

Civilian - Based Defense: News & Opinion

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Social Defence: Elite Reform or Grassroots Initiative?

By Brian Martin *

The idea of social defence — or nonviolent civilian resistance to aggression using methods such as strikes, noncooperation, demonstrations and alternative institutions, as an alternative to military defence — has so far remained just that: an idea. If social defence is to be introduced on a large scale, how will it come about? Will it be introduced by government and military elites who have become convinced that it is a better method of defence? Or will it be introduced by the initiatives of many individuals and local groups, often in the face of elite resistance?

These questions cannot be answered simply by referring to past history. There is yet no substantive example of a community which has systematically organised its members and its political, economic and technological systems to operate social defence. True, there are a number of historical examples which have been used by proponents of social defence to illustrate its feasibility. Strikes and noncooperation led to the collapse of the Kapp Putsch in Germany in 1920; the Czechoslovak people put up an impressive nonviolent resistance to the 1968 Soviet invasion. But all such efforts have been organised spontaneously. Preplanned social defence has yet to be organised on a major scale.

There are various names for nonviolent resistance as an alternative to military defence, including social defence, civilian defence, civilian-based defence and nonviolent defence. Whatever the name, the idea is relatively new. In the first half of this century there were some suggestive proposals for nonviolent resistance as an alternative to military defence, inspired especially by the Gandhian campaigns in India.¹ The first systematic presentation of the idea of

social defence was by Stephen King-Hall in his book *Defence in the Nuclear Age*² published in 1958. Following this, a number of writers, mainly in Europe, developed the ideas further by investigating past examples of nonviolent action, analysing the social conditions favourable for the implementation and success of social defence, and exploring the possibilities for nonviolent action against invasions and coups.³

Some members of peace groups,

mainly in Europe, argued the case for social defence in the 1960s and 1970s. But in those decades social defence mostly remained at the level of argument: little or no practical action to mobilise communities for nonviolent resistance occurred. One exercise warrants mention: a simulation on Grindstone Island in Canada in 1965, in which a group of Quakers roleplayed a military takeover and nonviolent resistance to it. The account of this exercise provides a number of lessons for potential resisters.⁴

Also in the 1960s and 1970s, a few European governments evinced a limited interest in social defence by sponsoring studies. Civilian resistance actually plays a small part in the overall defence systems in Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia.

In the 1980s there has been an upsurge of interest in social defence. This is mainly due to the worldwide resurgence of the peace movement and the consequent grappling by many people with the question, "If we disarm, how will we defend ourselves?". The prior studies and interest in social defence have enabled it to be put on the list of 'alternative defence policies'. A very important factor in the increased interest in social defence has been the increasing numbers of people involved in nonviolent action. Nonviolent action has a long and inspiring history⁵, but systematic training for this form of social action is relatively recent. It has been inspired especially by writings

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and sharing of skills from the Movement for a New Society⁴ in the United States and implemented in a major way in environmental campaigns in Europe and America since the 1970s, especially against nuclear power.

Social defence is at least on the peace movement agenda in many countries, though there are major exceptions such as the United States where it remains little known. There are also some political parties in Europe which have put social defence on their platforms, most well known of which is the Greens in West Germany. Nevertheless, social defence is still seen as an unorthodox and radical option even by many within the peace movement, and it is hardly known among the general public.

For those who would like to see social defence researched, developed and implemented, the question is, what is the best way to help this come about? Here I describe two general directions in which efforts for social defence might be channelled: elite reform and grassroots initiative. I argue that relying on elites to introduce social defence is both unreliable and also undercuts its potential to challenge the roots of war. On the other hand, promoting social defence at the grassroots provides a much sounder basis for long-term success, and also provides valuable connections with other social struggles which contribute to overturning the war system and related systems of power and exploitation.

Elite Reform

Some prominent proponents of social defence have pitched their arguments towards elites, especially state bureaucrats. Their aim has been to win over influential leaders by showing that social defence is more effective than military defence in attaining at least some of the explicit goals of governments and military establishments.

The arguments for social defence are good ones. For example, races to develop ever more devastating weapons for 'defence' decrease rather than increase people's security, whereas social defence, which cannot be used to launch deadly attacks, avoids this paradox. Military defence provides the basis for military coups and military dictatorships which repress the people who are supposed to be defended;

social defence avoids the dilemma of "who guards the guardians?" by turning the people into their own nonviolent guardians against both external and internal threats.

Gene Sharp is the best example of an advocate of social defence who aims his arguments at governmental and military elites. His recent book **Making Europe Unconquerable**⁷, which is an effective and valuable argument for social defence, seems to be aimed mainly at policy makers.

Let me make it clear that I think that Gene Sharp's scholarship and writing is extremely valuable. I routinely recommend it to many people. But that does not provide any reason to refrain from 'friendly criticism' of some of his underlying assumptions.

Sharp assumes that the reason for present military policies is that people, both policy makers and the general population, lack knowledge or awareness that there is a viable alternative defence policy without the extreme dangers of nuclear deterrence. Sharp gives hardly a hint that there might be other reasons for the reliance on military means than the perceived need to defend against the 'enemy', which he takes to be the Soviet government and military.

In my view⁸, military establishments are created and sustained for other purposes than just defence and security. Military establishments and associated industry and government bureaucracies have a strong organisational and economic interest in their continued existence even in the absence of external threats or the presence of superior defence alternatives. More fundamentally, the state is premised on the monopoly over what is claimed to be legitimate violence within a territory, within a system of competing states. It is not feasible to dismantle the military system of organised potential for violence without also undermining the dominant power structures within states, including the power of capitalists in the West and of communist parties in the East.

