

NONVIOLENCE

Today

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- **Jabiluka**
- **Interstate Reports**

- **International**
- **National Gathering**

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Contents

National Gathering

3 Nv Gathering 2000 Report

Bryan Law

Jabiluka

5 The Blockade

Bryan Law

6 MARJ stands for Mining Ain't Right at Jabiluka

Phil Bourne

7 Jabiluka Response

Marty Branagan

Protests

8 Ten Years of Sanctions on Iraq: A Weapon of Mass Destruction

Ciaran O'Reilly

9 Whilst I was in Prison

Jason McLeod

International Peace Force

13 A Proposal

14 Global Peace Force?

Rebecca Spence

Peace Brigades International

15 Making Space for Peace

Anthony Kelly

16 Indonesia & East Timor Project Focuses on West Timor Camps

*Marcus Berglund &
Pamela Sexton*

Interstate Reports

17 Nonviolence Victoria Website

Mark Cerin &

Anthony McCarthy

18 SA Report

Mary Heath

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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 Bryan and Janelle. We hope you will continue to support our efforts to promote the understanding and practice of nonviolence.

Nv Gathering 2000 Report

On 22-24 April 2000 the Australian Non-violence network had a national gathering at Mt Glorious, just outside of Brisbane. Some 28 people attended for all or some of the sessions over three days. There was a blend of seasoned activists, old friends, and curious new practitioners. Everyone agreed it was real good to get together to talk and think about non-violence practice in Australia. To consider the nature and function of our network.

The gathering had two themes, one was "learning from Brisbane" - so we got to hear from a bunch of "Phase 1 and phase 2" ANNs, and some life-long Catholic Workers, about their experience of non-violence organising and action in Brisbane. The Nuremburg Action Brisbane in 1988 emerged as a key event, both as an experience, and as an example of powerful tolerant relaxed alliance between many different kinds of activists. Six activists from that group attended the gathering full-time.

The other theme was "what ANN could most usefully do in the anti-nuclear movement in Australia". Many ANNs participated in the recent and ongoing Jabiluka campaign. Six shared their stories and perspectives on the good and the difficult experiences of this eight month blockade. The most painful divide among us was the nature of activist/Aboriginal relations, how it related to the anti-nuclear/social justice debate, and how conflict was experienced by many different kinds of activists.

We pursued this topic from listening to experiences, to hearing a couple of loose proposals for ANN activity (see below), and agreed to pursue discussion through NvT and let the proposals simmer until our 2001 gathering on the southern coast of NSW.

Along the way we listened and thought about the Pt'Chang Community Safety Project in Victoria, a proposed Australian chapter of Peace Brigades International, finding a new editorial collective

for NvT, a suggestion to pursue anti-militarism through national warship actions, along with the nature of life, children, and community development. Patriarchy popped out for a moment. Everyone ate well, shared, and talked late into the night.

Elements of all that thinking and talking are presented in this report. Some participants are putting their best thinking forward elsewhere in this issue of NvT. Debate is welcome. The next gathering will be more decisive, maybe.

What is this ANN thing anyway?

While there was no broad agreement at all, one gathering participant went so far as to offer an analysis of two distinct phases of the Australian Nonviolence network so far. Phase 1 was said to be triggered by "environment actions" from the early 1980s, and was active in the popular "anti-nuclear/green/peace" movement which was so distinctive in that decade.

Much of the network's emphasis was on teaching/training, research and education of nonviolent thinking and technique. ANN was decentralised and used a north American body of literature to

promote and think about nonviolence. This material was sometimes a bit rigid, and needed cultural translation to our local context. Nuremburg Action Group was one good go at that.

More commonly it proved difficult and unrewarding to promote the techniques for training and action in the frenetic and sometimes desperate atmosphere of a bush blockade camp, or a ship action - and ANN members were occasionally maligned as "training fascists" for their efforts. For whatever reason the first phase of network activity "ended" with the collapse of the popular peace movement in the early 90s.

There was a period of no gatherings, although NvT continued to be published, and articles continued to discuss the range of green/peace activities taking place in Australia and around the world.

A serious attempt to revivify and support the ANN came out of Victoria, based on the considerable successes of the Melbourne Rainforest Action Group. MRAG was a kind of virtual community based around shared activism. Bonding, emotional work, planning and alliance-building were strong in this groups repertoire.

They formed a natural and very productive alliances with Commonground to pursue nonviolence interests.

During phase 2 the network was given much impetus and logistic support from Melbourne. A Centre for Nonviolence was established. Philanthropic funding was acquired to support education and networking functions. There was a national facilitation collective, and Victoria provided a large body of participants. Gatherings were held annually again. ANN acquired a tangible form, along with minor elements of centralisation.

Phase 2 foundered when the annual gathering proved unable to agree on a set of "Principles" which would define who was "in" or "out" of ANN. The key line of conflict lay in gender politics, and seemed intractable at the time. Key par-

ticipants withdrew or moved inter-state, and gatherings stopped for a while. The network functioned nationally through phone link-ups for a couple of years, and NvT has been continuously published - although irregularly in the past year.

Now, according to this analysis, we're entering phase 3. The call for the gathering came from two 'regional' families with young children. Many "young activists" from phase 2 are now parents and have adopted "community development" as a key direction for their day to day activism. We had as many as eight children for care at this gathering.

This "new" network is decentralised and informal. People define themselves in or out, and build associations or work with whomever they choose. Conflict can be listened to without need for resolution. It

makes sense for us to think and listen together, and figure out ways we can make social change more effective and easier at the same time. Plus it's a lot of fun.

We want an annual national gathering again, outside Metro Victoria. At the same time we were really happy to see a Victorian regional gathering happening this year, and were impressed that five of you came all the way to Mt Glorious.

So we're still grappling with the questions: "*What is it that ANN does well and distinctively?*" "*How can we develop and support ANN as a powerful force for nonviolence?*" "*How can we use ANN to make our own lives better and actions more powerful?*"

Bryan Law
NvT

The Blockade

In 1997/98 there was an eight-month continuous blockade outside the site for a new Uranium mine at Jabiluka. This blockade was the focal point for a well-organised campaign that involved an alliance of supporting environment organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, Wilderness Society, Friends of the Earth - and a network of "Jabiluka Action Groups" or JAGs around Australia, operating primarily out of the Universities.

The Mirrar people, whose traditional estates include the mine site, are opposed to the mine and see it as part of a deadly and ongoing European threat to their culture and survival. The Mirrar were part of organising the campaign from its inception, and insisted their authority in decision-making and sovereignty in the land be recognised and respected. There are twenty-nine Mirrar, and their representative organisation is Kunjaime Aboriginal Corporation.

