

Civilian-Based Defense: News & Opinion

EXPLORING A NONVIOLENT STRATEGY FOR DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Nobel, Ontario, Canada

I would like to comment on the article, "Nonviolent National Defense – Canada," in the September, 1989 issue of your newsletter. I tend to see George Crowell's dealing with the potential for synergy from nonviolent civilian defense as a kind of landmark in the history of an idea on its way to maturity. Certainly a willingness to rethink the importance of one's personal (may I even say "lonely") theories within a broader context, as George Crowell has done for NVCD (nonviolent civilian defense) in the context of various other pressures for participatory democracy, economic security and environmental responsibility, has to be the foremost sign of intellectual growth and vitality.

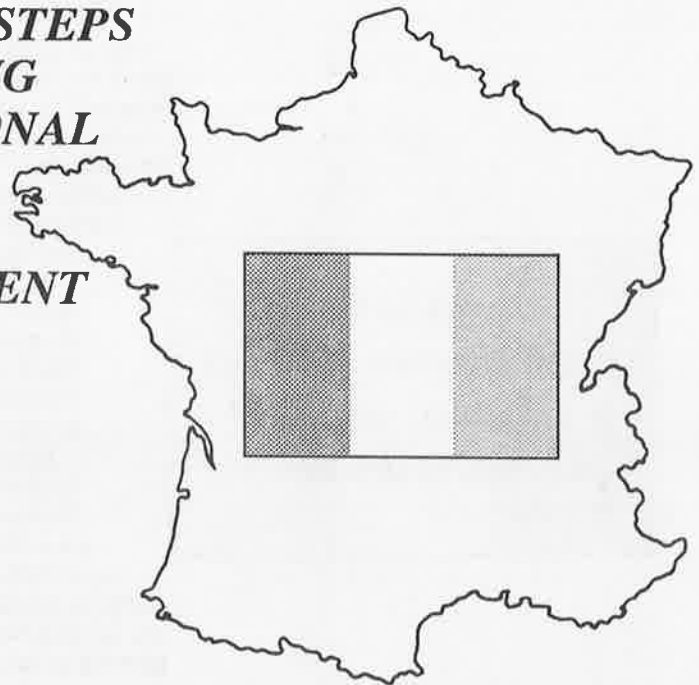
I would like to suggest only that, along with the vitally liberating notion of synergy, it is now time we add to this attack on the insularity of an unpopular and thus vulnerable idea (if attack I may now

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FOCUS ON FRANCE

THE FIRST STEPS IN THE LONG INSTITUTIONAL MOVE TOWARD A NONVIOLENT CIVILIAN DEFENSE: 1982-1989

By Jean Marie Muller



Ed. Note: The following translation, by Margaret Wehrer, OSB, is from an article this Fall in Issue 72 of Alternatives Non Violentes (16, rue Paul-Appell, 42000 SAINT ETIENNE, France). Jean Marie Muller is associated with the IRNC (Research Institute on Nonviolent Conflict Resolution, BP 19-94121, Fontenay-sous-Bois, France). Reprinted with permission. The article retraces an impressive series of steps taken in France, toward the institutionalization of a nonviolent, civilian defense.

THE FIRST STEP

In May 1982, M.A.N. (Mouvement Pour Une Alternative Non-Violente) decided to launch a campaign entitled "Toward Another Defense." A petition with the following objective was circulated:

"We believe it is urgent to begin in-depth research in France on methods for defense without the use of arms; nonviolent defense by the masses, aimed at deterring and defeating an aggressor by a collective organization of non-collaboration, civil disobedience and other means of nonviolent action, should have a right to exist in our country. We ask the government to finance the creation of a national institute and regional centers whose goal would be to study the possibilities of nonviolent popular defense."

This petition, signed by over 30 personalities and 15,000 others, was handed to the Prime Minister.

On November 18, 1982, the weekly magazine *La Vie* published a survey by the Harris Institute on questions related to defense. To the question "In case of a direct threat to the French territory, in what means of defense would you be most confident?"

- 17% said, "in a pre-planned nonviolent resistance in which the whole population participated: strikes, demonstrations, civil disobedience"
- 18% said, "in a nuclear strike force"

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- 28% said, "in a conventional army"
- 20% said, "in a pre-planned armed resistance by the whole population"
- 17% had no opinion.

To the question, "Should we reduce military expenditures in the defense budget and use the money to set up other means of defense, founded on nonviolent methods?",

- 61% were in favor
- 23% were opposed
- 16% had no opinion.

Jose de Broucker, editor-in-chief of *La Vie*, made these comments on the survey: "Six out of ten French, interested in national security and not at all naive, think that peace can be upheld by other means than the weapons of war. That is considerable."

In February 1983, M.A.N. wrote up a proposal for the creation of a Research Institute on Nonviolent Conflict Resolution (IRNC). In a letter dated April 13, 1983, Louis Darinot, President of the Defense Committee of the French National Legislature, acknowledged receiving this proposal, stating, "I must tell you that I was very interested to hear about this project; it seems to be an excellent initiative."

