



Making Waves



Turning the Tide Programme of Quaker Peace & Social Witness
Nonviolence for social change

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Editorial

“For some people land is a commodity for selling and buying, for others it is mother earth, they respect it.” The interview with Rajagopal PV, Gandhian activist, organiser and President of Ekta Parishad (United Forum) on page 4 starkly describes the opposing values in social change struggles across the world. Nonviolent resistance is something Rajaji and many others give their lives to. They live and act on values that automatically bring them into conflict with the powers that be. Their example empowers others, gives hope and inspiration, opens up space for a better future, and develops positively transformational ways of doing conflict.

In this issue we look at resistance in three parts of the world: India, Colombia and Palestine. All have land as the central issue: land as livelihood and source of food for economically poor people in India and Colombia; and in Palestine land additionally as identity and self-determination. As climate chaos increases, as competition for resources intensifies, as economic disparity widens, and as migration of peoples grows and accelerates, so will conflict over living spaces and resources.

Nonviolence is not about avoiding conflict; it’s about doing conflict a better way. If nonviolence means anything, it should be effective in situations like these of life and death. Sometimes we see it as effective only in retrospect, sometimes in the present. Always we will be challenged by comparison with violent alternatives. But this much we do know: where violence becomes locked in its own cycle, nonviolence has a learning culture that adds and strengthens and discourages repeating the same damaging patterns. It has the power to bring change without trauma, and offers a possibility for breaking our violent habit - and saving ourselves.

Steve Whiting, *Programme Manager, Turning the Tide*

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Host a Turning the Tide workshop

Turning the Tide is looking for local hosts and organisers to help us run 1-day nonviolence taster workshops.

We hope this might lead to a partnership to deliver our comprehensive course in 2011 or 2012
Involvement could be to:

- organise the venue
- provide workshop resources
- publicise the workshop locally
- recruit local participants
- host the Turning the Tide team delivering the workshop
- help evaluate the event

Please see pages 15-16 for details

'Janadesh' - a victory for nonviolence

Gerald Conyngham

When India's Rural Development Minister came to the 'Janadesh' (people's verdict) marchers on the 29th October 2008, he told them startling news: the Indian Government had accepted their demands! First thing would be to set up a National Land Reform Committee which would advise a new National Council for Land Reforms, chaired by the Prime Minister. This Council would direct the States to implement the 'Janadesh' agenda. The Government will select the bureaucrats and Ekta Parishad (the people's land rights movement that organised the 'Janadesh') will have a 50% say in the composition of the panels. The Committee will draft policy for the Council.

There have been many promises made about land reform which have not been honoured, but this is a very important step. Ekta Parishad wants the Government to move forward and is planning further action if they do not.

What led to this success?

Ekta Parishad has been pressing for land reform for many years (see *Making Waves 12, Summer 2002*) and has made important political allies. However, economic growth has been the priority of successive Indian governments who somehow believed that the poor would benefit from a trickle down effect. In agriculture the emphasis has been to larger farmers and little attention paid to land ownership.



Ekta Parishad organised a mass mobilisation to put pressure on the Government - a large scale *padayatra* in which landless people such as the 'Adivasis' (tribal people) and 'Dalit's' (low caste or 'Untouchables') could participate directly. The plans were ambitious: 25,000 people marching for almost 4 weeks the 350 kilometres from Gwalior to Delhi. The march was planned in great detail over 3 years. It included rest places, water in tankers and a meal each day. The marchers walked in their regional

groups in a very dignified and ordered way. Musicians and drummers livened up the proceedings. A group of Buddhist monks led the way, playing a steady beat on their drums, and there was usually a group of dancers at the front. The movement leaders participated in the same way as the marchers, sleeping out at night, eating by the side of the road and sharing the same experiences.

Nonviolence

Ekta Parishad interprets nonviolence in the same way as Gandhi, as an active force in bringing about social change, and adopts the same concept of 'satyagraha' or truth force. This concept includes respect and love for one's opponent whilst at the same time resisting the injustices done by them. A major part of their work is about raising awareness, empowering and mobilizing people in large numbers.

Ekta Parishad trains the people they work with in these principles. One morning, as the marchers were sitting, waiting to start, a lorry crossed over into the side of the road. Three people were killed instantly and others were injured. In similar situations in India, the lorry driver might have been attacked, but the marchers did not attack him, although some of the local villagers did.

This incident led to one of the most moving parts of the march for me. We saw three bodies laid out under white sheets and a group of people sitting quietly meditating and praying while the monks slowly beat their drums. Incense sticks were burning and it felt as though a sacred space had been created in which grief for the dead could be expressed and mourning carried out. It symbolized for me the equal worth of every person involved in the march and that they were being treated as true children of God who had died in a struggle for basic human rights.

When the march resumed four hours later, people were subdued but even more determined. Anything less would diminish those who had died.

The marchers

Walking alongside the 'Adivasi' and 'Dalit' people was a powerful experience. I had a sense of their resilience and determination, as well as their good humour. A number were carrying children since there was no-one back in their villages who could look after them. Carrying a child for 350 kilometres is no mean achievement. At night they normally slept by the side of the road, although on some occasions they were able to sleep in special sites. The nights were getting colder and not all of them had blankets. Some people became sick and were treated by doctors and medical crews. Many marchers arrived quite undernourished and

emaciated and for them the march was quite an endurance test. In addition to the three people killed in the accident, another eight died as a result of sickness and/or exhaustion during or after the march. Ekta Parishad gave compensation to each family.



In their local communities most of them were treated as the lowest members in a strict hierarchy, but on the march everyone was equal and talking to them. It was clear they were proud to be taking part. Many had travelled long distances and some had lost their homes in recent floods.

Khantiji Bhuriya, an 'Adivasi' farmer from Madhya Pradesh, says he and fellow tribals had to pay local authorities a monthly fee to keep their land, and they never get receipts. If they refuse, their bulls and ploughs are confiscated and they are thrown off the land. To ensure they no longer have a claim on it, trees or jatropha crops are planted, or ditches dug.

"My grandfather and father have died, my son has grown up, and still I've never got a 'patta' (land title) for my land" Bhuriya says. "Even to stay on it, every month, I have to pay off the tehsildar (local revenue officer), the police, the collector and the record keeper. The fruits of our labour go not to our own children, but to those of government officials."

A family from the Bihar area told me that four months ago, a company took their land and showed them papers which they later discovered were forgeries. They now work as casual labourers.

Local support

A great deal of support came along the way from villages and individual well wishers. They donated food, blankets and shoes since some of the marchers were walking barefooted on hot tarmac. As we came into villages, children were lined up along the roadside with flowers, petals and garlands to drape round our necks. Jugs of water were available to refresh the thirsty or to pour over our heads. Many local dignitaries came up to greet Ekta Parishad president, Rajagopal, and the other

leaders and welcome them into their communities. The publicity generated by the march also encouraged some middle class Indian people to join and show their support.

The attitude of the police was co-operative for most of the march and there did not seem to be any problem in closing roads. The tradition of 'padyatras' is well established in India. To India's credit there is freedom of expression. One cannot imagine similar happenings in China, or in neighbouring Myanmar.

