

# NONVIOLENCE

# *Today*

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- Action
- Jabiluka

- Letters
- Review

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## Editorial Collective

We hope *Nonviolence Today* will promote nonviolence in a broad sense. It is strictly nonprofit and all editors donate their time and use of personal resources. The editors for this issue were Jan, Janelle and David. We hope you will continue to support our efforts to promote the understanding and practice of nonviolence.

# Confessions of a Sycophant

I am writing in response to the critique of the Jabiluka Blockade by Ciaron O'Reilly in *NvT* #60. I had a very different experience of Jabiluka from Ciaron and wish to share this, acknowledge Ciaron's challenges and pose some of my own. My views are as an individual and I do not represent any organisation. What I express in this letter is simply my interpretation of events as I experienced or understood them.

To Ciaron O'Reilly, Ploughshares.

## Authority

My understanding of Mirrar/Gundjehmi authority was an exercise in dealing with the tendency in the politics of oppression for the most oppressed to end up at the bottom of a long line of decision making control. The issue at Jabiluka to me is not simply uranium, but indigenous people's rights and authority over land use. Land that Mirrar people experience as their responsibility to care for. Setting decision-making up that respected this, was a way of turning the tide of white, outside control of this custodianship. Perhaps what is happening is a confrontation of authority between: Mirrar/Gundjehmi; Green groups; Ploughshares; Global corporate capitalism via ERA; Government both Territory and Federal.

## Complexity abounds!

Before the blockade began, my guess is that Mirrar people would have had high understandable fears of being at the bottom of decision-making control again. As a self-confessed subscriber to Mirrar/Gundjehmi authority I accept your challenge of being perhaps too willing to accept this decision-making form, as a starry-eyed whitefella trying to do good. I also ask you to consider the genuine attempt by myself and I believe many others to recognise Aboriginal sovereignty as a means of reconciliation and respect.

We may have been ignorant of how decision-making was realised at times, but it was a positive experience to acknowledge that I was on Mirrar land and agree in practice with their authority. Their

custodianship of this land is of paramount importance to me in the whole Jabiluka business. Labelling us as sycophantic masochists (literally translated via Webster as "servile parasites engaging in pathological self-destruction") is aggressive and unhelpful in promoting genuine debate about authority. (Being described as racist Christian fundamentalists and having your explanation banned from camp also seems unhelpful)

## Legal business

Your view that there was a "*complete sell out to the police*" (p.4 *NvT* #60) underestimates the discourse about disclosure as a potentially legitimate means of nonviolent action. This is an ongoing issue that deserves constructive debate, and is frequently questioned in nonviolent circles (see p.8 *NvT* #59).

My experience of being arrested (12 June 98) was certainly not being "on your own". There were more supporters than arrestees (albeit eight) at the action and many travelled to Jabiru and waited for our group to be processed, then cheered and supported us in post arrest de-briefing.

Also, I was involved in training and preparation days in Melbourne, which all people travelling to Jabiluka were encouraged to attend. At these sessions we had a lawyer, experienced in working in the Northern Territory and direct action, give a one and a half hour briefing on what to expect re the law and police in the Northern Territory. Participants were also given a legal kit with this information.

It was clarified at this time that the cam-

paign was not able to pay for any legal fees or ancillary costs to do with arrest. It was therefore an individual decision whether to follow the path of arrest or not. As not all people attended these sessions before going to Jabiluka, it was thought wise to brief people at camp about these limitations.

While your criticism that more support to arrestees has merit, and good on you for instigating measures that improved support from your extensive experience in these matters, the picture you paint lacks context and appreciation or understanding of efforts made.

## Mirrar involvement

Perhaps the best course of action is for us to not make assumptions as whitefellas but to enquire, or trust that Mirrar are as involved as practically possible given all circumstances. I note that on page 11 of *NvT* #60 that Keith Armstrong says that "*the entire Mirrar clan*" participated in "*the biggest ever mass presence in Kakadu...*"

The aggressive and cynical tone of your criticism of the campaign leadership belittles your courage and dedication, and to me reduces the usefulness of your critique. I wonder what reflections have transpired for you since the blockade and hope that the creation of enemies amongst potential allies is not an inevitable conclusion.

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**NvT**

# Effective Non-Hierarchical Living: skills and techniques

When I went to Jabiluka (in part) to find an alternative culture being lived and developed in order to provide an alternative to the severely dysfunctional one (culture/society) we live within. What I met was at most, a fledgling; still heavily weighed down by the unquestioned/unprocessed conditioning that we are brought up with(in). There was (as there often seems to be at political campaigning) a token deference to nonviolence but basically restricted to the period of 'an action'. The structure of non-hierarchy was continually being eroded and ignored, because of a lack of grounded experience (and therefore belief [I shy away from using the word faith which connotes belief without any reasonable foundation]) I am not denigrating that protest, or any particular campaign, but my view is that an incredible potential for laying the foundations for dramatic change is being lost when so many are continually fighting against a corrupt and ineffective system with the methods taught through that system.

In an effort to make a positive contribution toward that end (and tired of trying to fight for each aspect piecemeal and virtually alone) I developed a 'handout' giving a comprehensive, but brief, introduction to the issues involved in living and working without hierarchy, in order to plant seeds of ideas and questioning. A copy of that flyer follows:

**Effective Non-Hierarchical Living** - Skills and techniques (or, methods for free flowing love within a group (and then the world)). More of an alternative *culture* than a group structure, it is a way of relating that works effectively by empowering everyone, and thereby getting the best of people's ideas and skills, allowing their positive energy to flow, and making them feel good and so further encouraging their participation.

As opposed to a pyramid, with some

walking on other's backs, it is a circle, where everyone can see and hear everyone else. A circle that will spread, drawing in more and more people because it works, and feels good as well.

**Listening** to each other, and taking seriously what we each have to offer (providing it is respectful and empowering). Listening to the quiet ones as well as the loud, the children as well as the elders, the recently arrived as well as those in place for a while, the wimmin as well as the men.

We need to speak clearly and relevantly to each other about our feelings and concerns, being careful to **communicate constructively and respectfully**. This means being aware that we are all humyn and fallible, vulnerable and emotional beings. It means feeling love and compassion, and speaking with an attitude of 'No Blame' at all times. To hear each other we need to be unafraid, and not defensive.

**Sharing** as much relevant **information** as we can with each other so that we can understand what's happening, why, and how, and can contribute to it.

**Sharing the skills** we have as much as

possible so we will be able to share the work-load, and the responsibility. It means giving people experiences that allow them to:

- have a broader understanding of how things work, and therefore be able to make a more informed contribution.
- feel empowered because they are personally gaining new skills and sharing skills with others.
- be able to further spread those skills and so create a culture of widely skilled people with a broad understanding of the things happening around them.

**Sharing the responsibility** means skilling and informing people as much as possible while letting go and allowing them to contribute, make decisions, and do things in their own way (as long as it is respectful and empowering to those around them). Rather than giving or taking orders, it means **negotiating** decisions based on the wishes and concerns of all the (possible) relevant people.

**Inclusion** refers to the attitude of openness and of actively encouraging people to feel that they can participate and contribute. It requires creating an environment where people feel (!) able to contribute appropriately. This requires challenging the bad habits that we have inher-

ited from the hierarchical (capitalist, patriarchal) system; hence we must be 'pro-active'. A special mention needs to be made about our language which has hierarchy and non-inclusive concepts embedded in it which need careful attention eg. using spokespersons as opposed to spokesman, facilitator as opposed to leader, the job I'm doing at the moment as opposed to my job.

**Validation** means accepting and acknowledging that while we are all equal, our experiences are all different. It means listening to people (active listening skills apply) and allowing them to express what their experiences are even though they're not the same as yours; trusting that they are doing the best that they can, according to their current understanding of the world. This applies especially between genders, different ages, different cultures and differently-abled people. It means (if it's appropriate and NOT patronising) affirming that they are all right, and doing the right thing, or doing their best; helping people to access their love for themselves (and therefore everyone/thing else).

