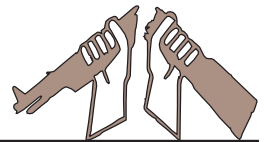


The Broken Rifle

Newsletter of War Resisters' International



Greenham Common: women blocking the gates of the nuclear base. Photo: WRI archives

A Call for a Nonviolent Strategy of the Global Peace & Justice Movement

By Stellan Vinthagen

We live in a historical time of social change. While the economy, state regimes and wars are being globalised, the social forces of people's movements are as well. At least 15 million demonstrated worldwide against the war in Iraq 2003. The gathering of "the global movement of movements" at the World Social Forum continues to grow, the latest in Brasil with 150000 participants. This global peace & justice movement has drawn the conclusions of earlier strategies of reform through national parties and elections and revolution through armed rebellion, and is searching for a nonviolent strategy of social change.

Twin problem

Current global confrontations like Prague (with the World Bank), Gothenburg (with EU) or Genoa (with G8) exhibit a twin problem due to lack of a coherent strategy: violent riots and ineffective nonviolent resistance. These and other protests have also failed to organise effective nonviolent confrontations and new coherent strategies of nonviolent engagement with global powers. This twin problem is a problem arising in part from a lack of skilled nonviolence within the movement. Very few people with knowledge of nonviolent theory and movement practice have taken an organising part within the movement (with some exceptions in USA).

It is already clear that this global movement is not a simple spontaneous outburst of mobilisation,

but an ongoing mobilisation. The WSF is explicitly searching for a non-armed and non-electoral politics (see the WSF charter at www.forumsocialmundial.org) – a kind of "non-violent social resistance" – while not outlining what that really means.

Since no nonviolent strategy has been adopted so far there is now an ongoing discussion on moving away from global confrontations. The confrontations are seen as unproductive and too much of symbolic bashing of the logos of the present world order (Bush, WTO, G8 etc.) – in favor of making alternatives visible and creating local resistance. The emphasis on constructive alternatives is great – as a matter of fact a central part of the kind of nonviol-

ent strategy Gandhi did suggest – while the problem is a lack of resistance approach.

War Resisters' International have the potential to contribute to this development of a nonviolent strategy. However, it is not only the global movement that lacks an understanding of nonviolent strategy, we who work with nonviolence are lacking a global understanding of nonviolence, and need to develop a global repertoire of nonviolent resistance together with the global peace and justice movement. This is a challenge for nonviolent activists and scholars to develop something new from past experiences.

Transcending traditional politics

The movement of movements is transcending both the local/global levels of politics, and the very idea of politics confined into certain areas (e.g. militarism, economics, cultural or environmental) or subjects (e.g. nuclear weapons, conscription, genetically modified crops and agrobusiness or thousands of other subjects of the evil effects of present world systems). This is a movement of the full fledged heterogeneity that social life is about, and the diversity of tactics needed in protecting that life. What that means for nonviolent resistance is difficult to comprehend, but clearly something different. We are in need of a comprehensive strategic framework which is adoptable for various contexts and needs.

Traditionally power critical approaches (such as feminism or anarchism) and nonviolent resistance have been marginal to "mainstream oppositional politics", but today it does not have to

be so. There seems to be a greater need for approaches that not only critically engage with oppression and violence of all kinds, but also have the practical tools from centuries of experiences to create change. It is my firm belief that the global movements need to be offered the choice of a comprehensive alternative to the usual political traditions. If the coming struggles of global confrontations are not built on the (limited but yet well founded) historical experiences of nonviolent movements, then this fragile movement of movements in the making might be less effective and even might lose its momentum of mobilisation and its capacity for creating lasting change.

What we aim to do: War Resisters' International is calling on nonviolent resistance trainers, scholars, activists and organisers to participate in the conference "Globalising Nonviolence" in order to explore together how we can adopt strategic nonviolent resistance in global networks. We do not think we already have the answers of how to go about this mildly speaking gigantic task, but we know that we have to try, history is drafting us.

