

# Civilian-Based Defense: News & Opinion

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## IN THIS ISSUE

CBD and the Countries of Latin America.....	Cover
Letters to the Editor .....	2
Brazil: Land for the Poor?.....	5
News & Announcements .....	5
Program on Nonviolent Sanctions.....	6
Readers' Survey.....	6
Civilian-Based Defense Project Underway in Nicaragua.....	7
Book Reviews.....	8
Alternatives to Military Defense.....	9

## CIVILIAN-BASED DEFENSE PROJECT UNDERWAY IN NICARAGUA

See page 7

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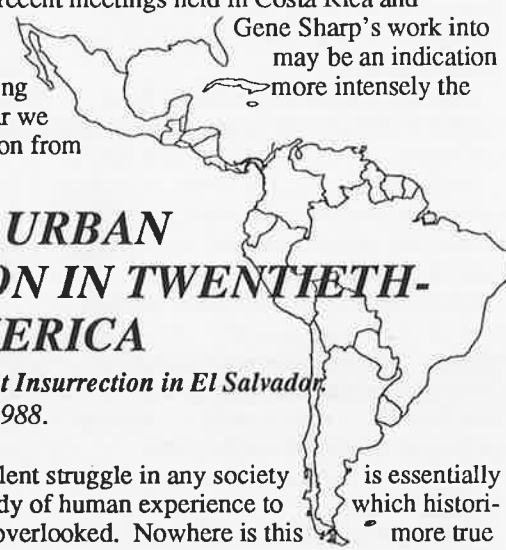
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## CBD AND THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA

In this issue we look to a part of the world where many nonviolent forms of struggle have been used by the people but the idea of civilian-based defense has not been discussed widely as it has been in Western Europe (cf the May, 1988 issue of *Civilian-Based Defense: News & Opinion*). However, the recent meetings held in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and the translation of some of Spanish (cf articles elsewhere in this issue) that Latin America, too, will soon be studying possible relevance of CBD. In the next year we hope to include much more news and opinion from Latin America.



Gene Sharp's work into may be an indication more intensely the

## THE TRADITION OF URBAN NONVIOLENT ACTION IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY LATIN AMERICA

By Patricia Parkman, Author of *Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1988.

The reconstruction of the history of nonviolent struggle in any society is essentially the recovery of hidden history — a vast body of human experience to which historians have not given a name and often have overlooked. Nowhere is this more true than in Latin America, where both historians and contemporary journalists have focussed on the violence in political life: riots, coups, guerrillas, and death squads. Yet in my own study of Latin American history I have come across much evidence of a characteristically Latin American tradition of political struggle that relies fundamentally on nonviolent forms of power.

This has been a largely serendipitous process. I make no claim to having a complete or balanced view of the role of nonviolent struggle in Latin American history, even where my research has been concentrated, i.e., events in cities since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This essay is offered as a preliminary overview of one small part of a rich history about which we have much to learn.

The tradition of nonviolent struggle in Latin America is not easy to delineate because there, as in many other places, it has most often been waged without benefit of theory or ideology. Like Moliere's M. Jourdain, who was astonished to learn that he had "been talking prose for the last forty years and...never known it," people have for generations engaged in nonviolent struggle without calling it that. In view of this, it is not surprising to find that peaceful demonstrations have frequently turned violent under pressure, and that nonviolent action has been deliberately combined with violent methods in some conflicts.

Nevertheless, Spanish speakers have a term for specifically peaceful direct action: *brazos caidos* (literally, fallen arms; arms hanging down at one's sides), as in *huelga* (strike) *de brazos caidos*. In many of the cases mentioned hereafter, organizers explicitly defined the action as peaceful and called upon participants to avoid violence. The reasons for this were pragmatic — to attract maximum support, to minimize repression, and to throw the responsibility for any violence that did occur on the opponent. But these calls for nonviolence also appealed to values: respect for the law, dignity, self-respect, calm, and serenity. The organizers of these actions understood the political importance of legitimacy, and they knew that all power is not tangible.

One of the most prominent elements of the Latin American tradition of nonviolent struggle is the strike. North Americans know it best as a weapon used by workers to win

(continued on page 2)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Basel, Switzerland August 5, 1988

With interest I have read your newsletter about Civilian- Based Defense (May issue). Of course one looks quickly to see what is written about one's own country, and concerning that, I would like to make some remarks.

It is not completely true that almost no research has been done on this subject in Switzerland. It is true that this research is not supported financially by the government, but a book written by Ruedi Epple, *Soziale Verteidigung*, has been a good foundation for the discussion of civilian-based defense.

Civilian defense articles have been written at the time of the referendum concerning the introduction of a civil service in Switzerland (voted in 1984), as well as earlier when actions were organized during the discussion about the Kaiseraugst nuclear station (in the seventies).

Alternative defense concepts have always had a big role here in the history of peace organizations and movements. One could notice this reading the *Handbuch Frieden Schweiz*, a historical and actual survey about the peace movement in Switzerland, edited in 1986 by our institute.

The initiative for the abolition of the Swiss Army has given a new impetus to the discussion of alternatives. The initiators of this discussion have already written a book, *Unterwegs zu einer Schweiz ohne Armee*. (1987)

There would be more to write, but my intention is only to give another view in addition to the one given by my French-speaking colleague, without of course contradicting what he stated. There is always the difficulty of languages in our country.

- Stella Jegher,  
*Forum für praxisbezogene,  
Friedensforschung Postfach CH-4021  
Basel, Switzerland.*

Guadalajara, Mexico September, 1988

I think that in many of the Latin American countries the biggest problem currently is not aggression from the outside, although we have had the recent experience of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands and the continued pressures on Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, etc. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the

## LATIN AMERICA (continued from page 2)

concessions from their employers, but European theorists as far back as the mid-nineteenth century also envisioned the possibilities of a simultaneous cessation of work, or general strike, as a political weapon to put pressure on the power structure of a society for broad economic and political reforms, and even as a revolutionary instrument to bring the whole structure to an end. All of these ideas, as well as the experience of organizing strikes, came to Latin America with immigrants from Europe. These immigrants formed most of the urban working classes of Argentina and Uruguay in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and they had an important influence in a number of other countries as well. They started the first modern labor unions in Latin America, and, in some countries, anarchist circles and socialist parties.