When something bad or upsetting has happened, it can be good to remind them

that they're only humyn, and it wasn't their fault (no blame); that they did the best they could at the time. Validation is a key technique in NvA (nonviolent action), and in counselling, and a powerful and effective technique in direct action.

**Active Awareness and Affirmative Direct Action** - challenging stereotypes. Because we all come from and live within a dysfunctional system, because we have a lifetime of learning and being forced into bad habits, and rarely get taught the skills to live co-operatively with each other, we need to use **active awareness** and **affirmative action** to sort through and challenge the dysfunctional cycle(s) we've inherited. We need to actively pay attention to and change how we act and relate to each other and to our feelings. And we need to positively discriminate towards people and groups of people who have particular disadvantages.

**Self-responsibility** is about taking care of yourself, and making sure you are able to deal effectively and respectfully with everyone around you: feeling able to express the fact when you're not being treated respectfully as the beautiful humyn being that you are. And when you

feel that you're not safe, or just not having effective communication, no matter how hard you're trying, accepting your limitations and walking away (and sometimes even asking for help).

I was also encouraged by friend to develop a workshop which I did (with their reluctant help) and eventually ran it. It got a great response but unfortunately was broken up because of circumstances of time, and then never fully finished.

I intend to resurrect this workshop and run it, beginning in about May in the Byron Bay area.

Anyway, the handout still seems relevant and I try and give away copies whenever I can (especially good for toilet walls). I intend to include this e-mail address on future copies for feedback.

I am also considering submitting it for publication around the country, primarily I was thinking of the various student newspapers.

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**NvT**

# Neptune's Manifesto

## How a few good pirates can save the oceans

The oceans of the world desperately need some aggressive, committed, passionate, determined pirates--eco-pirates of conscience to stop the ongoing destructive pillaging by the pirates of profit and greed.

The pirates of greed operate on the high seas with impunity, so why not build a navy of the former--an eco-force of environmental privateers, beholden to no corporate interests or state authority?

It was not the British or Spanish Navy that put an end to piracy on the Spanish Main in the seventeenth century. God knows, both navies spent considerable energies and resources in pursuit of that goal, but both failed miserably. Piracy was instead vanquished by an individual - a pirate, Captain Henry Morgan, in fact. For his efforts, he was rewarded with the governorship of Jamaica.

Individuals and non-governmental organizations can triumph where state governments fail because bureaucracy can be dispensed with and expediency can be deployed. Whereas the bureaucratic state is shackled into non-action by the vested interests and conflicting political ambitions of its citizens, a non-governmental organization is fueled by the common interests and passionate desires of its members. A state must include all interests, many of which are in conflict. A non-governmental organization moves ahead by a common interest and seeks a common goal.

If the common goal is also one that nations agree with in principle, if not in practice, then an NGO that reflects this common concern should be at least tolerated, if not actively supported by some nation-states.

There were many in the British and Spanish Empires who profited directly and indirectly from piracy, including many in positions of influence. The advocates in government wishing to end piracy had to wade through the muck of political and

corporate corruption, special interests, diplomatic dilemmas, conflicting ambitions, and just plain old bureaucratic red tape.

Captain Morgan, on the other hand, concerned only with his own ambitions, simply got on with the job, and most effectively.

### Post-modern Piracy

Today, another form of piracy is practiced on the high seas. The ever-escalating demand for resources is pillaging the planet's oceans.

And because this greater part of the Earth's surface is free of state authority, there is no structure, and no political or policing body that is in a position to defend these resources from high-seas piracy. The world's oceans are an open frontier, with everything up for grabs for those who possess the biggest and best technologies to extract fish, seals, whales, minerals, oil, krill, plankton, or energy. The same holds true for those who view the seas as a dump site for radioactive waste, sewage, toxins, or discarded plastic.

On the high seas, might makes right. It is

the only law that exists in practical fact, whereas most international laws exist only in theory. Laws without enforcement are not worth the paper they are written upon. Captain Jacques Cousteau once told me that he believed that the navies of the world should stop playing war games with each other and get down to the real business of protecting the oceans from the greed of humanity.

Of course, navies are merely the tools of nation-states and it is not in the real-politik interest of any nation-state to protect the common heritage for the good of the commons. In the long term, of course, it makes perfect sense, but politics has not been a discipline to concern itself with long-range objectives.

### High Sea Frontier Commons

We are stuck with a dilemma. The oceans are being plundered, yet the status quo of international law allows nation-states to choose to disregard any law, even if they have agreed to abide by it.

At present, what we know as international law is merely a collection of agreements by certain nation-states, all of which have no binding force to back up their implementation.

The drafting of the laws is undertaken only by those who are deemed to have "standing" to do so, i.e. representatives of nation-states.

Monitoring of ecological balance, of fish stock or whale populations, is underfunded, biased, or simply ignored for the political convenience of industry or agriculture.

The government of Canada in the early eighties was very much aware of the possibility of the collapse of the northern cod fishery off Newfoundland. Action was continually delayed until the fishery crashed, at which point Canadian Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin launched a public relations ploy that blamed the whole mess on the Spanish, to distract from the incompetence of his own government.

Canada still has refused to learn from its mistakes. This is illustrated by the fact that salmon populations continue to decline off the West Coast under pressure from the large fishing companies and unions that deny the fragility of the species and the ecosystem.

Crimes against ecology are also crimes against humanity. These crimes have been consistently committed by the same nation-states that possess the standing to participate in the formulation of treaties and laws. None of these states will admit to wrongdoing-or if they do, they will certainly not agree to be penalized for their transgressions.

Just a quick trip through a short list of the crimes of some of these nation-states reveals the awesome extent of lawlessness on the world's oceans: Iraq's gross ecological crime of dumping millions of tons of oil into the Persian Gulf; the former Soviet Union's crime of dumping nuclear reactors into the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans; Canada's illegal whaling and incompetent management of both Atlantic and Pacific fisheries; Mexico's slaughter of dolphins and the endorsement of this slaughter by the United States in the interest of trade; Norway's and Japan's blatant violations of the global moratorium on commercial whaling; the drift-netting of the oceans by Taiwan, Korea and Japan, with monstrously long

nets; uncontrolled worldwide poaching of marine wildlife; cyanide poisoning of tropical reefs; the operation of unsafe oil tanker traffic by all nations; the unremitting destruction of wetlands and estuaries.

The litany of threats to the environment is endless and ongoing. The real victims, the generations yet unborn, have no voice to protest and no standing to contest these crimes.

Yet, we have laws to protect the environment. Don't we? Japan and Norway are both members of the International Whaling Commission, and between them they have slaughtered some 18,000 whales since the IWC implemented a global moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986.

We have international conventions like the 1973 convention on vessel-dumping at sea and the 1973 convention for the prevention of pollution by ships, both of which are essentially unenforceable.

Article 192 of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea provides: "*States have the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment.*"

These are all words, without adequate measures for enforcement.

One possibility for enforcement is the enactment of national legislation that would impose trade embargoes on offending nations. For example, under regulations of the US Department of Commerce, measures can be taken to sanction nations that do not adhere to the rulings of the International Whaling Commission. Despite this being the law, President Clinton has consistently chosen to ignore the law and has substituted "letters of protest" to offending whaling nations like Norway and Japan. His reasoning is that the issue is not worth upsetting trade relations over. As a result, despite the law, both nations have annually raised their illegal quotas without recriminations from any nation.

Both the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as

international treaties render domestic legislation like the US Endangered Species Act subordinate. International trade agreements negate domestic conservation legislation. For this reason, Mexico successfully sued the US under GATT for barring trade in tuna caught by the method of "fishing on porpoise." This in turn forced the US to overturn legislation protecting dolphins from tuna nets.

What all this means is that the future looks bleak for conservation because it will always be forced to take a back seat to the interest of free trade.

### **Oceanic Range Wars**

Of course, as resources are depleted, warfare will become the natural extension of diplomatic discussions. We saw this surface in 1973 with the British and Icelandic cod war when Iceland unilaterally extended its territorial limit to fifty miles. This was the first step toward an international agreement creating the globally recognized 200-mile limit, a measure that was successful because it appealed to the territorial ambitions of all the participating states.