Organising for the blockade began after a bus load of students travelled with a seasoned FOE anti-uranium campaigner to the site after a national "students and sustainability" conference. They met with some of the Mirrar, saw and heard about the issues, and went back to start up JAGs in their home bases. This was a time when "reconciliation", the "green/black alliance" and "native title" were hot issues around the country.

Jabiluka developed into a large and visionary campaign that raised enormous public interest, and significant funds. Perhaps half a million dollars were spent maintaining the campaign and blockade. Subsidised buses carried literally thousands of students and others from just about every city in Australia. Most stayed only a week or two, some for months, a few diehards for the whole time. The Mirrar live there.

On site it was the full remote hard-core blockade catastrophe. Everything is tough, the state and miners are much better equipped and organised for their roles than we are, a lot of activists pursue

slightly different agendas and slightly bizarre behaviour, eco-crats from outside may as well be from another planet - misunderstandings occur, along with the occasional conflict.

Cultural misunderstanding

One line of schism was the authority of the Mirrar to make land-use decisions and political decisions according to their wider campaign objectives (protection of land/people/culture), with the blockade being only one consideration. The blockade was having political impacts on the networks of Aboriginal politics in the region, in which the Mirrar must operate, so they acted to bring it more into line.

This ran up against the urgency factor among anti-uranium activists. "We are not here for a social issue. We are here for the most important issue on the planet - stopping uranium mining NOW. Similarly there was distrust of the hierarchical nature of some Aboriginal decision-making, and the role of Kunjaime.

Stories told about this at the gathering included:

- "the big stick meeting" where Mirrar leaders remonstrated with blockaders about the need to respect Mirrar decisions and culture in their actions and lifestyles;
- "the no-brakes action" where ferals crashed a disposable vehicle through a mine-site gate, and freaked lots of people out with the danger and reckless disre-

gard for life;

- "the ploughshares action" which had originally been sanctioned by the Mirrar, but permission was withdrawn due to wider Mirrar considerations. These activists went ahead without permission, with a disciplined nonviolent action.
- "the letter from Kunjaime" asking JAGs to forward any funds raised to them, for use in the Mirrar's ongoing campaign for land rights and cultural survival.

We had participants from across the spectrum of non-indigenous activists telling these stories, and there was considerable conflict among them about what all these things meant. Widely differing views were held about the best way forward. It's down for ongoing discussion.

Electioneering

The second problem identified was more familiar. The difference between how front-line and anarchist activists see a direct-action campaign, and the uses to which such a campaign may be put by conservation corporations and political parties.

The enormous wave of publicity generated by the blockade was turned to "get Labor elected". The usual bunch (Wilderness Society, ACF, and friends) orchestrated this campaign, and inevitably sought both to tone down the blockade ("let's not alienate the middle-ground swinging voter") and divert resources for electioneering. A Labor government would stop the mine.

The election strategy happened. It failed. The blockade collapsed (it was collapsing anyway). In the eighties this kind of national electoral campaign succeeded twice in electing and securing a Labor government federally. It has most often failed during the nineties.

Gathering participants weren't so caught up in this issue, with little support for electoral politics, but with little surprise it was played. It did muddy the issues around Kunjaime for all concerned.

End-game

The third problem was identified as the end-game of the large-scale campaign. When the blockade collapsed and the electoral strategy failed, a mood of despondency settled on the national net-

work. People left, but it was still active with actions in the cities.

The Kunjaime letter jolted people, and caused something of a crisis of faith. The JAG network of non-indigenous city residents are just not ready to hand over control and resources to an Aboriginal organisation. A core feature of the campaign was being cut out.

At this time a concerted effort by traditional socialist organisations to enter and control campaign meetings saw a series of hostile and expensive blockades of the mine's corporate owners in Melbourne. By all accounts it was a very negative experience and the campaign haemorrhaged people and resources until it went comatose.

The Jabiluka campaign is now low-key and dispersed. The Mirrar continue to oppose the mine, which is in a bad financial and operational way - and may yet collapse under commercial and political pressure. (North Ltd has just been acquired by C.R.A.)

The gathering wanted to foster an ongoing discussion about how all of these issues can be addressed - and what particular contribution might the Australian Nonviolence Network make to their future resolution?

Phil Bourne participates in a small Melbourne group called MARG, and his story follows this article.

Bryan Law
NVT

MARJ stands for Mining Ain't Right at Jabiluka

MARJ was formed in 1999, in response to the situation at Jabiluka. We are a nonviolent social action group, based in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Our statement of purpose is as follows:

- We value a just and sustainable society that meets the needs of all people and ecosystems.
- We see the mining of uranium at Jabiluka as an act that undermines our progress towards this vision and denies the rights of the Mirrar people.
- Recognising this, we will act in nonviolent, creative ways as part of the movement to prevent uranium mining at Jabiluka, and seek a resolution that meets the needs of all involved.

Our focus at present is

- to let the public know about and express opinions re Jabiluka
- to add pressure on North to withdraw from the Jabiluka project
- to increase our membership

To this end we have held two community ballots in Brunswick in Melbourne. Both were very successful with over 100 respondents each time. This information

was then forwarded to North Ltd. with resulting correspondence noting "an ongoing requirement for frank communication" We are also developing a newsletter.

MARJ is still in infancy, but there is a good feel and solid commitment in the group. We look forward to growing and developing our nonviolent input into the Jabiluka campaign.

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NVT

Jabiluka Response

I was angered to read Cairon O'Reilly's article in NvT #64, where he attempts to justify his and Treena's actions at Jabiluka on Nagasaki Day. He bemoans his lack of support because "*movement bureaucrats denounced us.*" It wasn't just movement bureaucrats (a cynical and derogatory term for the largely unpaid and selfless workers for social justice, the environment and peace) denouncing them. It was a huge cross-section of the camp, the Mirrar and the movement who were disgusted with their flagrant disregard for the Mirrar people's sovereignty over their own land. I speak as one who was actively involved in the protest, in offices as a 'movement bureaucrat', in protests outside Westpac Banks, on the bike ride, at Jabiluka itself, then in jail and the court system. I was particularly disappointed since I had admired Cairon and most of his work since meeting him some fifteen years earlier.

The Mirrar are the traditional owners of Jab. That there are only twenty-seven Mirrar left does not detract from their land rights, much as the government and industry and Cairon would like it to. Rather it is a result of systematic dispossession and genocidal policies of the British occupying regime, usually justified by its paternalistic Christianity. As Kev Carmody writes, "*Your left hand holds the bible while your right hand holds a gun, And you taught us Hey Black Woman Thou Shalt Not Steal.*" Cairon, being like myself, of Irish extraction, should surely be aware of the effects of dispossession.

Cairon writes that for people in cities there are human rights struggles closer to their homes. Obviously. But Jabiluka is not in a city. It is situated in an internationally recognised piece of country, where the custodians still have close ties to the land. They have held firm against enormous pressure and inducements. Thousands of people chose to support them, and to travel huge distances to help their blockade. As part of social justice, and in common courtesy, we recognised them as the owners, and respected their right to know of and approve or disapprove of our actions.