The first recorded strike in Latin America was carried out by the typographers' union of Buenos Aires in 1878. By the end of the century there were strikes in Uruguay, Chile and Cuba. The first two decades of the twentieth century saw the rapid spread of labor organization and the use of the strike throughout Latin America.

The first general strike evolved out of a boatmen's strike in Chile in 1890, when the boatmen of Iquique demanded their wages in silver and boatmen all over the province took up the same demand.<sup>(1)</sup> Since then, citywide and national labor federations throughout Latin America have called general strikes for a variety of purposes: to support the demands of member unions, to protest repression of striking workers, anti-worker legislation, and the cost of living, and to win the eight-hour day.

Another important development in the same period was the student strike. This represents a different form of power, because, while it might also be viewed as a consumer boycott, the refusal of students to attend classes has no economic impact at all. It is a symbolic protest. Nevertheless, it is a powerful weapon in countries where students are an elite, recognized as the nation's leaders in training.

The earliest student strike I have found recorded in Latin America occurred at the National University of El Salvador in 1890, when students sought the dismissal of a professor.<sup>(2)</sup> This was a prelude to a pattern of student combat with the government of El Salvador in which a variety of nonviolent weapons came into play. In 1895 the editors of a student newspaper were expelled for criticizing the government, and the other students not only vowed not to return to classes until the editors were reinstated, they also hung a sign reading, "For Rent - Unfurnished" on the door of the university building and then proceeded to organize "The Free University of El Salvador." The Salvadoran historian who recorded this event observed apologetically that the free university lasted *only* five months for lack of funds!<sup>(3)</sup>

The movement that became a model and inspiration for university students all over Latin America began at the University of Argentina at Cordoba in 1918. The students demanded and eventually won a series of reforms that gave students and alumnae a voice in the government of the university, fostered academic freedom, and brought the university into a closer relationship with the larger society. In the course of a seven-month struggle the Cordoba students boycotted classes, demonstrated in the streets, and finally occupied the university premises. They were able to mobilize widespread support, which included sympathy strikes in four other universities and labor participation in the demonstrations.

The political potential of student action was dramatically demonstrated in Haiti in 1929, when a student strike sparked a popular movement against the United States occupation that had been in force since 1915. Demonstrations spread over the country, and inevitably, a little over a month after the students walked out, a group of marines armed with guns clashed with demonstrators armed with sticks, stones, and machetes at the town of Les Cayes. The demonstrators sustained all the major casualties, and the Les Cayes massacre became a major embarrassment to the United States. President Hoover promptly dispatched an investigating commission whose charge was to investigate "when and how we are to withdraw from Haiti." At that point, according to one history of the occupation, "American policy was to avoid further popular demonstrations at all costs and to get out of Haiti as quickly as could be done in an orderly fashion."<sup>(4)</sup> The marines did leave in 1934.

The mushrooming of student activism was only part of a general ferment throughout Latin America in the years between World War I and the Great Depression. A variety of actors invented new forms of nonviolent action. Rent strikes erupted in Panama in 1925 and 1932.<sup>(5)</sup> Salvadoran students led a bus boycott in 1929, and in 1930 a consumer boycott of electric power in a number of Salvadoran cities compelled fifty companies to lower their rates.

(continued on page 3)

(continued on page 3)

**LATIN AMERICA** (continued from page 2)

Women's actions made news in El Salvador in 1922. Market vendors demonstrated against currency changes that made problems for them. The banks supported them, and the finance minister resigned.<sup>(6)</sup> The women's suffrage movement founded in that year allied itself with a presidential candidate who came out for giving women the right to vote and organized a march in support of his candidacy. After soldiers fired on the marchers, killing several, women carried out what has become another traditional form of protest in Latin America: walking silently through the capital in mourning behind the coffins of the victims.<sup>(7)</sup>

This was also the period in which nonviolent action began to play a dramatic role at the level of national politics.

In Guatemala in 1920 a group of opposition politicians decided it was time to open up the political system by getting rid of President Manuel Estrada Cabrera, a classic Latin American dictator who had been in office for 22 years. Their strategy was to build public pressure on the congress, which had been going along with Estrada Cabrera all those years, to remove the president legally. Although opposition leaders made contact with military officers, they planned to call on military force only if Estrada Cabrera refused to accept the decision of the congress - to put him in the position of being the rebel.<sup>(8)</sup>

So they proceeded to act as if the political rights guaranteed by the Guatemalan constitution were really in force. They announced the formation of a political party, called the *Partido Unionista* because the idea of Central American unity was widely discussed at the time and enjoyed a great deal of legitimacy. The party opened a headquarters, in which it held bigger and bigger public meetings. It put out a newspaper, as did its affiliated labor and student organizations.

Estrada Cabrera was taken by surprise. According to one account, the dictator

*did not know what to do in those first days when a suitable quick decision by him could still have killed the bud of liberty. When assassination attempts and revolutions were used against him, he could imprison, punish, and kill those who violated the law[;] the law was on his side. But now! How to repress a party that forbade its members to carry arms, which proclaimed its respect for the law and which in all of its acts was within the law...What could be done against an idea, invisible in a brain? What could be done against a feeling hidden in the depths of a heart? What could be done against a will locked in the depth of a being?<sup>(9)</sup>*

He tried petty intimidation and provocation, which only brought more public sympathy for the Unionists.

Meanwhile, the party began to lobby the congress, and succeeded in getting it to pass an innocuous resolution in favor of Central American union. It then seized the opportunity to show its strength by holding a parade of some thirty thousand people in support of the congress. When a police attack on the peaceful marchers killed one, again, it won more support for the party.