International Support

It was important to show that the march had support from people in other countries, and 200 foreigners participated. I was one of the representatives from the UK, along with a group from Action Village India. All of us felt privileged to be taking part and involved in a powerful movement. Our role was to walk alongside the marchers to show our support, and to carry out advocacy work back home.

Groups also came from Brazil and Kenya where there are similar land issues. In Brazil about 40% of the land is owned by 2% of the population. During the march a meeting was held to discuss experiences and think about how international alliances could be formed.

One specific area to highlight is the effect of tourism. Many tribal people are losing their land to national parks set up to protect wildlife such as crocodile or tiger, which are visited by tourists from the West. Whilst the survival of wildlife is important, ways need to be found of protecting the rights of tribal people who have lived there for years in harmony with their environment. Tourists from the West who are visiting India in increasing numbers need to be made aware of some of these effects.

Media Coverage

At the start of the march there was little media coverage, but that changed when the accident happened and when they reached Delhi. Suddenly a whole spate of articles appeared. The impact of 25,000 poor people entering India's capital, the way they were not allowed to march to Parliament and the way the Government finally agreed to their demands, all contributed to this new interest. The influential weekly *Frontline* carried two features, including a comment by respected columnist Jayati Ghosh. The story was also picked up internationally.

Conclusion

Spirituality and political action are both key parts of the way Ekta Parishad operates and I believe that it is the way they fuse together that made 'Janadesh' so successful. In Matthew's gospel in the Bible, it is told that we will be judged not by what we have

believed but by the way we have lived our lives: "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me.... Just as you did it to one of the least of these .. you did it to me."

Gandhi said something similar when he wrote: "Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest person whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the next step you contemplate is going to be of any use to that person. Will that person gain anything by it? Will it restore that person to a control over his or her life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to freedom for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away."

Gerald Conyngham is a Turning the Tide Resource Person. Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) is a long-time supporter of Ekta Parishad and Turning the Tide has been involved in collaborative work with them to deliver trainings (see MW18 Spring 2006). For further information on Ekta Parishad and 'Janadesh 2012' see www.ektaparishad.com

All photos in this article courtesy Simon Williams

Interest has been expressed about a QPSW group joining the Janadesh in 2012. For more information contact the Turning the Tide office: denised@quaker.org.uk or steve@quaker.org.uk

Interview with Rajagopal PV, President, Ekta Parishad

Paul Schwartzenruber, February 16th 2009

What keeps you going? You have been doing this work for over 40 years, often in an atmosphere of hostility. In the last few days, I have seen you working from early morning to late at night day after day. What motivates you?

What is driving me is the desire to see change and the very understanding that unless you move very fast there are others moving faster. Even then there is no guarantee that you are going to prevent it, but at least there is the satisfaction that you didn't sit down watching things fail. The other motivation is that I do not like to see suffering. I have seen a lot of suffering as I have travelled and it is a very undignified life when a person has to spread their hand in front of everybody. Then you ask yourself this question, if your mother had to spread her hands in front of others, how would you feel? That should be the level of reaction. So try to reach out to

as many people as possible, try to see as many young people motivated as possible, knowing that it might not be making enough change, but it is good that you keep doing it.



Has 'Janadesh' made a difference?

'Janadesh' has made a big difference. 25,000 people walking for a month makes a difference. Ten people walking for a month makes little difference - even ten people walking for a year will make little difference. What you are saying is 25 million people are desperately poor, so 25,000 people will represent them. Next time, what I am saying is that we have a 100 million people in this country so they should be represented by 100,000 people. It is what you call the critical mass, unless you have the critical mass nothing is going to change. You are not heard because your intentions are good or because you have good ideas, you are heard because you have a mass base.

And Gandhi understood that?

Gandhi understood that. He knew how to mobilize people to have his voice heard by the British. I think we need to use that technique of mobilizing people. You have to have the capacity to reach people; unless you can, the state won't listen. It took 25 years of work before I could get 25,000 people on the road. So mobilizing people, getting their confidence making them believe that you mean what you say through your life and your actions. It takes years of work.

You know in order to boil water you need to create 100 degrees of heat. If you create 25 degrees of heat in four places, the water is not going to boil. You need to concentrate it in one place. So that is what I contemplate, what is the boiling point at which things can change? So creating that nonviolent heat is how I understand what I do. When I train young people, I know that through them I can reach all these villages. When there is mobilization, I know that one day it can be brought into a larger action that will create that heat. So create small heat and change small things but create a bigger heat and at some point in time you will be able to change a bigger thing.

But then in a country like India this is the only thing I can think of: the ordinary person's tool is to walk, and the ordinary poor person's tool is to fast. Walk and fast, fast and walk. Because you don't have food anyway, so you know how to fast and you have to walk every day, it is easy to walk. The tools are so ordinary and yet so powerful that the state cannot find a way to contain them. And nobody can say this tool is bad.

Let's expand this a bit. If you look in the broader context of the world it seems that violence is still the first choice, even for a new President like Obama who has decided to bomb Afghanistan. For ordinary people, violence seems like the first choice. What would you say about nonviolence as an option? Why is it a good or better choice?

When I look at the world I find that uneducated people are more civilized in terms of not using violence. Educated modern human is very very violent. They are violent in terms of their consumption and they really don't care. They are violent in terms of how they argue for their positions, violent in terms of cut-throat competition and violent in terms of grabbing what they want to grab. It's violence that is built into a system where they're too arrogant, too competitive, too consumeristic.

Compare to the poor people, who are hardworking, less greedy, less grabbing, and less prone to using force because they don't have the capacity to use force. The problem is not with the ordinary people the problem is with the so-called educated people.

So I think if you really want to bring a change in the world you need to begin with the educational system. It can begin in the classroom the moment a child understands that there is nothing wrong with being second or third. The parents are all into this game that "my child should be first". And in order to make your child first you need to make others second and third and fourth. No home is teaching children that when you become fourth or fifth in the classroom you should enjoy it because there were many other people who could become second or first. Even this mental capacity to understand that others can go ahead of me and I don't have to be first - that is hard to grasp.

Is that what Gandhi meant by 'sarvodaya' (the well-being of all)?

To some extent, yes, because if you want to care for everybody's well-being you will have to compromise with your own want, because want has no end. And you really don't know where need will end and greed will begin. There is a very fine line there. When you have three sets of clothes and then buy the fourth one, is that need or greed? How do you decide? Unless you have a control over what you need, 'sarvodaya' cannot be brought about.

Is the control to greed really seeing other people's

needs?

You need to look around. If you are so self-centred you will only see your need. You will justify why you are fulfilling all your needs, by saying you are a responsible father or a responsible mother. Because then you have an argument of being responsible for your family. But this question comes of being a responsible citizen of the world, how will you behave? I would say, be responsible not just for yourself but for the world, care for the world and for society. So 'sarvodaya' is an ability to look around and see in comparison to the world, what do we have? And do we have the right to enjoy all that we are enjoying when many others are deprived and are suffering?

Awareness is not just about fighting for your own rights only but also understanding society and behaving in a way that your rights don't impinge on the lives and rights of others. I think when we speak of rights today we mean it in a highly individualistic way - I speak about my rights, I don't speak about the rights of anybody else. A good mix of rights and responsibility is what can lead to a 'sarvodaya' society because it is a society of sharing. And we also have this word, 'antodaya', it is the well-being of the last person, the least person. Really 'sarvodaya' cannot come until you care for the well-being of the least person. That will lead to the well-being of all.