Certainly the genocide in East Timor is atrocious. To say that it is more important than the Mirrar struggle is nitpicking, as at least the same percentage of Aboriginal people have been killed since the invasion of Australia. It reminds me of Malaysia's Mahatir, who says we can't complain about what they're doing to the Penan because Aboriginal people are

treated so badly here. The fact is that the Jabiluka protest was on Mirrar land: to directly contravene their wishes on some supposed higher moral ground is paternalism at its worst. The greatest hypocrisy was that Cairon and Treena then put out a press release citing the need to support land rights as one of the reasons for their actions!

I am aware that the struggle against the nuclear industry is a pressing one, as I have long been part of it. However, there are plenty of places one can demonstrate against it without muscling in on or using someone else's blockade, particularly if those people are indigenous and have already been trampled on for centuries by holier-than-thou Westerners.

Marty Branagan

PS. *Nonviolence Today* is an excellent magazine!

NvT

Ten Years of Sanctions on Iraq: A Weapon of Mass Destruction

August 1990 - August 2000

Ten years ago I was with friends in Washington D.C. blockading the Pentagon on the anniversary of the mass slaughter by a U.S. nuclear weapon at Hiroshima. Also at the Pentagon that day were U.S. President George Bush and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, they announced sanctions on Iraq and the deployment of a half a million troops to the Middle East in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. An invasion provoked and encouraged by U.S. policy and diplomats.

In the second half of '90, former U.S. ally Saddam Hussein, who had been armed and financed to fight an eight year war with Iran during the 1980's, was systematically demonised. In the opening months of 1991, firepower equivalent to seven Hiroshimas was unleashed on the people of Iraq. Along with hundreds of others I was imprisoned for nonviolent resistance to the massacre in Iraq, in which the Australian government was an enthusiastic participant. I spent thirteen months in U.S. prisons. The peace movement of the 1980's was largely decimated by this huge U.S. military victory and the war against the Iraqi people has continued for these ten long years.

Away from the media attention it once commanded, the war against the Iraqi people has been executed by sustained sanctions, frequent air strikes and occasional drive-by cruise missile attacks. Australia hosts U.S. Navy ships traveling to the Gulf to police the sanctions, provides satellite targeting information for cruise missile attacks and air strikes from the U.S. Pine Gap base near Alice Springs. Since the 'official' Gulf war ceased in March '91, over half a million Iraqi children have died due to the sanctions. When U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was confronted with these figures her response was, "*It is worth the price!*" Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi

elite remain unaffected by the sanctions.

Ten years ago I was conspiring with friends to disarm a U.S. B-52 Bomber. Today I vigil on the tenth anniversary of the sanctions. Friends are bearing witness in Basra (Iraq) and others in U.S. prisons for disarming an A-10 Warthog - one of the planes that fired the deadly depleted uranium munitions. We can all do something to break the silence and challenge the continued war on the children of Iraq.

Ciaran O'Reilly

NVT

Whilst I was in Prison

A few stories and reflections

Whilst I was in prison, every day from the window of my cell I would watch a mob of eastern grey Kangaroos graze contentedly in the paddock next to the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre. Visible through five rows of fences and only partially obscured by the regular passing of an armoured car the Kangaroos brought a sense of serenity and beauty to the ugliness and harshness of prison life. It was in anticipation and fondness that I would look forward to seeing these kangaroos each day. Even though I was not in prison for a long lag, as they say, these Kangaroos became my brothers and sisters - my companions.

Officially I was charged with trespass on Commonwealth property and failure to obey a police direction. For ten years I have been involved in East Timor solidarity and nonviolent action to stop Australia's military support of Indonesia. In December 1998 along with Jim Dowling (a member of the West End Catholic Worker community, Saskia Kouwenberg (from Lismore Friends of East Timor) and my partner Manon Liefin (Journey of Peace) - and in full knowledge of the military and police - we peacefully entered the Canungra Land Warfare Centre (C.L.W.C) to establish a photographic exhibition of life inside East Timor. The C.L.W.C, as many of you would know, was one of many military bases where

Australia trained the Indonesian military.

When we entered the base we were met by around 30 police, including members of the Tactical Response Team, and without incident arrested. In March last year we were tried and sentenced. As a group we were fined a total of \$1100. At the suggestion of Saskia we matched the fine imposed by the magistrate dollar for dollar and redirected it to support grassroots community development in East Timor. In lieu of paying the fine we were sentenced to a time of imprisonment. I was sentenced to jail for 21 days. Last month I publicly surrendered myself to police.

I surrendered myself to police with a fellow activist, Tom Driftwood (who had 3 days to serve for vote refusal during the 1998 Federal election). Unfortunately the three others who I was arrested with during the Canungra 1998 action either had served their time or for various good reasons were unable or unwilling to go to jail.

Tom and I organised a media conference outside our local police station and together with a large group of supporters we walked to the police station behind a large colourful banner that read *Practise Nonviolence*. Gathering outside the police station we sang songs, spoke to the

media and our supporters, answered questions from the media and even staged a small creative piece of theatre before walking in to the station with police.

Of course, we had liaised with police (over the phone!) prior to doing the action to explain our intentions, reassure any fears the police may have and to communicate our commitment to nonviolence, especially the fact that the action would be both respectful and disciplined. This is, I believe, an important part of nonviolence and essential to building trust and demonstrating integrity. On the day we were even able to ask the police to delay arresting us until we had finished the small bit of theatre we had planned! A request they were willing to comply with! The self-surrender was broadcast by T.V, print and national radio media. The police were both amused by, interested in and evenly tacitly supportive of what we were going to jail for.

The night before the self-surrender action, Tom and I organised a dinner with family, friends, fellow activists and supporters. This also included a small ritual of sharing and story-telling, time for having fun, relaxing and relationship building. We also put equal thought into organising the action the following day - even printing T-shirts for the event. Peoples feedback afterwards was that both

events were fun and inspiring. Both events were also easy to organise and provided a great basis for building community and organising jail support - lots of letters and wonderful life-filling visits from my wife Manon, other friends and also a barrister and fellow co-counsellor who visited me on the pretence of a legal visit.

Why I went to jail

But why go to jail? Why not just pay the fine? There are many ways to answer that question. Let me just share a few.

Firstly I went to jail because I refused to pay the fine. I refused to pay the fine because I had done nothing wrong. War - in this case training and arming the Indonesian military - is the crime. Peacefully trying to stop it is not a crime.

Secondly, I went to jail *holding on to truth*. Let me explain what I mean by that. Mohandas Karamachand Gandhi, after Jesus, who is probably the greatest exponent of nonviolence to have ever lived, described nonviolence as *satyagraha* - or holding on to truth. We all have a part of the truth including our opponents. My truth is that killing or training others to kill cannot resolve conflict.