On May 16, 1983, during a parliamentary debate on reform of the military service code, Mr. Darinot asked the minister of defense about the prospect of researching means to put in place a nonviolent defense strategy. Minister Charles Hernu responded, "As for nonviolence, you know that I am very interested and I have asked the strategy-planning group of my ministry to prepare for me a precise study on nonviolence as a means of defense."

In reality, the defense minister saw fit to entrust this study to experts in the field of nonviolent defense. In August 1983, Minister Hernu asked Jean Marie Muller to execute this study. General de Barry, then Secretary-General for national defense, was asked to oversee the work. In April 1984, a contract was signed between General Fricaud-Chagnaud, President of the Foundation for National Defense Studies, and three members of M.A.N. – Christian Mellon, Jean-Marie Muller, and Jacques Semelin. The object of the study was to examine the possibilities of incorporating principles and methods of nonviolent resistance into French defense plans.

"... the defense minister saw fit to entrust this study to experts in the field of nonviolent defense."

CREATION OF THE I.R.N.C.

On April 22, 1984, the Official Journal announced the creation of the Research Institute on Nonviolent Conflict Resolution, or IRNC. The institute's president was Francois Marchand. Other founding members included Christian Delorme, Christian Mellon, Jean-Marie Muller, and Jacques Semelin. The objective of the institute: "To conduct multidisciplinary scientific research into nonviolent conflict resolution, and to provide the means for diffusing the results of such research.

General de Barry invested General Chavanat with the responsibility of coordinating a commission within the National Department of Defense to study specific issues related to nonviolent civilian defense. This commission was to become a forum for discussions between the IRNC and public authorities. Following the departure of General Chavanat, generals Lafond, Ferrand, Mouton and de Quercise each took over as coordinators. Another commission member was Professor Louis Pilandon, head of the Department of Defense Studies at the National Department of Defense and currently the chief advisor to the Secretary for National Defense. The commission meets approximately every two months, allowing its members to be updated regularly on current projects.

On December 3, 1985 the Ministry of Research and Technology granted the IRNC the sum of 80,000 francs, to support the following activities for one year:

- 1) publication of the journal *Alternatives Non-Violentes*;
- 2) organization of an international conference on civilian strategies for defense, to be held in Strasbourg, France;
- 3) consultation for students, researchers and organizations wishing to introduce the idea of nonviolence into their own disciplines;
- 4) clarification of the fundamental relationship between the state and nonviolence.

But, on April 3, 1986, Senator Jose Balarelle wrote to the Minister of Research and Higher Education to point out that "a grant of 80,000 francs out of the 1985 budget has been allocated to the IRNC, a pacifist organization which is against our national defense policies, including nuclear deterrence, and which publishes and distributes the magazine, *Alternatives Nonviolentes*." The senator questioned whether it would not be highly

advisable to stop funding this type of organization. The response from the Minister of Research and Higher Education was that he had no intention of renewing the grant to the IRNC.

On October 6, 1986, Jean-Marie Bockel, a socialist deputy from northwestern France, wrote to the National Education Department, which oversees research and higher education, concerning the IRNC. "This institute," he wrote, "conducts research on nonviolent defense strategies which would, in cases of conflict, set into motion a resistance on the political, economic and ideological levels." The institute's research, he noted, "has awakened much interest among political, and even military, authorities. This research, which is vital to both a more effective defense and to a reinforcement of democracy, seems to have been stifled by lack of grant monies in 1986." Bockel closed his letter with a question: would the National Education Department consider allocating a grant to the IRNC equivalent to the one granted in 1985, if not greater?

But Deputy Bockel received no response from government spokesperson Jacques Chirac. Only with the arrival of Michel Rocard as government spokesperson would a dialogue between the IRNC and public authorities be reestablished.

On July 7, 1988, Jean-Marie Muller met Marisol Touraine, the Prime Minister's technical advisor on issues of defense, in the presence of Jean-Pierre Sueur, a deputy from the Loiret region. Ms. Touraine decided to pursue the issue of a grant to the IRNC with the Ministry of Research and Technology. Jean-Pierre Sueur, designated speaker at the Commission for Research Activities, used his influence to call the attention of the Ministry of Research and Technology to the grant request of the IRNC. Research and Technology Minister Hubert Curien, in a letter dated August 29, 1988, responded that he had "requested a particularly close examination of the IRNC file."

Jean-Michel Boucheron, president of the Commission for Defense at the French National Legislature, also contacted the Ministry of Research and Technology to request that the IRNC be given a grant.

On October 20, 1988, Francois Marchand and Jean-Marie Muller met with the head of research at the Ministry of Research and Technology, Mr. Perget, who announced that the ministry had decided to honor the IRNC's grant request.