I think 'sarvodaya' is a very radical theory and people haven't understood it yet, especially if you look at it as a political theory. We used to say dictatorship was the well-being of one and democracy is the well-being of the majority. From that political positioning when you say "the well-being of all" you are identifying a very radical position. People say that is a very old idea, but I ask, what is more radical than that? Resources have to be equally redistributed. I find it is a very radical position and unfortunately it hasn't become a popular position.

Thinking about others is hard for us. Insecurity is a big problem for people: I need all this money in my bank and if I can't keep it here I have to send to Switzerland to keep it safe and then I convert it into a credit card and put it in my pocket so when I travel I take it with me. Many years back, people would say "a tree is a tree", so if you want to transport a tree you need to take it to the market and sell it. But now you can convert the whole forest to a credit card. So you can say all this forest is mine and I am mortgaging it to the bank and converting it all to a credit card. In today's world people have found ways to convert resources into money and put it into their pocket. Once you have it you have all the freedom to spend it and you don't care about people who have to spend eight hours toiling to fill their stomach.

So we are faced with a world where millions of people are just thinking about filling their stomachs and a handful of people are spending money and

wasting resources. That is where 'sarvodaya' needs to be articulated and articulated as a challenge.

I want to ask you now about why land and land rights are so important in India? This is something that is sometimes difficult for us in North America or Europe to understand.

Well first of all, in India, land is called "mother earth" and so people have an emotional attachment to the land which is very real. Then, there is an old proverb which says that the best thing is to be a farmer; the worst thing is to be someone else's servant. And now that is reversed, everyone is trying to get a job, and that means to be the servant of someone else, and the worst thing is to cultivate your own land. So there is a shift in terms of values. Previously, agriculture had very high credibility. But times have changed.

So land is seen as a possession, like the credit card you were talking about, rather than as something to sustain yourself.

Yes. The moment you feel that land is not going to sustain me, then you move on. What we are saying is that people who don't have any other opportunity who are really working on the land and who respect the land, they should have the land. That is where the value shift is: for some people land is a commodity for selling and buying, for others it is mother earth, they respect it.

India is the word in English, 'Bharat' is the word for India in Hindi. So the country is divided in two; India, the country of the English educated people, and 'Bharat', the country of the people who speak a local language and live on the land. So we are against the commercialization of land because 70% of Indians are living on the land. And in India, however great the government may be, they will never employ more than 2% of people. Maybe the private sector will employ 3% of people. At no time will you find more than 5% of jobs in the service market and government employment. So how are these 95% of people living? 70% are living on the land. 8-10% are tribals, so they depend on the forest. And about 5% are setting up small shops and selling things on the road. So 95% of people live on their own. This is a self-employed way of living.

Of late, the government is trying to say, "Okay, no small shops, we'll have malls". So you take away the jobs of 5% of people. Then they say "the forests are for tigers, you get out". So another 10% are out. Then they say "the land is for special economic zones, construction of dams and 6-lane highways", then that's all gone too. So a government which has no ability to create jobs is using its force to evict people from the land and the forest and their livelihoods. It's only adding to the size of slums in this country.

We all learned as children that India is a country of

villages. Gandhi said that he wanted to see self-governed, self-sufficient villages uniting into a country called India. He didn't say "Delhi will be powerful and they will decide everything for all the villages". So when you have such a wonderful concept of self-sufficient, self-governed villages, why destroy their empowerment by taking their water, their land, their forest? Why don't you invest into developing their agriculture? Because growing food is not a crime. Why destroy people who grow food? Why take water and other resources only to promote industry? Why give such great support to industrialists and not to the farmers?

So land is not just land. Land is related to food. It is related to agriculture. It is related to self-sufficiency. It is related to happiness. And it is also related to the dignity of people. If you have a piece of land you are somebody. We feel land is very important.

It is the same everywhere other than the industrialised world where industry has become most important. There the welfare state is taking care of everyone through unemployment benefit and old age pension etc. They can make industries and, having polluted the earth and air and the water, they shift those industries to other countries and take their resources and pollute them.

This is only violence. This way you are using violence on people who can't defend themselves. This way you are grabbing the resources of others and perpetuating a system of violence. So then don't cry about terrorism. You can't sow the seeds of a thorn tree and speak of beautiful mangos to come out of it.

In India, people are using violence to win elections. They are engaging young people to use force on people. The banks in India are using goons to recover loans. Industrialists are using goons to go and get the land of the indigenous poor people. If industry, banks and elections are involved in violence then young people are being trained in small violence; they will graduate one day into larger violence. When you promote small violence you don't care about it but when they graduate into bigger violence then you complain about it. But it is the seeds you have sown.

Can you tell me about the 'Adivasis'? Who are they and why have you chosen to work with them?

I decided to work with them for two reasons. They still have a very high level of community feeling so they can come together on an issue and are not divided along caste lines. The second reason is that they have something to fight for. There are communities that have lost everything so they have to fight for something new. But the 'Adivasis' have the forest and the water sources. They have a very strong culture. They have their community. So by displacing them you are destroying a self-sufficient, very highly cultured group of people and that is

where we need to redefine poverty.

Poverty is not only an economic thing. That is just one part. When you look at 'Adivasis' you say how rich they are. Rich in terms of their community life and culture. Rich in terms of their attitude to people who come to their society. Rich in terms of their relationship to nature. We are working with a very rich community who do not have the money component. It is not pity as much as recognising that here is a strand that can be used and each strand can be multiplied and if they can understand their strength. Then amazing things can happen.

But I thought it is important to work with indigenous people to strengthen them and to use their strength in organizing programmes that will force the government to change policies. And what little amount of success we have had is because of that, because 'Adivasis' are very powerful in terms of taking suffering and then fighting for what they believe in.

It's a bit like an alternative society within society...

It is, yes. One interesting thing about them is that they are not the accumulating type. We tell them about saving and bank balances, and they look at us like "whatever you say", you know. Like Gandhi said, that is the most modern way of thinking: "if I have enough for today, why should I grab it for tomorrow?" People who will be born tomorrow will also have hands and legs. I don't have to accumulate for them. Accumulation is our problem and 'Adivasis' don't suffer from that.

My argument is that once you come to a dead-end, once all the resources are used up, you may need the indigenous people to learn how to live without accumulating, how to live simply. So it is not just a group to work with, but also a group from whom you can learn values about how to approach life.

I also found that they are victimized: mining companies come and they are evicted; dams come, they are evicted; tiger reserves come, they are evicted; factories come and they are evicted. So I found a community that is innocent at every level and they don't fight back and they sacrifice themselves. But in the face of what is happening it is not so bad to help them resist and fight back. So they can say "you can have your development model, but you can't destroy us for it." That is where the whole fight began.

It's not easy to help the 'Adivasis' fight back because the forces against are very powerful. But I think that the final defeat of the 'Adivasi' community will be a defeat for humankind. That is why I am with the 'Adivasis' and I think we will find an answer to many of our problems by respecting the way they live. The moment you look at them with respect, the whole situation will change.

You have been doing this work for over 40 years. What has surprised you in what you have learned over that time?