Our neighbours in East Timor suffered because we trained and armed their oppressors. Skilling-up the Indonesian military might have made them more professional and disciplined but it also increased their capacity to wipe out the independence movement in East Timor. I went to jail holding on to the truth that for 24 years Australia was sowing the bitter seed of oppression in East Timor. Holding on to truth meant refusing to submit to the injustice of training and arming the Indonesian military and nonviolently trying to persist with stopping that and being prepared to accept the consequences - even if it meant going to jail.

Finally, I went to jail because I believe in the God of Love. As a Christian I draw much spiritual sustenance for my nonviolence from the life of Christ and the Gospels. I believe that faith is to profess love in our lives. I believe that God's deepest and constant hope for us is to become the kind of people that Jesus was. People that demonstrate a deep heart-

felt and prayer-filled nonviolent commitment to love and justice. People of integrity committed to not just political justice but personal righteousness as well. People, to use an expression from the Sojourners community, not from the left, not from the right but from the spirit. People of conscience and compassion. I am not that kind of person but I would like to be. And I feel God's constant presence and gentle encouragement - leading me on.

Jail

Most of all my experience of jail was one of boredom - uplifted at times by the experience of community and the presence of humour! Whilst in jail I divided my time up into prayer, reading, writing, exercise and getting to know the guys I was inside with. Unfortunately due to a technicality, Tom wasn't taken into custody and whilst it was strengthening for me to do jail alone it is a lot of fun to go inside as an affinity group!

In police custody I was kept in a small two person cell - lit 24 hours a day. Incidentally getting a vegetarian meal in the watch house was easy. In the main jail, however, it was a real struggle that involved talking to the doctor, writing to the General Manager, asking a barrister friend to advocate on my behalf and persisting and persisting, seemingly to no avail. In was held in the watch house

for six days, during which time I shared my cell with two different guys, at two different times, including a former organised crime boss who was jailed for many years after the Fitzgerald inquiry. You certainly met a lot of interesting folk in jail!

Like all prisoners, when arriving at the watch house I was obliged to undergo a compulsory but non-contact strip search. The police officer I was with asked what I was in for. I explained my charge and context - what I did and why. His response I must say astonished me. The police officer smiled and held out his hand.

Wryly he exclaimed, '*you can see why I am not a short-hand typist.*' One of his fingers was severed at the knuckle and his hands were carved with deeply etched scars. '*What happened?*', I asked. The officer smiled again and went on to share some of his life as a SAS commando in the Australian Army between 1975 and 1983. His finger had been shot off in a gunfight '*somewhere north of Australia*'.

'*When I was in the SAS we trained with the Indon's, including Koppasus*', he said. Koppasus, I might add were the very people who established, trained, armed and organised the militia on their bloody rampage through East Timor last year.

Tom Driftwood (centre) and Jason Mcleod (right) outside the West End police station.

The same Koppasus who were trained at bases like Canungra. In a tragic twist of irony the Australian military went to East Timor last year to protect ordinary East Timorese from the very people Australia had trained.

As he led me to my cell he turned and facing me he said the most extraordinary thing. *'You know I remember what you people did at Canungra - well done.'* *'Well done'*, he said. *'Well done'*, at first I wasn't sure if I had heard correctly. A former SAS soldier, current police officer and now my jailer appreciating our nonviolent persistence.

I still smile every time I think about it. *'Well done'*. You know it seems to me that people, even those who superficially appear to oppose us - and there opposition is always superficial because underneath there is a deeper common bond - our shared humanity - a seamless web of love that holds us connected - well even those people, I believe, have a longing, perhaps buried deep or long forgotten, but a longing nonetheless for a better world.

The path of nonviolence, I believe, calls us to recognise the humanity of our opponents.

Let me tell you another story. A story about a Maori man I was in jail with - let's

call him Manu. I first met Manu in the watch house and together we did a mini tour of the prison system. After six days in Roma St we were handcuffed together and transported to Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre. We Stayed at Arthur Gorrie for Eight days - where we were held in a maximum-security unit with 50 other guys. We were given a security classification and sent to Palen Creek prison farm at the foothills of beautiful Mt Lindsey and Mt Barney.

Manu had been an activist his whole life. He grew up on a Maori Pa, or fortified Maori village on the head waters of the beautiful and wild Wanganui river. It wasn't until he was ten, when his father got a job on the railways and he and his family moved into town that Manu started speaking English. When we met Manu was in his mid-forties.

During the Vietnam war, at the tender age of 18, Manu was jailed for six months as a conscientious objector. He was at the barricades over land rights in New Zealand and apartheid in South Africa. Even now Manu was deeply committed to standing in solidarity with Aboriginal people. Manu drew strength from Black activists around the world and throughout time. He had read the words of fellow black leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, he was deeply moved by the witness of Nelson Mandela and up-

lifted by the spiritual teachings of the Rastafarian's. *'I am a Black activist I am'*; he'd often tell me with pride.

Manu had done a lot and seen a lot but life had always been a struggle for him in more ways than one. When I left him at Palen Creek he was depressed and homesick. After nearly three weeks in jail Manu was still drying out from years of repeated alcohol abuse. He had been in and out of jail for years - over a string of offences - including violent crime. His health was in bad shape. *'Alcohol is killing our people'*, one day he told me sadly. And he wasn't just talking about Maori people, indigenous people or even black people, he was talking about all of us - and all of our struggles with addictions and violence. Manu knew, however much we tried to rationalise it or deny it, that we turned to addictions to try and find relief for the pain we feel inside. Addictions don't help us with the root causes of our distress and running away from the painful memory of early distressing experiences only adds a new layer of hurt on top of the old.

The tragedy was that prison did nothing to either heal Manu's distress or address the fundamental oppression that lead to his distress. In fact prison only laid another layer of hurt and frustration on top of the old. Being 'inside' I felt that society was abandoning these men - giving up on them because we were scared of their patterns.

Manu felt especially concerned about how his partner, who had a debilitating illness, was coping whilst he was in jail. Manu was her primary care giver and his absence from her caused him grief.

What Manu taught me is the painful truth that if we want to change the world we have to be prepared to change ourselves also. Struggling for love, peace and justice means treating ourselves and those closest to us justly and peacefully also. Quite simply, there is no point doing the hard work out there if we are not also prepared to do the hard work *in here*.