Less than a month later the congress did depose Estrada Cabrera on the ground that he was insane and named a successor. The former president attempted to resist, the armed forces split, and Estrada Cabrera's forces were defeated in about a week of fighting. But the nonviolent campaign of the Unionist Party foreshadowed things to come.

In 1931 Chilean dictator Carlos Ibanez del Campo confronted a spontaneously snowballing movement to unseat him. In what was to become a typical pattern, the university students started it by going on strike and occupying the National University building. But then something new happened. A group of professional men began to organize a type of action for which I have borrowed the term "civic strike," a collective suspension of normal activities in which people of diverse social classes unite for a common political objective. The first group to stop working was the medical profession. Lawyers, dentists, and pharmacists quickly followed suit. White collar workers — teachers and bank employees — walked out, and in one city all the municipal officials resigned. The day some blue collar workers announced their intention to join the strike Ibanez decided to resign.

Another civic strike brought down the notorious Cuban dictator, Gerardo Machado, in 1933. Variants on this model played a major role in an unsuccessful epic struggle against the military rule that was imposed on Cuba in the wake of Machado's fall.

The end of the World War II era saw another rash of civic strikes against entrenched dictators, beginning with those that brought down Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez of El Salvador and Jorge Ubico of Guatemala in 1944. In the same year unsuccessful attempts

(continued on page 4)

**HELP WANTED**

As *Civilian-Based Defense: News & Opinion* becomes more and more an international publication there is a growing need for translations of non-English news items and articles. If you are able to translate accurately from some other language to English we invite you to volunteer as one of our translators. Let us know the language(s) in which you are skilled and we will send material to be translated as need arises.

**LETTERS** (continued from page 2)

most important source of oppression, "occupation" and violence is internal. This is certainly true in Mexico, obvious in Chile and Paraguay, perhaps also in Colombia and Panama.

I think there are many historical and cultural roots for this situation. CBD, therefore, needs to be adapted to the particular needs of these countries where internal oppression, either by the governments themselves, or by important sectors of the population, keep large numbers of people in bondage. The Mexican experience is showing that the content and form of "civil disobedience" and "nonviolent resistance" are quite different from US interpretations of the same concepts.

I think that one of the most useful ways in which any third party can help introduce an idea such as CBD is to urge the people to study their own history and find local examples of nonviolent actions that were successful. Among the most negative ways of proceeding are those that characterize the "ugly American" who thinks s/he knows just what has to be done and is always "right"! In Mexico, and I am sure in the other countries also, there are local groups that are working for change in a nonviolent way. It would seem that getting in touch with them and offering to support their efforts would be a useful thing to do. For example, what kind of support could you offer CIRIMEX in its efforts to disseminate existing material and create educational materials in Spanish on nonviolent action/CBD?

- *Caridad Inda,*  
CIRIMEX, Fernando De Alba 659 Col.  
Chapalita, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

**LETTERS**

(continued from page 3)

Bothel Park, PA September 9, 1988

Prior to my first visit to Central America in 1982, I was cautioned by a State Department official to remember that Central Americans were "inherently violent" people. This was supposed to be the essential knowledge I needed to truly understand what was going on in the region.

It was, indeed, true that I encountered violence of a kind and quality that could be described as "demonic". This was true especially in El Salvador where in 1982, the evidence of death squad activity was still quite visible. The ferocious level of atrocity seen in the pictures at the Archdiocesan office was a silent witness to the violent quality of daily reality.

This, combined with the violence of the counter-revolutionary forces in Nicaragua, the increasing militarization of Honduras and the genocidal violence of Guatemala made the whole issue of civilian-based defense seemingly irrelevant in this context. Even the apostle of nonviolence, Msgr. Oscar Romero, finally allowed for the use of violence "in defense of the innocent" in the last days before his own assassination.

A closer examination, however, reveals some interesting aspects of regional political reality. Costa Rica, alone in Latin America, has survived since its 1948 revolution without a standing army. Admittedly, it has not had a "CBD" in the classic sense. Its National Police force has increased in size and firepower over the last six years. Nevertheless, the country has resisted constant pressure from the U.S. Administration to remilitarize. Even in the worst years of the crisis, Costa Rica used diplomacy as its primary defense against Nicaraguan "threats," negotiating several creative agreements, especially with regards to border conflicts.

In many respects, it has been this historic Costa Rican experience that provided the environment which could inspire Oscar Arias and the Esquipulas II accords of August 1987. The ways in which citizens in nearly all countries seized on the accords in powerful and creative ways — far beyond their governments' expectations — not only gives the lie to the "inherently violent" label but also points to an environment in which CBD could grow. Of course, for this to happen would require the stability

(continued on page 5)

**LATIN AMERICA** (continued from page 3)

were made to unseat the dictators of Nicaragua and Honduras by means of civic strikes. Then, in 1946, another civic strike succeeded in dislodging president Elie Lescot of Haiti.

The late fifties and early sixties brought what Tad Szulc of the *New York Times* optimistically called "the twilight of the tyrants."<sup>(10)</sup> Two notorious ones, Gustavo Rojas Pinilla of Colombia and Paul Magloire of Haiti left office in the face of civic strikes. Civic strikes also played supporting roles in the predominantly military insurrections against the dictators of Venezuela and Cuba. After the assassination of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, popular demonstrations and a civic strike played a major role in ousting his relatives and the titular president who continued in office after Trujillo's death.<sup>(11)</sup>

Nonviolent action has played a defensive, as well as offensive, role in Latin American politics. One of the most famous cases occurred in 1945, when demonstrating Argentine workers foiled the attempt of rival officers to remove Vice President Juan Peron. In 1956, a business-labor-peasant alliance, which had broken the landowning oligarchy's control of the Brazilian city of Recife, responded to persecution from the landlord-dominated state government by shutting down the state's economy.<sup>(12)</sup> When Bolivian army officers attempted a coup in 1979, a week-long general strike compelled them to back down and accept a new compromise civilian president.