Still, this was not enough. In 1995 Canada fired on the Spanish trawler outside the 200-mile limit to underscore its desire to protect fish that it considered its own regardless of whether said fish might travel across an imaginary line in the water in the course of their migrations. In turn, Spain charged the Canadian Fisheries Minister with piracy, but, like everything else on the high seas, the charges did nothing. The incident furthered the Minister's political ambitions in Canada. Spain carried on fishing as Canada congratulated itself for displaying some rare machismo.

It is interesting to note that it was Canada that arrested me in 1993 for chasing the Cuban fishing fleet off the Tail of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. This was also outside of Canada's 200-mile limit. Nonetheless, as a Canadian citizen, I was put on trial on three counts of felony mischief. Although I did not damage any property or injure any person, Canada attempted to impose two life sentences plus ten years as punishment for having demanded that the Cubans leave the area.

What I had done was no different than what Canada did to the Spanish two years later, except that I did not use force. My trial was held shortly after the Spanish incident, and when my attorney attempted to compare my actions to those of Canada, the judge ruled that it was improper to compare one criminal action to another criminal action as a precedent. In his summation, the Crown Prosecutor informed the jury that *"a message must be sent that interference by citizens with over-fishing must not be tolerated."*

### **Sheriff without a Badge**

In other words, it was not my actions that were objectionable, but the fact that the actions were not taken by a representative of the State. Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin was lauded as a hero for doing what I had done—after charging me with the commission of a crime when I did the same thing.

The jury trial did give me the opportunity to defend myself utilizing the United Nations World Charter for Nature.

Specifically, I pleaded that I had acted in accordance with Principle 21 Section (e) of the Charter, which reads: *"States, and, to the extent they are able, other public authorities, international organizations, individuals, groups and corporations shall: 'Safeguard and conserve nature in areas beyond national jurisdiction'."*

Canada sent a legal expert to my trial to argue that although Canada had indeed signed the World Charter for Nature, the Charter was not to be considered as a defense for actions under Canadian law. My lawyer successfully argued that if Canada signed the Charter, then Canada agreed with the Charter.

Canada informed me that I was responsible for some thirty-five million dollars in lost revenue to the Cubans. All I could see was the vast number of fish this represented and considered it a victory.

I have been operating under the World Charter's stipulation for many years. The same spirit that brought it into being compelled me to set up the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society—not as a protest organization but as an enforcement or-

ganization to uphold international laws and treaties.

I began this endeavor in 1977, five years before the Charter came into existence, but it was in anticipation of the need for the Charter that I did so. In 1982, the Charter simply gave us some legal authority to act.

I confess to being a pirate. Since 1979, we have sunk nine outlaw whaling ships and have rammed numerous illegal drift netters and tuna boats. In doing so, we are complying with the law, as defined by the UN General Assembly in 1982: *"States, and, to the extent that they are able, other public authorities, international organizations, individuals, groups and corporations shall safeguard and conserve nature in areas beyond national jurisdiction."* This is our letter of marque from the United Nations.

It is interesting to note just how much of a threat this makes us. As the only organization that has enforced the rulings of the International Whaling Commission, we are the only organization banned from attending the meetings of the IWC. This was at Iceland's insistence.

In 1988, I turned myself in to Icelandic authorities in Reykjavik to answer charges brought over our scuttling of half the Icelandic whaling fleet in November 1986. Not only did Iceland refuse to lay charges against me, they deported me the next day. They knew that to put me on trial would be to put themselves on trial. In 1990 and 1992, I rammed and disabled Japanese drift net vessels in the North Pacific. We documented the ramming and challenged Japan to lay charges. They did not. They could not because they themselves were acting illegally.

It is important to understand that we are not advocating the enforcement of our philosophy against any random target. The IWC is the only international body empowered by participating nation-states to draft whale conservation regulations. According to Article 65 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, states shall cooperate with a view to the conservation of marine mammals, and in the case of cetaceans, shall in particular work

through the appropriate international organization for their conservation, management, and study.

The UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio De Janeiro in 1992 further reinforced this ruling by recognizing the IWC as the legitimate body overseeing whale conservation regulations.

The Rio document called Agenda 21 also gave reinforcement to the World Charter for Nature by stating: *"Governments and legislators should establish judicial and administrative procedures for legal redress and remedy of actions affecting environment and development that may be unlawful or infringe on rights under the law, and should provide access to individuals, groups, and organizations with a recognized legal interest."*

Sea Shepherd activities have served only to enforce rulings that nations have arrogantly chosen to disregard.

True, we don't always stick to areas beyond national jurisdiction. We did sink the whalers in port, when no one was on board, so as to not risk injury to their crew. But we were enforcing an international moratorium against nations that had agreed to abide by the rulings of the IWC, and we were protecting a species that was not restricted to the territorial waters of the offending state.

It may be argued that our actions are undemocratic (though many of the nations that are signatory to treaties are non-democratic). I feel that our actions are democratic in the extreme, because we represent a far greater constituency. We act on behalf of all other species and on behalf of thousands of unborn human generations. Our great democracies represent only a small planetary minority—people—and only of this generation, and generally excluding children, and, of course, excluding the millions of other species that also are entitled to rights on this planet.

### **Neptune's Navy**

As a small organization, our actions have been effective but restricted. There is a need to build an aggressive international

oceanic policing force that is answerable to no particular government but is answerable to the commons in principle. There really is no reason why this cannot be done.

A non-governmental organization has as much right to operate on the high seas as any government. Instead of citizens, this organization would have contributing members who fund an enforcement body and empower them to uphold existing laws, conventions, treaties, regulations, and agreements despite the protests of the participating signatories.

This 'Neptunian Tribunal' would not create laws but would simply enforce existing laws already agreed upon by nation-states. The World Charter for Nature provides the authority for individuals and organizations to act in this manner, limited only to the 'extent that they are able'.

I would envision this organization as a worldwide web of contacts that would monitor and communicate relevant information on all activities that transgress against established law. Armed with this information, the organization would then deploy either covert tactical units or overt police force where it is needed. Because enforcement vessels may be designated as pirates and targeted as such (opening an interesting ethical debate as to why 'conservation pirates' would be targeted and 'corporate pirates' would not), I would advocate for a fleet of submarines.

They would be difficult to locate and difficult to attack. They would remain at sea in international waters on a permanent basis. Repairs could be achieved either by a floating dry dock or in a nation that agrees to allow operations within its territory. Crew changes and refueling could take place at sea.

In this way, the vessels would be unflagged and not subject to the laws of any one nation. (The Law of Admiralty or Maritime Law is confined primarily to shipping. Its jurisdiction is in practice relegated to the territoriality of the nation where any charges have been formulated. It is not applicable to the high seas.)

We have the communications technology to make this work. Instantaneous worldwide communication is a reality. We have concerned, skilled, willing participants. All that is really needed is the organization to bring it all together to finance and deploy it.

What I envision is an independent naval force: Neptune's Navy.

I have already laid the groundwork with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

After all our activities over the last twenty years, I have been called many things, but I am not a convicted criminal. There is a big difference between being called a terrorist by an outlaw whaler and being a terrorist in the eyes of the law.

When Sea Shepherd purchased a submarine in 1994, a spokesperson for the Canadian Navy said that it was ridiculous for a conservation organization to have a submarine. He laughingly dismissed us as not knowing what to do with a submarine. "*What sort of experience do these people have anyway?*" he thundered.

I had to respond that since World War II, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has sunk more ships, boarded more ships, and rammed more ships than the Canadian Navy. Our level of in-the-field tactical experience exceeds that of the Canadian Navy. The tactical forces that we have deployed to sink whalers are trained military special forces from various nations. We have lawyers, doctors, engineers, navigators, pilots, electricians, and special ops people.

There is really no reason why we cannot stand up and enforce the law against international ecological piracy. We have the means under international law, we have the skills. We only require the will, the finances, and the courage to act.