I remember reading somewhere, probably in the New York Catholic Worker, a story about the nonviolent activist and

then Archbishop of Recife, Dom Helder Camara. When he was speaking someone asked him what was his greatest obstacle in the struggle for peace with justice in Brazil. Many were expecting stories of confronting greedy landowners or brutal security forces. But opening his arms wide, as if to emphasise the enormity of the cross, then slowly drawing his hands back to touch his heart, Dom Helder Camara replied gently, *'The greatest obstacle in the struggle for peace with justice in Brazil is myself.'*

Most of all though, I was sensitised to the oppression in society and how the cause of crime and violence in my opinion, is this oppressive society. It was painful listening to people's stories in jail. One thing that particularly struck me was the number of Aboriginal men in jail. A Waka-waka fella from Cherbourg (lets call him Norman) and I were yarning in the exercise yard one day. He shared that he enjoyed the food and was happy to put on a bit of weight. He was able to play footy with his mates every couple of days and was also thankful for the opportunity to 'dry-out' as well. I asked him how long he had to go and he replied, *'Only a few weeks.'* This, however, didn't include his seven day early release (pretty much standard) as he wasn't applying for it!

For him jail was a better option than life at Cherbourg. I was saddened and angry at this and the racist society that is damaging to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. I was also saddened by the fact that jail was giving me an opportunity to mix with and get to know Aboriginal people - better than I had been able to do on the 'outside'. I need to think more about how to cultivate genuine diversity and mutuality in my own life. Obviously continuing to work on my own racism is a good place to start.

Another story I want to share is a story of hope about a man I will call Carlos. Unlike mainstream prison's which are mostly single cells now, in the watch house prisoners often share their cells. When I first arrived at the Roma St watch house and for several days afterwards, my cell mate was Carlos. Carlos had been in Australia for about 7 years. He was a former political refugee from El

Salvador and for many years took up arms and fought with the FMLN, a left wing revolutionary political group struggling for democracy, and agrarian and economic justice.

I enjoyed talking with Carlos. We were both committed to revolution, he through armed struggle, me through nonviolence. Carlos was doing over a month's jail for losing his train ticket and possessing less than 50 grams of marijuana.

We talked a lot about El Salvador and Latin America. For many years I have been involved in accompanying refugees as they try and begin a new life in Australia. Many of the refugees I first met were from El Salvador and I was interested to hear Carlo's perspective about culture and celebration, struggle and oppression in El Salvador.

He talked easily but not without emotion. It was good to be able to encourage him to cry - to let him know that crying is healing. His brother, his mother and his father, he told me had all been killed in front of his eyes. The violence of war was all around him. *'That is why I took up arms'*, he said. I could not even begin to imagine the pain he must have felt. His eyes began to well up with tears as he remembered his family - the pain he still feels. Carlos was all alone in Australia, living in a boarding house on the outer suburbs of Brisbane.

'The killers of my family', Carlos said, 'were trained and armed by the United States. The officers went the School of the Americas, then in Panama, now in Georgia - and those murderers,' he went on, *'were supplied with U.S weapons and ammunition.'*

'Companero,' continued Carlos, *'I understand why you are in jail - it was the same in East Timor.'*

Carlos and I were in jail together on the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Oscar Romero, the former archbishop of El Salvador and courageous practitioner of principled and revolutionary nonviolence. Together Carlos and I were able to commemorate the life and death of Monsignor Romero - a life and death that for

me points to Christ. Romero is an inspiration. Despite his fear and frailty, Romero spoke out, from the heart and spirit of the Gospels, in defence of the poor.

Romero was not naturally a courageous man. In fact the army supported his appointment as Archbishop, precisely because they thought he would not intervene. He's too passive - a book man they thought - and he was. But transformed by grace Romero found the courage to love and then to persist unflinchingly with loving right up unto death.

Reflecting on this I realised that we may at times find encouragement - even from unexpected quarters - in the nonviolent struggle for love and justice. We may even have the courage to look inside at the need for personal change and how we treat those closest to us, as well as looking outside to structural change. We may recognise the humanity of our opponent and even struggle nonviolently to change society. But the message of Romero - the whole point of the passion story is to never give up. What God wants us to commit to - over and over again, despite the pain, in spite of the costs - is to persist with love, even unto death.

The mob of kangaroos at Arthur Gorrie taught me a lot about love and persistence. Looking at them through five rows of fences from the prison cell window I realised that this was a message from God - a sign of reassurance. That beyond the distress and oppression in the world there is a deeper reality, a constant comfort. The presence of a loving God, the existence of beauty and the comfort of a kind and friendly universe.

Jason McLeod

Postscript

Two weeks after I got out I received a letter from the General Manager of Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre approving my vegetarian diet but warning me that any deviation from this diet and it would be immediately revoked!

NVT

A Proposal

Below is information about a proposal for an International nonviolent peace force that has been under development since the Hague Peace Conference. It maybe a worthwhile topic of discussion for the Australian Nonviolence Network, particularly as they are requesting nonviolence organisations and individuals to endorse the proposal. Currently, the Conflict Resolution Network is the only group from Australia which endorses it. The proposal is currently being discussed within PBI and it's interesting. (I've just been reading *Recurrent Visions* the book by Tom Weber and Yeshua, which points out some of the many dangers in such massive undertakings to create huge standing peace armies, particularly in light of the effectiveness of PBI's decentralised and long-term projects.) I'd be interested in hearing the comments of others around the ANN about what they think of the International Peace Force idea, and whether ANN should endorse the proposal in principle. The website is also worth checking out.

Anthony Kelly

Proposal for a Global Nv Peace Force Executive Summary, May 16, 2000 A Project of *Peaceworkers*

Mission

To mobilize and train an international nonviolent, standing peace force. The Peace Force (*name under discussion*) will deploy to conflict areas to protect human rights and prevent death and destruction, thus creating the space for local groups to struggle, enter into dialogue, and seek peaceful resolution.

Endorsed by

His Holiness the Dalai Lama (Nobel Peace Laureate)

Oscar Arias (Nobel Peace Laureate and Former President of Costa Rica)

UN Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Bangladesh

International Fellowship of Reconciliation

Hague Appeal for Peace

80 organisations and key leaders worldwide

Background

As we venture into the new millennium, we stand at a significant crossroads. Will the next century bring an incessant stream of devastating armed conflicts and brutal violence, like the horrors we have seen in Kosovo, Iraq, and East Timor? Or are there alternatives to the endless repetition of such catastrophes?

There is an alternative, one that builds upon the recent experiences of many organizations which have successfully experimented with the application of "third party nonviolent intervention" techniques in areas of advanced conflict. Out of these experiences has grown a new wave of deliberate nonviolent intervention carried out by some twenty or so organizations around the world: Peace Brigades International (PBI), Witness for Peace, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Balkan Peace Teams, International Alert, SIPAZ (Servicio Internacional para la Paz) and others took their permanent place alongside ad hoc projects (like Cry for Justice in Haiti).

The 1980's were an important decade for the development of peace teams. During this period, a number of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) like the religious-based Witness for Peace and the nominally secular Peace Brigades International, saw action in Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Sri Lanka and Que-

bec. A small PBI presence in Guatemala, whose "protective accompaniment" deterred the assassination of key human rights workers and supported the creation of a small "space for peace" in that embattled society, contributing greatly to the subsequent reemerging of a democratic society and the peace process.