The most important matter is to recognise that current nonviolent knowledge, training forms, strategy, organisational forms and action forms (i.e. our nonviolent repertoire) need to be developed in accordance with global conditions. What specific development is needed is not yet clear, but we

Editorial

Globalising Nonviolence – this is the theme of this *Broken Rifle*, and it is the theme of our upcoming conference in July in Germany (mark the dates: 23–27 July). But what do we mean when we say *Globalising Nonviolence*?

Stellan Vinthagen explores what nonviolence has to offer for the global movement for peace and justice – the "movement of movements", converging at social forums and major summits of government or intergovernmental institutions. More correctly it's probably different wings of this movement that meet at one or the other – or even organise parallel events, as recently with the World Social Forum and the Alternative Social Forum in Caracas (see page 2).

But Stellan Vinthagen also argues that we – the protagonists of nonviolence, but also the movement of movements as a whole – lack a global strategy of nonviolence, and an idea what nonviolence really means for a global struggle.

War Resisters' International's conference *Globalising Nonviolence* wants to explore these questions, based on our experience with nonviolent action and campaigns, but also our awareness that we don't have all the answers. We hope that this issue of *The Broken Rifle* encourages you to join us in this debate – either by joining us at the conference, and/or on the Wiki at http://www.wri-irg.org/wiki/index.php/Globalising_Nonviolence.

Another world – a nonviolent world – is possible.

Andreas Speck

The Broken Rifle

The Broken Rifle is the newsletter of War Resisters' International, and is published in English, Spanish, French and German. This is issue 69, March 2006.

This issue of *The Broken Rifle* was produced by Andreas Speck. Special thanks go to Majken Sorensen, Howard Clark, Stellan Vinthagen, Jochen Stay, and all others who provided the information used in this issue, and to *Peace News* and *Graswurzelrevolution* for including this issue in their March issue. If you want extra copies of this issue of *The Broken Rifle*, please contact the WRI office, or download it from our website.

War Resisters' International,
5 Caledonian Road,
London N1 9DX, Britain
tel +44-20-7278 4040
fax+44-20-7278 4044
info@wri-irg.org
<http://wri-irg.org/pubs/br69-en.htm>



continued on page 2



Alternative Social Forum in Caracas

Parallel to the official Caracas "police-centric" World Social Forum, sponsored by the Chavez government, the national oil company PDVSA and even the Caracas Hilton hotel, an Alternative Social Forum took place, organised by anarchist and anti-authoritarian groups in Venezuela, and without subsidies, without compromises with power. Most participants probably saw it less as a counter-event, but as a welcome addition to the official social forum, and many participated in both – including War Resisters' International.

The alternative forum did not only discuss issues that were left out of the official forum – militarism in Venezuela (quite obviously an issue that is not welcome in a country where the president is a military), the social and ecological consequences of Venezuela's oil and coal production, mostly for the "world market", human rights in Venezuela or anarchism in Cuba, to mention just a few. More important than that, the alternative forum engaged in a real debate, unlike the format often found at the official forum, which did not seem very different from consumerism, just in a "leftist" variant, with hundreds listening to supposedly intelligent speeches but with little space to really participate.

Still, the alternative forum was also a place of critique of the official social forum process, and the "institutionalisation of the World Social Forum that has spelled its degeneration over half a decade of development. This bureaucratization of the WSF is contrary to its genesis and original principles, which spoke of a convergence of diverse and contradictory movements, a 'movement of movements'. At its current stage, the WSF is serving to catapult and legitimise a series of leaders, governments, institutions, NGOs and leftist political parties with relatively large economic power and resources; this has the effect of furthering these interests and marginalising more radical and 'minority' movements. One of the priorities of the Alternative Social Forum was to generate an autonomous space to develop and interrelate various local movements, whose diverse subjectivities offer alternative visions to the imposed discourse and Manichaeism that has characterised Venezuela in recent years", so the organisers of the alternative forum. No surprise then, that the political police observed the Alternative Social Forum.