It is important to proceed against violations with maximum restraint. Every effort should be implemented to ensure against causing injury to crews employed in illegal actions on the high seas. For this reason, the primary enforcement tools should be non-lethal tactics and hardware. The objective is interference, intervention, disruption, and intimidation, utilizing vessels, electronics, and, most importantly, documentation.

We contemplate, for instance, the sinking of trashed and torn up junked cars off the Grand Bank. First, of course, we'd burn them to get rid of toxics; then sink them in international waters where they would most likely cut up the trawler nets and, at the same time, provide shelter and habitat for the fish.

### **Deepsea Interpol**

At the moment, the most important weapon that can be deployed to ensure that the plundering of the high seas does not take place, out of sight and out of mind, is the camera.

Information could be gathered from a variety of sources, but primarily from an international network of field representatives. We are presently doing this with Norwegian whaling. We have a network of dozens of Norwegian citizens who file reports on the movements of whaling vessels, their takes, and vulnerabilities. These informants can be both paid and volunteer. Field agents would also assist with special operations agents when needed for support and cover.

Although covert operations would be employed, all activities would be publicly acknowledged. It is important that the public be informed at all times that these actions are required to uphold existing

laws and are not acts of political or philosophical protest. If I thought that it would be practical to advocate for the United Nations or another representative body of nation-states to create such an enforcement body, I would not hesitate to support such a proposal. However, since the record of international cooperation on this enforcement issue is non-existent, and considering the duplicity of nation-states in appeasing corporate or national interests above the spirit of international cooperation, I believe the solution must be non-governmental.

*Captain Paul Watson*

From: Whole Earth Review, Fall 1998.

**Sea Shepherd Conservation Society**  
P.O. Box 628  
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The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has been on the front lines since 1977, directly defending the world's marine wildlife to maintain global biodiversity. This is achieved through the research, investigation and video-documentation of violations of international laws, regulations and treaties established to protect these species.

## High School Students Learn New Values in the New South Africa

**Based on an interview with Anne Welgemoed, a Durban High School Principal**

After the ANC government came to power in 1994, they initiated a series of reforms to education. This reflected a new democratic philosophy stressing pluralism and human rights. A process of desegregation, introduced in 1991 by the de Klerk government, was accelerated. Students of colour began attending formerly White schools. Schools adopted a more decentralised system of democratic institutional management. Curriculum was modified to be more flexible and learner-centred with the goal of fostering a democratic society. This is the first in a series of articles on what I have seen over four months of work in Durban area high schools undergoing this transformation.

As a Canadian researching the process of integration in Durban area high schools, one of my biggest concerns has been that although schools have desegregated, most have done very little to actively promote integration. Although structural reform reflected in policy changes requires much more attention in practice than it has been given, even less has been done to transform entrenched attitudes to deal with new diversity. As a result, the new sys-

tem of education has lacked legitimacy and is often described as being in crisis. Inter-racial conflict in South Africa's schools has demonstrated that democratic values cannot just be adopted automatically, but must be learnt.

Grosvenor Girls High School in the Bluff, a middle-class Durban suburb, is one of the few educational institutions that has been pro-active in its attempt to integrate

students of diverse backgrounds. I spoke to Anne Welgemoed, the former principal of the school, about these changes.

Welgemoed initiated and facilitated the process of integration at Grosvenor Girls High School where she was deputy principal and then principal from 1990 until late 1997. Initially, this went smoothly, but when expectations changed after the elections in 1994, more conflict arose in

the school. In order to deal with these problems, Grosvenor used Value-Sharing Workshops to help the students find common ground to overcome their differences. These proved quite successful. Despite this, Grosvenor Girls remains the only school in KwaZulu Natal to have used this method of conflict resolution.

### **The end of apartheid: moving toward democracy**

Anne Welgemoed began her career at Grosvenor Girls High School as deputy principal in 1990. At that time it was still an all-White school. When she became principal in 1992, the de Klerk government had initiated new, seemingly progressive education policies. At a time when everyone recognised that the ruling National Party would inevitably lose power, such changes masked the attempt to protect White privilege. It was a bold move, however, as White communities were given the right to vote for the kinds of schools they wanted when historically this had been dictated by the White government.

When the vote took place, the Afrikaners in the area opted to keep their school White. The English community, whose children attended Grosvenor Girls and Grosvenor Boys High Schools, decided to allow a small percentage of children of colour to attend. They voted for the type of school that gives management a large amount of autonomy vis-a-vis the state. At this time, the Group Areas Act which forced different racial groups to live in specific areas, had already been abolished. Families of colour began moving into the area. After Mandela was released from prison in 1990, there was a new sense that things would have to keep changing and that integration was inevitably the way to go. People started to feel that there was no turning back. Ninety-five per cent of those who voted chose to open the doors to mixed schools. Although this may not necessarily have been for altruistic reasons, the National Party was clearly on their way out.

### **White schools admit students of colour**

In her research, Welgemoed discovered that two kilometres down the road in Wentworth, a Coloured community, two

high schools were jam-packed with students. Meanwhile, nearby Grosvenor Girls, Grosvenor Boys and the Afrikaans high school in the area were operating at fifty percent capacity. Welgemoed aimed to get word out that Grosvenor was accepting students of colour. Thanks to the legacy of the Group Areas Act, the degree of segregation between communities made this difficult: the newspaper was not distributed outside the White area and there was no transport between neighbourhoods. She phoned the principals of Wentworth's primary schools to inform them of her intentions. She organised a bus route between Grosvenor Boys and Girls High Schools and Wentworth. Pamphlets were distributed to the surrounding area. Word soon spread and within a year enrollment was up by about 120-125 students. By 1993, two busloads of girls from Wentworth attended Grosvenor Girls High School while their brothers went to Grosvenor Boys. The school became inundated with applications. Pretty soon girls from the neighbouring Tamil Indian community and from the Zulu township attended.

*"When this started happening," Welgemoed told me, "the language we used to describe what was happening was that 'they are coming to our school'. There was a strong 'us' and 'them' mindset reflecting years of segregation. But there was a powerful feeling of excitement. Everyone was trying hard to make others comfortable and the first few months went very well. We adopted multiculturalism as a theme and speakers came to discuss diversity issues. But although things went well and no major conflicts emerged, it's difficult to change how people were brought up. The degree of segregation was so complete that as children we really didn't know what was going on in other communities."*

She gave me an example of the kind of friction that existed between students. A Black girl went to drink from a water fountain when a White girl intercepted saying, "Whites first!" The Black student shyly withdrew to let the other drink, but approached Welgemoed with the problem. With incidents like this, Welgemoed realised how much there was to learn about overcoming prejudice

and the legacy of segregation.

### **Addressing new attitudes and old conflicts**

In 1994 with the first democratic elections just around the corner it became more obvious that it would not be easy to overcome the legacy of apartheid. As teachers began discussing democracy with their students, there was a new awareness of rights. Welgemoed noticed that the children of colour, especially Blacks were becoming more assertive.

*"They became more confident. Just one year later, that Black girl at the tap would never have moved quietly out of the way," she said. By the end of the year, conflicts arose as White arrogance was confronted for the first time and as White privilege was being eroded.*

As people were mobilised to vote, many expected the worst. People began to hoard groceries fearing civil war. On the day before the election, everyone was concerned about what was going to happen. Welgemoed described the feeling as a 'quiet tension': *"On election day, we expected all hell to break loose, but that never happened. The feeling of hope was indescribable. It was like a miracle had descended on the country. Mandela had encouraged such a strong spirit of hope and reconciliation in everyone's heart that there ended up being little tension."*

After the elections, a strong feeling of despondency and negativity emerged among Whites. In 1994 alone, the School had lost thirty White students whose families had emigrated. By 1995, the school population was up to 850. As the classrooms and hallways became overcrowded, people felt their space was invaded. Conflict became more prevalent and took on racial overtones. When it arose, old racial prejudices were evoked to resolve it.

No one was sure how to deal with the situation. School management decided to write a new code of conduct and got the girls to sign it. They soon realised that this was a mistake. Rather than democratising the process of change, they had adhered to the legacy of an authoritarian-style system of governance that imposed

top-down solutions. None of the students had been given a say as to the types of changes that would happen. This first attempt to manage conflict didn't work. Welgemoed recognised that it had been a superficial change that didn't deal with the real problems.

