuclear energy question touched many groups involved more in creating an alternative society than in campaigning politics, in particular wholefood shops. For some, the Torness Alliance was almost a crusade for nonviolence — not just in terms of nonviolent action tactics, but in terms of the vision of a nuclear-free, ecologically-sound society. Torness introduced many people both to nonviolence training and to the notion of organising large actions via 'affinity groups'. This in turn provided a base of experience on which CND and anti-missiles activity was to build in the 1980s.

Nonviolence training has helped groups function more effectively, giving us a greater sense of control over our actions in larger demonstrations and greater clarity about our purpose. It has also helped many of us feel supported in our struggle for change, affirmed in our activities, and encouraged in our vision. But training, as it now takes place in Britain, has severe limits. For large nonviolent actions, 'training' too often means 'briefing' — simply relaying essential information about the plan of action and the law, doing little to develop the group taking action or to deepen understanding of nonviolence. At the other end, it often happens that the deeper people get into training, the less do they engage in social struggle; protracted training sessions often attract people whose priority is personal growth and therapy rather than social action. The rhetoric may be about 'empowerment', but the practice can actually involve becoming estranged from people with whom you want to connect.

Nonviolent Action As Social Defence

Since the revival of CND, the concept of 'alternative defence' has largely been of non-nuclear military options. Peace researchers in many countries have continued to investigate the possibilities of nonviolent defence, but the dominant tendencies within the nuclear disarmament movements have looked more

to notions of 'defensive deterrence' and 'non-provocative defence' — in short, proposals more likely than nonviolent defence to be acceptable to social-democratic politicians seeking power. The stress is on 'credible', 'genuine', 'real' defence in a way which appears to offer phoney guarantees of security and to evade the disarmament campaigner's central problem of shifting popular values so that most people would rather be vulnerable to attack than to threaten mass annihilation of others.¹³

People committed to nonviolence, however, have tried to connect nonviolent action as a form of protest with nonviolent action as a defence policy. The core concept is *social defence*. Social defence does not assume a national framework, but a framework of social struggle: protecting the environment, upholding certain values, defending a particular institution or people's rights. Its focus is not on what threats might arise, but on immediate situations. In this perspective, the occupations of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, London (1975-76) and Thornton View, Bradford (1983-85) were instances of social defence, as are work-ins (defending jobs) and strikes.

Some groups have made an explicit connection between 'social defence' now and alternatives to military national defence. In 1985 *Peace News* adapted a broadsheet on Social Defence first produced in 1980 by Canberra Peacemakers, a group whose activities and perspective are expounded in Brian Martin's book *Uprooting War*.¹⁴ They sought to connect with industrial workers; with groups concerned about community security and street safety, such as feminists; with groups which are targets for public hostility or repression, such as lesbians and gays. At the same time, looking to the future, they held workshops — including one with a community radio station — to draw up contingency plans for responses to a coup or the situation which occurred in Australia in 1975 when the Governor-General intervened to overturn the Whitlam Government.

Aldrig Mere Krig — the Danish Section of War Resisters' International — was invited to draw up a nonviolent defence strategy for Christiania, a 'free city' squatted in a former army barracks in Copenhagen. The women of Christiania decided to take the lead:

They trust their own self-discipline more than they trust the men, and want to show that Christiania is women with children (60



Nonviolent direct action — a six-month continuous blockade of farmland at Luxulyan in Cornwall — prevented the Central Electricity Generating Board from conducting test drilling for a nuclear power station. A 'captive' drilling rig is shown here in June 1981. Eventually the CEGB abandoned its plans for Luxulyan.

Credit: Mike Wall

children, more than 30 born there) and homes, not tumbledown houses with drug addicts. At the same time, they mean to use the sexist prejudices of society against the authorities. (PN, 6.2.76)

When Christiania finally 'fell', about four years later, it was more as a result of internal collapse and drug abuse than of police action.

The Dutch group Women for Social Defence¹⁵ has incorporated a hand in a halt sign into their symbol. This adapts the anti-racist 'Ne touche pas mon pote' ('Hands off my buddy') badge widely worn in continental Europe and which they see as one form of social defence. The group's first discussions were pooling their experience about occasions when they had stood up for themselves; their first public action was to join a peace camp as an act of defence against cruise missiles.