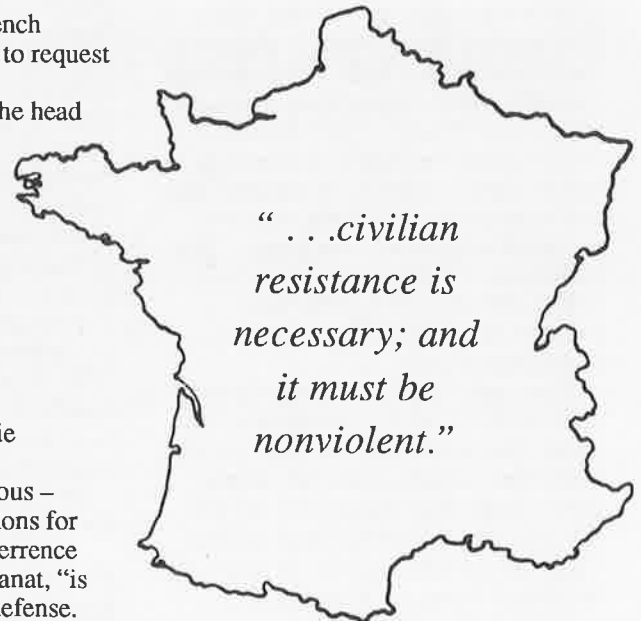
On January 26, 1989, the Ministry of Research and Technology determined that the amount of 60,000 francs would be allocated to the IRNC from the ministry's budget for research and technology. The grant was to be used for the study of civilian dissuasion and its application in Europe; this study was to last six months.

CIVILIAN DISSUASION

In October 1985, the journal of the Foundation for National Defense Studies published a study entitled *Civilian Dissuasion*, by Christian Mellon, Jean-Marie Muller and Jacques Semelin. In April 1986, the magazine *Alternatives Non-Violentes* published the reactions of various groups – political, military, religious – to the study by Mellon, Muller and Semelin. The consensus was that preparations for a nonviolent civilian defense would be a valuable addition to the country's deterrence strategy. "The thesis developed in *Civilian Dissuasion*," wrote General Chavanat, "is primary, and it will remain an essential point of reference for future study on defense. This excellent study will allow even wider thinking about civilian defense."

"If nuclear deterrence fails," wrote General Buis, "if the enemy has not been discouraged from attacking, then our deterrence strategy is useless. That is why civilian resistance is necessary; and it must be nonviolent." Deputy Bernard Stasi of the Marne region noted, "It seems fundamental that such research be conducted in an institutional setting. We should study the methods necessary to institutionalize the duty to resist (an aggressor), and thereby delegitimize any actions taken by people collaborating with the enemy."

Since 1983, Jean-Marie Muller has been participating in "Defense-University" workshops organized each year by the French Department of Defense; these workshops bring together professors responsible for education and research about defense and representatives of various military authorities. The theme of the 1984 workshop was: "Public Sentiment and the Defense of France." During the workshop, the National Department of Defense announced the results of a survey taken by the defense department to test French opinion on the subject of defense. The following are responses to the question: "Do you believe that it is very necessary, somewhat necessary, slightly necessary, or not at all



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fearlessly proclaim it), a truly disillusioning acceptance of the meaning of vulnerability itself. Many aspects of a thing are best seen with a sidelong glance rather than straight on, and passers-by must often catch nuances invisible to those caught up in the throes of an overwhelming idea. I would even suggest that to be most effective in promoting NVCD we must sometimes be willing to pass "it" by because most people will see "it" at a rather personal level. Our vulnerability is not something we are accustomed or even wise to deal with objectively.

When first I mentioned to a friend of mine, a thoughtful "dove," that I was excited about the potential for a "prepared nonviolent national defense" I was not so much disappointed as disillusioned by his response: he quietly said, as though touching an old and familiar wound, that he had always thought nonviolent resistance was something which came out of people "naturally" when it was called for. Though I successfully pointed out the need for preparing the ground of such faith, I think we both understood that certain limits which we could not or would not define must operate naturally on this "preparation." I had to admit to myself, for instance, that I had never been comfortable with the picture of nonviolent "war games." It is time for us, I think, if not exactly to define, then to accept, these limits imposed by the subjective nature of nonviolent pressure.

If we cast NVCD, as George Crowell does, in the light of a logical center for many other seemingly "utopian" social goals, then we reveal not only its true power as an idea for our times but also the difficulty in "selling" such an idea. Utopia is absolute security, an essentially unbelievable, no, an "unacceptable" concept. This absolute security is just what violence tries to obtain! A thing we can believe in only in a violent moment! To sell nonviolence we must sell insecurity and nobody's buying because they already own it.

But our vulnerability is, in the end, acceptable as payment for an existence which is meaningful at all. That, I think, is what my friend meant when he said that nonviolent resistance is called forth "naturally"; and it is only in showing that this last resort is fast becoming our only resort in political conflict that we may believably "promote" NVCD. As Piet Hein wrote, "the only defense that is

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necessary to train people in nonviolent resistance?"

- 59% find it very necessary (36%) or somewhat necessary (23%);
- 15% find it slightly necessary;
- 13% find it not at all necessary;
- 13% have no opinion.

Commenting on these results in the journal *National Defense*, General Chavanat notes, "What this survey shows, above and beyond the statistics, is that after a long period of time where defense was essentially a distant, complex and terrifying system, the French wish to play a more direct role in its execution."