Since the early 1970s, nonviolent struggle has mushroomed throughout Latin America, probably involving more people than ever before. It still comes into play against dictatorship, as we have seen in the long struggle to end military rule in Brazil, the ouster of the Bolivian military regime in 1982, the end of the Duvalier dynasty of Haiti in 1986, the continuing campaign for a return to democracy in Chile, and the recent, so far unsuccessful, effort to topple General Noriega of Panama. Growing, often persecuted, labor organizations continue to strike and to demonstrate. But new issues, new protagonists, and new models of organization and action have come to the fore.

The violent repression of dissidents with wholesale imprisonment, torture, assassination, and disappearance in one country after another has given rise to courageous and resourceful movements to defend human rights. Both the urban and the rural poor have organized to fight for their own interests, and indigenous people are doing likewise. The Catholic Church has become a champion of the underprivileged, and its base communities in some countries have served as seedbeds for the development of grassroots leaders. Women, who played important supporting roles in several of the civic strikes mentioned earlier, have emerged as leaders and protagonists in their own right.

It remains to be seen whether these new forces will prevail against the multiple oppressions that have deep roots in Latin American society and are often reinforced by the power of the United States, but they are already writing dramatic chapters in the history of nonviolent struggle.

**NOTES**

1. Victor Alba, *Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 247.
2. Patricia Parkman, *Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador: The Fall of Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), pp. 11-12.
3. Manuel Vidal, *Nociones de historia de Centro America (especial para El Salvador)*, 8th ed. (San Salvador: Ministerio de Educacion, Direccion General de Publicaciones, 1969), p. 421.
4. Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971), p. 206.
5. *Current History*, vol. 22 (December, 1925), pp. 412-13; vol. 38 (October, 1932), p. 88.
6. Parkman, *Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador*, p. 16.
7. "Feminismo Salvadoreno," *La Prensa Grafica* (San Salvador), *Revista Dominical*, September 5, 1976, p. 5.
8. This account is drawn from Rafael Arevalo Martinez, *Ecce Pericles!*, 2nd ed. (San Jose, Costa Rica: EDUCA, 1971). For a brief account in English, see Dana G. Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 457-465.
9. Arevalo Martinez, *Ecce Pericles!*, pp. 115-16.
10. Tad Szulc, *The Twilight of the Tyrants* (New York: Holt, 1959).
11. For a comparative study of the civic strikes in Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, see Patricia Parkman, "Insurrection Without Arms: The General Strike in El Salvador, 1944" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1980), pp. 5-42. The civic strike in El Salvador is reconstructed in detail in Parkman, *Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador*, pp. 115-16.
12. Clodomir Moraes, "Peasant Leagues in Brazil," Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Agrarian Problems and Peasant Movements in Latin America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1970), pp. 475-77.

## BRAZIL - LAND FOR THE POOR?

By Mev Puleo

*Ed. Note: Mev Puleo is a graduate student in Theology at Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. She observed conditions in Brazil during the summer of 1987 as an intern in a program sponsored by Project Abraco of the Resource Center for Nonviolence, Santa Cruz, California, and by SERPAJ/Brazil. We include her reflections in this issue to convey some sense of the plight of the poor in Latin America.*

Unjust land distribution, ownership, and use is at the heart of Brazil's growing misery. Still, when I first heard of the grassroots movements' strategy of "invading" and "occupying" land, I found the method morally questionable. (The objective is to stay on the land, usually farming it, long enough to gain legal rights, while also pressuring the government to expropriate the land at a just price.) I questioned this because I've grown up believing in the right to private property.

But one must also realize that many large landowners acquired titles to their land illegally. Moreover, in a country where over 1000 children die each day from lack of adequate food, 83% of the fertile land is not farmed but held for re-sale at a profit. Also, although small farmers have certain legal rights to crops and land after they've worked it for a certain period of time, hundreds of people - farmers, union leaders, church workers and lawyers - have been murdered for trying to make people aware of those rights.

Thus, since the long-promised land reform is not being handed down from above, it is being CLAIMED from below.

The morality and justice of the people's struggle really dawned on me during my first bus ride through Brazil. I saw endless stretches of land - unused, unpopulated and fenced in. But on the meager patch of land between the barbed wire fences and the highway, I saw impoverished families living in mud huts, tending little plots of corn and manioc, while their children stumbled around with swollen stomachs and glassy stares. A shocking, unforgettable image of injustice and suffering! Barbed wire fences mean early death for so many of God's precious children.

Why and how does one live nonviolently in the clutches of violence? Most of the people I've met are engaged in nonviolent struggle because of their simple yet profound realization that violence breeds violence. The people are so tired of violence and so hungry for peace that they sincerely want to use weapons of peace to fight for justice.

## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MEXICO

Caridad Inda reports that about 5000 copies of a Spanish summary/translation of Gene Sharp's three-volume work, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, have been sold. The publication, *La Lucha Noviolenta - Criterios y Tecnicas*, by Jaime Gonzalez Bernal, is in its third printing. A Spanish publisher is still being sought for Gene Sharp's *Defense By Societal Power*. Caridad also stated that the opposition political party - Partido Accion Nacional (P.A.N.) - has been sponsoring workshops on civil resistance. These workshops have been attended by some 50,000 people and they have continued even after the election. Caridad also belongs to a team developing some non-political materials on nonviolence. The materials have a religious base and are being used in test workshops. Caridad can be reached at CIRIMEX (Centro Internacional De Recursos), Fernando de Alba 659 Col. Chapalita, COD Post. 4500, Tel. 21 48 78, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

### FRANCE

A 112 page dictionary explaining 68 terms relating to nonviolence (*Lexique de la Non-violence*), has been published by *Alternatives Non Violentes*. The author, Jean-Marie Muller, has included material on "defense civile non-violente," "dissuasion civile," and "transarmement." The book can be obtained for 38 FF, plus le port (7,40 F), from: Secretariat national du MAN, 20 rue du Devidet, 45200 Montargis. Muller is a founding member of Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-Violente (MAN) and is associated with the Institut de Recherche sur la Resolution Non-violente des Conflits (B.P. 19, 94121 Fontenay-sous-Bois, France.) *Alternatives Non Violentes* has, as one of its purposes, to inform its readers about research on non-military dissuasion and defense.