There have been many, many surprises. I am humbled by what I have learned from people. Everyday there is something new that I learned and sometimes is very funny. We were introducing a smokeless cooking furnace once and talking to people in a village about it. One old lady stood up and said, "I already have a smokeless furnace." I said, "No that cannot be because we are bringing it to you for the first time." She asked me, "Young boy do you understand what smoke comes from?" And I said, "Yes, smoke comes when you cook your food." "Well", she said, "I have nothing to cook so I have a smokeless furnace already." So people slap you in the face and tell you, don't be so smart and educated when you don't understand how my life works.

So the learning has been about coming to see the reality of people's lives?

Yes. What I have learned, I have learned from people. I have rarely learned from books. So I use people as my books. I watch them very closely I try to understand them seriously. I watch their body language. When I am organizing training programmes with young people, they are teaching me a lot, teaching me how to be a better person. And when you learn from people, that brings you closer to people, then you have no notions coming from books, no theory coming between you and others. I have learned to be closer to people, to respect people. There is a poem by Kabir that says, "the branch of the tree that has many fruits bends, the one without fruit stands straight." So the more knowledge you have the humbler you should be. If you understand people, you should be humble. Then you know that you know a little only. So you are very careful and polite.

That is one reason why I was able to organize 'Janadesh'. People trusted me and had faith in me. It was a very personal thing.

Forty years has taught me a lot. There is a lot more to learn. When we conduct training programmes now we invite ordinary people and ask them to tell others how they do what they do. "How do you plough your land?" "How do you collect this leaf from the forest?" This gives them a great respect and we have come to understand that the greatest resource is in the people right around us. I don't have a great constituency among the educated class because I am very critical of them, but I do have a constituency among the uneducated, poor people.

Paul Schwartzentruber is an Ekta Parishad volunteer and writer living in Canada.

Bioduels: agrofuels in Colombia

Rachel Boyd

Nuns in a riot

5 March 2008

I met some very cool nuns. The bloke who'd set up the meeting for me had told me in advance, "son chevères" (they're cool), and he was dead right.

There's been a strike of palm oil workers in Puerto Wilches, and I was meeting with the nuns to hear how they had been supporting the workers, and how I might be able to help.

They told me the background to the strike. It was started by workers from the Monterey company. Monterey subcontracts the majority of its work to cooperatives. Which might sound like a good thing, but it really, really is not. It is done simply as a tactic to get over labour laws.

As Norma the Nun began to tell me about the workers' conditions, my jaw started falling floorward. Collecting palm oil seeds is not easy work. The men spend the day craning their necks, pulling bunches of seeds down from the trees. It's very hot. There are commonly spinal problems from looking up all day and injuries from falling branches.

The job of injecting the trees with the pesticide monocrotophos (illegal in many countries) is often done with little protective gear. Last year 18 year-old Emilio Sabas died after only two weeks at the job. He only had a flimsy face mask. No protective clothes or gloves. Blame of who should have been responsible for his gear bounced between the Monterey and his cooperative. Given how most workers can hardly afford the food they need on their wages, extra clothes are not their priority. So they go home in the same clothes, hug their kids, have their clothes washed along with everyone else's. Studies have shown pesticide contamination in workers' families.

The sorts of things the Monterey strikers were protesting against included:

- The many ways in which they get fined: for bunches with fewer than 8 branches, for bunches left in the trees, for bunches cut without leaves, for stems which are too long, and when bunches are too ripe and seeds fall out.
- Wages had not risen in five years.
- Workers have to pay 100% of the transport costs of getting to the fields.
- If they buy their tools from the factory shop (where they can get credit, which they need when they're paid late), they are 60% above market value.

- Workers have to pay for the transport of the seeds from the fields, and are fined for any damage to the carts, including wear and tear.
- The cooperatives are meant to pay the social security payments. Monterey is often late paying the cooperatives so there are gaps in payment, which leaves people with a big problem when they have an accident during one of the gaps.
- Workers are fined for the seeds that fall loose to the ground. Women collect them off the ground. The women are paid, and the men are fined. That's the bit that really made my jaw drop.

So the Monterey workers started the strike on 30th January. They were joined on February 13th by workers from many other companies. They set up a blockade on February 18th. Two groups of nuns were there, supporting two different sites, meeting up at 4am.

The nuns had gleaming eyes as they related the story. Riot cops arrived at 5.25am, threw in some tear gas, and there was a pitched battle till 8 or 9am. The crowd grew from 300 to 5 000 when the tear gas started. The police singled out people to beat up. They threw tear gas into houses with women and children in. One pregnant woman later miscarried. The nuns treated tear gas victims and told off lots of cops. People threw water over tear gas canisters to neutralize them. The police then ran out of gas, were surrounded, and had to get rescued. They left the scene at 12pm.

The blockade lasted another week or so. There were some negotiation meetings, but the companies did not give an inch. It's common after agreements are reached for community leaders to be assassinated afterwards. I imagine they might be even more vulnerable when they didn't even win anything. Bit of a worry.

Solidarity raises your wages

21 May 2008

When I spoke to the nuns just after the palmworkers strike in Puerto Wilches ended, they were upbeat about having been in a riot, but they painted a pretty dismal picture of what the 30-day strike had achieved - despite the fact that it got so much solidarity and support from locals, nationals and internationals.

I have been staying in Puerto Wilches for the last 2 weeks, with intention of finding out what had happened since. It's horribly hot here, which made me ill and then took away my motivation to do anything that isn't sleeping.

Since then, things have been going surprisingly smoothly. We asked around for the bloke who was one of the leaders of the strike. Shortly after, he turned up where I was staying. And rather than hearing the tale of woe I had been expecting, the word 'triumph' was repeatedly used.

The Threats

The repression experienced due to the strike is not as bad as it could have been. Bloke I spoke to was verbally threatened by the police during the strike. He had a fairly exciting story about being shot at and a load of them involving themselves in a motorbike chase where they followed the assailants back to their base at the police-station. They reported it but the police have chosen not to follow it up. There was also a young guy who left town for a month when he and his mum were threatened after his active involvement in the strike. He's back now though.

The Triumphs

For the Monterey workers:

- The fine system has changed so the 6000 pesos fines have been reduced to 2500, half paid by the company and half by the cooperative. The other fines are now 500, also half paid by the company.
- Workers now are allowed a 3% margin of error before the fines start. Supervisors give you the opportunity to cut the stalk to the right length before a fine is imposed.
- Tools that had to be bought from the company are now sold much nearer to cost price: roughly half the cost they were.
- Wages have increased by 28%.
- There is a review committee of workers and company reps who meet monthly to look at how the fine system is running.
- The company pays for a full-time consultant to lend expertise to the cooperatives.

All this means that the strike has led to an increase in income of about 40% for workers in this sector. Up to around minimum wage levels. I think that's quite an impressive triumph. Plus positive results breed others. This strike inspired another, which is now on its 30th day.

And there are less tangible consequences of over 3000 striking workers coming together every day for a month. A new organisation has started up with a focus on encouraging the cultivation of staple foods. People have a sense of success and unity that's nice to see.

No riot for the nuns

31 May 2008

I went to see the cool nuns again. They were talking about the strike they are now supporting in Yarima, and were even more bright-eyed and sparky than when they recounted the riot at Puerto Wilches.