So it is really out of the question to expect state elites to introduce social defence simply by convincing them

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that it is logically a better system for the interests of the people. In most cases, the beliefs of state elites reflect the power structures in which they operate. Knowledge and logic alone can do little to undermine these structures.

Sharp says that if European countries became more militarily self-reliant through social defence, the United States government should respond with "relief and gratitude"⁹. This hardly seems likely considering the way the US government has browbeaten its allies to accept cruise missiles and the way it has reacted to the New Zealand government's cautious steps away from nuclear weapons.

Elites might well give more consideration to social defence if popular pressure became greater. Some advocates of social defence indeed favour development of popular support for social defence as a way to influence elite decision-makers to take it more seriously. From the point of view of elites, popular pressure might make social defence more attractive as an elite reform. Sharp recognises this when he suggests that governments might adopt social defence measures to "mollify" a strong peace movement.

If governments brought in social defence as a reform, it would almost certainly be done in those ways most compatible with existing institutions. What would this mean for social defence?

First, social defence would be seen as a contribution to national defence, supporting the interest of a particular state within the existing framework of competing states. Sharp does not deal with social defence except as national defence.

Second, social defence would be organised in a relatively top-down fashion. Although popular participation

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is intrinsic to the operation of social defence, participation can be either organised and designed by those participating or manipulated and controlled from above. Elite-sponsored social defence could well be organised and run by a professional corps of experts and leaders, with the populace entering in according to the plans and directions of the professionals. This sort of social defence would be relatively undemocratic. It is even possible to imagine conscription for social defence service, which would be a travesty of nonviolent action.

Third, elite-sponsored social defence would be integrated with other methods of defence, including continuation of military defence. Instead of becoming a replacement for military defence, social defence would become a supplement. Sharp sees this as the most likely path for introduction of social defence (although elsewhere he gives many examples of the dangers of mixing violent and nonviolent resistance). This would preempt more radical initiatives for popularly organised social defence. In terms of infrastructure — communications, transport, factory production — social defence would depend on the existing facilities which are geared to control by elites.

Social defence which is organised by professionals for national defence as a supplement to military defence could actually serve to contain popular action for social change. The military establishment, through its influence over social defence plans and knowledge of avenues for popular action, might find itself more able to control the populace. Since the elite-sponsored social defence would be oriented towards external enemies, it would be harder to use against domestic repression. Finally, because of the top-down control, it would be relatively easy for elites to reduce overall commitment to social defence. In essence, power over the development of social defence would have been put in the hands of the elites.

In summary, elite-sponsored social defence would have a minimal impact on dominant institutions. The state system and the necessity for its defence would remain a central premise. Popular participation would be under the control of elites and professionals, and the military system would not be challenged in any fundamental way. This sort of elite reform could coopt social defence in the same way that demands for workers' control have been partially coopted by limited forms of worker participation, and demands for women's liberation have been partially coopted by promoting some women into high positions within otherwise unchanged institutions.

It should be clear that I do not see attempts to convince or apply pressure to elites as the only or best way to promote social defence. If any headway in this direction is made at all, it is likely to achieve a form of social defence lacking its most important democratic features and providing no real threat to established institutions which underlie the war system.

Grassroots Initiative

Another way to promote social defence is through grassroots initiatives. This means that groups of people in suburbs, factories, offices, schools, churches, farming communities and military forces would take action themselves to prepare for social defence.

This sort of action has only begun to appear in the past several years. Canberra Peacemakers has taken a number of initiatives in investigating how social defence might be promoted at a community level¹⁰. There is a community social defence network in the Netherlands¹¹, and a number of other groups and individuals are active in various parts of the world.

There are many possible things to do. In factories, for example, workers might teach each other how to use equipment and also how to disable it so far as outsiders were concerned. They could plan decision-making procedures for crisis situations and organise communications networks for coordinating their own efforts with other community groups. To make these preparations would of course require considerable self-education about social defence. The process of developing a social defence system

would itself be an important component of the education process. Once preparations were underway, they could be tried out in role-playing exercises, and eventually with large-scale simulations in which the factories were shut down to prevent use by aggressors, or in which the factories were used to produce other products of relevance to a wider social defence programme.

In the somewhat longer term, factory workers could begin pushing for changes in the social and technological infrastructure. Greater use of job rotation and shop-floor decision-making would develop the skills of the workers and make them more effective in resisting aggression. Flattening wage differentials and reducing management prerogatives would help reduce inequalities and antagonisms between sections of the workforce which might be used by aggressors to undermine worker solidarity. Decentralising production and converting wasteful or harmful production to production for human needs would increase the value of the workers' labour for community needs, and in many cases reduce its value to aggressors, as in the case of converting military-related production. Developing wider communication and decision-making forms, such as workers' councils, would provide a solid organisational basis for social defence.

This example of what a grassroots initiative for social defence might be like illustrates several features different from the likely direction of elite-sponsored social defence. First, the orientation would be much more to defence at the community level rather than only at the national level. Since the state is a key feature of the war system, this community focus is much more suitable for putting social defence into a wider antiwar strategy.

Second, the grassroots initiative approach would lead to a form of social defence which is much more democratic and self-reliant. Because people would be involved themselves in developing social defence, they would also be much more committed to it. The defence would be stronger because it would be less reliant on professionals and official leaders. Also, to the extent that reorganisation of social and technological infrastructure occurred, the basis for warmaking by political and economic elites would be undercut.

Third, social defence developed through grassroots initiatives would be much more potent against attacks by state elites. Self-reliance developed at the grassroots could be better mobilised against a repressive government or against a coup supported by government leaders — a situation only poorly addressed by Sharp.