## LETTERS

(continued from page 4)

that would result from peace. But Esquipulas II's breakthrough was the idea that peace is the way to peace. Within its provisions is the basic principle that security can only ultimately be preserved in a demilitarized, democratic situation with economic justice and an organized, involved citizenry. The idea of CBD may not be so far-fetched after all.

Certainly there is a tradition of violence in the region. But there is another popular tradition deeply embedded in this culture. In 1986, Father Miguel D'Escoto led his "Viacrucis" — "evangelical insurrection" across Nicaragua. It struck a deep chord even among political opponents. Certainly this form of nonviolent resistance to U.S. policy was beyond all pre-conceived notions of Nicaragua and a different form of "defense." It was but one more sign of what could eventually become a rational, perhaps necessary policy for what has been a troubled region.

- Rev. Robert L. Brashear,  
Executive Director,  
South Hills Interfaith Ministries,  
Pittsburgh, PA.

## CBD AND YOUTH

If you are a teacher, parent, or other individual involved in the education of children and youth, we invite you to help the Civilian-Based Defense Association develop materials which can be used in classrooms and homes to communicate the idea of civilian-based defense to young people. Send us your ideas, visual aids, etc., and we will print them in a future issue of this newsletter.

### SPECIAL OFFER: PAST ISSUES OF NEWSLETTER

A complete set of all back issues of Civilian-Based Defense: News & Opinion (since 1982) for \$10.00, postage paid. (\$12.00 outside the U.S.) Write to: Civilian-Based Defense Association, Box 31616, Omaha, NE 68131, U.S.A.

## READERS' SURVEY

Do you agree with any of the following three statements about Latin America and the idea of civilian-based defense? Why or why not? We invite your comments in "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR."

1. In Latin America the idea of civilian-based defense is irrelevant at this time. The real problems faced by Latin Americans are poverty, domestic oppression, and foreign exploitation - not aggression from abroad. Discussion of civilian-based defense could only distract people from finding solutions to their real problems.
2. In Latin America civilian-based defense should be discussed as a future option for national defense, but there is really no connection between today's nonviolent struggles for liberation and the future defense policies of Latin American nations.
3. Discussion of future civilian-based national defense should be included now in planning for nonviolent struggle in Latin America because victories for justice which are gained by nonviolent action can best be safeguarded under national defense policies not dependent on military strength.



## PROGRAM ON NON-VIOLENT SANCTIONS – FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED AT HARVARD

The Program on Nonviolent Sanctions in Conflict and Defense was established "to study the nature and potential of nonviolent struggle, and to learn how nonviolent sanctions may provide effective substitutes for violent ones in resolving the grave problems of dictatorship, war, genocide, and oppression." (From an invitation to a reception marking the fifth anniversary of the Program, which is located in the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. The mailing address is 1737 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: 617-495-5580.)

## FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

At a congress held in Minden, June 17-19, 1988, over 1100 people came together to discuss ways of working towards a social defense program. The gathering, entitled "Wege zur Sozialen Verteidigung," was the first of its kind, at least in Europe, and was sponsored and presented by a broad variety of movements and groups working for social change. According to a commentary by Christine Schweitzer in the September, 1988 issue of *Graswurzel Revolution*, the diversity of groups represented prevented a consensus on solutions. Different, even contradictory answers were offered to questions like: What is to be defended, and against whom? Who is to defend? Is the social defense program to be imposed from above (by the Red-Green coalition) or introduced from below (grassroots movement)? What steps would have to be taken first for a transition? A discussion between representatives of the four main federal parties ended in heated arguments and fierce opposition. *Ed. Note:* More information about this large gathering, and commentary on it, would be useful. We will be happy to include additional material in future issues.

## AUSTRALIA

A pamphlet entitled "Resist Repressive Regimes" has been published by "Schweik Action Wollongong" (P.O. Box 492, Wollongong East NSW 2520, Australia). Included are some suggestions as to how people in one country can help say "NO" to repression and military coups in another country.

## CHILE

In April 1988 a workshop on "Disarmament and Democracy" was organized by OMIDES (Women's Organization for Latin American Disarmament, Unity and Development). One of the topics discussed was alternative security systems. OMIDES can be contacted at: Casilla 1914, C. Central, Santiago, Chile. Ph. (562) - 335531.

## CANADA

A thirty-panel travelling (within Quebec) photo exhibit on civilian-based defense has been produced by the Nonviolent Civilian-Based Defence Committee of the Centre de ressources sur la non-violence (5770 Cote des Neiges, Montreal, Quebec, H3S 1Y9, Canada. Ph. [514] 340-9209). Financial assistance was received for the project from the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security.

## UNITED STATES

The Center for Common Security (P.O. Box 275), 35 Spring St., Williamstown, MA 01267. Ph. 413-458-2159) is offering participatory workshops which include material on civilian-based defense – in California (February and March), in the Mid-west (March and April), and in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region (throughout the year).

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*"I come from a continent that lives between anguish and hope. For this continent where I live, the choice of the evangelical power of nonviolence presents itself, I am convinced, as a challenge that opens up new and radical perspectives."*

- Adolfo Perez Esquivel, acceptance speech on the occasion of the presentation of the Nobel Prize for peace in 1980

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## CIVILIAN-BASED DEFENSE PROJECT UNDERWAY IN NICARAGUA

By Mary Link, Secretary, Peace Brigades International.