### When values systems clash

At that time, Welgemoed attended an international principal's convention in Australia along with two thousand colleagues from all over the world. She shared ideas about the problems in culturally mixed schools everywhere. When referring to the flow of kids from diverse backgrounds attending her child's school, one Australian parent lamented, "We've lost our values." This made a lasting impression on Welgemoed. It struck her that the problem of conflict in her school was based on the clash of different value systems. White English schools in South Africa had inherited a set of values from a British colonial system that the British had abandoned years ago. These values - the basis of education in formerly White schools - were not shared by new students of colour.

Welgemoed felt strongly that there was a need to find common ground between all students and look at shared values. She reflected on the writing of South Africa's new constitution.

*"When the constitution was written, there was a need for compromise that changed our whole vocabulary. We began talking about negotiation, mediation, compromise, conflict resolution. I thought of all the stakeholders and their diversity and how they managed - despite their diverse affiliations, cultural backgrounds and political parties - to sit down at a table and agree on a way forward. This inspired me. How did they do it? How did they manage to find unity in diversity and common ground to agree on this way forward? And then I thought, why can't we do that?"* And that's what they did.

### Value-sharing workshops: managing conflict

Management at Grosvenor Girls planned workshops where the school staff - from the principal and teachers to the cleaners, all the students and those parents who volunteered discussed the kind of education, behaviour, attitudes and values they wanted in their school. They hired a management consultant to help them with the process. He drew up a programme to train staff as workshop facilitators. The teachers demonstrated much enthusiasm during the weekend training session. Nonetheless about a quarter of those who participated, although they supported the process, felt that they were unable to lead it. Many believed they were not strong enough. The issues of racism and prejudice were 'too close to the bone'.

Workshop participants were divided into groups of thirty facilitated by the teachers. First, South Africa's history was explored as an attempt to address the past before moving forward. The process of conditioning in a segregated society was examined. Next, they talked about their differences as well as what they have in common. They found that they all hoped for and feared the same things. They then contemplated the hopes and fears they had for their school and their country. South Africa's socio-economic and political problems were looked at. Participants agreed that in order to improve the situation, the country needed to come up with some kind of plan of action. But this was a matter of choice: They could move forward with the spirit of reconciliation, growth and democracy encouraged by Mandela or they could ignore the intensifying conflict and let it erode into civil war. All agreed that they felt it was important to confront and deal with conflict. The notion of conflict itself was then investigated and identified as a negative form of debate.

*"There is an Afrikaans expression that says 'you must know your place'. It is a culture where nothing can be challenged. But in a democracy you have the right to challenge things without resorting to conflict. Conflict can become something positive. Conflict can become debate. And in a democracy debate is essential. We tried to stress that people should debate their differences. Debate meant that we can attack people's views, ideas, or comments but not the colour of their skin - the way they look or speak."*

In the workshops, each group wrote down what they felt were important values. They each had a representative comprising the 'Committee for Change' where they took the results. The committee came up with eight common values: education, respect, pride, honesty, democratic principles, unity in diversity, communication, and discipline. They agreed that these were the values they strived for, but how were they to live these goals? On the second day of the workshops, the groups devised a 'code of behaviours' corresponding to the common values. For example, if they value respect, they must respect people's rights and not behave in a way

that impinges on these rights. If unity in diversity is important to them, they must not use racial slander to deal with debate. If they resort to pointing at someone's colour to resolve conflict, they are not living that value. This also helped for better communication.

#### **Common values: finding unity in diversity**

When asked if the value-sharing workshops were successful, Welgemoed enthusiastically told me that it was like a miracle situation. *"There was not a single incident afterward. Courses in conflict resolution were nothing compared to this. Every time some disagreement arose, we encouraged negotiation, compromise and debate."* Disagreement over a song competition became a big issue for some of the students. Since the girls

from different cultural groups like different kinds of music, they could not agree on what song to sing. Eventually, they compromised. The girls learned that in a democracy you don't always get what you want. You have to consult with others to make decisions and sometimes this is a lengthy process.

*"After the workshops we celebrated the results. It was like a microcosm of what was happening in the country with the elections. Everyone wanted it to work because they had invested in it - like the constitution. There was such enthusiasm and it was this positivity that helped it succeed. And it was overwhelmingly successful."*

The school continues to promote value-sharing, although there is a need to revisit

it with each new generation of students. During orientation week, new students sleep-over at the school where they get to know each other and participate in value-sharing workshops. Although very few diverse societies have suffered the extreme circumstances of segregation and racism as South Africa, many also face problems of inter-cultural conflict. Integration among different cultural groups is seldom pro-actively encouraged in schools. The example of Grosvenor Girls High School can be a model for all multicultural societies about how unity can be found in diversity. By focussing on what they have in common and by democratising school practices, differences that lead to conflict can be managed.

Kim Hershorn

**NVT**

## The Community Listening Project

### **Listening For a Change**

The idea that 'listening' is a powerful tool for social change is not a new one. The simple yet powerful act of listening carefully and deeply is relatively rare in our culture, yet time and time again has proven invaluable in our personal lives, our work and in our efforts to understand the world of other people around us.

Listening is so often perceived and couched in the passive, an act of simply sitting back and doing nothing, letting the other person - the talker - do. Yet this is far from the reality. Active listening, or Heart Listening as it is sometimes called, is a relentlessly active, tiring, sometimes extremely difficult, personally challenging and often rewarding activity. If we attempt to listen deeply, we are searching for a special revelation about how the other person feels and thinks about an issue, why they hold the views they do, how they put the picture together. Not only does this entail mentally and emotionally putting our own views aside for a while, (a difficult job at the best of times!), but continuous focusing, following and attending on the words and meanings of another human being. Any one who has experienced their own internal doubts, confusion and half-formed ideas, shift and suddenly transform whilst

talking to a carefully listening friend, knows how listening can empower the listener and the speaker alike. Careful and non-judgemental listening can allow us to discover new truths and correct our own misconceptions. We may also help open the other person to new perceptions and directions.

As nonviolent peace keepers, intervening in aggressive situations, Pt'chang volunteers have often experienced active listening quickly de-escalating and calming a potentially violent person. Reasoned argument or barking orders does nothing for an upset, angry, or fearful person, although a carefully timed *"hey, you seem really pissed off mate, why's*

that?" and some decent listening can immediately change the situation, help identify underlying needs and meet the persons immediate need of simply being heard. Many of these skills and ideas have been tried and developed over decades within the nonviolent social change movements. From the early Civil Rights movements of the United States, and Australian peace, environmental and social justice campaigns to organisations such as Peace Brigades International<sup>1</sup> activists have been using active listening skills in extreme circumstances.

### **Pt'chang**

Pt'chang - Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacekeeping group is a Victorian based, volunteer organisation that takes an activist, grassroots and community building approach to creating safety. We apply peacekeeping skills from the non-violence movement, skills from the conflict resolution fields, anarchist and feminist community development approaches and our own creative and experimental insights to the goals of helping to create safety on a community scale. Pt'chang sees safety as pro-active - the creation of space where all can experience and express their lives to the fullest - and that it is possible to create safety powerfully, effectively and nonviolently. We focus on using and developing cooperative and power-with processes to help create safety in ways that empower and bring people together.

Pt'chang had been interested in experimenting with the idea of a Listening Project for some time and saw it as an ideal way of finding out about a community's concerns that was far from the dry analysis contained in studies and reports. A Listening Project would also allow Pt'chang volunteers the opportunity to actually meet and hear the concerns and ideas of community members in person and empower them through the experience.

We also saw Listening Projects as a viable and sensible precursor to more extensive nonviolent community safety projects. In this way Listening Projects can act as an important social research tool that inform the development of other projects or activities.

For these reasons Pt'chang decided in June 1998 to initiate and organise a Community Listening Project in Melbourne.