Finally, and most importantly, many more links would be made with other social movements. For example, the methods of nonviolent resistance could be used by workers against oppressive employers as well as against outside aggressors. Similarly, promotion of social defence among women could be linked with campaigns against rape and other male violence. The making of such links would help the social movements concerned by providing them with tools for their own struggles. And by providing an independent reason for practising nonviolent techniques, the involvement in social defence would be much greater than possible through elite sponsorship.

The grassroots approach to social defence implies that social defence is not just a desirable goal, to be implemented in whatever way possible. Rather, social defence would become an organising tool. Organising of communities could be based around the development of social defence skills and preparations, since this would require promotion of increased local democracy, self-reliance and participation.

There are many obstacles to social defence organised from the grassroots. Factory workers promoting greater shop-floor decision-making power will be strongly opposed by employers, by associated state bureaucracies, and also by many trade union elites. Historically, elite opposition to strong workers' movements has relied ultimately on military force. Specifying the array of forces that would oppose grassroots initiatives for social defence highlights the close connections between the war system and other systems of political and economic inequality and exploitation. The grassroots approach to social defence can only succeed if it is part of a wider challenge to oppressive institutions such as patriarchy, capitalism and the state. The strength of the grassroots approach is that it can tap the support of all those people oppressed by such institutions.

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There is a long way to go before social defence becomes adopted as an organising tool in very many places. But once teething problems are sorted out — and this will take quite a few years, if not decades — there is no reason why rapid expansion in the use of social defence could not occur. Certainly this is what has happened in other social movements in their use of nonviolent methods, such as the labour movement and the black civil rights movement. The dramatic use of nonviolence against repressive regimes in Iran, Poland, Argentina and the Philippines in recent years is a hopeful sign. Once such grassroots initiatives get going, they will be much harder to stop than any elite-sponsored systems.

Gene Sharp says that serious consideration of social defence “is more likely to be advanced by research, policy studies, and strategic analyses of its potential than by a ‘campaign’ being launched advocating its immediate adoption”¹². Sharp’s view is flawed on two counts. First, activists who campaign for social defence do not demand its “immediate adoption”, but rather foresee a gradual but punctuated process, just as Sharp does. Second, and more serious in its implications, is Sharp’s view that research is more useful than ‘campaigns’. Sharp clearly wants to distance himself from the peace movement, and indeed he hardly mentions it in his book. His concern is with policy studies and policy-makers.

The history of social movements shows that popular action is the key to social change, not the logical arguments of experts with the ear of elites. The anti-slavery movement would never have made much progress simply by trying to convince slave-owners that it was more economically efficient to have a free labour force, nor would the

women’s movement have made much progress simply by trying to convince individual men that sexual equality was more in keeping with the highest precepts of human civilisation. Similarly, all the available evidence shows the futility of relying on governments to abolish the war system¹³.

Undoubtedly, it is important to popular movements for there to be intellectuals who argue their case, and often these intellectuals prefer to set themselves apart from the movements which use their material. Sharp’s writings are immensely valuable to social activists, who will continue to read and refer to his work even if he does not consider their activities worthy of mention. That’s all a part of the typical dynamic of social movements and intellectuals.

A similar process occurred with the energy debate in the late 1970s. Amory Lovins provided a powerful indictment of conventional energy planning and an eloquent case for a ‘soft energy path’ based on energy efficiency and an increased use of renewable energy technologies¹⁴. Lovins argued his case in terms of physics and economics and eschewed arguing on the basis of social and political grounds. Like Sharp, Lovins argued in terms of pragmatism rather than morals or social action. But as the ‘alternative energy movement’ encountered the enormous difficulties of opposing entrenched interests and became partially coopted into government programmes, the impetus towards the soft energy path faded. Many improvements in energy efficiency have been made, but the basic infrastructure of energy-intensive society has hardly been scratched. Lovins seemed to hope that changes in energy systems, introduced on pragmatic grounds, would lead to desirable social changes. Unfortunately, the political and economic ‘logic’ of vested interests in dominant energy systems have so far prevailed over the more intellectual logic of the soft energy path¹⁵.

It is understandable that Sharp, a researcher, should advocate more research. But there is not really such a great disjunction between research and action as implied by Sharp. Sharp’s writings are actually effective tools in nonviolent struggles against oppression and war. On the other hand, many campaigns are very effective

research tools. Sometimes the best way to obtain knowledge is to become involved in social action rather than waiting on the sidelines for it to occur.

One of the difficulties with 'alternative defence' options such as non-alignment, armed neutrality and 'defensive defence' is that they depend on governments and state bureaucrats for implementation. Social activists are reduced to applying pressure on elites. One great advantage of social defence is that immediate steps can be taken on the local level to study, promote and implement it. Social movements often have come to grief when reliance has been put on 'people in power' to implement policy. Activists cannot afford to wait for research and action from the top. It would be especially ironic if social defence, which by its nature is ideally designed for grassroots initiatives, were to become another captive and casualty of elite policy-making.

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NOTES

- 1 On some of the intellectual antecedents to social defence, see Gene Keyes' 'Strategic non-violent defense', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 4, June 1981, pp. 125-151.
- 2 Stephen King-Hall, *Defence in the Nuclear Age* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1958).
- 3 Anders Boserup and Andrew Mæck, *War without Weapons* (London: Frances Pinter, 1974); Johan Galtung, *Peace, War and Defense. Essays in Peace Research, Volume Two* (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers, 1976); Gustaaf Geeraerts (editor), *Possibilities of Civilian Defence in Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1977); Adam Roberts (editor), *The Strategy of Civilian Defence* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967); and Gene Sharp, *Social Power and Political Freedom* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1980).