Yet when faced with the brutal aggression of the Milosevic regime throughout the last decade, the world has lacked a credible, coherent, and comprehensive response. While some international activists bravely carried out nonviolent strategies with people of the Balkans (and are still doing so), many others could think of nothing better than to go along reluctantly with the NATO response. The situation epitomized the increasing dilemma of the international community when the only widely known alternatives are to do nothing or drop bombs.

The Global Nonviolent Peace Force represents an alternative to massive military intervention that many people hope for, but does not yet exist. Building on important peace work throughout the world, this Peace Force will bring peacemaking to a dramatic, new level. It will be a key component in the development of a strategic, cohesive, efficient, and effective nonviolent response to brutality and threats of genocidal violence.

Last May at the Hague Appeal for Peace, activists from around the world gathered to explore how to develop third party nonviolent intervention, based upon lessons learned from the experiences of the past quarter century. The Hague proposal has been reviewed, discussed, and critiqued by hundreds of nonviolent activists, scholars, military veterans and government leaders from various parts of the world. It lays the groundwork for the present proposal.

Since Gandhi first dreamt of "peace armies" (and experimented with the India-based "Shanti Sena" peace armies), the vision has slowly grown: there are many veterans of nonviolent movements, thousands of citizens have demonstrated their willingness to courageously stop violence and oppression, hard lessons have been learned, our organizational abilities have increased, highly qualified trainers are available, and the World Wide Web has shown its usefulness in the campaigns to ban land mines and to establish an International Criminal court. Most importantly, the people of the world are demanding an alternative to punitive, militarized, and costly responses to conflict

Profound questions remain about the use of nonviolence in acute conflict situations - but even more disturbing questions plague the reliance on using military force "for peace." Surely it is time to devote our energies to a way of preventing and ending violence and wars that honours all life and leaves hope for the peaceful development of human destiny.

Together we can make the Global Nonviolent Peace Force a reality. There will be no better way to honour the United Nations Decade of the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.

Objectives

- To build the organization needed to create and maintain a standing Global Nonviolent Peace Force of 200 active members, 400 reserves, and 500 support-

ers (building up to 2,000 active members, 4,000 reserves, and 5,000 supporters over 10 years).

- To develop the theory and practice of third party nonviolent intervention, in order to significantly increase that tool's effectiveness.


Possible Methods

1. Accompanying (activists, leaders, returning refugees, people in peace zones).
2. Facilitating communication among conflicting parties.
3. Monitoring (elections, cease fires, treaties).
4. Training and training trainers in conflict transformation.
5. Interpositioning between conflicting sides.
6. Providing an international emergency response network to support local peace-making efforts, and prevent violence and human rights abuses.
7. Investigating and controlling rumours.
8. Promoting unbiased information, internally and internationally.
9. Instantaneous video witnessing to the Internet.
10. Creating safe zones for civilian populations.

Key Attributes of Proposed Global Nonviolent Peace Force

- Multi-cultural standing Peace Force trained in third party nonviolent intervention.
- Deployed at invitation of local groups engaged in nonviolent struggle and/or peacemaking.
- Capable of rapid response in situations of advanced conflict.
- Possessing strong media capability.

Contacts:

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 (for complete proposal) 

Global Peace Force?

Dear NvT,

My initial reaction to the idea of a global peace force is one of uneasiness - I think largely due to the idea of anything global truly representing the interests of everybody.

I think the strengths of PBI and Witnesses for Peace, etc., lie in their ability to network with local communities and to learn from local community initiatives. I think that a small cohesive group of people who act in co-operation with communities facing conflict or in the process of recovering from armed conflict are more likely to set in motion recovery processes which are attuned to the needs and cultures of that community.

My fear with a global peace force is that they would try and present a perfect model of peacemaking which would be enacted in every situation regardless of the context.

More thoughts later.

Rebecca Spence, Ph.D
Lecturer in Peace Studies, School of
Education Studies, University of New
England, Armidale NSW 2351



Making Space for Peace

Many *Nonviolence Today* readers would be interested in the emergence of an Australian Country Group of Peace Brigades International (PBI).

PBI is a global, nonviolent and independent organisation working for human rights and nonviolence since 1981. PBI sends teams of unarmed, international volunteers into areas of violent conflict or repression, provides protective accompaniment for local human rights, church or union workers, conducts grassroots peace and conflict resolution training and reports on human rights violations. By doing so, PBI's presence successfully 'creates space for peace' as the saying goes, allowing local activists under threat of 'disappearance' or execution the freedom to continue democratic organising in situations of often brutal repression.

Currently, PBI has project teams working in Columbia, Haiti, Mexico, the Balkans, East Timor and Indonesia and has previously worked in Guatemala, El Salvador and Sri Lanka as well as with Native American communities. Over almost twenty years PBI has developed into a unique and highly successful force for peace, being requested and used by countless people's organisations, activists and human rights workers who now credit PBI for their survival. PBI's model of non-partisan, nonviolent intervention is a very real form of international solidarity, successfully bridging the gap between the international desire for effective intervention in human rights violations and the importance of respecting the abilities of local activists finding solutions to local problems.

PBI Australia formed in late 1998, largely in response to the growing PBI project in Indonesia/East Timor and now has groups and members around the country and Australian volunteers working in the Indonesian/East Timor Project (IETP) and in the Colombia Projects (CP). Australia is one of eighteen such Country Groups around the world, supporting the various PBI projects, raising funds and recruiting, training and supporting vol-

unteers.

PBI Australia is currently developing into a large and powerful grassroots movement that can directly support non-violent movements struggling under repressive regimes in neighbouring countries. PBI country groups internationally have consistently grown in the context of their local nonviolent and solidarity movements, often recruiting local nonviolent activists with experience in domestic campaigns and committed to regional solidarity. Similarly, PBI Australia is closely associated with the Australian Nonviolence Network and provides Australian nonviolent activists with the unique experience of working in a vastly different political context alongside other nonviolent activists, trade unionists, church and human rights workers under direct threat in their own countries.

I urge nonviolent groups and activists around Australia to support the building of PBI Australia, by networking information about our work, reprinting material in your local newsletters, letting local activists know how they can become involved or hosting speaking tours of returned project PBI volunteers.

For those readers who may wish to become more directly involved, there are essentially three levels at which you can become part of PBI Australia - all of which are crucial:

1. You can become a part of the Emergency Response Network (ERN) which mobilises thousands of concerned people around the world to immediately respond with a strategic fax, letter or phone

call if a PBI volunteer or a local activist is in immediate danger. The ERN forms a vital back-up for PBI's protective work in the field. To join the ERN simply contact PBI Australia below.