In Britain in the 1980s, anti-nuclear nonviolent direct action has several stories of successful social defence: in 1981, preventing test-drilling at a possible nuclear power station site at Luxulyan in Cornwall; in 1982, stopping the construction of a bunker at Bridgend; forcing Britain to abandon the dumping of nuclear waste at sea by repeated nonviolent direct action by the Severnside Alliance and Greenpeace, culminating in 1983 with non-co-operation by the rail and sea unions. But let's be clear about the role of the activists in these victories. The key to success was that they catalysed other groups — the whole community around Luxulyan, even the police; the local authority and unions at Bridgend; and on sea-dumping, the International Maritime's Organisation moratorium was crucial in securing union support for the ban.¹⁶

Lynne Jones has written about Greenham as a form of social defence.¹⁷ Its keynotes are flexibility and improvisation — precisely the qualities which would be needed in the event of military invasion or occupation. I doubt that Greenham women would have been so effective without practical support from central CND, or without the experience many women have had in small group actions and even in nonviolence training, but Lynne contrasts their spontaneity:

with the established view of nonviolent action which is seen to require a high degree of centralised organisation — with briefings and information beforehand, lengthy preparation in advance for every participant, a lot of time spent on the group process. We have found these methods are too cumbersome to deal with a situation that changes every day.

This analysis could be expanded. One remarkable feature of Greenham is the relationship between the relatively few women camping at any one time and popular mobilisation: 'Greenham women are everywhere', as the slogan says. Thousands of women have descended on the site for mass actions; hundreds of people have visited regularly with wood, food and other supplies; many have taken Greenham home — either by doing actions where they live or sometimes, literally, into their own home and relationships. The women at the camp have had a prophetic role: their absolute and fundamental rejection of patriarchal violence and their determination to celebrate their womanhood, no matter what abuse is heaped on them, has inspired and energised women around the world who find themselves in more conventional circumstances.

Strategy Against Occupation

Analysts of nonviolent defence think of an occupied society as having three components — a tiny minority of active collaborators, a larger and heroic minority of determined resisters, and the great mass of the population, loath to take risks but ardently wishing to end the occupation. A good strategy then seeks (a) to establish structures capable of co-ordinating resistance and withstanding repression; (b) to isolate the collaborators; (c) to find ways by which the majority can deny the occupier's objectives without much risk, and (d) to build up the people's courage. The plan is to frustrate, weaken and ultimately undermine the occupier.

Although the imagery of nonviolent resistance tends to be of general strikes, mass demonstrations, civilians — unarmed and open-handed, or perhaps bearing a flower — approaching a soldier, those are only the most dramatic moments of resistance. Such a 'nonviolent blitzkrieg' (Sharp's term) may be appropriate as an immediate reaction to invasion, but all-out non-co-operation cannot be sustained indefinitely. Ways are needed to hamper administration and paralyse certain industries which do not call for such open defiance. Against a prolonged occupation, a strategy of attrition and 'semi-resistance' (Michael Randle's term)¹⁸ is often the order of the day. This includes such activities as deliberately misunderstanding orders, making mistakes, going slow. By such means, Danish shipbuilders managed to delay construction of a German warship until after the war had finished. In December 1956 in Hungary, when

factory representatives from the Beljanif Electric Works were arrested, their colleagues held a 3-day sit-in strike. They were forced to resume work, the police and militia were posted throughout the factory. Yet even in the face of this intimidation, a mixture of go-slow tactics and poor quality work succeeded in reducing output to 8% of normal production.¹⁹

Against occupation, existing institutions often provide a basis for resistance — trade unions and churches, especially — and existing political leaders, even if they are in exile or in prison, play an important role. Existing culture will also be mobilised in the cause of resistance — 'culture' here includes the deep-rooted political values of a society as well as religious services, national statues or, as in occupied Denmark, patriotic folk-songs. An 'underground' — pirate radios, clandestine presses, a complete and autonomous system of support and communications — will begin to function parallel to the existing administration, and ready to take over when the occupier is forced to withdraw.