- 4 Theodore Olson and Gordon Christiansen, *Thirty-one Hours* (Toronto: Canadian Friends Service Committee, 1966).
- 5 See Robert Cooney and Helen Michalowski (eds), *The Power of the People* (Culver City, California: The Power of the People Publishing Project, 1977); and Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).
- 6 See especially Virginia Coover et al., *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1981).
- 7 Gene Sharp, *Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-based Deterrence and Defence* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger, 1985).
- 8 Brian Martin, *Uprooting War* (London: Freedom Press, 1984).
- 9 Sharp, *op. cit.* note 7, p. 82.
- 10 Jacki Quilty et al., *Capital Defence: Social Defence for Canberra* (Canberra: Canberra Peacemakers (GPO Box 1875, Canberra ACT 2601), 1986).
- 11 The international contact for the network is Linæke Schakenbos, Utrechtseweg 29A, 3704 HA ZEIST, The Netherlands.
- 12 Sharp, *op. cit.* note 7, p. ix. See also p. 64.
- 13 See for example Alva Myrdal, *The Game of Disarmament* (New York: Pantheon, 1976).
- 14 Amory Lovins, *Soft Energy Paths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).
- 15 Brian Martin, 'Soft energy hard politics', *Undercurrents*, No. 27, 1978, pp. 10-13.

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The Association for Transarmament Studies invites readers' commentary and other points of view in response to this article.

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WEST GERMANY and "AUTONOMOUS PROTECTION"

by Mel Beckman

Wilhelm Nolte, a military officer in West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany), is proposing a defense concept for that country which would no longer rely on NATO's nuclear weapons but would, instead, call for a mix of conventional military defense in less-populated areas, defense by nonviolent resistance in the cities, and protection of the population in the sense of "civil defense". The following description of his proposal has been developed from Nolte's article, THE UNITED STATES AND AUTONOMOUS PROTECTION IN EUROPE (Copyright: Wilhelm Nolte, Hamburg, Marz 1987. Tonninger Weg 29, D 2000 Hamburg 52, Tel: 040/8004357). The basic structure of "autonomous protection" was first described by Hans-Heinrich and Wilhelm Nolte (brothers) in ZIVILER WIDERSTAND UND AUTONOME ABWEHR, Vol. 27 of: Dieter S. Lutz (ed.): MILITAER, RUESTUNG, SICHERHEIT, Baden-Baden, 1984.

In the above-cited article Nolte suggests that U.S. citizens in Detroit, for example, would have much to gain if a shift could be made in Europe to autonomous protection. Presently, Detroit's citizens are hostages of Hamburg's, in the sense that the families of U.S. soldiers serving in Europe are expected to die along with families in Hamburg should war break out in Europe. This is so because of the need for a credible NATO nuclear deterrent to Soviet aggression. On the other hand, when the U.S. tires of paying for the defense of Europe and threatens to withdraw troops, Europeans become hostages to U.S. political and economic interests. The hostages we take, Nolte writes, can never be our friends. The individual invulnerability of the member-states must therefore be strengthened in order to escape from this situation of mutual hostage-taking. Further, according to Nolte, the ability to truly defend towns is an important consideration. Such defense is not possible with nuclear weapons without destroying the population centers and also risking nuclear extinction.

In the autonomous protection concept, the Federal Republic would remain a member of NATO and NATO troops would continue to be stationed in the country. However, all nuclear weapons systems would be removed as well as weapons designed for mass destruction. NATO allies would pledge to not involve West or East Germany at any time in their strategy of nuclear deterrence nor would they provide nuclear protection for West Germany or aim any of their nuclear weapon systems at any target in East Germany. These steps would be taken without delay and the countries of the Warsaw Pact would be invited to do likewise.

West Germany would then introduce a "National Protection Service" to replace the present National Service. Under it, three categories of forces would be set up: a) armed forces, b) resistance forces (nonviolent), and c) protection forces (as in civil defense and relief work). German draftees (including

German women) could join any one of the three services. All services would be considered equal.

The armed forces would be defensive in nature and structure and would include naval, air and land forces. Total personnel would amount to 350,000 with 750,000 in times of crisis. These military forces would fight in non-urban areas only - in the terrain where the full effect of their weapons could be brought to bear. Towns of 50,000 inhabitants and more would not be defended or protected militarily. Troops and military installations would be removed from within their boundaries and they would be declared "open towns", subject to the provisions of International Law. All components of the armed forces would operate in ways to minimize damages, limiting target areas to the greatest extent possible to induce an attacker to not employ heavy weapons or deliver heavy fire on targets he would otherwise consider remunerative.

Nolte anticipates that recruits for the nonviolent resistance forces would include those who today are conscientious objectors to military defense but who are not necessarily opposed to defense. Women, too, might have an interest in joining these forces. The resistance forces would be organized and committed in the towns only and would number about one percent of the total population. In Nolte's concept, the smallest unit of the resistance forces would consist of two members who live or work close to each other. The next larger unit would be an "action group" consisting of two of the smaller units. The "action group" would be the basic active nonviolent cell of the resistance forces. In this cell, only two members are to act while the others stay in the background to be ready to support, cover and act as witnesses in court.

The resistance forces would operate within the towns in three action areas: district, commercial and administration. Forces operating in the "district" would be prepared to converse with members of occupation forces (their training would include language study), getting them to reflect on what they are doing. They would also try to prevent citizens from collaborating with the occupational forces. In the "commercial" area resistance fighters would delay work to be carried out for the occupation forces and would induce members of work forces in various plants and enterprises to go slow. Resistance forces operating in the "administration" area would see to it that tasks of administrative nature are carried out for the aggressor very meticulously, in detail, involving as many departments as possible, so that a great deal of time is involved.