Of course, it wasn't tens of thousands that participated, but probably several hundreds. But more important, a community was created, and real networking took place, which will hopefully last and will contribute to the development of something new.

Andreas Speck

www.fsa.contrapoder.org.ve

World Social Forum – Forum for Nonviolence?



Caracas, January 2006: A march during the World Social Forum. Photo: Mike Rhodes, www.indybay.org

Howard Clark

The World Social Forum is the latest – and one of the more attractive attempts – to provide an international process to strengthen cooperation between a wide range of related movements of social resistance based on more or less common values. After five years, this process shows sign of institutionalisation – it's popular enough for some governments (national governments such as that of Chavez in Venezuela or the regional government of Cataluña) to want to be seen as supportive. Yet at the same time the process remains open enough to clarify and update its analysis, for instance last year adopting a statement from Women Living Under Muslim Laws offering a feminist critique of so-called anti-war movements that align themselves with patriarchal religious fundamentalism.

I imagine that at every Social Forum – be it regional or global – there have been activists present

in some way associated with the WRI. I say "imagine" because we are rather a loose network. Something like a Social Forum offers useful networking opportunities – and frankly in some ways can be as useful as some events we organise for ourselves (and at our own expense!). This used to be the case in the 1980s with the European Nuclear Disarmament Conventions – indeed I met some WRI members there who I never met at WRI meetings.

The END Convention, however, was about war and weapons. The Social Forum deals with much wider issues. Indeed, the Charter for the World Social Forum does not specifically mention war and the only reference to the military is that military organisations will not be represented. However, it does speak of nonviolence. Towards the end, in Para 13, we read that "the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organizations and movements of society,

that – in both public and private life – will increase the capacity for non-violent social resistance to the process of dehumanization the world is undergoing and to the violence used by the State, and reinforce the humanizing measures being taken by the action of these movements and organizations."

So here is a clear point of reference for WRI. Our own WRI declaration doesn't specifically mention nonviolence. The first part is our refusal to support war, the second part our commitment to remove the causes of war – which for many years we have taken to mean our commitment to promote nonviolence to remove the causes of war. Hence all our debates on manifestos for nonviolent revolution, our statements about active nonviolence as an alternative to armed struggle, our conferences on nonviolent social defence, and our more recent work on "nonviolence and social empowerment".

WRI cannot exist as an isolated organisation – we have to take our place among those social movements whose goals we share. That is our sphere of action. There are times, when we feel marginal – and certainly it is more appropriate for WRI to be seen at the recent alternative social forum in Caracas than cheering on the Chavez government – but there are times when we connect with vital issues and impulses which, organisationally, we otherwise have to put to one side as being beyond our limited resources.

Right from the beginning WRI has posed a radical social analysis – an analysis far more wide-reaching than our organisational programme can be. Also we promote values, values to practise not just in the organisation but in our daily lives and reflect a much wider consciousness than bald anti-militarism. Together, these put us firmly among the "movement of movements" that gravitate towards the Social Forums.

However, there is something else we have, and that – for all the controversy over nonviolence – has been welcomed when we have offered it. This is a record of careful preparation and honest, critical evaluation of nonviolent action. These have rarely been actions organised by or in the name of WRI or its affiliates, but actions in which our members have participated, which we have discussed and which have given us ideas to apply in our own situations. From outside, sometimes people view us as being like a "club for the nonviolent". One of the challenges we face is to show that ours is not an exclusive nonviolence, nor a nonviolence fixed in time or part of a particular culture – but is continually re-creating itself in fresh contexts. Our conference Globalising Nonviolence should be an important step in this direction.

Howard Clark has recently helped April Carter and Michael Randle to compile People Power and Protest since 1945 – a bibliography of nonviolent action to be published by Housmans in March. (Sorry, but it only covers publications in English.)

Continued from page 1 A Call for a Nonviolent Strategy

do recognise that we are in a new situation. The global movements will make us understand the new situation and, hopefully, we will then learn and contribute with our understanding of nonviolent strategy, making the global movement of movements not only challenging the present world order but effectively changing it.