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN STRASBOURG

It was through the above-mentioned "Defense-University" workshops that Professor Georges Durand, head of geostrategic studies at the Institute for Political Studies at Lyons, asked Jean-Marie Muller to teach a course on nonviolent civilian dissuasion. This 15-hour course, given for the first time in 1985, was an elective course for second and third-year students. Already, forty students have participated.

Since 1986, Muller has participated as a member of the jury at a National War College session where officers-in-training present their conclusions on the subject of the "spirit of defense." Following the presentations, there is a dialogue between the thirty or so officers-in-training and the jury. From November 27-29, 1985, the IRNC organized an international conference in Strasbourg on the subject of civilian strategies for defense, bringing together prominent researchers from western Europe and the U.S. Over 200 people participated, notably General Lafond and Colonel Doly from the Department of Defense; Dominique David, Secretary General of the Foundation for National Defense Studies; General T. Hollants van Loocke, of the Royal Defense Institute of Belgium; Guy-Michel Chauveau, a deputy from the Sarthe and member of the Defense Committee of the French national legislature; Jean Guilhaudis, professor at the University of Social Sciences in Grenoble; Monsignor Ernoult, bishop of Sens and bishop-president of Pax Christi, France. The newspaper *La Croix* (the Cross), in its December 7, 1985 issue, entitled the conference: "Nonviolence: An End to the Secrecy." Documents from the conference were published in a special edition of *Alternatives Non-Violentes*.

In October 1986, Jacques Semelin successfully defended a thesis at the Sorbonne University in Paris on civilian resistance to the Nazis during World War II. He was then invited by Gene Sharp to Harvard University, as part of the "Nonviolent Sanctions in Conflict and Defense" program. During his stay in the U.S., Semelin wrote a book based on his thesis. He received a study grant from the French Ministry of External Affairs in 1987, allowing him to begin new research on communication strategies with respect to East/West relations in Europe. Returning to France in 1988, he rejoined the Communications and Politics division of the National Scientific Research Center (CNRS) as an associate researcher.

On May 25, 1987, Jean-Marie Muller was invited by the Rennes branch of the Institute for National Defense Studies to give a conference on nonviolent civilian defense.

STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Many studies have been conducted by the IRNC:

- 1) In 1985, Jacques Semelin participated in a study of the benefits of civil service in the social realm, produced jointly by the Civil Service Coordinating Committee and the National Fund for the Development of Social Life. His input was on the special role of conscientious objectors in civilian defense.
- 2) In 1986 and 1987, Olivier Serret, an engineer in thermodynamics and a conscientious objector, working at the IRNC, conducted a study on the application of civilian dissuasion to the energy industry in France. This study was made possible with the logistical assistance of the French Agency for Energy Use. The concept of "survival without being taken advantage of" was a major focus of the study, which has been published by the IRNC and is entitled, "Energy and Civilian Dissuasion." Copies are available from the IRNC for 50 francs.
- 3) In November 1986, a contract was signed between the IRNC and the National Office for Youth and Sports, for a survey of the role of associations in a civilian dissuasion strategy. A grant of 40,000 francs was allocated to the Institute by the National Fund for the Development of Associative Life as well as a grant of 20,000

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- francs from the Department of Defense. Alain Refalo conducted this study, basing his research on over 50 interviews with heads of associations.
- 4) In February 1988, a new research contract was established between the IRNC and the Foundation for National Defense Studies, for studies dealing with the activation of civilian defense strategies in various European countries in order to increase Europe's security. A grant of 45,000 francs was given for the study. Hugues Colle, director of the study, applied the working hypothesis on civilian dissuasion to the European situation. Two foreign consultants, Robert Polet from Belgium and Roland Vogt of West Germany, assisted in the research. In a related development, Colonel Jeunehomme, director of the Center for Defense Studies of the Royal Institute for Defense in Brussels, Belgium, gave his approval for Polet to conduct a similar study in Belgium. This study will be published in the journal, *Securite et Strategie*, a publication of the Center for Defense Studies in Brussels.
 - 5) Other developments include contacts between Jan van Lierde and Robert Polet, on the one hand, and Alfred Cahen, secretary-general of the Union of Western Europe, on the other. In a letter to van Lierde on February 8, 1988, Cahen wrote, "The question of civilian dissuasion has attracted my attention, especially after reading the excellent book you sent me (the study published by the Foundation for National Defense Studies). My colleagues and I are studying the possibility of using this strategy in member countries of the Union of Western Europe." The IRNC has been in contact with Mr. Cahen.
 - 6) Eric Mace, conscientious objector working for the ALDEA, conducted a study of the role of local collectives in the organization of nonviolent, civilian defense. A grant of 20,000 francs has been approved by the National Department of Defense for this study.

POLITICAL PARTNERS OF M.A.N.

M.A.N. has made contacts with various political parties and organizations:

On February 4, 1987, M.A.N. met with Alain Lipietz of the "Rainbow" movement. Rejecting the nuclear deterrence strategy, he believes that the only alternative defense would be a combination of "techno-guerilla" strategies and nonviolent civilian defense.