Some of the elements of a strategy against occupation will also be found in other social struggles. Any movement challenging existing power structures needs to be under-pinned by its own counter-structures and its own culture. Morale is a vital factor. Gene Keyes²⁰ has argued that the 'centre of gravity' of unarmed resistance to occupation is morale, and morale hinges on a sense of power to effect change and also on a steadfast commitment to principles which are felt to be worth dying for.

Strategies also have to accommodate different levels of commitment. There is something that each person can contribute and so a strategy has to have several layers, each offering particular forms of involvement and each reinforcing the others. Thus, while some people will stay up all night or expose themselves to great risks, others will try to introduce some form of resistance into an otherwise routine daily life — for instance, a consumer boycott.

Nonviolent activists would do well to pay attention to these strategic insights, but our own situation is more complicated than resisting military occupation. The immediate focus of nonviolence is social change. A thoroughgoing nonviolence seeks to challenge all forms of domination and to encourage people to grow beyond them. It therefore implies a critique of some of the institutions around which resistance to military

occupation would mobilise — not only the Royal Family and the State, but also white, male-dominated, hierarchical organisations such as trade unions and churches. Nonviolence aims to embody the values of the society it wants to bring into being — values which are often fundamentally in conflict with the prevalent culture. The problem is, however, that pacifists often have difficulty in relating the principled commitment to nonviolence with everyday reality — the oppressions and injustices, the frustrations and aspirations — that gives rise to struggle.

Gandhi was clear about the first duty of 'satyagrahis' — core nonviolent activists. It was to propagate the 'constructive programme'. For him, the basis of a non-co-operation campaign had to be this programme. It was directed not only at economic self-reliance — for instance through hand-spinning, wearing handspun cloth, or 'bread labour' (working to feed yourself) — but at social reform. In particular, this involved promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, ending discrimination against women and untouchables, improving sanitation and education.

Explicitly nonviolent movements in Britain have rarely succeeded in combining resistance with a constructive programme grounded in local needs. At a personal level, how do we balance our commitment to make social change with our needs for support and fulfilment? It is all too easy to settle for a 'personal solution', a way of life which may suit us, but which may actually divorce us from a wider struggle. At a collective level, today there is a diverse culture of radical alternatives — rural and inner city, black, feminist, gay and youth — but we are far from seeing what Keith (Paton) Mothershead called for in 1977:

autonomous coalitions created by women, centrally, and by gay, black, old, young and disabled people, claimants, freaks and low-paid and public sector workers (PN, 2.12.77).

It is through the excluded, the oppressed and the disaffected connecting with each other that people will grow from claiming their own rights to asserting the rights of all. An effective nonviolent struggle has to go even one step further — in propagating its values and constructing alternatives, it also has to cultivate an empathy with people not yet with us — with the insecure, the scared and the trapped.

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3. Bertrand Russell, 'War and Non-Resistance', *Atlantic Monthly*, 1915, quoted in Michael Randle, 'Aspects of the Debate in Britain on Civilian Defence', paper for the Strasbourg Symposium on Civilian Defence, November 1985.
4. For reading on the Kapp Putsch, see Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack, *War Without Weapons*, Frances Pinter, 1974, pp 122-127, and Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Porter Sargent, 1973, pp 40-41. On the Ruhrkampf, see Boserup and Mack, pp 92-102, Wolfgang Sternstein, 'The Ruhrkampf of 1923', in Adam Roberts (ed), *The Strategy of Civilian Defence*, Faber and Faber, 1967, pp 106-135.
5. In particular, Richard Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, 1st edition 1935, 2nd revised edition with Foreword by Martin Luther King, James Clarke & Co 1960.
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12. Richard Gregg, *Training for Peace*, Peace Pledge Union, 1936.
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14. Brian Martin, *Uprooting War*, Freedom Press, 1984
15. Women for Peace, National group on social defence, c/o PO Box 363, 3800 AZ Amersfoort, the Netherlands.
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17. Lynne Jones, 'Peaceful Defence', *Sanity*, December 1984.
18. See Chapter 7, 'Defence by Civil Resistance' in the Alternative Defence Commission, *Defence Without the Bomb*, Taylor & Francis, 1983.
19. Andy Anderson, *Hungary '56 Solidarity* London 1956, Black and Red Detroit, 1975, p 105.
20. Gene Keyes, 'Strategic Non-violent Defense: the Construct of an Option', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 4, 2 (June 1981), pp 125-51.