Nolte sees coordination of the nonviolent forces as being effected by the Federal Government by broadcast or by passing information by word of mouth. Several rules of conduct would be in force: no guerilla warfare/ no action directed against the German population/ no action carried out independently, i.e., without cover or observation of other resistance fighters/ reporting on concluded action/ no desperate or dramatic action.

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The protection forces - the third arm of the national defense forces - would number again about one percent of the population. They would care for the needs of the population during national emergency. Their work, in Nolte's estimation, would be lessened under the autonomous protection plan, for two reasons: a) NATO guarantees to conduct only conventional warfare in West Germany. This being the case, the aggressor is not likely to contaminate the desired objectives (industries and industrial areas) by use of nuclear weapons. b) There are no military targets in the towns and thus the chances for survival of the population are increased. The "open" towns can also be seen as sanctuaries for the inhabitants of the smaller villages which would be exposed to combat activity. Autonomous protection would thus lessen the great problem of refugees. Evacuation would not involve moving millions from the large cities but rather relocating people from the smaller towns into the larger cities where accommodations are already available. Shelters of the Swiss standard are suggested for the population remaining in the likely areas of combat.

In the Nolte plan, all three forces would operate autonomously but in "cofunction". They would be bound to each other by the determination of the whole population to avoid war - or to survive it if it cannot be avoided. The German society would commit itself to stay free of any responsibility for nuclear extinction, whether initiated by nuclear "warning shots", first use, retaliation or "friendly support" of another nation. There would be no German general to ask for nuclear war-fighting against conventional attack. No German chancellor would ask the U.S. President to accept having Detroit destroyed on behalf of Hamburg.

A book by Dietrich Fischer, Jan Oberg and Wilhelm Nolte is to be published this year in the United States. Its title will be WINNING PEACE - BREAKING THE DEADLOCK THROUGH AUTONOMOUS INITIATIVES.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



AUSTRALIA

ATS member, Robert Burrowes is beginning work at the University of Queensland on his Ph.D. research topic, "A Nonviolent Civilian-Based Defence for Australia?" He would welcome communication with other ATS members and their suggestions. Write to: Robert J. Burrowes, P.O. Box 137, St. Lucia, Queensland 4067, Australia.

"SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES" published by the Dept. of Government at the University of Queensland, has devoted its last two issues to peace and disarmament. The January, 1987 issue was concerned with peace education and the April issue with nonviolent political action. The latter issue is especially relevant to ATS concerns since several articles contained therein (by Gene Sharp, Brian Martin, Ralph

Summy and Michael Stratford) deal with the topic of civilian-based defense. ATS members might also want to become involved in the on-going "Dialogue and Debate" section of the periodical. Persons in the United States and Canada may receive both issues, via air mail, by sending U.S. \$10.00 to: SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES, Dept. of Government, Univ. of Queensland, St. Lucia, Queensland 4067, Australia.

UNITED STATES

A study group on nonviolence and its potential for national defense, sponsored by the Peace Resource Center of San Diego, met for eight sessions this Spring. The group was convened by Virginia Flagg and examined the writings of Gene Sharp, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Also discussed were examples of nonviolent resistance in India, the United States, the Philippines, Guatemala, the West Bank, and Europe.

On March 17th, Gene Sharp gave the keynote address at "A Symposium on the Strategic Defense Initiative" held at Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska. Several hundred students were exposed to the idea of civilian-based defense as well as co-presenters John Kogut, Brig. General Raymond McMillan, Dmitry Mikheyev, Thomas Moore and Carl Throckmorton.

Two former students at Williams College are spending this year bicycling between U.S. colleges and sharing their ideas on the themes of student leadership and nonviolent alternatives. Among the topics they cover in their workshops, Dominic Kulik and David Yaskulka include civilian-based defense. To contact them, write to: The Gaudino Project, 46 Victory Court, Old Bridge, NJ 08857. Ph. 201-947-0740.

A conference on "Alternative Security and Defense" sponsored by the Disarmament Program of the New York American Friends Service Committee on May 8-9 included a panel presentation by ATS Coordinator Mel Beckman on the subject of civilian-based defense.

A number of groups in the United States have reprinted the ATS publication "DEFENDING AMERICA WITHOUT WAR" for distribution to their members. The three-page discussion guide was published by ATS in response to the movie "Amerika". It is available from ATS @ .50 for single copies/ 10 - 24 copies @ .25/ 25 or more @ .15. Reproduction is permitted and encouraged.

SWITZERLAND

A private organization called "Group for a Switzerland Without an Army" (GSOA) has successfully used Switzerland's initiative process to introduce a proposal to include the following text in the Swiss Constitution: "Switzerland does not have an army. It is forbidden for federal, provincial or community authorities as well as private persons to have armed forces or to train them. Switzerland will develop a comprehensive peace policy

which strengthens the self-determination of the people and promotes solidarity among peoples." Over 100,000 signatures were required for the referendum. The vote is expected in about four years, according to the November, 1986 issue of "Disarmament Campaigns".

CANADA

An article by Hans Sinn entitled "Transarmament: Challenges For The Peace Movement" appeared in the Spring, 1987 issue of HUMANIST IN CANADA. (The same publication carried an earlier article by Sinn, "Transarmament: Waging Conflict Without War," in its Summer of 1986 issue.) In this new article the author asks people in the peace movement to accept that it is not within their power to bring about or maintain peace. We are "...in the midst of conflict and in a state of defence." He writes "...that which is seen and described as 'the peace movement' is in fact a movement of unarmed civilians acting in their own defense. The term for it is social defence or civilian-based defence." He sees the step from 'peace movement' to 'social defense' as small but significant. He states that "...we have to drop the notion of peace for that of non-violent defence, non-violent conflict resolution and non-violent conflict waging. We have to give up the idea of disarmament in favour of transarmament."