As a first response to an invitation from the Nicaraguan Government (February 4, 1988), the United Nations University for Peace and Peace Brigades International brought to Nicaragua, in August, 1988, an international group of resource people on nonviolence and civilian-based defense.

This project offers ways in which Nicaragua could demilitarize, by developing unarmed security and directing resources to pressing human needs. Marvin Saballos, the UN University for Peace representative in Nicaragua, noted that "it took a great effort to organize the activities in Nicaragua because everyone is extremely busy in this moment in which we Nicaraguans are trying to go from a society of war to a society of peace." Nicaragua has particular potential for incorporating civilian-based defense because it is already strongly organized at the grass roots level.

The initial invitation came from Fr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, Nicaragua's Foreign Minister, who has a deep personal commitment to nonviolent approaches. Leaders and educators from the women's organization (AMNLAE), the rural workers' union (ACT), the Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS), Catholic University, National University of Nicaragua, Professionals for Science and Peace, La Prensa, and an opposition party, the Liberal Independent Party, were among those who consulted with organizers and participated in sessions.

The first part of the project took place from August 22nd to September 2nd, 1988, with the first week spent in Costa Rica and the second in Nicaragua. A series of consultations brought together six international nonviolence theorists and trainers to exchange ideas with Nicaraguan leaders. Drawing on the knowledge of the international resource people and the lessons from Nicaragua's own experience in unarmed forms of defense, this group began to explore nonviolent defense options for Nicaragua.

The six theorists and trainers who participated in August include: Jean-Marie Muller - French Professor of Philosophy who specializes in civilian-based defense and is working on a civilian-based defense strategy for France; Paul Wehr - Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado, U.S.A. and editor of *Peace and Change*, who has done case studies of nonviolent protest in many countries; Vicenc Fisas - scholar, author, and Spain's foremost expert on civilian-based defense; Pat Patfoort - Belgian anthropologist, author and widely experienced nonviolence trainer; Jean Cardonnel - French Dominican priest interested in liberation theology and nonviolence; and Julio Quan - PBI Central American representative and Guatemalan Professor living in exile in Costa Rica.

During the preparatory week in Costa Rica, the resource people met with various Central American leaders to receive an overview of the political situation in the region and specifically in Nicaragua. The international group made final plans for the following week with the Nicaraguans, establishing session content and strategy.

Julio Quan initiated the talks in Nicaragua by describing points in Central American history when nonviolent methods were used to overthrow extremely repressive regimes. Paul Wehr added to this by speaking of the M.K. Gandhi-led Indian movement against British colonial rule and of the U.S. struggle for civil rights led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. Jean-Marie Muller presented the main body of civilian-based defense theory, particularly commenting on its dissuasion aspects. Vicenc Fisas detailed alternative security and defense. Pat Patfoort presented possibilities for training people, noting how different the situations are, and how demanding it will be for trainers like herself, with experience in Europe and North America, to adapt to the Nicaraguan situation. Fr. Jean Cardonnel spoke of ethics in nonviolent struggle toward change.

Organizing work in Central America was done by Julio Quan, Maralise Hood (U.S.A.) - coordinator of the Conflict Resolution Program of the UN University for Peace, and by Marvin Saballos - Nicaraguan representative of the UN University for Peace. Michelle Ford from Spain, and Jean De Wandelaar from Belgium, provided excellent written and oral translation. Many individual families contributed their homes, and, while benefitting from the contact with the resource people, taught them as well about Central America.

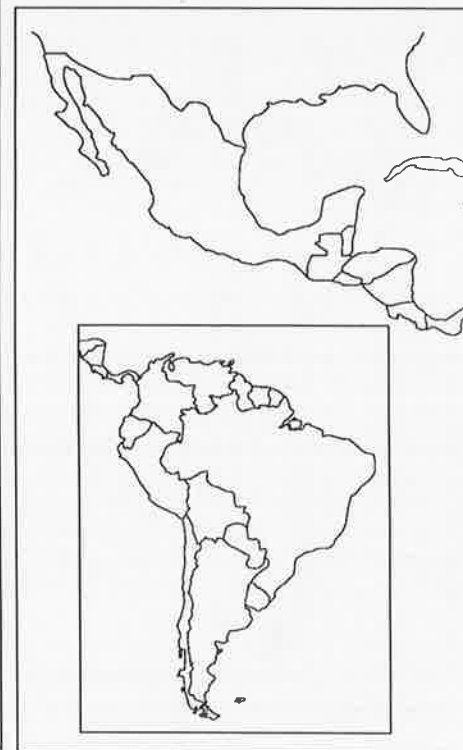
Both Nicaraguans and international participants felt these consultations were a solid success. A report evaluating the conference will soon be submitted to the Nicaraguans. From this, proposals for the next stages of the project will be generated to focus during Part II on planning and strategizing for nonviolent civilian-based defense and in Part III on issues of training. Part II is being planned for early in 1989, followed by Part III

(continued on page 8)

## ESTUDIO DE LOS LECTORES

Esta usted de acuerdo con una de las siguientes declaraciones respecto a la America Latina y la idea de defensa civil-basada? Por que? o Por que no? Invitamos sus comentarios in "LAS CARTAS AL REDACTOR."

1. En la America Latina, la idea de defensa acivil-basada no tiene relevancia ahora. Los problemas actuales que afrontan a los latinoamericanos son la pobreza, la opresion domestica y la explotacion por los extranjeros - no es la agresion desde los paiseseextranjeros. La discusion de la defensa civil-basada simplemente distraeria a la gente de encontrar soluciones a los problemas actuales.
2. En la America Latina, la defensa civil-basada debe ser discutido como alternativa futura para la defensa nacvional, pero no hay coneccion entre las luchas no-violentas para la liberacion y las politicas futuras para la defensa de los paises latinoamericanos.
3. La discusion de la defensa nacional civil-basada debe ser incluido ahora en los planes para las luchas no-violentas en la America Latina porque las victorias para la justicia, las cuales se ganan por la accion no-violenta, pueden ser salvaguardadas debajo de las politicas de la defensa nacional que no dependen en la fuerza militar.