Another – and nonviolent – world is possible!

Stellan Vinthagen, WRI Triennial Committee, and Department of Peace & Development Research Göteborg University, Sweden

stellan.vinthagen@padrigu.gu.se

This article is a very short version of an article published by War Resisters' International in a series of articles leading up to the International Triennial Conference in July 2006 in Germany. In the original version of the article (go to <http://wri-irg.org/tri2006/en/news/msg00001.html>) you can read an analysis of what consequences globalisation has for contemporary politics and a detailed action plan for developing a nonviolent strategy within the global peace and justice movement.

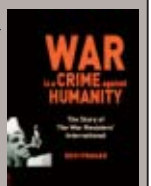
War is a Crime against Humanity: The Story of The War Resisters' International New book by Devi Prasad

"War Resisters' International, born out of the horrors and stupidity of World War I, has kept the banners of conscientious objection and abolition of war flying through the most atrocious century of European history. War resisters, organised or not, will bring about the end of war."

Johan Galtung, dr hc mult, Prof of Peace Studies

Devi Prasad studied at Shantiniketan, Tagore's University, worked as a teacher and artist in Sevagram, Gandhi's ashram, from the 1940s until 1962. From 1962-1972 he was General Secretary of the WRI.

Published by: War Resisters' International
ISBN 0-903517-20-5. 560 pages, 67 photos. Publication date: 21 October 2005
£28.00 plus postage.
Order now on our webshop at <http://wri-irg.org/en>



Preconditions and social-political factors for mass civil disobedience.



Blockading in a nuclear waste train in Germany: how do you get people onto the tracks? Photo: WRI archives

Jochen Stay

Jochen Stay, who was active in civil disobedience campaigns against the deployment of Pershing-II nuclear missiles in Mutlangen in Germany in the 1980s, and later in the campaigns against nuclear waste shipments in the 1990s and early 2000s, reflects on his experience with mass civil disobedience. In the present situation, it is clear that courageous action is again necessary, but he asks: Is civil disobedience with the participation of thousands of people an appropriate perspective for the peace movement today?

It is evident – and the many failed attempts prove – that not just any issue, nor in just any political context, and nor with just any political approach can thousands of people be attracted to take part in civil disobedience. Some political conditions have to be met for it to work. I will give ten points, which can be found in Mutlangen and with “X-thousands in the way”, but I don’t claim to be able to offer a recipe for success:

1. The issue at hand is perceived by many people as a real threat. Being affected as a person is also a crucial factor.
2. The issue at hand is one where many people believe that powerful interests are superior to politics and that party politics does not represent the will of the people.
3. The movement has been able to focus on highly visible, controversial, or symbolical part of a big, general, and highly complex issue, and to generate a conflict around this part, which symbolises the issue as a whole.
4. The movement has been able to escalate the conflict at one concrete place – Mutlangen, Gorbleben – so that the place itself gets a large symbolic meaning and even becomes part of the identity of the movement.
5. The campaign gains energy from a social vision which goes

far beyond the political aim, and which is reflected within the campaign, in the way people relate to each other. I only want to mention grassroots democracy, consensus decision making, affinity groups and spokescouncil.

6. The campaign for civil disobedience is carried by a circle of activists, who for years put all their energy and time (almost full-time) into the campaign and the fulfillment of their vision.

7. A form of civil disobedience is devised whose consequences are neither too heavy nor too light. This means through limited violation of the law and through the preparedness to confront the consequences public awareness is created, but also that many people are prepared to wage civil disobedience, because the legal and physical consequences are limited and costs can be calculated.

8. The actions develop into a good mixture of effective disruption of the machinery and ritual. For me, rituals are not negative, as long as they are filled with life.

9. The mobilisation for the actions asks for a personal commitment from participants, for instance via pledges.

10. Participants have the opportunity to prepare themselves well. A lot of effort is put into creating of an organisational framework that allows the individual activist to focus on the act of blockading itself.