### **History of Listening Projects**

The idea for a Listening Project was most likely developed by Herb Walters, an activist with Rural Southern Voice for Peace<sup>2</sup>, who works in the southern states of the US. Walters founded a Listening Project in 1986 as a means to respond to the fact that so many social change or progressive groups were alienated from or in conflict with various segments of their communities. The first project involved thirty peace activists listening to people in their homes about the presence of nuclear weapons at local submarine base in St Marys, Georgia.

Through the Listening Project, Saint Marys activists were able to build common ground, friendship and support with both community residents and naval base employees. Other Listening projects have occurred since then around issues such as racism, AIDS, literacy, toxic waste dumping, conscientious objection to war and even national independence.

In Palau, Micronesia, a Listening Project was held over the issue of a Compact for Free Association, a piece of legislation that would determine Palau's independence from the US, the degree of US military control over certain land and the island's nuclear-free status. The Compact had deeply divided the small population, creating anger, hostility and violence. Trained Palauan Listeners surprised people who were not used to someone seriously listening to their opinions and feelings. Some who were shy at first, stepped forward after they saw that the listeners really respected what the people had to say. The listeners found that many Palauans had no real understanding of how to make democracy work for them. They distrusted the politicians and kept their distance from politics and social issues. They felt empowered by the fact that the Listeners cared about their opinions. That Listening Project resulted in the creation of a public education campaign on the Compact and a higher degree of involvement on the issues that concerned Palauans<sup>3</sup>.

In Australia, in 1992, a Listening Exercise was organised by community activists in Ravenshoe in Queensland to listen to all sides of a community conflict around the Tully-Millstream Hydro Electricity project<sup>4</sup>. Also, in 1997 a rural Victorian branch of the Defenders Of Native Title (DONT) organised a series of Listening Posts in Echuca around the issue of the local Aboriginal people's, the Yorta Yorta's, Native Title claim. The DONT group had recognised the high level of fear, anger and ignorance amongst white people about the claim and organised the Listening Posts as a means of 'white people listening to white people' about the issue.

Anecdotes from that project highlight times when people with seemingly entrenched racist views approached the posts yet left after telling stories of powerlessness, fear and fond memories of childhood Aboriginal friends<sup>5</sup>.

### **Listening to the People of Darebin**

All of these examples provided valuable ideas which Pt'chang applied to the Community Listening Project in Melbourne. Pt'chang received funding from the City of Darebin through the Community Support Scheme and the Safer Communities Office and spent three months developing and planning the project.

The City of Darebin is located in Victoria about three kilometres north-east of Melbourne's Central Business and includes the suburbs of Northcote, Fairfield, Alphington, Thornbury, Preston, Kingsbury, Oakhill and Reservoir. With about 125,000 residents, the municipality has one of the largest populations within the metropolitan area.

Although the largest community group within the City is what is commonly termed 'Anglo', over one third of Darebin's residents were born overseas. Darebin's overseas residents come from over forty-five different countries.

Thirty percent of the population were born in countries where English was not the first language. Darebin also includes the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of any Victorian municipality.

The aim of Pt'chang's Community Listening Project was to create a series of 'Listening Posts' in a variety of public spaces throughout the City of Darebin over a period of six weeks. We saw the project not only as a method that we, as a community organisation, could find out about the attitudes and opinions of the community but a project that actually helped to create safety through the process of community members listening to each other. We chose the issue 'community safety' as a way of focusing the issues but from the beginning we did not want to define or limit the topic of conversations. For this reason, 'Community Safety' was defined broadly so as not to limit what participants wished to speak about. We were, however, particularly interested in such questions as *"What do you think are the major safety or violence issues in Darebin?"*, *"What do you think could be done to improve people's sense of safety?"*, *"What things hinder your involvement in community safety?"* and many other related questions.

Each of the Listening Posts was staffed by trained volunteers from Pt'chang and from Darebin who actively and deeply listened to people's ideas, concerns, feelings and perspectives about community safety in their area.

The objectives of the Community Listening Project were:

- to create spaces in which the people of Darebin can actively and deeply listen to each other
- to highlight the importance and role of

active listening in creating safety, building community, resolving conflict and in working towards reconciliation

- to learn and grow from the experience of listening to people and increase our understanding of community safety issues in our local area,
- to compile and document our experiences and insights into a publicly available report to be submitted to the Safer Communities Officer of the Darebin City Council.
- to develop the Community Listening Project as a viable and effective model for nonviolent community safety initiatives in other areas and situations.

### Training

Two training days were held in the month leading up to the Project's launch, which included an overview of the project, basic active listening skills, an opportunity to practise and role play active listening in many situations, strategic questioning and an opportunity to choose places on the listening post roster.

Training was an important part of the project. The training aimed to involve and empower local community members, build a supportive and fun group of volunteers as well as teach active listening and communication skills. Robin Latrobe, an experienced trainer and consultant from Castlemaine in rural Victoria, facilitated the training. Robin has played a similar role for the Defenders Of Native Title (DONT) Listening Project in Echuca earlier this year.

The project was launched with the first Listening Post on Wednesday 9 September 1998, on the footpath outside the Preston Town Hall on High Street. The launch was also a part of the Community Safety Week Programme (6-12 September) which was organised by the Victorian Community Council Against Violence (VCCA).V).

### The Listening Posts

The Listening Posts consisted of a simple fold-up table, up to four chairs and a sandwich-board and banner identifying the Listening Post. They were held in a variety of public spaces throughout Darebin at different times of the day and on both weekdays and weekends. Locations included; busy shopping strips and markets, outside churches, schools, libraries, on a train carriage, and on a station platform, outside licensed premises, at sporting venues and community events.

There was no literature or information available at the Listening Posts except minimal referral information available if the listener thought it is appropriate to give it to a participant who may have been in crisis. This referral information included cards from the Domestic Violence Information and Resource Centre (DVIRC), The Men's Referral Service, Parentline, Helpline and the like.

Volunteers sometimes sat at the tables, but often stood in order to more easily connect with people passing by.

After talking with and listening to someone the volunteer recorded the discussion in a notebook and/or asked the person to fill in a questionnaire regarding their thoughts on safety issues in the community.

Volunteers for the Listening Posts were coordinated on a roster basis of approximately two to four hours per shift.

A total of eight Listening Posts were held over the six week period of the project.

There was a feeling that the hundred or so people who stopped and talked to the volunteers had worthwhile experiences. Some people spoke for over an hour, told their life story or had long and stimulating conversations. Others had a brief chat before they went on their way. An incredibly diverse range of community safety issues was raised by the speakers, from rubbish in their streets to violent assaults and abuse.

Many people made clear and useful suggestions about community safety and others criticised the police, the local council or the government. The listeners heard a wide range of views about community safety and what we, as a community, could do about it.

Many people were initially confused about the purpose of the Listening Posts, asking if we were selling something or if we represented a political party. Listeners experienced some frustration in making initial contact due to this difficulty and spent some time explaining the purpose of the Listening Posts. This may have been avoided by having a more focused issue such as 'Drugs and Safety' or a similar more defined issue around which people had stronger views, such as sexual abuse or racism. This may have resulted in people having more to say. The subject of 'safety in our community', whilst clearly important, was sometimes too abstract and sometimes unrelated to people's everyday lives. The listening posts did not always indicate clearly that the topic was 'community safety'. More signs placed around the local area may have made this easier.

Involvement of more bilingual volun-

teers would probably have enabled us to reach a wider range of the community. Although approximately one third of Darebin's population has a non-English speaking background, the people who approached the Listening Posts were predominantly English speaking. Despite the presence of some bilingual listeners, the breadth of cultural diversity in the area meant it was hard to match the sheer numbers of languages spoken.

The design of the listening posts was generally considered good. The tables and chairs helped give the post substance and enabled it to stand out. Flexibility of design was necessary to adapt to different locations. It was sometimes better to have tables split up though in proximity to each other in order to speak to more people.

Also too many volunteers at one spot could be intimidating.

#### **Publicity**

Publicity was by means of posters, press coverage in the local newspapers and radio interviews. Posters were placed around the community advertising the listening posts and the trainings. These posters had brief information in Vietnamese, Cantonese, Italian, Turkish and Greek as well as in English. Posters were first put out prior to the initial training. The week before the listening posts started there were also articles in the local community newspapers.