2. You could apply to become a volunteer with a PBI project. People with language skills, nonviolence or human rights experience and are able to spend at least six-months to a year in the project country are sought. For further information about the next PBI training and the application process contact PBI Australia below.

3. You could become involved in the building of PBI Australia in your local area. We would welcome your energy and input into an array of awareness-raising, networking, fund raising, and organisation building tasks currently underway.

If you are interested, contact us below and we can put you in touch with the PBI Australia representative in your area.

*In Peace, for peace,
Anthony Kelly*

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Indonesia and East Timor Project Focuses on West Timor Camps

"The East Timorese have obtained independence through blood and tears." Graffiti like this covers remnants of burnt buildings in East Timor.

East Timor has gained independence through an internationally recognised referendum, but the persecution of East Timorese continues. While the Indonesian military has been forced out of East Timor, East Timorese people within Indonesia remain under great threat. PBI's newest project, the Indonesia and East Timor Project, is now based in West Timor where more than 100,000 East Timorese remain, many held like hostages by pro-Indonesia militias.

After the extreme Indonesian military and militia-led violence following the East Timor referendum, approximately 250,000 East Timorese (close to one third of the population) were forced to flee or were forcefully deported across the border to Indonesian West Timor. In West Timor, they were put in camps controlled by the same militias that burned their houses and carried out brutal massacres.

Since the intervention of INTERFET - the International Forces in East Timor - the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) has been given the task of coordinating the repatriation of the East Timorese in West Timor. Slowly, East Timorese have been returning home, some with the help of the UNHCR, others taking their lives into their own hands and crossing the border alone.

Today, it is estimated that more than 100,000 East Timorese remain threatened by militias and the Indonesian military. While the local Indonesian government and the military persist in claiming there are no problems in the refugee camps, we have witnessed extreme fear among camp inhabitants, even when it comes to expressing their desire to return home. The concentration of Indonesian military troops and militias is extremely high around the camps and there are daily

reports of people being disappeared, women being raped, and children dying from preventable illnesses.

In response to this situation, PBI has set up an office in Kupang, the capital of West Timor, to provide accompaniment to three local grassroots organisations. Flores Volunteers for Humanity (Truk-F), Timorese Organisation for Advocacy and Research (LAP Timoris) and the Centre for People's Information Advocacy (PIAR) are three organisations based in Kupang working to address the needs of the East Timorese throughout West Timor.

Truk-F provides emergency humanitarian aid to East Timorese in the camps and also protects and assists in the evacuation of those East Timorese most under threat. LAP Timoris and PIAR focus on education and advocacy. They publish testimonies and articles about the situation, often directly contradicting the reports in the mainstream Indonesian media. They also meet with government officials and community leaders to share information about what is happening in the camps and express concerns.

As a result of their work, these three organisations are subject to regular harassment and threats. After receiving various anonymous phone threats and recent direct attacks in the local press by a militia leader, LAP Timoris requested

daily protective accompaniment from PBI.

The PBI team provides an international presence within this situation for the purpose of deterring violence against these organisations. While the local organisations that work with East Timorese are still threatened, the level of harassment directed toward them has decreased quite remarkably since the escalation of violence in East Timor in September. Today, these organisations can, in general, work more openly without fearing immediate personal danger.

PBI's work in this region has focused on opening the political space even wider by monitoring the refugee camps and the circumstances under which local organisations work in them. Over the past few months, we have met with local organisations, local government, military, pro-integration organisations, international relief organisations and refugees. Information collected and concerns revealed are passed on to the appropriate local actors as well as foreign embassies and institutions. Most of this information has centred on threats against local organisations and threats towards refugees who want to be repatriated.

Having the advantage of viewing the refugee crisis and the humanitarian efforts from a grassroots-level, PBI has also assisted in improving the level of

cooperation between international aid agencies and local organisations. The local organisations have unique knowledge and experience, having worked in the area prior to the crisis, and can generally access areas that international agencies cannot. Because they have cultivated a trusting relationship with the refugee community, local organisation leaders are able to obtain more accurate information about the situation in the camps.

Recent signs indicate that the conflict in West Timor is far from over, and that the degree of danger for local activists will again increase. Subsequent to the crisis in East Timor, the Indonesian archipelago has seen the spread of violence from island to island. The militias have stopped talking about reconquering East Timor, suddenly claiming that they accept the outcome of the referendum. Instead, they now talk with the same anger about problems within West Timor, often directing that anger at the local government. Credible sources say that the militias continue to receive military training from the Indonesian army and that new militia members are constantly being recruited from Java and Sulawesi.

PBI's Indonesia and East Timor Project will continue to work in West Timor assisting in the return of East Timorese to East Timor until there is no longer a need for our team. A PBI training was conducted in January in Bali, Indonesia. We look forward to welcoming new volunteers to the team from this training and others planned in Germany and the United States. Later this year, we plan to provide trainings in non-violent conflict resolution for a number of interested local organisations. PBI is maintaining contact with organisations in East Timor to consider our future role there. We have also received invitations from groups in Aceh, where we hope to send a PBI assessment team. We are extremely grateful for the support we have received.

Please let us know if you wish to be kept up-to-date on project developments.

Marcus Berglund & Pamela Sexton
PBI Australia
(see previous article for address,
phone, email & website)

NVT

Nonviolence Victoria Website

Hi everyone! We'd like to let you know about the *Nonviolence Victoria* website project which we are working on. The project will set up a World Wide Web site for nonviolence groups and activists in Victoria.

Why a *Nonviolence Victoria* website?

A website is a way of making information and resources on nonviolence available to a wide audience and locally, around Australia and overseas. There's a lot of useful information on paper (for example, in the Melbourne nonviolence library), but it's not easily accessible to people who live elsewhere. Sharing our information on the Web is a way of getting it out to more people. It's also an attractive format for young people to access. Melbourne and surrounding areas have a rich history of nonviolent activism, and the website is a way of making our stories known and a source of pride and inspiration.

The website will also be a networking tool and a way for people to find out what's happening and connect with local nonviolence groups and campaigns. For those of us who are part of the nonviolence networks in Victoria, the website will strengthen our links with each other, and reaffirm our place as part of a shared movement working towards a nonviolent future. We also hope the website will raise the profile of nonviolence within

the social change community more generally.

Why a Victorian website rather than, say, an Australian nonviolence website?

Our passion in nonviolence networking is strengthening our local bioregional communities and networks. Out of vibrant local communities comes the capacity for resistance and social change. We'd like to see nonviolence websites based in many bioregions around Australia, reflecting the local 'flavour' of nonviolence as it is lived and practised in those communities. The Victorian nonviolence website is a step towards this vision. We also see a place for an Australia-wide nonviolence website, linking the bioregions; this looks like a longer-term project, emerging from the energy generated by strong local nonviolence networks.