Those are some commonalities. But there are also differences, factors that have changed since. I want to name some of those too. (...)

► The use of and preparation of civil disobedience is now seen from a more pragmatic perspective. In Mutlangen there was a long and deep debate why civil disobedience is justified in times of the nuclear arms race. Nowadays, many see civil disobedience as one normal form of action, which is able to get more public attention than a normal demonstration. But it is also at-

tractive because it provides the opportunity to put your own body as a spanner into the works.

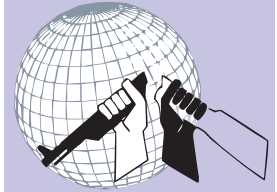
► “X-thousands in the way” works less with existing groups. Though they still exist and form the core of the action, most activists join as individuals or in small groups, and only form affinity groups on arrival. Therefore one or two days of preparation are needed before an action, to turn a chaotic mass into a community ready and able to act. And even this community is little more than an expanded core of participants. Most activists join spontaneously and without preparation, and the action has to be planned in a way that makes this possible.

► The actions are a bit more “militant style”. Because the police try to prevent any action in advance, using bans on demonstrations and deploying huge amounts of police, often getting to the action can be the most difficult part. Watching an action of “X-thousands in the way”, we can see

how thousands walk almost like a route column to the action, where thousands of police wait, reminiscent of images from the Napoleonic wars. The difference becomes obvious when shortly before the confrontation we fan out and calmly but determined walk through the police lines.

► What changed too is the perception of success. Our aims in the ‘80s were set high too, but the individual activist was aware that the action itself wouldn’t stop the arms race. Nowadays many are more ambitious and want short-term success.

This is an abstract from a longer presentation by Jochen Stay at the conference “with new energy for peace”, 7 December 2002, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany. The full version has been published (in German) in gewaltfreie aktion no 138/139, 1st+2nd quarter 2004, and a translation will be posted on the WRI web page!



Globalising Nonviolence War Resisters' International Conference

Schloss Eringerfeld
Paderborn, Germany
23-27 July 2006

Conference fees

Participation in the conference costs 200€ (registration, accommodation and meals) for individual participants. The fee for representatives of organisations is 250€. There a cheaper options (bring your own tent/caravan) available, if you cannot afford the full fee. Please check the registration form, either online or download the PDF version from the conference website.

Travel information

The venue is Schloss Eringerfeld, near Paderborn, Westphalia. Further travel information will shortly be available on the website.

Visa requirements

Please check visa requirements on the website of the German Foreign office at http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/willkommen/einreisebestimmungen/index_html. If you need a visa to come to Germany, please contact WRI after registration for the conference. We will provide you with an invitation after payment for participation in the conference has been received.

Registration information

War Resisters' International, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, Britain
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—	Devi Prasad & Tony Smythe: <i>Conscription: A World Survey</i> (WRI, London, 1968)	£3.30	€7.00	US\$11.00
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—	 Mitzi Bales, ed: <i>Opening Doors to Peace: A Memorial to Myrtle Solomon</i> (WRI, London, 1991)	£3.85	€7.00	US\$9.25
—	Peter Brock: <i>Testimonies of Conscience</i> (privately printed, Toronto 1997)	£3.85	€7.00	US\$8.75
—	Devi Prasad: <i>War is a crime against humanity. The story of War Resisters' International</i> (WRI London 2005)	£32.00	€47.00	US\$66.00

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Are you interested in both nonviolence and globalisation?

**Are you campaigning against war?
Are you involved in nonviolent direct action or curious to learn more?**

Globalising Nonviolence will be a great opportunity to meet activists from all over the world, to get to know what makes them tick, and to see how you can help each make another world possible. Around the world, a movement of movements is converging. This movement seeks to counterpose the perspective and values of people's power to those of global financial institutions, transnational corporations or governments. This is a movement of globalisation from below. WRI believes that nonviolence has a major role to play in this globalisation from below. Hence the theme of our upcoming international conference - Globalising Nonviolence.