THE NETHERLANDS

On March 14th about 300 women from the peace movement gathered to share experiences and to connect them with social defense. The national group on social defense, of Women for Peace, presented a 40 page bulletin relating to training and social defense in which fifteen women or groups describe how they work and how they connect their training with social defense. For more information, contact Lineke Schakenbos, Normapad 4, 3816 EZ Amersfoort, The Netherlands.

ITALY

In May this year the Florence-based peace research organization FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR announced the establishment of a "working group on alternative defence options for Italy". The group will consider whether a non-offensive defense strategy is possible for that country and also whether it might be possible to start there a transarmament process involving the gradual implementation of civilian-based defense. The group would like to exchange information on topics of mutual interest with peace research centres and individual researchers both in Italy and abroad. The working group can be contacted by writing c/o Forum on the Problems of Peace and War, Villa Arrivabene, Piazza Alberti, 1 50136 Firenze, Italy. Tel. 055/677681.

OMAHA PILOT PROJECT BEGINS

An experimental study group on civilian-based defense has begun to meet in Omaha. Participants have an overall understanding of the concept of CBD and are now attempting, in a limited way, to discover how feasible civilian-based defense would or would not be in their own city. No attempt is being made to write a comprehensive plan for the nonviolent defense of Omaha. Instead, participants have chosen two local systems - communications and railroads, for research and study. A research sub-group for each has been formed and will report back, periodically, to the larger group. Eventually a written report will be published which will try to address such questions as these:

* How could the use of Omaha's communications systems be made more difficult for an enemy? How could their takeover be resisted? For how long? By whom? At what levels? How could an alternative system of communication be maintained within Omaha that would be invulnerable to enemy control?

* How could the railroad system in Omaha be kept out of enemy hands? What tactics could be employed? For how long? How could railroad utilization by an enemy be slowed down?

If more individuals join the study group later additional study areas will be added, as, for example, the local airport, city government, the police department, etc.

No assumptions are being made, in the study group, as to whether or not it is likely that the U.S. would ever be invaded. Rather, it is an attempt to create a model exercise which could be carried out in most any city or community, in any country, whatever the political circumstances might be. ATS would like to determine whether study of specific possibilities for resistance and noncooperation at the community level can be empowering for people and result in more popular interest in CBD and awareness of its potential as a national defense policy. If so, the Association may wish to publish certain educational tools to facilitate such community-level study in the future.

Progress reports from the study group will be available from time to time. To be included on the mailing list, send name and address to ATS. A small donation to cover mailing costs would be welcomed.

ATS members who wish to join the pilot program by organizing similar study groups in their own communities are asked to contact Mel Beckman at 3636 Lafayette Avenue, Omaha, NE 68131, or call 402-558-2085.

INTRODUCTORY OFFER

New subscribers to Civilian-Based Defense: News & Opinion may designate a person or group of their choice to receive a free

one-year subscription. This offer expires December 31, 1987 and is limited to addresses within the United States.

NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE IN THE NEWS

Ed. Note: Our choice this time for the best story of present-day nonviolent struggle comes from Poland. It is taken from an account carried in the publication KOS, Issue No. 102, Oct. 8, 1986. The following paragraphs are excerpts.

"More than forty one years have passed since the communist takeover of Poland. To this very day, we live under the threat of military blackmail and are mired in a political impasse. Our blackmail has even been codified into the Constitution. Preserving communist power at any price has been elevated to the status of patriotic duty. Patriotism has become the property of the communists...the communist system has entangled the majority of Poles into a situation whereby expressing patriotism through positive action -- for the good of Poland or even simply in good work -- is tantamount to expressing support for the regime and its goals.

We need to find ways that all Poles, and not merely opposition or underground circles, can give creative expression to their patriotic feelings and desire to save Poland. We have to restore dignity and meaning to our everyday work...

If you want to help achieve our objectives, join our initiative to save the country called "Our Poland." All you need to start, from today on and without waiting for others, is to sign the fruits of your work, undertaken with the intention of helping Poland, with the sign NP (Nasza Polska -Our Poland). In this way, the communists cannot usurp its moral benefits, or transform your work into a sign of political support for them.

As of today, whenever you are repairing or constructing a road, press into the concrete or asphalt the sign NP. If you are building a house, a school, a hospital or a church, remember you are building it for Our Poland, and imprint the sign NP. If you are writing a book or an article, drawing a poster, making a film or a theater production with the feeling that you are making it for Our Poland, leave the sign NP on your work...

Whatever you do, if you do it for Poland and not for the Polish People's Republic, in the name of the truth that Poland belongs to Poles and not to communists, sign your work NP. Let the sign NP become the sign of our identity, the sign of our solidarity, the sign of patriotism, and the sign of excellence...

This act does not require forming organizations; it does not fall under charges of inciting public unrest, spreading false information, using emblems of illegal organizations or conspiring against the State. It is difficult and politically awkward to repress. It requires only an open commitment by those who want to save Poland..."

Also From Poland...

30 January 1980 - - Swidnik, Lublin Province. Zdzislaw Paluszynski was detained for 18 hours. During the interrogation it was suggested to him that he took part in the hanging of signs with slogan "Delegate to the Eighth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party" on stray dogs. Many dogs with that slogan were seen in Swidnik on that day.

Directors of the Association for Transarmament Studies will meet in Cambridge, Massachusetts Oct. 16-18.