On April 1, 1987, M.A.N. met with Prime Minister Michel Rocard in the presence of Jean-Pierre Sueur, a deputy from Orleans, and Gerard Fuchs, deputy from Paris. Rocard responded favorably to M.A.N.'s request for an institutional investment in nonviolent civilian defense. On January 4, 1988, Rocard sent a letter to the support committee for conscientious objector Michel Fache during Fache's trial at the appellate court of Rouen. He wrote, "conscientious objectors must participate in national defense efforts, notably in civil defense. Studies on nonviolence can be of real value to the idea of civilian defense." Francois Loncle, deputy from the Eure, also wrote a letter to Fache's support committee on January 26, 1988, and wrote, "I am in total agreement with the position taken by Michel Rocard. Finally, Pierre Bourguignon, deputy from the Seine-Maritime, wrote to Fache, supporting Rocard's position.

On April 29, 1987, M.A.N. met with national legislature deputies Jean-Marie Bockel from the Upper Rhine, and Catherine Trautmann and Jean-Andre Oehler of Alsace. All three were in agreement with the idea of setting up a nonviolent civilian defense in addition to French military defenses.

On June 4, 1987, M.A.N. met with the Greens' presidential candidate, Antoine Waechter. He was in total agreement with the theses developed by M.A.N. on the subject of nonviolent civilian defense, and planned to make them known during his campaign.

On July 1, 1987, M.A.N. met with Michel Delebarre, a deputy from the Nord region who is national secretary of the Socialist Party. He was favorable to integrating the strategy of nonviolent civilian defense into the Socialist Party's platform on defense.

In September, 1987, the weekly *Temoignage Chretien* (Christian Witness) published a survey of its readers. Out of 7,576 who responded, 73% believe that France "should do away with an armed defense and begin organizing a nonviolent civilian defense." This choice of nonviolence was stronger among women than men (79% vs. 68%), and among the under-40 than the over-40 (78% vs. 71%).

On October 7, 1987 and February 24, 1988, M.A.N. met with Jean Michel Boucheron, a Socialist deputy from Ile-et-Vilaine and a member of the Committee on Defense at the national legislature. Boucheron believed that with the Socialist Party's return to power in May 1988, it would be important to begin preparations for organizing a non-

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more than pretense is to act on the fact that there is no defense. In researching and preparing the ground for NVCD we may aid and inform such action – this is as much mischief and glory as we are allowed – but we must not pretend to compete with the illusory offers of security made in military-style shows of strength.

We must either drop the word "defense" from our vocabulary altogether, or show just how defense and vulnerability coincide. Perhaps it is not nonviolent civilian defense we should be promoting at all, but nonviolent political "action"? Better yet: "Beyond military political action"? Defense and vulnerability coincide at the very root of democracy, in that elusive act of faith known simply as "people power."

The intrinsically vulnerable "power" underpinning democracy (and, lest we forget, life itself) is a painfully, fitfully and yet tirelessly cultivated act of faith. In revealing the connection between the want of this and the failure of many social, economic and environmental causes, we do much; in pointing out how various institutions, such as the military, can erode this "last resort" without improving on its vulnerable sort of security, we do much; in demonstrating how our institutions can be designed to nurture this we do much; in fitting examples of this into our history books and into our shared consciousness through various media we do much; in nailing this down with sophisticated jargon, as they say Christ was nailed to a tree, in seeking assurances from nonviolent action, as we do from the size of a military arsenal, in calling defenselessness "defense," and "taming" freedom, we are in danger of doing too much.

We want to hear from you!

We invite you to write and send us news about CBD from your country – and we will print it in this column.

Mail News Items
and Letters to:



Civilian-Based Defense:
News & Opinion
P.O. Box 31616
Omaha, Nebraska 68131 USA

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUSTRALIA

According to an announcement in *Nonviolence Today* (P.O. Box 292, West End Qld. 4101, Australia) Schweik Action Wollongong will offer a "Symposium on Social Defence" February 16-18, 1990. The gathering will be hosted by the Board of Studies, Peace and War Studies, University of Wollongong. Johan Niezing, Professor of Peace Studies at the Free University of Brussels, will be in attendance. The Symposium is designed both as an introduction to social defense and as an opportunity for activists in the area to meet, share experiences and plan future activities. There will be no charge for attendance. Inquiries may be directed to Brian Martin (042 287860) or Alison Rawling (042 264497).

Petra K. Kelly, MdB, of West Germany addressed the Ecopolitics Conference at the University of Adelaide this September. Among her comments, "...green global politics must give hope to a future without the use of force. This is not a utopian dream. Just as the abolition of slavery once seemed unrealistic, radical disarmament, too, can come to be the normal state of international affairs. A disarmed world is not defenseless – for there can be the development of nonviolent, civilian-based defense – a revolutionary concept that is the only sane answer to the atomic age. A new beginning in security thinking could be an independent, non-aligned and neutral Australia – a non-nuclear, non-aligned Australia, pursuing true environmental and ecological policies and working for nonviolent civilian defense together with the South Pacific Islands."