Yarima is a 'corregimiento' (district of a municipality) in San Vicente in the department of Santander. It's fairly near Puerto Wilches, where people were giving their own strike credit for inspiring this new one.

The nuns like how the Yarima strike is lots more organised than the Puerto Wilches one. This is easier as it's a much smaller community and people all know each other. They have an evaluation meeting at the end of each day to look at what they could do better. (I really like the sound of that.)

There has been a great sense of solidarity from the area. Yarima has a big advantage over Puerto Wilches in that oil palm is newer and not as widespread. This means more countryside is left for farmers to grow useful stuff, like food.

When these sympathetic farmers pass by, they donate the odd sack of corn or yucca or half a dead cow. The strikers said they are actually eating better now than when they were working. The wonderful generosity of local farmers means they get three hot meals a day, and there has even been food left over. When they were working in the fields, their food would be cold, less frequent, and less of it.

Being well-fed is great, but the cash they are lacking after 40 days of striking certainly does not mean their lives are now easier. They have no money to pay their rent, for any medicines their family needs, or for their children's schooling. Many can no longer make the down payments on their motorbikes, which will leave them without transport.

According to the nuns, the strikers' policy has been to block the roads to any vehicles connected with coal, palm, oil or rubber, and let all other vehicles pass. This was to put pressure on the government to move on the negotiations.

The strike hit the national news early on, when the president of the oil workers' union (USO) Jorge Gamboa Cabellero suffered an assassination attempt while visiting the strikers. That's how it was reported in the press anyway. The nuns made it sound less certain. Whether the two armed infiltrators who had been taking photos of the crowd were actually intending to kill USO's president as they moved towards him, I'm sure we will never know. The crowd at the time were fairly convinced, swiftly surrounding the men and disarming them. Jorge Gamboa says he owes them his life.

The palm workers were originally striking to demand better working conditions, similar to the situation in Puerto Wilches. Their main demands were for:

1. the system of employment through cooperatives to be abolished and the companies to employ their workers directly, complying with their legal responsibilities such as social security payments
2. a rise in pay which has been frozen for years.

Because the palm companies had still not responded to the workers' demands, three days ago the local community called a civic strike in solidarity. This has widened out the issues, making links to other local problems, such as the degradation both

of the environment and infrastructure (eg roads) caused by the companies taking natural resources from the area. The health centre is in a state of utter disrepair, and the community notes how wealth is being extracted from their territory while their circumstances are getting worse.

The Governor of Santander visited yesterday. He made some agreements with regard to social investment, but nothing relating to improving the palm workers' conditions.

When I started writing this, I named it 'No riot for the nuns', but since then I've learnt that the riot police turned up this morning and there was a confrontation. Tear gas. Rubber bullets. Two thousand people. Fifteen injuries. People seeking refuge in the church.

Workers' List of Demands: Background

Below is part of the background information they gave with their list of demands. The first paragraph deals with the change of land use since palm arrived in the area in 1985 and how this led to land theft, forced displacement, and people's conversion from farmers to palm labourers, working on the same land previously belonging to their families. Then it discusses how labour rights have degenerated over time, especially with the formation of workers' cooperatives.

"Today, the outlook for our community and our workers is dark. We watch as the environment deteriorates from the aggressiveness of crops that do not respect the rivers, streams or gullies. The indiscriminate felling of forests has brought us serious problems of erosion and the destruction of water sources, with disastrous consequences for the extinction of flora and fauna. Autonomy and food security have been lost as we have gone from being the food pantry of Magdalena Medio to consumers of traditional products brought in from other regions such as yucca, corn, plantain, fruit, and meat and milk derivatives that we previously produced. These are required for our nourishment and that of our children. In addition, we now have to pay the extra costs for transporting these foods.

The cultivation of palm throughout these 20 years has only generated the unbridled exploitation of our workforce and our land, without any compensation apart from the miserable wages we earn. The long hours of work only serve to line the pockets of the executives at the expense of the suffering of our people. We watch as our men and women hand over their youth, health and even life in this work, without seeing any improvement in their quality of life as was promised at the start of this project. The technical and technological training did not happen, the social investment did not happen, and neither did the decent work with fair working conditions which we inhabitants of this region deserve, as the owners and generators of so much wealth."

Rachel Boyd is a former Turning the Tide Resource Person and Committee member. In 2008, she was in Colombia to investigate the conflicts caused by biofuels (referred to here as 'agrofuels' as they have more to do with industrial agriculture than biology), and to do some general solidarity work. These are extracts from her blog www.bioduels.blogspot.com

A short and sweet animation about the importance of land and forests can be found at www.wrm.org.uy/Videos/defend_life.html

Nonviolence in Palestine

Tony Davies

Violence by Palestinians towards Israelis is reported readily. But there is very much more nonviolent resistance: to the occupation, to the West Bank barrier, to house demolitions, to the theft of Palestinian land and property. We rarely hear about it. In fact for most Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza), much of daily life is a nonviolent struggle against oppressive measures imposed by the Israeli military. The Palestinians who form 20% of the population of 'Israel proper,' and particularly the pastoral Bedouin villagers, also suffer from discrimination and hardship designed ultimately to force Palestinians to leave the country so that it becomes a state inhabited only by Jews. I will mention here a few examples of nonviolence by courageous people I have met: Palestinians, Israeli Jews, and 'internationals' from other countries.

Resisting eviction

Earlier this year a young man invited me into a small house in Hebron Old City near the Ibrahim Mosque. Israeli settlers are trying to buy this house from the Awawi family. Two of my host's brothers were killed in attempts, he believes, to terrorise the family into selling. Last December, soldiers and armed settlers forced their way into the house and set fire to the contents of a room. The day before my visit Israeli settlers, supported by soldiers, wrecked the water tanks on the roof, depriving the family of their water supply, and flooding the house and a shop below it. The settlers also vandalized a chicken coop on the roof and stole the chickens. The family had a garden at the side of the house where they kept cows and camels. Settlers poisoned the animals and now prevent the family from using the garden. The young man said that the family will not sell their house, no matter what price they are offered, or whatever the settlers and soldiers do to them.

Resisting house demolition

From a recent e-mail from someone living in a village in the south of the West Bank: "On the 20th July, Palestinians from At-Tuwani held a nonviolent

action against the Israeli military issuing demolition orders on several homes. A man from the village was arrested. Video evidence shows the demonstration was completely peaceful, but the man was charged with assault. He appeared in court and was ordered to pay 15,000 shekels (about £2,500) and imprisoned until the fine is paid. No video evidence was accepted; no Palestinians or internationals at the action were called to give evidence." He will never be able to pay such a sum.

For many years Ezra Nawi, a Jewish activist committed to nonviolence, has opposed and publicised Israeli army-backed settler violence against villagers in the south of the West Bank. He was arrested in July while trying to prevent a bulldozer from destroying a farmer's home. He has been convicted of "disturbing the peace"! He may well be sent to prison, though 20,000 people round the world have petitioned for him not to be.