Several radio interviews happened during the weeks that the project ran and a lengthy article appeared in the *Living Section* of the *Melbourne Age* towards the end of the project<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Summary and Key Findings**

We listened to over one hundred people throughout the six week project with forty-three people completing the survey forms and many others making clear and imaginative suggestions about community safety in their area.

Pt'chang learnt much from the project, enabling volunteers to listen first hand to the views, concerns and ideas within the community and gaining invaluable skills. A forty page report has been published

and submitted to the City of Darebin Council that details the findings of the project<sup>7</sup>.

The Community Listening Project successfully highlighted the role that listening plays in our community on many levels and its importance in people's lives. The media publicity, training sessions, multilingual promotional posters and the presence of the Listening Posts all contributed to this.

The project found that listening to each other, carefully and without prejudice, is an important and simple way of increasing people's feelings of safety and well-being. The listening project itself, by creating a forum in which people could listen to each other had an observable effect on some people's sense of personal safety. In other words, the processes and methods which enable or encourage people to simply listen to and be heard by each other are a crucial factor in a community's ability to create safety.

Listening Projects can be a simple, accessible and inexpensive method for community organisations, activists groups and local councils to actively research community attitudes and perspectives, tap into the wisdom and ideas held within that community and approach issues in a inclusive, neutral, open-ended way.

'Ordinary people' in the community have valuable insights and wisdom regarding community safety and hold ideas about creating safety that often reflect those of academic research and 'expert' opinion. The responses from community members participating in this project contained a wide variety of creative and useful suggestions for creating safety on a number of levels. Many of these would be useful and informative to City of Darebin planners and officers, community workers, service providers, agencies and community safety groups such as Pt'chang.

There is strong agreement amongst the participants in the project that 'Everybody is responsible for creating safety'. However, a range of factors was mentioned that hindered people's involvement in community safety initiatives and

activities. These factors need to be reduced or mitigated in order to increase community involvement in community safety initiatives.

People's perception of safety is diverse and variable depending on a wide range of individual and societal factors. The vast majority of people who participated in the project felt safe in the area they live in but less thought that most other people in their area felt safe. This reflected the finding that many people, although they felt safe themselves, stated a concern for other, more vulnerable members of their communities.

However, when prompted, most people expressed diverse individual safety concerns that caused them not to feel entirely safe. In general community members, who identified themselves as vulnerable, expressed quite a high level of anxiety about safety. These people included the elderly, particularly elderly women, some younger women, particularly parents of young children and some people who did not speak English as a first language.

A common and over-arching finding of the Community Listening Project was that it is the extent of people's positive connections with other people in their community that determines how safe people feel. There was a strong affirmation from many people that the answers lay in building community links and breaking down the distance between people. In other words, people's sense of 'community', the extent of community networks and groups and the level of

involvement in those networks is fundamental to the creation of safety.

*"Safety is to do with personal attitude, common sense and respect for others"*  
*"Feeling safe helps to ensure safety and prevent danger. It creates a reality"*  
 - comments by City of Darebin residents.

The Community Listening Project was a first for the Melbourne area and represented a unique and very people-oriented approach to community safety. It was ideal for a first step before launching into a larger community project but was enormously beneficial by itself. The project was an enormously exciting and challenging endeavour for the three year old Pt'chang - Nonviolent Community Safety Group. As it was the first time the group had worked closely with a local council, we learnt how important and beneficial mutually supporting relationships between local government and community groups can be. The project also affirms and highlights the idea that all of us, in our own way are responsible for creating safety in our lives and communities and that everybody's contribution is valuable.

#### Contacts

For further information about this project, a copy of the Report 'Listening to the People of Darebin about Community Safety' and information about other Pt'chang projects please contact: Pt'chang - Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacekeeping, P.O. Box 69 Brunswick Victoria 3056.

Anthony Kelly

Anthony Kelly is an activist and community development worker with the Australian Non-violence Network.

He has been working with Pt'chang - Nonviolent Community Safety Group Inc. for three years with a background in the Australian peace, environment and social justice movements.

#### Notes:

1. Peace Brigades International (PBI) places unarmed, nonviolent 'escorts' with activists in various countries who are under threat from extrajudiciary execution or 'disappearances' and are a part of the growing number of international and domestic non-governmental peace teams or interpositional forces.
2. An affiliate of IFOR, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, an international grassroots nonviolence organisation which has branches, groups or affiliates in over fifty countries, primarily in the majority world. <http://www.ifor.org>
3. Walters, Herb. Listening For Justice and Reconciliation, *Reconciliation International*, Fall 1991
4. Law, Bryan. Towards Nonviolence in Ravenshoe: Part 2. *Nonviolence Today* #25 March April 1992
5. Latrobe, Robin. Conversations with the author. 1998
6. Parsons, Belinda. 'Friends, Countrymen, Lend me your ears' *The Age*, Melbourne, October 12 1998
7. Pt'chang, Community Listening Project-Report, February 1999

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## Seeds of Peace

is the approximately 52-page thrice-annually magazine of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD) and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). The latter organisation works to promote cooperation among socially conscious Buddhist groups and to promote cooperation between Engaged Buddhists and activists from other spiritual traditions. Each issue contains a variety of material. This includes reports on INEB conferences, reports on Buddhist and other nonviolent activism, analyses of political and environmental struggles in the countries of Asia, theoretical articles, book reviews and letters to the editor. *Seeds of Peace* is edited by Jonathan Watts and Kenneth MacLean and is published by the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, 127 Soi Santipap, Nares Rd, Bangkok 10500, Thailand. An annual subscription (three issues) costs \$US15 (minimum).

NVT

# Information Liberation: Challenging the Corruptions of Information Power

by Brian Martin (London: Freedom Press, 1998), 189 pages, ISBN 0 900384 93 X

Australian distributor: Anarres Books, PO Box 150, East Brunswick Vic 3057. Email: [mailorder@anarres.org.au](mailto:mailorder@anarres.org.au) Web: <http://www.anarres.org.au> A\$27.80 post free. Also available for 7.95 pounds direct from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England. For further info. contact Charles Crute, phone +44-171-247 9249, fax +44-171-377 9526. You can have a look at chapter 3: see <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/98il.html>.

## From the back cover

Power tends to corrupt, and information power is no exception. Information Liberation analyses the corruptions of power in a range of crucial current areas in the information society, including mass media, intellectual property, surveillance, bureaucracies, defamation and research.

Reform solutions seldom get to the root of information problems.

*Information Liberation* examines radical alternatives that undermine the power of vested interests. Alternatives include replacing mass media with network media, abolishing intellectual property, and changing social arrangements that create a demand for surveillance. The book canvasses strategies for moving toward these alternatives, focusing on grassroots action.

*Information Liberation* is provocative. Most readers will find something to disagree with. That's all part of the process. Everyone needs to be involved in discussing information policies and practices, rather than leaving the issues to experts and vested interests.

## Outline of contents

### 1. Power tends to Corrupt

### 2. Beyond Mass Media

Mass media are inherently corrupting. A small number of owners and editors ex-

ercise great power over what is communicated to large numbers of people. Mass media should be replaced by participatory media organised as networks, such as telephone and computer networks.

Strategies to supersede mass media include changing one's own media consumption patterns, participating in alternative media and using nonviolent action against the mass media.

### 3. Against Intellectual Property

There is a strong case for opposing intellectual property. Among other things, it often retards innovation and exploits poor countries. Most of the usual arguments for intellectual property do not hold up under scrutiny. In particular, the metaphor of the marketplace of ideas provides no justification for ownership of ideas. The alternative to intellectual property is that intellectual products not be owned, as in the case of everyday language. Strategies against intellectual property include civil disobedience, promotion of non-owned information, and fostering of a more cooperative society.