**CBD IN NICARAGUA**

(continued from page 7)

possibly in March. Both are likely to take the form of conferences in Nicaragua involving several international resource people, primarily those especially skilled as planners and trainers.

This project may facilitate a dramatic step toward realization of the Central American Peace Plan, help improve the Nicaraguan situation, and contribute toward the learning and experience needed for civilian-based defense.

PBI has undertaken this project even as we continue to expand our human rights accompaniment in El Salvador and Guatemala and as we develop our initiatives in Southeast Asia, the Mideast, and South Africa. Other work that PBI does involves sending unarmed peace teams, upon invitation, into areas of violent conflict or repression. These teams create "breathing room" by maintaining a nonpartisan presence at demonstrations, at workplaces, and at the homes of social justice groups and their leaders. The teams also conduct seminars in peace education and nonviolent conflict resolution.

We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions as we go forward with this exciting new opportunity. We also need funds to continue. Contact Peace Brigades International at 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143, U.S.A. Phone: 215-727-0989 or 215-724-1464.



**BOOK REVIEWS**

*Fateful Visions*

Ed. by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Graham T. Allison, and Albert Carnesale. Cambridge: Ballinger Publ. Co., 1988. 299 pp.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 5

By Leonard Gambrell, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Stephen J. Flanagan's "Nonprovocative and Civilian-Based Defense" is chapter five of *Fateful Visions*, edited by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Graham T. Allison and Albert Carnesale. *Fateful Visions* is a product of the John F. Kennedy School of Government's "Avoiding Nuclear War Project." Collectively the editors present ten options, each written by a different author, which purport to examine and evaluate ideas most frequently mentioned for reducing or eliminating nuclear war.

CBD, as discussed here, focuses primarily on Gene Sharp's work and is presented alongside Randall Forsberg's ideas on "Global Nonintervention" and that of the German Social Democratic Party's proposal for "Nonprovocative Defense." My remarks here are focused on this chapter and are limited primarily to Flanagan's evaluation of CBD.

Mr. Flanagan is a senior fellow in the Strategic Concepts Development Center of the National Defense University, Washington, D.C., serves on the editorial board of *International Security* and is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Flanagan and the editors are professionals whose works generally reflect what I characterize as the mainstream philosophy of international relations. The fact that CBD is included in their list of ideas on national security makes *Fateful Visions* unlike most mainstream books on national security alternatives.

In the preparation of two recent papers on nonviolent action, I have examined approximately 15 popularly utilized international relations textbooks, all published in the 70's and 80's, and have found only one reference to CBD, and that one was totally confused. In fact, it reveals the author has not read the work he referenced. That is not the case here. Flanagan reveals an overall grasp of much of what Sharp is developing in *Making Europe Unconquerable*, the primary source for his chapter on CBD. Though his description of CBD and Sharp's fundamental ideas are only briefly developed, they do reflect some of the primary concerns Sharp frequently mentions: 1) modern conventional weapons are too destructive to defend; 2) that in a NATO failure to deter aggression the results would be catastrophic due to both the destruction itself and the failure to include remedial means for protection of society; 3) that CBD seeks to frustrate efforts of hostile governments or groups through various nonviolent approaches, including persuasion, protest, noncooperation, boycotts and intervention (p. 103).

Flanagan's overall assessment of CBD, however, is negative. His fundamental premise is that CBD as a full-fledged approach to security would be "unthinkable unless nuclear weapons had been virtually abolished" (p. 104). Even mixing CBD with minimum nuclear deterrence would tend to undermine the credibility of the nuclear threat to escalate since the mere presence of CBD plans might suggest no intent to use nuclear weapons at all, Flanagan contends.

The threat of long-distance technological assaults through the use of nuclear weapons (and perhaps others of even greater lethality) concerns me as I explore CBD's feasibility. But Flanagan's remarks sent me back for a closer review of what I had first considered an accurate introductory presentation of CBD. I then began to see several problems. First, the author tells us that "Sharp applies the history of *passive* (my emphasis) and active resistance to aggression . . . (p. 94). Whatever passive resistance means, I am certain Gene Sharp does not base CBD on such notions.

Secondly, in language very much in the style of the realist school of international relations, Flanagan argues that CBD might be useful as a supplement for non-nuclear neutral states but even then projects doubts about that by reminding us "history shows that it is difficult to sustain such efforts for long or with much success in the absence of external military support" (p. 108). Of course this is true *historically*. But CBD is hardly a concept from history! In Chapter 2 of *Social Power and Political Freedom* and elsewhere, Sharp has reminded us that without numerous and varied loci of power, social control must be accomplished through centralized power. Thus "devolution of power" and a variety of adjustments of contemporary institutions are seen as prerequisites for the development of CBD. Never does Gene Sharp tell us we are ready for the adoption of CBD. Rather, the entire spirit of Sharp's efforts is one of suggesting that, given the

(continued on page 9)



**BOOK REVIEWS** (continued from page 8)

gravity of the problem of real security, CBD should be included as an alternative for research, testing and refinement in an effort to determine whether the history of nonviolent resistance and struggle can be developed into a substitute form of national security. Thirdly, Flanagan adds the criticism that CBD "suffers from a credibility problem due to its inability to punish an aggressor" (p. 109). This criticism seems to ignore that portion of Sharp's program which includes the development of plans for making an attack, invasion, coup d'etat or other undesired consequence excessively costly for the perpetrators. Surely punishment includes more than being able to inflict bodily harm in revenge on any would-be aggressor or his people.