Nonviolent intervention

Yanoun is a beautiful village in the north of the West Bank. It is under constant threat from the settlement of Itamar on hills above the village. All Israeli settlements on Palestinian land are illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention. A farmer told me that for the first three years after they arrived, the settlers behaved civilly, even taking tea in the villagers' houses from time to time. The first violence was in 1998 when settlers beat up an old man, blinding him in one eye. Later, settlers killed 150 sheep by scattering a toxic chemical, subsequently identified by laboratory tests, on the villagers' grazing land. They also destroyed the generator on which Yanoun relied for electricity, and polluted the village water supply. In 2001, settler violence forced the eight families living in Upper Yanoun to leave. Israeli and international peace groups reacted by establishing a permanent presence there. This is a nonviolent protest which has considerably reduced settler attempts to terrorise the villagers and drive them away, because the settlers know that news of their crimes will reach the outside world. As a result, the families returned and continue to live in the village.

Nonviolent protest

Of the many nonviolent protest actions carried out in the West Bank, those in Bil'in are the best known. The village's organizing committee was awarded the 2008 Human Rights Medal by the International League of Human Rights based in Germany. Each Friday, after midday prayers in the mosque, villagers, accompanied by members of Israeli and international peace groups, walk to the separation barrier, which isolates the village from 40% of its land. Along most of its length, the barrier is not on the border with Israel – the Green Line – but is well inside the Palestinian West Bank. At Bil'in it is 4 km inside. It is primarily an annexation barrier, not only

cutting the villagers off from their land but also from the wells on which the village depends. In 2004, the International Court of Justice declared construction of the barrier inside the West Bank to be illegal.

In the five years since the start of these demonstrations in Bil'in, over 1300 demonstrators have been injured and one killed. Two people have been killed at similar demonstrations in the nearby village of Ni'lin, and in March an American activist was hit by a high-velocity teargas projectile which fractured his skull, severely damaging his brain and left eye. He is still in a critical condition in hospital. In democracies, nonviolent protest is accepted as a legitimate and important way for people to make their views known. However, the Israeli Ministry of Defence has just declared that nonviolent protest in Ni'lin to have been "an act of war."

On 14 August this year, hundreds of Palestinians, Israelis and internationals demonstrated against the barrier and for the release of 18 men and boys from Bil'in currently being held in prison. One of the organisers of the demonstrations, Mohammad Khatib, said: "The Israeli authorities are worried that the model of popular nonviolent resistance is spreading. They are targeting the [organising] committees to try to crush it but they cannot destroy the spirit of the demonstrations in Bil'in with the arrests of individuals. The whole village is part of the nonviolent resistance and the military would have to arrest the entire village to stop us from protesting against the Occupation and the theft of our land."

Away from the demonstrations, some youths throw stones at Israeli soldiers. This is not a crime, as international law recognises the right to use armed struggle to exercise self-determination and self-defence. I was told that the protests at Bil'in were started by a man from the village who had studied Gandhi's use of nonviolence against the British in India. Gandhi believed that nonviolence would work with the British because they had a sense of fair play – a generous sentiment about the colonial power then controlling his country. However he was doubtful whether it would influence the behaviour of the Nazis in Germany. I fear, in the similarly savage ruthlessness and racism of political Zionism it is unlikely that the Israeli government and military will listen to the protestors.

This does not mean that nonviolent action in Israel-Palestine is a waste of time. On the contrary, it is essential to raise awareness about injustice, and for the morale of the oppressed. The example of those who suffer arrest, imprisonment, injury and even death for having the courage to protest nonviolently, is inspirational to the continuing struggle.

Tony Davies is Co-Clerk of the Turning the Tide Group that oversees the programme. He is a former Quaker accompanier in Israel-Palestine and frequently visits the area.

Palestinian nonviolent resistance and Israeli response

Gill Swain



Gill Swain/EAPPI

In early November, three of my EAPPI team based in Hebron witnessed a roadblock removal action at the Palestinian village of Al Jab'a, just south of the Israeli Gush Etzion settlement near Bethlehem, in the West Bank. It involved local Palestinians, Israeli and international activists, press and TV cameras.

The roadblock had been erected by the Israeli army 10 years ago for "security" reasons. It isolates the 800 inhabitants of Al Jab'a from their Palestinian neighbours, shops and schools and cuts off the communities of Surif and Beit Ummar from the fast main highway to Bethlehem. This was the fifth time Musa Abu Maria and his friends had removed this roadblock, which is usually replaced within a week or so. It was primarily a symbolic gesture, he said, brilliant for morale and for sending a message to the world that most Palestinians abhor violence but long for peace and freedom.

Musa, 29, is one of a growing number of Palestinians who have learned the techniques of nonviolent action and who are trying to teach them to their communities as the most effective form of resistance to the Israeli occupation. There is, in fact, a long history of widespread nonviolent resistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories taking the form of things like demonstrations and boycotts but it has always been obscured by the far rarer violent actions. At 17 Musa, having seen his village's land taken by Israeli settlers, a friend killed by the Israeli army (IDF) and his brothers arrested, joined the Islamic Jihad and threw stones at soldiers at every opportunity. He was arrested by the IDF and held for interrogation for three months. Charged with 22 offences relating to recruiting and training members of Islamic Jihad, he was eventually sentenced to five years in jail.

In prison, he began to hear about a new wave of nonviolent actions involving Israelis and internationals and on his release in 2004, he went to his first such demonstration in the village of At-Tuwani in the South Hebron hills. "The army had closed off the village with a roadblock, so the people could not go to buy food. I watched the internationals trying to move the block and women

and children joining in and I saw that the army did not hurt anyone during this demonstration."

Musa started a popular committee in his home town of Beit Ummar and made contacts with peace groups. Two years ago he organised his first action, planting 700 olive trees and helping with the harvest. "The people here did not know about nonviolent actions but they really liked it when Israelis and internationals helped them pick grapes and plant trees," he says. In early 2006, he and five others, including an American Jewish girl, Bekah Wolf, formed the Palestine Solidarity Project and began spreading the word.

"Every activity teaches me something new about nonviolence," he says. "I have learned that if a soldier puts his foot on a roadblock, I must not touch him or he could accuse me of assaulting him, but I can carry on pulling on the rope. I never give them any excuse to use their guns and I can see how angry it makes them."

"People ask me why I changed from working with Islamic Jihad," says Musa. "I tell them that it's because the Israelis built a fence and the Palestinians can do nothing about it. If we use guns, they will come and kill many of us. But if we sit down in the street and the media come and tell the world the truth of why we are doing it, we might get somewhere."

Musa was first inspired by the example of At-Tuwani, a collection of humble stone dwellings at the centre of a number of small, scattered communities where the people live in tents and caves and graze their sheep on the hills. These communities have come under persistent and well-documented physical attack from the settlers of Maon who shot dead two Palestinians and permanently injured several more. The Palestinians made numerous reports to the police but no action was ever taken and in the end the majority of the people abandoned their homes.

"Everyone used to have land to graze their sheep and grow their winter fodder. It was enough for us and it was an independent life," says Hafez Hreini who co-ordinates nonviolent actions in the area. "But the settlers now control 60% of the land. I and my mother and brothers have been attacked, two of our houses have been demolished, settlers destroyed my olive trees and poisoned my water cistern. I thought, I am a human being and I believe in justice, but there is no justice. So, what to do? It would be easy to do crazy things in revenge, but what would happen then? They would have an excuse to destroy my property and harm my family and my neighbours. I wanted to think in a different way."