LETTERS

University of Wollongong
Australia
March 19, 1987

Civilian-based defence, social defence, nonviolent defence...what do they mean? Or rather, what should they mean? The definitions you are proposing in the March issue seem to me to confuse the issue.

As I have interpreted the literature, there have been numerous terms all used to refer to the use of nonviolent methods as a method of defence against military aggression. These include (in alphabetical order) civilian-based defence, civilian defence, nonmilitary defence, nonviolent defence and social defence. Social defence is the common term in Europe while civilian-based defence is preferred by Gene Sharp and ATS.

Each of these expressions has advantages and disadvantages. "Civilian defence" sounds too much like civil defence. "Civilian-based defence" is cumbersome, and even with its length does not immediately imply the use of nonviolent means. "Nonmilitary defence" is too vague, and is negative in construction. "Nonviolent defence" is the most explicit, but it is also negative and brings in the loaded word "violence". "Social defence" is concise and points to defence of the social fabric; it has the disadvantage (or advantage) of being meaningless to most people on first hearing. At the moment I prefer "social defense".

A common problem is what to call the use of nonviolent action for social struggle, for example against sexism or racism. I prefer "social action" or "social struggle"; this often proceeds using the methods of "nonviolent action". Social defence then is a form of social struggle or social action, and is one application of the methods of nonviolent action. Some people I know like to call feminist or environmental campaigns "social defence", whereas I would reserve this for nonviolent resistance as an alternative to military defence. But we can't expect everyone to adhere to a fixed terminology, and

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admittedly "social defence" is more readily extended to a variety of areas than some of the other terms.

Another problem is that all the terms use "defence", which suggests waiting around for any aggressor to arrive before being able to do anything. But it is also possible to use nonviolent action in an "offensive" way to challenge potential aggressors. This might include liaison with opposition groups in potential aggressor countries, radio broadcasts, and nonviolent intervention (like the International Peace Brigades). What do we call this? I have used the term "social attack". It is not ideal, but at least it challenges the image of passiveness often associated with terms using "defense".

Perhaps you can see why I dislike your plan to use "social defence" to refer to social struggles aside from nonviolent alternatives to military defence. "Social defence", being defence of the social fabric, should certainly apply to nonviolent alternatives to military defence, if not also to other applications of nonviolent action.

I must also object to your assumption that civilian-based defense (or what I call social defence) is inevitably national defense. That seems to me to buy into the present world configuration of nation-states, which itself is based on territorially-based monopolies over the use of violence. If and when nonviolent methods begin to supersede war, it may no longer be states that are being defended. I for one think that it will not be states for which most people will be risking their lives in nonviolent resistance.

BRIAN MARTIN

CBD AND THE MILITARY

When exposed to the idea of civilian-based defense, military personnel and veterans have expressed interest and a desire to learn more. They discover that the idea of using nonviolent methods strategically can fit easily into the way they have been trained to think. Stimulated by these concepts they often see that nonviolent means could be effective in situations where they perceive military force to have decreasing utility. The proposal by the German military officer, Wilhelm Nolte (summarized elsewhere in this issue) should serve as evidence that some military people can and do have an interest. We may not always agree with their concepts of how CBD should be integrated with the overall defense of a society but at least dialogue can begin when they have considered the idea. The MEMO TO MILITARY PERSONNEL AND VETERANS GROUPS contained in this issue may be useful to those who would like to make contact.

BOOK REVIEW

RESISTANCE, POLITICS, AND THE AMERICAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, 1765-1775, Walter Conser et.al., eds., Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1986.

Review by Liane Ellison Norman

My colleague, Angele Ellis, and I were once asked to speak to several classes at a large high school. A clean, modern, sunny building, it quickly came to seem a species of prison for young people: every move of every student was monitored; even to go to the bathroom required a signature and taking a little block of wood appropriately labelled. We were told that the principal had said that two students had "gotten loose" the week before.

The students had read John Hershey's *Hiroshima* and our job was to talk about what could be done to prevent nuclear war. We wanted to suggest that bad, tyrannical policies can be resisted. "We can't do anything," the students said dully. What policies in your school, we asked, would you like to change? The students came alive: their resentments were both deep and vivid. The teachers had a place to smoke and a soft-drink machine: students did not: there was nothing they could do, however, because the principal and the school board always overruled them. They were especially angry and insulted that while they wanted to name the spring prom "Two Tickets to Paradise," the administration insisted it be known as "Spring Prom." They were furious and helpless and nuclear war seemed the least of their worries.

We tried some what ifs. What if, we suggested, they drew up a petition? What if they went to the school board? They'd lose, they said. What if they walked out? They'd get detention, they said. What if the teacher gave an unfair assignment and they refused, as a body, to do it? They'd all fail, they said. Would the teacher be able to fail a whole class? Hesistantly, they realized that there are constraints on teachers: the principal might question 30 failing grades: parents might complain.

One student remembered a few years earlier. The administration had made a rule against "displays of affection" in the halls and the students had been so angry, they'd sat in in the auditorium. And then what happened? we asked. Well, the ringleader had been "dragged off to detention" and everyone else, intimidated, had left. What if they'd stayed? we asked. They'd all get detention, several said.

One girl, who had been quiet till then, suddenly and repeatedly insisted, "They couldn't put everyone in detention, not everyone." and it became clear. The effectiveness of "dragging" the ringleader off to detention lay in its ability to intimidate, and the other students could refuse to be intimidated.

We don't know whether the attempts we made to

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link possible resistance in the jail-like school with resistance to public policy got through, but we thought it important that there was, in the history of these students, an example they might remember and think about. the lessons they were taught in their academic captivity were of submission, obedience, fear and hopelessness. They were being prepared to be obedient soldiers, obedient taxpayers and the obedient reproducers of soldiers and taxpayers.