### 4. Antisurveillance

Surveillance, a serious and growing issue, is essentially a problem of unequal power. The usual reform solutions, such as codes of professional ethics, laws and regulations, give only an illusion of protection. Another approach is to promote grassroots challenges to surveillance either through disruption or by replacing those social institutions that create a demand for surveillance. The institutional change programme provides help in choosing directions for present-day antisurveillance campaigns.

### 5. Free Speech Versus Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic elites control information in order to help maintain their control. If all employees can speak freely, this undermines bureaucratic power and its corruptions.

### 6. Defamation Law and Free Speech

The law of defamation is supposed to

protect people's reputations from unfair attack. In practice its main effect is to hinder free speech and protect powerful people from scrutiny.

### 7. The Politics of Research

The work of professional researchers is strongly influenced by funding, disciplines, hierarchy and competition. As a result, it is mainly useful to corporations, governments, professions and researchers themselves. Strategies to challenge this pattern include critical teaching and research, popularisation and community participation in research.

### 8. On the Value of Simple Ideas

Rather than building complex social theory and then drawing conclusions for making a better society, it is more productive to find, develop and promote simple ideas that empower people and then build up theory that is compatible with these ideas.

### 9. Celebrity Intellectuals

It's better to think for oneself and to assess ideas on their own merits than to worry about whether they came from a famous intellectual or an unknown.

### 10. Toward Information Liberation

Lessons from the chapters.

Brian Martin

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**NvT**

# Voluntary Simplicity

Dear NvT,

I'm contacting you to let you know of a new email discussion list which might well interest readers of Nonviolence Today, and members of your nonviolence network. The "vol-simplicity" list is for people interested in the ethics, philosophy and practicalities of "voluntary simplicity" - learning to live a simpler lifestyle. Here is some information about voluntary simplicity:

## What is "voluntary simplicity"?

Voluntary simplicity, or VS for short, is about living more simply - and more fully. It's about recognising that enough is plenty, that happiness is not about acquiring material goods, often that you cannot afford; that personal satisfaction cannot be purchased at the expense of others or of the environment we share. VS is about reassessing your life priorities, learning to value your time, your health, your relationships, and your world. VS usually involves reassessing how you earn and how you spend money, how you use your time, how you exploit natural resources, and what contribution you make to the world around you.

Beyond those general statements, VS has many expressions according to the cultural and social contexts of its practitioners. Because VS is a PROCESS of simplification, how that process is lived will be different for each person in her or his own context.

A simple lifestyle is a major feature of all major spiritual and philosophical traditions, of both east and west. Repeatedly the point has been made by those who have experimented with their own lives that an uncluttered, non-acquisitive, non-violent, healthy life is the fundamental path towards peace/truth/ethical behaviour/fulfilment/enlightenment/happiness/integration/god (call it what you will).

For many people in the world, a simple lifestyle is not a choice but a necessity - poverty is all they will ever know. Voluntary simplicity is a "luxury" for those of us who, through no merit of our own, find ourselves in the midst of so much. VS invites us to raise our awareness of how little we need and how much we waste; how, by living with less, we are able to give more. "Living VS" is a continual process of awareness, a continual process of learning to notice how we might live our daily lives more consciously and more frugally.

For more information about VS, and references to many relevant resources and links, please visit the Simple Living web site: <http://www.slnet.com/default.htm>

We've set up this email list to provide a space where people interested in VS from whatever perspective, at whatever point they're at in their own VS process, can

share practical tips and explore ethical and philosophical issues.

Because the list is the first time those interested in VS have been able to make contact in cyber-space, it would be helpful if all new members could briefly introduce themselves and indicate their particular interests in VS.

Whether you are currently striving to live more simply, or whether you would just like to know more about what it means, you are welcome to subscribe to the list.

**To subscribe to the VS list** send a message to: [majordomo@explode.unsw.edu.au](mailto:majordomo@explode.unsw.edu.au), no subject heading. in the message line, type simply: <subscribe vol-simplicity>, then send your message (no signature, no other words at all).

You should soon afterwards receive a confirmation message, which tells you how to send messages to the list and also briefly describes the purpose of the list (the information given above) and list etiquette.

If you'd like any further information, please contact me.

Suzanne Eggins  
[s.eggins@unsw.edu.au](mailto:s.eggins@unsw.edu.au)

**NvT**

# Plowshares Email Discussion Group

Ta Da! Come see our new web site! <http://www.onelist.com>. A free email community service.

Welcome to [plowshares@onelist.com](mailto:plowshares@onelist.com). This is a mailing list for international discussions about the Plowshares movement, civil disobedience and nonviolence.

## Ground rules

Please be respectful of other's opinions. Personal insults are not acceptable.

The mailing list is open for everyone who

follows the ground rules. The list managers (Hans Leander and Rolf Lindahl) reserve the right to exclude anyone who does not follow the ground rules.

Comments and subscription information: To post messages to the mailing list, send an email to [plowshares@onelist.com](mailto:plowshares@onelist.com). All the members of the mailing list will get the message.

To subscribe to the list, send an empty email to [plowshares-subscribe@onelist.com](mailto:plowshares-subscribe@onelist.com).

**NvT**



# in back of it all

## What is NONVIOLENCE TODAY?

*Nonviolence Today* is published every two months to help increase the understanding and use of nonviolence. We publish reports and evaluations of trainings and actions, with a view to improving the quality of both. It's the peoples' magazine and first hand participant reports are especially welcome. *Nonviolence Today* also serves an educational role in promoting a theoretical understanding of nonviolence as a political philosophy. There is much diversity of opinion of what that is, but the common ground of agreement is probably that political power

comes from cooperation. If we don't like the behaviour of power holders, then we withdraw our cooperation in sufficient numbers and they will be disabled. Nonviolent action is a technique which has existed throughout history and occurs in all cultures and has been used by an enormous range of social groups. Nonviolence can be applied to activities as widely different as personal growth and national defence. Violence is not necessary for social change and is, in fact, counterproductive to greater freedom, justice and harmony.

## Subscription Information

Although *Nonviolence Today* is on sale in some alternative bookshops around Australia, subscriptions are a better form of support. Supporting and Maniacal subscriptions make it possible for us to send the magazine to organizations and people who couldn't otherwise receive it, e.g. organisations in the Third World. Unless requested not to, the names and towns of supporting and maniacal subscribers will be published for the time period which applies. The subscription card should have annoyed you

by falling out of the magazine by now. You can pay by telephone with Bankcard, Mastercard or Visa. Phone Dave on (07) 3366 2660 (10am to 9pm 7days). If you like the magazine and want it to continue, please:

**Subscribe to Nonviolence Today today!**

*Nonviolence Today* is also published electronically (without graphics) on the World Wide Web at <http://uq.net.au/~zzdkeena/NvT/>

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## Free Trial Offer

If you know someone you think might be interested in *Nonviolence Today* (including yourself if you are not a subscriber), send us their(your) name and address. We will send a free copy and invite them(you) to subscribe. Tick the appropriate option on the subscription card (In this case you don't even need to use an envelope) or phone.

## Adoptions

This is a gift subscription idea which encourages *Nonviolence Today* supporters to pay for a subscription to be sent to a library of their choice. This has the potential to introduce a much larger number of people to the idea and practice of nonviolence, not to mention the possibility of finding new subscribers. A subscription card is enclosed for your convenience. If you are a librarian and would like to seek adoption, let us know and we will place your library on a list and make adoption available as soon as possible. The names of the adopted library and the person or persons who adopted it will be published in the magazine unless we are specifically asked not to.

## Notes for Contributors

*Nonviolence Today* exists to promote  
(1) nonviolence as a political theory and  
(2) the study and practice of nonviolent action as a method of social change.

Theoretical proposals and analyses of actions and campaigns that advance these goals are most welcome. We may edit articles to maintain a focus on nonviolence.

We prefer contributions to be sent by electronic mail (see address above) or on a floppy disk, which we will return. Failing that, preferably typed (for scanning), or clear, legible handwriting (if in doubt, please type it). Please inform us of the authorship of any items you send and tell us if they're not for publication.

Photographs are extremely desirable, preferably: (1) clearly captioned on the back; (2) dramatic.

Copy deadlines are at the end of January, March, May, July, September, November.