In 1999 the IDF carried out a mass eviction of people living next to the Green Line. "It was a remote area, nobody knew about it, there was no media coverage, nobody cared," says Hafez. But Israeli peace activists heard about it and started a legal action which six months later restored the people to their homes. "It felt so good to have the support of these groups. I thought this is the way to go."

Despite his commitment to nonviolence, Hafez's suffering did not stop. At the first demonstration he took part in he was badly beaten by the IDF, some ribs were broken and he was jailed for two weeks. "I am targeted because I am a leader," he says. "The IDF have often come into my house in the middle of the night, destroyed things and told me not to work with Israeli peace groups. They came 12 times in one month."

Like Hafez, Musa too is targeted for special harassment because of his high profile. "Three settlers once took pictures of me when I was planting olive trees and that night the IDF came to my house and the captain said: 'Musa, I give you a big message: be careful.' I said to him: I believe in what I am doing even if it is dangerous. I am not afraid."

Gill Swain was employed by Quaker Peace & Social Witness as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). This is her Journal Letter of November 2007.

For more information on the EAPPI scheme, and to read more reports like this, see www.eappi.org

Book reviews

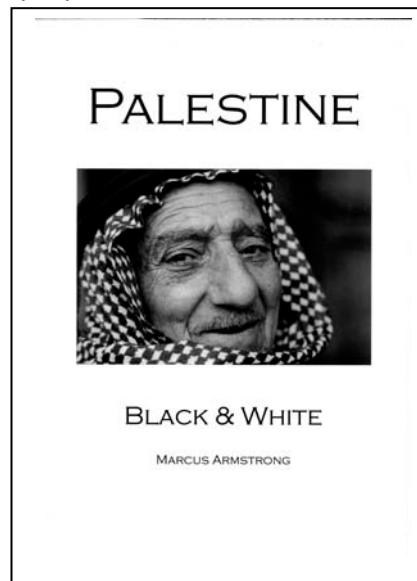
Palestine. Black and White.

By Marcus Armstrong
ISBN 0-9550349-0-6
Blue on Blue Publishing, 2005

Reviewed by Jenny Gawain

The smiling face of an elderly gentleman on the front cover of *Palestine. Black and White* introduces the format of this book, a practically wordless photo-essay of a potentially significant moment in recent Palestinian history when in February 2005 there was a cease-fire called between Palestine and Israel. It was a time when there was much hope for the future, but also a great deal of frustration at the lack of movement in the peace process. Put together by a peace activist and Turning the Tide Resource Person who has visited the area on numerous occasions, the photos attempt to capture the resilience, hopes and fears of the Palestinians. At a time when the people of the Middle East are often faceless and nameless, portrayed by the

mainstream media either as terrorists and suicide bombers or victims of oppression, this book is important in that it shows individuality of Palestinian people. Instead of stone throwers and angry,



chanting crowds we are treated to insightful images of everyday life in Palestine.

From the very beginning the photos are in a well-thought out order that forces the viewer to think in depth about the situation, the cheerfulness of the first photo

is immediately overshadowed by the desolate wasteland on the next page where rolls of barbed wire run into the distance. Further on, the stark image of a demolished Palestinian home followed by the tri-lingual "Go in peace" sign from an Israeli tourist resort provides plenty of room for thought.

The pictures themselves are aesthetically interesting to look at, from the infectious smiles of children and old men to the utter destruction wrought upon homes, but to fully appreciate this book the reader would benefit from at least a basic understanding of the situation in Palestine and the geography of the area. The lack of explanation of the photos, all there is is a brief list at the back detailing where the photo was taken and a brief title, means that in some of the photos there is not enough information to appreciate the meaning behind them. Having said that, there are many photos that require no words, such as the picture on page 107 showing a rifle butt leaning against the back of a coach seat in the foreground whilst in the background a hand touches a personal music player is indicative of the normalisation of weapons which sees teenagers on the streets of both Palestine and Israel armed with high-powered guns. The images of "The Wall" destroy the myth of this barrier that snakes through Palestinian land being a "security fence" by showing its true scale, and the image of a man trying to force his way through part of it with a baby in his hands shows how much it disrupts everyday activities that we take for granted. Such images portray some of the reality of living under occupation and the daily hardships that result from such a life and the sheer level of destruction that is wrought on the Palestinians by the Israeli forces.

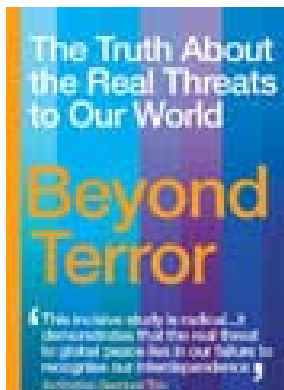
This book will be appreciated by anyone who has an interest in the area and who wants to go beyond the

wordy arguments that often accompany any discussion of the occupation.

Beyond Terror: The Truth About the Real Threats to Our World

by Chris Abbott, Paul Rogers and John Sloboda.
ISBN 9781846040702 Price £5

Reviewed by Zee-Zee Heine



I read this book in preparation for Turning the Tide's macroanalysis day in April. We look at the major trends in the world over the next 5 years or more that are likely to impact on social change activism and then look at whether we should make any adjustments to the priorities of the Turning the Tide programme.

Chris Abbot and John Sloboda are from the Oxford Research Group and Paul Rogers is Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University. Oxford Research Group is one of the UK's leading think tanks. It develops policy thinking on national and international security.

Since 11 September 2001, Western leaders have presented us with the unquestioning belief that international terrorism is one of, if not THE, greatest threat to our security and the "war on terror" is a necessary and effective response. This book argues that terrorism is not the greatest threat to the world and the "war on terror" is failing, and actually increasing the likelihood of more terrorist attacks. Those trends most likely to lead to large-scale loss of life, and that threaten the international system as we know it, are climate change, competition over resources, marginalisation of the majority world and global militarisation.

It seemed to me that, for Western governments, wealth, power and control over oil resources are more important than peace, security, and the long term future of the planet.

Wealth exclusion: Overall global wealth has increased but, the benefits are not equally shared. The gap between rich and poor is growing, with 1 in 7 people not getting enough food to lead a healthy active life. 10 million of these die each year from

hunger and related diseases, yet there is enough to feed the entire global population of 6.4 billion. Poverty and inequality cause crime, social disorder and cultural tensions especially in the ever expanding urban areas. It would be a gross over simplification to say that poverty leads to terrorism, but growing inequality is one strand of discontent as modern technologies such as satellite television and the internet, raise awareness of the rich-poor divide.

Political exclusion: The book shows how the US and its allies are facing a decline in their perceived legitimacy because they are not abiding by the same rules they seek to impose on others. Instead they act on the principle that the only way to protect their security is by eroding others' human rights. For example, detention without trial in Guantanamo Bay, the widespread and deliberate bombing of civilian infrastructure in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the abuse and torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison.

Yet the US State Department's own figures show that the number of US citizens killed each year by international terrorism is rarely more than 24. Even in 2001 when 2500 died, it is tiny compared to the number of innocent civilians killed by the US in other parts of the world, or US citizens dying from other causes. In 2001 in the US, 3,500 US citizens died from malnutrition, 14,000 from HIV/AIDS, 42,000 were killed in traffic accidents and 62,000 died from pneumonia.