SWITZERLAND

Swiss voters rejected a proposed constitutional amendment which stated simply that Switzerland should not have an army. But the measure was supported by 1,052,218 persons – 35.6 % of those who cast ballots. Voter turnout on November 26th was 69 percent, the highest for a referendum since the 1971 measure that gave women the right to vote. (From a news item in the November 27, 1989 issue of the *Omaha World Herald*) See also *Civilian-Based*

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violent civilian defense. Boucheron was in favor of creating an agency to develop the nonviolence strategy.

On November 24, 1987, M.A.N. met with Pierre Juquin, who was interested in the possibilities of nonviolent civilian defense and planned to develop the idea during his electoral campaign.

In January, 1989, the Green Party published a six-page document entitled, "To Live Free: Another Defense for Peace," as part of their local and Europe-wide election campaigns. The booklet explains;

"For ecologists, peace is not simply the absence of war but rather the result of the struggle for justice and freedom. The Greens seek a morally acceptable system of defense which is safer and more effective than the current suicidal strategy of nuclear deterrence. We must find other ways to resolve conflicts; we must dare to think peace[...] Disarmament is a necessity recognized by many countries, but France has dragged its heels. How to begin the de-escalation without risking our own security? To break the impasse, the Greens recommend a nonviolent civilian defense in France and in Europe[...] This defense must not be improvised; it will take a long time to put in place, and the role of the military and of armed defense can only be reduced gradually[...] From the very beginning of such a transition, an institute for studying nonviolent civilian defense – for which the IRNC could furnish the foundations – will be given considerable resources."

On February 8, 1989, M.A.N. met with Jean-Michel Boucheron, president of the Committee on Defense of the national legislature. Boucheron said he would help interest public powers in the advantages of the civilian strategy for defense as part of France's total defense strategy. A first step in this could be civil-defense training for persons doing civil service; the training for conscientious objectors could be financed with public funds, but draftees doing other types of national service could be trained as well.

On May 2, 1989, M.A.N. met with Freddy Deschaux-Beaume, deputy from the Eure and secretary of the Committee on Defense. He supported significant efforts to promote nonviolent civilian defense.

On June 23, 1989, M.A.N. met with General Fuchs, a deputy at the European Parliament and Socialist Party national secretary for defense and foreign affairs. Fuchs felt it was important that public authorities support research on civilian strategies for nonviolent defense, and he pledged to support such an effort.

On July 31, 1989, during the Green Party's "Green Summer Days," Alain Refalo, a member of M.A.N.'s coordinating committee, participated in the discussions of the "defense commission" of the Green Party. His goal was to plan continued collaboration between M.A.N. and the Green Party in order to define the methods for promoting and instituting nonviolent civilian defense in France.

ONLY THE BEGINNING

During its November 1986 conference, M.A.N. decided to create regional commissions to establish a procedure for discussions on nonviolent civilian defense. This medium-term objective will take several years. It entails contacting, and entering into dialogue with, those social forces which would be responsible for coordinating civilian defense: public authorities (especially local prefectures which are directly dependent on the Ministry of the Interior and are thus directly responsible for "civilian defense"), heads of political parties, unions, associations, churches. . .

On the one hand, M.A.N. does not claim that it can gather all these potential "partners" into one organization. Rather, bilateral contacts should be made between M.A.N. and each of these "partners" to inform them about the possibilities of nonviolent civilian defense. These partners are generally uninformed about this strategy, but experience shows that they are open, receptive and understanding to our proposition.

In conclusion, nonviolent civilian defense is beginning to find an institutional space where it is seen as a possible and even necessary component of our society's defense strategy. But this is only the beginning, and we must continue the struggle. What is new and decisive is that the struggle will no longer take place on the fringes of our society; it is now possible to conduct it within society's institutions. However, the sociological and ideological forces which oppose the serious consideration of nonviolent civilian defense are still very strong. We must admit that public authorities, while welcoming our theoretical propositions, haven't shown the political will necessary to overcome the forces which would prevent the realization of these propositions. To realize our goals, the work of education and of sensitizing the public must be continued and expanded.

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FROM DEFENSIVE DEFENSE TO NONVIOLENT DEFENSE

An Interview With Anders Boserup

Ed. Note: This interview appeared originally in the September 1989 issue of Non-Violence Actualite (20 rue du Devidet, 45200 Montargis, France). Translation by Margaret Wehrer, OSB. We have asked for and received permission to reprint this interview in News & Opinion because Anders Boserup's earlier work, War Without Weapons, is familiar to many of our readers.

INTRODUCTION

Anders Boserup, member of the Disarmament Summit of the TOES (*Ed. Note: full name is unavailable*), is director of the Danish section of the European Center for International Security, a newly-created organization with offices in Munich and Copenhagen. This center works on the issues of disarmament, of restructuring the armed forces of Europe, and of security. It seeks to promote ideas related to non-offensive defense.