We are also aware that many people do not have the money, knowledge or skills to access information via the internet. A website should be one among many ways in which we communicate with each other and our publics.

What will be on the website?

Initially, the website will contain:

- general information on nonviolence as a philosophy, a way of life, and a means of social change (eg. types of nonvio-

lence, principles of nonviolence, categories of nonviolent action)

- information for effective nonviolent campaigning (eg. information on forming groups, facilitation, conflict resolution, nonviolent strategy, avoiding burn-out etc.)
- information and contact details on local grassroots groups, organisations and campaigns that have demonstrated their commitment to nonviolence through their work (eg. Pt'chang, Commonground, MARJ, Nonviolence Education Collective, Alternatives to Violence Project etc.)
- information on resources available to support nonviolence work, including contact details for national and international nonviolence organisations

• links to other nonviolence websites and resources on the Web

- bibliographies and recommended reading on nonviolence, social change, etc.
- nonviolence journals and how to subscribe to them.
- a bulletin board enabling participating groups to post updates and information about upcoming actions, workshops, gatherings etc.

Later, the site may be expanded to include local and international nonviolence case studies.

How can you be involved in the project?

We are currently gathering information and writing content for the website. We'd love to hear your ideas! Please write,

phone or email with your thoughts. We'd like your ideas about which groups or campaigns to include in the website, and other relevant websites to link to. We're also looking for a catchy title for the site, and some good nonviolence graphics.

We hope to have the site up and running by 1 August 2000. See you online!

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NVT

SA Report

Dear Nvers, it's been a long while since I saw any of you, and of course there are people on this list whom I've never met - so hello to you all! So far I think I am the only South Australian activist on the list, so I thought I'd send in an update as to what's occurring over here. If the historical stuff is of no interest, there is an account of the weekend's big event nearer to the end! I would certainly be interested to hear how things are going in other places around the country.

Adelaide has no group which is explicitly organised around nonviolence as its focus. In the fifteen years I have been an activist here I have never seen such a group. On the other hand, most campaigns which reach the stage of undertaking direct action here say that they are nonviolent. Commitment to Nv is often reached by groups in which there is no consensus as to Nv as a principled rather than as a pragmatic approach to activism. Campaigns involve people whose conceptions of why Nv is important are quite different and founded upon different understandings of what it means to be non-violent.

In the last few years we have had a range of major campaigns around local issues which have taken this kind of form as they moved away from focusing on lobbying into NvDA. For examples: there

has been a long running campaign to prevent the building of a bridge between mainland SA and Kumarangk (Hindmarsh Island). The campaign involved various stages and events including public meetings, rallies, blockades of the construction site, and a long walk from Adelaide to the site. The direct action aspects of this campaign involved clear commitments to nonviolence from Indigenous and nonindigenous participants. Currently, after long legal efforts to stop construction, work on the bridge is progressing. The developers of the Island marina have sued a large number of activists (individuals and organisations) and media organisations and there is a group which has been set up to provide support to those who have been sued. You can

check it out at <http://www.green.net.au/hindmarsh>.

Currently there are people organising in solidarity with the Arabunna people to protect Lake Eyre and support Arabunna who want to return home and who are opposing Roxby Downs and other proposed uranium mines. There have been protests on site and also in Adelaide. There is an ongoing series of candle lit walks around the city opposing genocide of Indigenous peoples and seeking a just reconciliation.

There have been other major protests in the metropolitan area: a long running protest against development on the sea-shore at West Beach ultimately became a

blockade of the construction site. Myself and another activist ran training for the West Beach activists as to how such a blockade could be organised and how to establish and maintain a clear set of common understandings as to how the blockade would be run (nonviolently, for example). Though brilliantly organised and strongly supported by the local community, construction at West Beach has also commenced.

The proposal to build a new power station at Pelican Point in the Industrial (i.e. heavily polluted and impoverished) northwest of Adelaide produced a long standing community and union picket line. This group also organised NvDA training for local people. A highlight was the women's picket the day after NvDA training. The entirety of the picket was made up of women (with men supporters bringing cups of tea when no trucks were approaching). Women from the Trade Union choir taught songs, and women were still singing as they were arrested later in the day.

Adelaidians have also been involved in some of the national campaigns: Critical Mass has been happening here, Reclaim the Night continues, and folk from Adelaide have been up to Jabiluka and into various forest campaigns interstate (as SA has virtually no forest left to protect). Most recently, (Saturday 25 March 2000) we had our first Reclaim the Streets Street Party, which was just fantastic! I was asked to run NvDA training for organisers including marshals and police liaison

people the week before. The organising group had by this stage become quite large and the training was full of excitement, plans and ideas.

On Saturday, about 400 people piled into the central square in Adelaide. Several media organisations showed up and interviewed one of the organisers. When we were ready we piled out onto King William St (the largest thoroughfare in the city), blocking all lanes on one side of it completely. The route had been organised so that no single street was blocked for very long, and the marshals managed the traffic very well. When we reached the site, part of Hindley St (full of nightclubs and such) it was about 2.30 pm. The road was blocked and the blockage sign posted quickly and effectively. Cars wishing to leave the street party area were escorted out. Sound systems had begun playing music, dancing and juggling and a small skate park had started and a permaculture display garden had been established in the street before the police arrived.

The police soon realised that two of them would not be able to move 400 of us and police liaison began in earnest. The police liaison from RTS did a fabulous job of engaging waves of ever more senior police as the police cars arrived. They were assisted by the chosen site being a low traffic area in the afternoon (though it gets very busy at night). I counted thirty-one individual police, including six STAR force officers (SA's paramilitary policing team) and seven cars.

It was difficult for police to argue that the event was badly organised (when it was so obviously elegantly organised, albeit without any permit), or that it was unsafe (when the road had been blocked so as to minimise hassle for motorists and danger to pedestrians), or that businesses were unhappy (when all the businesses had been told in advance, all except one were supportive, and two had opened especially for the event!), or that it was violent (children having their faces painted, people dancing, street decorated with chalk...)

By about 4pm RTS had negotiated to move the barricade past the business that objected to its presence, provided police ensured the continued safety of that part of the street. A police officer who said "I'm in charge of the city!" arrived and eventually offered to leave RTS alone in place until 7.30 pm provided people then moved, and negotiations among the activists in the street began as to what to do next. I understand that sometime after 7.30 pm people paraded through a busy part of central Adelaide to a city park where they partied on into the night!

I have to say it was exciting to be part of such a positive and well organised event, and to see how well the police liaison team managed what could clearly have been a difficult or violent confrontation with police taken by surprise by a large public event. Beautiful!

Mary Heath

NvT

in back of it all

What is NONVIOLENCE TODAY?

Nonviolence Today is published 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

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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.

Publication frequency is subject to quality and quantity of both copy and the editor's time.