If people are faced with oppression, political disenfranchisement and a lack of opportunity it creates a sense of marginalisation. The book shows how British foreign policy, particularly current security policies and the 'war on terror' are not reacting appropriately to this trend and are actually causing an increase in support for radical and violent movements such as the al-Qaida network.

Competition over Resources: In the past 30 years or so, various resources have become depleted. Oil is the one that has a big impact on Western consumers and is a potential source of conflict, especially between USA and China. China is rapidly becoming significant, partly from its rapid industrialisation and partly because, like the USA, it can no longer produce enough oil from its domestic oil fields. By 2010 it will import half its oil. The Middle East is the potential flash-point area of the world as it has two thirds of world oil reserves. Since the 1970s USA has had a unified military command called CENTCOM (US Central Command). CENTCOM's zone of responsibility is centred on the Persian Gulf, and extends to southwest Asia, northeast Africa and the Caspian Basin. CENTCOM has hundreds of planes, scores of warships and several hundred thousand troops. So any talk of a complete US withdrawal from Iraq is specious. It is establishing four permanent military bases there, three of them near oil fields. For the USA it is a core security requirement to be able to deploy military forces to control the region – for as

long as the Persian Gulf is central to world oil supplies – no matter what the cost in innocent lives and global insecurity.

Climate Change: The book does not spend much time arguing whether humans are or are not causing climate change and whether there is or is not time to avoid more than a 2 degree rise in average global temperatures. Instead it looks at the global security implications of climate change and concludes that even for rich countries like the United States the imminent and long term security implications are far more serious, lasting and destructive than those of international terrorism. I was interested in the book's argument that switching from oil to nuclear power cannot be the answer to climatic change, either from a resources or a security point of view. Nuclear power could only supply the entire world electricity demand for three years before sources with low uranium content would have to be mined. Nuclear energy is not a carbon free technology. One of the main factors is the amount of carbon dioxide produced by the mining and enriching of uranium ore. The use of poorer ores in nuclear reactors would produce more carbon dioxide than burning fossil fuels directly. From a security point of view, nuclear power obviously encourages the spread of the technology and materials that could be used in the making of nuclear weapons and their use by 'rogue states' or terrorist networks. Oil security and climate change are different aspects of the same problem. A more secure and reliable response is a rapid shift to renewable energy sources and radical energy conservation practices.

Global militarisation: this chapter gives a brief history of the cold war and shows that there is a persistent tendency by the authorities to maintain an aura of control and responsibility, when this is very far from what is actually happening. For example, there was a crisis in 1983 called Able Archer that happened without the world realising. It was not until afterwards that academics and analysts realised how close we had come to nuclear war. Able Archer was a test of NATO's nuclear-release procedures, but the Soviet government thought the war games were a cover for an imminent NATO attack. Since the end of the cold war there has been a shift by governments, such as the USA and Britain, away from heavy armour on the ground towards pre-emptive first strike mass destructive weapons delivered from a distance. These include the new generation of nuclear weapons; cluster bombs, which are far more pernicious than individual anti-personnel land mines, are cheaper to lay and are outside the Ottawa treaty; biological weapons which, given the developments in genetic engineering and biotechnology, have for the first time the potential to become effective weapons of war; and the US star wars programme. The book is well researched and backs up its arguments with interesting facts, yet (at 93 pages) is short and has an easy-to-read style.

New resources

Available from the TTT library.

Books

- *Becoming An Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression* by Anne Bishop.
- *Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions* by Karen Armstrong
- *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists* by Betsy Leondar-Wright
- *Direct Action: The Memoirs of an Urban Guerilla* by Ann Hansen
- *The Leader as a Martial Artist: An Introduction to Deep Democracy* by Arnold Mindell

DVDs

- *On the verge* - police tried to stop public viewings of this celebrated campaign film. Records the local actions taken by Smash EDO protesters in Brighton against their local arms manufacturer that was making money out of the war in Iraq.
- *Taking Liberties* – an incisive account of the systematic erosion of basic civil liberties since New Labour came to power.
- *500 Years Later* – multi award winning account of the struggle of people from African descent for self-determination.
- *A Farm for the Future* – acclaimed BBC programme broadcast earlier this year. Explores ways of farming without fossil fuels. Can be found at www.darkoptimism.org/FfF.mov

Host a nonviolence workshop

Turning the Tide has run two highly successful year-long courses in London. Both times we had far more applications than places and had to create waiting lists. Some participants travelled long distances, including from other countries and we've had many requests to run the course outside London.

Our intention for 2010 is to run 1-day taster workshops in different parts of the country to establish working partnerships with Quaker meetings and local activists. We see this as an opportunity for a deeper partnership to deliver our comprehensive course at a later date outside of London.

If you, your meeting or group is considering being a partner, see the notes on the next page. They may answer your initial questions

Where do I start?

1. Remember, it's a 2-part proposal: 1) to help organise a 1-day workshop in 2010 and 2) to host a more comprehensive course at a later date. This has previously been a year-course of 1-day workshops each month, but other models will be considered.
2. Visit the Turning the Tide website www.turning-the-tide.org to gain an understanding of the specific area of nonviolence we work in.
3. Ask others in your meeting or group if they would be interested in the proposal and discuss it amongst yourselves.
5. If there is general support for the idea, discuss how you will do the key tasks listed in the box on the front page of this *Making Waves* and get some idea of what is possible. You might want to make tentative enquiries about the venue, accommodation for the trainers etc. Ask who'll be willing to help carry out these tasks. *It's vital that this work does not fall to just one person.*
6. Ask who will be willing to participate in the workshop. And this includes people outside your group. If there are groups in your area concerned with peace, environment, economic justice and human rights, involve them too.
7. Look at the range of workshop themes and decide which of them would be suitable as the focus for the 1-day taster next year.
 - o introduction to nonviolence
 - o power & change
 - o campaigning & organizing
 - o building the constructive alternative
 - o spirituality & activism
 - o nonviolent direct action
 - o personal & political empowerment

Descriptions and information on all of these workshops can be found on our website year course archive www.turning-the-tide.org/archive2009

We have the willingness and support. Now what?

Contact Denise or Steve at the Turning the Tide office and tell us how far you've got in your thinking. We'll ask about:

- geographical location
- proposed venue
- proposed date of workshop
- potential numbers of participants
- what local networks will be involved
- what organisational support your group can offer, such as how you will meet the key tasks above.

If we all agree that it's looking good and we want to go ahead, we'll start planning!



turningthetide

NONVIOLENT POWER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

About Turning the Tide

Turning the Tide aims to advance the understanding and practice of active nonviolence and its use for positive social change, using the experience of contemporary and previous nonviolence movements.

Turning the Tide provides

- Public introductory interactive workshops exploring active nonviolence;
- Consultancies, or tailor-made workshops, for groups. These can cover campaign strategy, empowerment, building strong groups, group process and preparing for nonviolent action;
- Providing materials. TTT has an award winning video, *Nonviolence for a Change*, a journal *Making Waves*, a website www.turning-the-tide.org and a nonviolence resource library.

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Views expressed in *Making Waves* and any leaflets enclosed are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by Turning the Tide, Quaker Peace & Social Witness or Britain Yearly Meeting.

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