INTERVIEW

A. REFALO: You published a famous book, *War Without Weapons*, in 1972. What have you been involved in since that time?

A. BOSERUP: For me, writing the book was a chance to think about strategy and conflicts. I concluded, based on this study, that the idea of nonviolent defense as a method for defending a country doesn't have a chance of attracting a lot of public support in today's Europe. The idea is convincing, but I don't believe it would attract a majority of the population. Thus, I turned to questions of reform of military systems, in order to remove their provocative, offensive side. This military reform will hopefully put an end to the arms race. The idea is to force one's adversary to adopt the same policy of non-offensive defense, simply because it becomes very hard for them to justify military expenses once their adversary is not perceived as dangerous. Thus, for example, today the Soviet threat is diminishing, and it is becoming very difficult for the West to apply the same arms policies as in the past.

A. REFALO: Thus, instead of working to change public opinion concerning the idea of nonviolent civilian defense, you plan to work with military institutions to move them towards defensive defense strategies?

A. BOSERUP: That is correct. I think you could say that nonviolent civil defense is very powerful for preventing long-term occupation, but it is evident to me that it cannot prevent short-term military operations. In an atmosphere where one thinks the enemy could attack at any time, there is no place for this type of defense. Thus, the fundamental problem is not so much one of finding an alternative means of defense as finding a way to dismantle this mutual feeling of insecurity. And that can better be done by a reform of the military system than by utopian ideas which are unrelated to the present situation.

A. REFALO: You are speaking as a researcher, but what about peace movements? Shouldn't they couple their criticism of the current nuclear and military defense policies with the promotion of an alternative defense system? This would increase their credibility.

A. BOSERUP: Of course, there is always the question of credibility. That is why we shouldn't tout a non-offensive military defense as the final solution, but rather as a step on the road. We cannot move directly from the current military and nuclear defense policies to nonviolent civilian defense; there must be a way to disengage ourselves from the arms race by creating mutual trust between peoples. With this mutual trust, and a reduction in arms, everyone will come to realize that no country can be occupied by an adversary. Why? Because behind every country is its civilian society. That civilian society doesn't even have to be extremely well-prepared in order to do civilian resistance! In my opinion, the idea of a defensive army must be seen as an important step, because it resolves a chronic problem in disarmament: whether to start by military disarmament or by creating an atmosphere of trust among nations. Through a defensive defense, those who have a real fear can be reassured without provoking a backlash from the other side. That would put us on the road toward a civilian-based defense.

SWITZERLAND

(continued from page 6)

Defense, News & Opinion, June 1987. Over 100,000 signatures were required, initially, for the referendum. The "Group for a Switzerland Without An Army" (GSSA, P.O. Box 769, 2501 Bienne, Switzerland) has campaigned strongly on behalf of abolition.

WEST GERMANY

Theodor Ebert, in a letter published in the November 1989 issue of *Graswurzel-revolution*, refers to recent coverage of the Bund Fur Sozial Verteidigung in that publication. He points out that the background for this movement goes back several years. He states that what is needed is not a Federal Office for Civil Resistance but rather a Ministry for Disarmament, Military Conversion, and Social Defense, with the goal of the complete abolition of military defense. Ebert believes that the Bund is necessary to provide a correct perspective on social defense versus the increasing attempts to coopt the concept and discussion.

UNITED STATES

At a rainy "Flag Day" parade in Ithaca, New York this past June a local group which focuses on nonviolence and civilian-based defense became the center of attention when its members walked down the street banging pots and pans to symbolize the popular movements in Chile, Uruguay and Panama, where pot-banging has become a traditional form of protest against military dictatorships. Members of the group also passed out leaflets explaining this symbolism and giving information about the idea of civilian-based defense. For a more complete description of the event contact Philip Bogdonoff (607-257-8404), Martha Hamblin (607-277-0247) or Chuck or Carol Mohler (607-257-8404). The Albert Einstein Institution has published "A Journalist's Brief Glossary of Nonviolent Struggle." Key terms are defined, in an effort to help journalists to report news about nonviolent action more clearly. Among the terms defined are nonviolent action, pacifism, civilian-based defense, civilian insurrection, passive resistance, force, violence, and transarmament. The Albert Einstein Institution may be contacted at: 1430 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA. Telephone: (617) 876-0311.

CIVILIAN-BASED DEFENSE: MAINTAINING A FOCUS

By Mel Beckman, Executive Director of the Civilian-Based Defense Association.

With people walking freely through the Berlin Wall these days it will not be surprising if national security is of less immediate concern to citizens in both East and West. After decades of separation the focus on friendship and a shared future should now be primary and the focus on defense secondary. Actually, this should be the normal order.

But if we agree that defense should usually be of less concern to people than taking positive action toward peace and friendship, how is it that the Civilian-Based Defense Association remains so narrowly focused, as an organization, on defense? Should it not also be concerned about peace first and defense second? This is a legitimate question.

On November 10th directors of the Civilian-Based Defense Association gathered in Omaha, Nebraska for their annual meeting. Founded in Omaha in 1982, the Association began publishing a newsletter on civilian-based defense in November of that year and the first national Board meeting was convened in April of 1983. During the past seven years the Association has maintained a narrow focus which some have considered essential and others have felt to be excessive.