The essays collected in *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* serve the same function for us as the student sit-in did for the class. They tell a story, almost entirely unknown, of the first ten years of the American Revolution, conducted without violence but with success. This is an incomplete review (I have only read the first essay, for these are meaty pieces) of an extraordinary story of coordinated and effective campaigns to render the colonies free of unjust taxes and other repressive measures.

"[E]ach of the major resistance campaigns contained not only a further development of the ideas of freedom and independence but also a lively debate about how these liberties should be sought and defended," write the authors. By the time the shooting war began, independence had virtually been achieved, and, in fact, had the same measures been continued in the face of British violence, recognition of independence might have come earlier than it did.

"The gradual transformation of British North America from colonies to an independent state involved five factors," writes Walter Conser. They were: 1) shared political consciousness (the development of the sense of common, as opposed to isolated, grievance), 2) the growth of institutions and organizations to express that grievance and to press for change, 3) open resistance, 4) noncooperation and 5) the establishment of parallel and independent government. "The real work of resistance," writes Conser, "was often carried on in villages and towns, in the country as well as the city, by forgotten patriots. These now nameless men and women were the people who spun, wove, and wore homespun cloth, who united in the boycott of British goods and who encouraged neighbors to join them and stand firm. Many came together in crowd actions and mass meetings to protest and served on, or supported, local resistance committees. They refused to obey the statutes and officers of the British Crown, which so short a time before had been the law of the land. It was these various acts of resistance and noncooperation that struck most openly at the authority of the Crown."

The details of this little-known history are fascinating. Even more fascinating, I think is that it is little-known. By no means do these events match the widely-held notions that peace is dull or that power must express itself through violence. It is an unknown history, I imagine, because history is largely written to confirm the same conception of power as Angele and I saw expressed in the rural high school.

The students did not know they had any power. They never encountered that part of their own history that told of power exercised by people over 300 years earlier who were much like themselves against a great imperial government. Frustrated and foiled because they could not even name their own prom, they had no idea how to affect government policies.

But once they remembered a real event only a few years in their own past, they could see how they might move to change their school. If they were exposed to equally real events in their more distant history that told of social struggle and change, they might know better how to go about ending the threat of nuclear war. They might even know how to go about defending themselves without reliance on such threats.

NEW BOOK

STATE AND OPPOSITION IN MILITARY BRAZIL, by Maria Helena Moreira Alves. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1985. 352 pp.

This recent book by Maria Alves recounts the little-known but very significant history and growth of the opposition movements which arose in Brazil after the military takeover in 1964. From the dustjacket: Ms. Alves "includes extensive discussion and documentation of the strikes since 1978" and she "provides accounts of the rallies, community mobilizations, resistance activities, and day-to-day struggles that have characterized Brazilian politics since 1964."

CBD IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

The Association for Transarmament Studies is in the process of gathering information from members who teach in universities as to the amount of attention currently being given to the idea of civilian-based defense in the schools. We are especially interested in hearing about instances in which CBD is studied and discussed as an alternative option for defense within existing courses or special offerings on campus. Additionally, we would like to know the reactions of students to these discussions and the kinds of independent research or study they do in regard to CBD. Readers are invited to contribute information they might have about any of the above by writing to ATS, 3636 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE 68131. Results of this survey will be summarized in a future issue of this publication.



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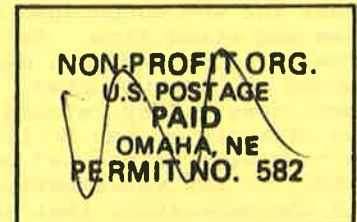
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MEMO TO MILITARY PERSONNEL AND VETERANS GROUPS

SUBJECT: Civilian-Based Defense.

The risk of future catastrophe hangs like a cloud over national defense. Recognition of that risk has stimulated both continuing arms control talks and discussion of possibilities for more far-reaching change. Some now ask whether an adequate substitute for military defense might be possible. Proponents of civilian-based defense suggest that a society, with its citizens and institutions, might build up a capacity to deter and defend in a new way - without violence or the threat to use it. In fact, nonviolent sanctions in conflict and defense is the on-going research area for a program instituted several years ago at Harvard's center for International Affairs. Roman Catholic and Methodist bishops have also urged further consideration of this defense concept.

We hope military personnel and those who have in the past served in the armed forces will take part in these discussions. Proponents of civilian-based defense, too, are concerned about security and so they welcome the contributions of citizens who have had military experience. A shared concern for security in this changed world makes a dialogue both possible and necessary.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY*

NATIONAL SECURITY THROUGH CIVILIAN-BASED DEFENSE, by Gene Sharp. Paper, 96 pp. Association for Transarmament Studies, Omaha, 1985. \$4.95

MAKING EUROPE UNCONQUERABLE: THE POTENTIAL OF CIVILIAN-BASED DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE, by Gene Sharp. Paper, 252 pp. Ballinger Publ. Co., Cambridge, 1985. \$14.95

DEFENSE WITHOUT THE BOMB - The Report of the Alternative Defense Commission (Britain). Paper, 311 pp. Taylor & Francis, Inc., Philadelphia, 1983. \$9.90 (Especially Chapter 7.) "Strategies Against Occupation: Defense by Civil Resistance".

CIVILIAN-BASED DEFENSE: NEWS & OPINION, quarterly ten-page publication of the Association for Transarmament Studies. \$5.00 per year. \$7.50 outside U.S.

*These resources may be ordered from the **Association for Transarmament Studies**, 3636 Lafayette Ave, Omaha, NE 68131.

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