- Conference discussions will:
- ▶ Analyse the contemporary situation of economic, cultural and political globalisation. How are capitalist globalisation and militarism related?
 - ▶ Develop strategies for nonviolent resistance towards the unjust aspects of globalisation. How do we create nonviolent social change?
 - ▶ Bring together people from the globalisation critical movement and WRI's network of pacifists and anti-militarists for mutual exchange of ideas on nonviolent opportunities for resistance.
 - ▶ Strengthen networks and create new links between activists from all over the world.

Conference structure
Each day of the conference will begin with a short plenary session on the day's major topic. Then participants will divide into theme and activity groups, where the same people will meet every day during the conference to discuss a specific theme in depth. The afternoons will include one-

time workshops and plenary sessions.

Day Topics

1. Globalising Nonviolence
We aim to make this a highly participatory conference and that will begin with the opening session.

2. Militarism and globalisation
The morning plenary will ask: How do economic globalisation, militarism and war relate? The evening plenary will address issues arising from the "privatisation" of war, by the increase in "outsourcing" to private companies.

3. Learning from globalisation from below
Investigating nonviolent actions already taking place against the negative aspects of globalisation, the morning plenary will focus on how German and East African groups have worked together against the trade/traffic in small arms. The evening plenary will concentrate on the strategies pursued by the movements involved in globalisation from below to support citizens' peace processes in Palestine as a specific case study.

4. For a nonviolent strategic framework
What does a nonviolent strategy have to contribute to the movement for globalisation from below? What does involvement in the movement for globalisation from below have to contribute to a nonviolent antimilitarist strategy?

5. From protest to social change
Discussing alliances and goals, and reviewing the plans and ideas developed during the conference.

Theme and Activity Groups

Militarism in a global economy
Military industry tends to be privatised, diversified, and globalised, and yet still - compared to other industries - privileged. This group will analyse the strategy and the practice of the global military-industrial complex.

Military presence
The military has a profound impact on society and culture through processes of militarisation. It occupies space, both physical and cultural. This group will examine possible nonviolent strategies for demilitarising society.

Nonviolent citizens' interventions
Nonviolent citizens' intervention is a practical example of globalisation from below, making links globally and supporting peace building and



globalising nonviolence

resistance to oppression in other parts of the world.

Nonviolent strategy and globalisation
What are the strategies and objectives of globalisation-critical movement and the place of nonviolence within these? How do the activities of the international anti-war movements fit with this?

The right to refuse to kill
Themes for discussion will include conscientious objection, war tax resistance, deserters, and/or war resistance without conscription. "The Right to Refuse to Kill" is one of WRI's major programmes.

War profiteers
This theme group will name some of the biggest transnational corporations that make a profit through war, and seek ways to direct nonviolent actions against these companies.

Nonviolence training for beginners
Through games, role plays, exercises and discussions, the participants in this group will be introduced to various aspects of the field of nonviolence.

Video activism
This group is both about practical introduction to the technical aspects of video and about how to use video as a political tool. This group will produce a video of the conference!

War Resisters' International
WRI believes that "war is a crime against humanity" and works "to refuse war and to remove the causes of war". Founded in 1921, it is now a network of pacifists, anti-militarists and nonviolent activists on every continent. Throughout its history, members of WRI have taken a lead not only in movements against war but in applying nonviolence to a wide range of other social issues, both in their own countries and internationally.

German Conference Hosts
The Conference will be hosted by and organised in cooperation with all WRI's German affiliates, participating in the WRI-Förderverein as a legal framework:

- ▶ Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft - Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen (DFG-VK)
- ▶ Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft - Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner (DFG-IdK) Hamburg
- ▶ Internationale der KriegsdienstgegnerInnen (IdK) Berlin
- ▶ Institut für Frieden und Gewaltfreie Konfliktbearbeitung (IFKG)
- ▶ Archiv Aktiv
- ▶ Graswurzelrevolution
- ▶ Antikriegsmuseum Berlin

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