According to its constitution, CBDA exists "to facilitate more widespread study, discussion, and research relating to the concept of civilian-based defense." This concept of defense is defined as "the idea that a nation accustomed to defense by military means, might, for pragmatic reasons, lay aside military means of defense and choose in their place a defense policy utilizing prepared, but nonviolent, civilian struggle to preserve the society's freedom, sovereignty, and constitutional systems against internal coups d'etat and external invasions and occupations."

But is this focus really relevant in our times, when the old East-West hostility seems to be breaking down and environmental concerns abound? If an organization wants to promote something called "civilian-based defense" would it not be wise to direct its efforts toward solving urgent "people" problems and not be so preoccupied with planning

for defense against doubtful threats from abroad? Isn't it true that lack of food, shelter, health care, human rights and personal security are more urgent problems than the fear of invasion? And isn't it really "civilian-based" defense when ordinary people use nonviolent action to protect themselves in these dangerous situations?

So far, the Association's directors have declined to change the narrow focus of the organization or to make its adopted definition of civilian-based defense more inclusive. The decision so far has been to conserve our resources in support of one objective – promoting consideration of the practicality of a defense policy which would use nonviolent sanctions to deter and defeat attacks against a country. While many groups and institutions in the world advocate the use of the technique of nonviolent action, very few are proposing that it might be useful in national

defense. Thus, we choose to focus on one possible future use of the technique of nonviolent struggle – in the defense of a whole national community of people, along with their institutions and way of life, when they are threatened by enemy attack.

It would be counter-productive for the Association to diffuse its energies in support of the many groups which are doing good work for peace and justice. On the other hand, we need to be aware of our relationship to the social movements of our time and to credit them with being of primary importance in today's struggle for a better world.

When organizations take positive action to improve race relations, to eliminate hunger, to educate children and adults, and to promote responsible freedom and moral values, they are undoubtedly doing things that make the country stronger and more difficult to conquer. They are engaging in "constructive" action in the truest meaning of the word. Constructive social movements improve a society and make it worth defending. Often, these kinds of social movements are hardly noticed and are taken for granted.

Other social movements receive quite a lot of public attention because of their use of demonstrations, noncooperation, and civil disobedience in pursuit of their goals. Groups engaged in anti-nuclear activities, war-tax resistance, and protest of environmental pollution come to mind immediately. These groups and many others use nonviolent action to protest and control abuses. Sometimes a whole society or a large part of it is

*"Constructive
social movements
improve a society
and make it worth
defending."*

involved in the nonviolent noncooperation and protest. This was true of the 1986 civilian insurrection in the Philippines and the massive student protest in China earlier this year. These uses of the technique of nonviolent action are of great interest to the Civilian-Based Defense Association and very encouraging, even if they are not what we would call "civilian-based defense."

These uses of the technique are valuable in themselves. Their value is in no way decreased if we choose not to call them examples of "civilian-based defense."

As an Association committed to exploring a nonviolent substitute for military defense we can be gratified each time nonviolent action is used successfully to address some social evil. It would appear that humankind is becoming more adept at wielding power nonviolently. When whole societies do battle with their repressive governments nonviolently, and win, it would seem that we are coming very close to the day when nation-states (if they still exist) will also be able to defend themselves against each other, nonviolently, instead of going to war.

If the Civilian-Based Defense Association remains a narrowly-focused organization, then, it is not due to a lack of respect for the countless other organizations and institutions which are daily trying to construct a better world. We acknowledge the primary importance of their work. Our narrow focus is due more to limited resources and the need to do a task which we think is being neglected, not only by governments but also by the same institutions and organizations which are doing so much other good work. That task is to promote the concept of a nonviolent defense which a whole society could use when it is threatened by military force, whether from abroad or from within. This task is basic to the abolition of war itself.

We have no desire to own this task to the exclusion of other groups. On the contrary, we invite groups which are already promoting various uses of nonviolent action to adopt, as a secondary interest, exploration of the idea of a nonviolent strategy for whole-nation defense.

The recent dramatic changes in the Communist world are very encouraging but they do not lessen the need for our work as an organization. If anything, they may provide an opportunity for civilian-based defense to be considered more widely. Moreover, virtually every nation is still armed. The national "need" to be ready to use violence in national defense is rarely questioned. The very existence of armies and military technology makes it difficult for good to triumph, for the poor to be protected, and for abuses of power to be controlled. There is still an urgent need to raise up the possibility of a nonviolent, civilian-based kind of national defense. This is what we think our focus must be for now – but we are open to dialogue and we welcome your comments.



Directors of the Civilian-Based Defense Association at their meeting in Omaha, Nebraska November 10-12, 1989. Seated, left to right: Liane Norman, Jeanne Ertle, Chet Tchozewski, Constance Phelps, Mel Beckman. Standing, left to right: Carey Grey, Robert Holmes, John Mecartney, Phillips Moulton and Philip Bogdonoff. Not pictured, Kari Fisher and Walter Conser.

“ . . . humankind is becoming more adept at wielding power nonviolently.”

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