Though analysts of CBD continue to raise serious questions and after years of consideration doubts linger in my own mind, I don't believe Flanagan raises the most important issues. Frankly, I don't believe he was quite able to imagine the full range of possibilities within a fully developed CBD program. Nevertheless, I believe serious scholars should read this chapter and especially those chapters in *Fateful Visions* devoted to partial and total nuclear disarmament. The overall quality of the book is superior and many of the sections are challenging analyses of the feasibility of a broad range of proposals, from defense dominance to world government. After working one's way through this maze of ideas, I am reminded of one of the principle reasons many of us maintain a persistent interest in CBD and the general notion of nonviolent sanctions. The limitations of both traditional approaches to national security as well as various peace proposals simply leave considerable doubts or glaring inadequacies. Intellectual refugees from such literature are likely to find that *Fateful Visions* reinforces these judgments though the portion on CBD leaves us waiting for more thorough critiques.

**ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY DEFENSE**

By Evert A. Huisman, Chairman of Stichting Voorlichting Aktieve Geweldloosheid (Foundation for Information on Active Nonviolence), Postbus 137, 8000 AC Zeewolde, The Netherlands.

Now that Reagan and Gorbachev are carrying on successful negotiations, many people think we no longer need a peace movement. "We are now on the right path and the peace movement had better not interfere with these talks. Rash and biased steps in the disarmament process might just be detrimental to it."

On the other hand, the peace groups point out that what is being discussed is only a small percentage of the total nuclear armament and that people should not allow themselves to be lulled to sleep by exaggerated minor successes in the peace talks. The destructive potential of armaments has hardly been reduced until now, and the risks we run because of unintended accidents are still in proportion to the enormous quantity of arms. Moreover, the dispersion of nuclear arms into countries which have not signed the nonproliferation treaty still continues.

Today, discussion is not merely about whether there will be disarmament and in what ways. More and more the question is about a proper alternative for the present armament. Though this discussion has only just begun we can distinguish four different "alternatives," as many authors call them.

1) There is a call for *defensive armament*, also called a non-offensive or non-provocative defense. Advocates of this kind of defense have short-range arms in mind – arms which are useful only for defensive tasks and cannot be used to attack. However desirable such defensive armament might be, it is still, it seems to me, only a variant, not an alternative. This is because for preventing or resisting an invasion defense will remain military. And the political aim – deterring the enemy from attacking by threat of destruction – has not changed either. Moreover, the question of where the border might lie between offensive and defensive weapons has not been answered convincingly, nor is it certain that the variant can be realized, attractive though it might be.

2) Another variant is *defense without arms* by the total population, as a supplement to military defense. This is a kind of sub-defense. Such a defensive system could raise the nuclear threshold. It would not give the defense extra destructive capability but it reduces the need to go to extremes. In case of imminent military capitulation you need not resort to the use of nuclear arms because you can fall back on a defense without arms as a sub-defensive system. In my opinion this system, like the previous one, is no real alternative for but only a variant of military defense. Developing this variant seems to be a step in

**CIVILIAN-BASED DEFENSE ASSOCIATION – BOARD MEETING HELD IN LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS**

Directors of the Civilian-Based Defense Association held their sixth annual meeting November 11-13 at the College of St. Mary in Leavenworth. The Association's commitment to publishing an excellent international newsletter on civilian-based defense was reaffirmed. In order to become more aware of CBD-related developments in other parts of the world and to report them more accurately, the Association will create an international advisory committee during the next year. Within the United States the Association will work toward publication of a "CBD Primer" to clarify the meaning of civilian-based defense, how the concept is relevant globally, and how it has relevance to the United States. The Primer will also contain the Association's recommendations for study and action. The Association will invite representatives of national groups and institutions (such as churches and peace groups) to participate on its Board of Directors. A national meeting for joint study and planning with such groups and institutions is also envisioned during the next two years. Finally, the Association will make available to other groups a list of resource people who can speak on civilian-based defense.

Philip Bogdonoff of Ithaca, New York (607-257-8404) will serve as Board Chairman during the next year and Mel Beckman (402-558-2085) will continue as Executive Director.

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(continued on page 10)

**ALTERNATIVES** (continued from page 9)

the right direction, especially if combined with development of a defense-without-provocation as is suggested.

3) Others see a third possibility, a system beyond the two variants just mentioned. It is called *social defense*. Social defense is primarily a system of deterrence, based on the population's capability to resist without violence any interference with the kinds of freedom they consider to be of fundamental value. This can never go together with a military system. Social defense, in this conception, is a human (ed."humane"?) method of deterrence. That is why advocates of this kind of defense consider radical changes in defensive policy to be absolutely necessary. Additional measures should be taken in other sectors of government policy, as for example, in the field of education.

4) A fourth idea is that an alternative for military armament should not only differ from military defense insofar as means are concerned but also in that the political end should be *fundamentally* different. This means that the object of such an alternative can hardly be deterrence (the threat to annihilate or oppress nations antagonistic to us). In the case of a real alternative that object should be fundamentally different. For example, we might try to *discourage* aggression.

In my opinion only a society with a *nonviolent defense* can do this successfully. For such a society would have a democratic structure and citizens who are politically aware, nonviolent-minded, and able-bodied; citizens who participate in political decision-making at all levels. Such a society would be highly capable of defending its rights against authoritarian persons and groups wanting to take control. Such persons and groups would simply not get the chance to seize power. Should an aggressive and authoritarian foreign power think to attack such a society they would need to keep in mind that, by invading, they are entering a *focus of infection*. By entering such a country they might not be able to control their own population. The army of occupation, especially, would be infected by democratic ideas.

My conclusion is that an alternative for armaments cannot be realized until we direct our attention *less* to the defense and *far more* to the *development* of democracy; a development that moves in the direction of a participation-democracy. (See the English summary of my book, *Freed From Violence: Surviving by Democratizing and Disarmament*.)

Each of these four conceptions of a possible alternative have their advocates and their opponents. Would it not be an attractive idea to join forces regarding these four views, which might partly overlap anyhow, as if they are just four stages of one process of development? It seems worthwhile to me that we examine this idea more thoroughly and experiment with it.



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