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Civilian-Based Defence Put to the Test
Current Issues and Practical Challenges

Documentation of an Online-Conference, September 6-7, 2024

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This paper documents an international online conference on social or civilian-based defence, held on the 6th and 7th of September, 2024. Under the title "Civilian-Based Defence Put to the Test. Current Issues and Practical Challenges" the up to 70 participants discussed the concept of social defence and the need to adapt it to the current challenges. The majority of the speakers from many different countries, from Australia to France, from Sweden to the State of Spain, from the U.S. to Germany handed in their contributions to be documented in this paper.

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Civilian-Based Defence Put to the Test. Current Issues and Practical Challenges
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Editor: Christine Schweitzer

Photo: Outside the Pentagon, 1967. A line of youth protesting the Vietnam War stand before a line of military police. A protester offers a flower to a military policeman. By: U.S. Army, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1111279

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For exchange between people interested in social defence, this email list has been created:
social-defence@lists.wehrhaftohnewaffen.de
It is public and everyone is free to register here:
https://wehrhaftohnewaffen.maadix.org/mailman/postorius/lists/

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Introduction

David Scheuing and Christine Schweitzer

This paper documents an online conference that took place in September 2024. The aim of the conference had been to bring together researchers with an interest in social defence (or civilian-based defence) to discuss the status of this concept of a defence without weapons.

Since the 1990s, the interest in this concept had almost disappeared with only a very few researchers still keeping the idea alive. The two foremost among them, Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin, have participated in this conference. Only in the last years, especially after the attack of Russia on Ukraine, some interest has been revived at least in the Western world. This has happened against the background of militarization in response to the Russian aggression. Pacifists have been confronted once more with the question: If we do not want our countries prepare to for war, is there an alternative we can offer? And is the main threat really Russia, or rather the power grab of right-wing extremists? Social defence has been designed in earlier decades to deal with various threats, coup d'états as well as military invasions.

The initiative to this conference came from three organizations / networks in Germany: The Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation is a network of citizen scientists in Germany with a keen interest in nonviolence. The Federation for Social Defence, having social defence in its name since its founding in 1989, came back to the topic in the 2010s. And both are, as well as a number of other groups and individuals, part of a campaign founded in 2022 in Germany to develop and promote social defence titled "Defensible without Weapons".[1]

When we met in September 2024 on this topic of nonviolent resistance against a military attack or a coup, we did this in a time when both have become far more realistic than it has been the last 30 years. While war never stopped to be a reality in many countries, particularly in the global south, the threat of war has returned to Europe with the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and many people especially in Eastern Europe fear that they might become targets of Putin's regime as well. In South Asia the tensions between the U.S. and its allies on the one side and China on the others also mount for several years, and the wars in the Middle East threaten to escalate to hitherto unknown dimensions. Added to these international threats, the threat by right-wing or outright fascist movements and parties coming to power in many countries – from the U.S. to Europe – leads also new urgency to the question of how to defend against such take-over of power without downsliding into civil wars.

The concept of social defence or civilian-based defence has been developed in its modern version primarily by British and Scandinavian peace researchers after the Second World War. The catalyst was the danger of a nuclear war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the realisation that such a war would result in no victors, but only general annihilation. Important names of that time were, *inter alia*, Stephen King-Hall, Adam Roberts, April Carter, Gene Sharp, Anders Boserup, Andrew Mack, Johan Galtung, and in Germany Theodor Ebert.

In that time, the concept seems to have been taken seriously in the field of peace research; at least some international scientific, interdisciplinary conferences on social defence took place during this period: in Oxford in 1964 and also at least two in Germany, organised by the Association of German Scientists (VDW), which worked on the topic in a working group on Social defence from 1969-1974. At the same time, also other concepts of alternative security were promoted, for example defensive defence and concepts combining nonviolent and armed resistance.

In the time of the anti-nuclear peace movement of the 1980s, the concept found interest in wider peace movement circles, and was broadened to include also other threats than a military attack by the socialist bloc or a military coup. For many activists, social defence was what they did when defending nature or humankind against nuclear weapons.

[1] https://www.ifgk.de, https://soziale-verteidigung.de/, https://wehrhaftohnewaffen.de/

With the break-down of the Warsaw pact, the interest in social defence evaporated and was replaced by research in other forms of nonviolent action and resistance – nonviolent intervention in conflicts as third parties, civil resistance and nonviolent revolutions. While there has been substantial new research on civil resistance in recent years, many of these recent publications have focussed primarily on nonviolent uprisings aimed at regime or policy change. Studies that deal explicitly and specifically with civil resistance with the aim of defending against a military attack or removing an occupation continue to be exceptions and rarely contain empirical research of their own.

Only with the escalation between Russia and Ukraine, the idea of nonviolent defence has come to the fore again, once more mirroring the political trends.

New and old questions

In light of this renewed interest and a sudden relevance to most people in Europe after the Russian invasion in Ukraine, a fresh look at old concepts, new data and a more recent literature and theoretical debates made us – the team behind this conference – discuss and problematise a number of questions. Those old and new questions – at least in our view – warrant a new round of discussions.

Most prominent among all those questions **remains one of practice and strategy as well as "knowledge transfer"**: How on earth could practitioners of nonviolent defence still read, understand and meaningfully integrate all the different aspects of new knowledge about civil resistance we have these days? Does it even make sense to try to integrate all this into the framework of social defence or are there limits to this debate? In short: Does developing the concept of social defence still make sense? Or is it effectively dead?

Other prominent and more specific questions we assembled in the Call for Papers for the conference:

- **Whose values are to be defended and how?** This question relates to the spectrum of values held by members of any society which – in an extreme case – might be driven in part by xenophobia while at the same time trying to defend their social values and institutions. How can any social defence deal with such challenges?
- **How do social defence and considerations of "law-preserving violence" relate to each other?** To what extent does social defence integrate violence in the sense of a broad concept of violence? Which concepts of a combination of non-violent and military defence (the so-called "mix") exist, and how can they be assessed in terms of their suitability for reality? Does any form of violent civil resistance jeopardise the possibilities of successful social defence?
- **What new cases are there?** Which new examples of social defence have been researched and documented in the last thirty years? What new insights from the "classic" examples have been gained (e.g. Kapp Putsch 1920, the Ruhr occupation 1923, World War II, Prague 1968)?
- **What new questions arise for social defence in the face of modern warfare** (e.g. drones, increased vulnerability of civilian infrastructure, hybrid warfare, etc.)?
- **Who are the driving actors for social defence?** Is social defence to be localised at state or at civil society level?
- **Are there new data available** which allow us to study the success conditions of social defence, such as: How many people need to be active nonviolently in order to be successful? Is Chenoweth & Stephan's "3.5% assumption" tenable?

For us the question which sprung from all of the above was: Can we build a new network of intellectuals focussing on the concept of social defence and its implementation? And where do we start? Well, obviously, we opted for a conference. With this conference, we hoped for interdisciplinary exchange, as well as inspiration and the initiation of possible research collaborations following from our exchange here. We see the absolute necessity to keep this exchange flowing since any research on nonviolent Social defence should be grounded in practice, aim at transdisciplinary exchange and build for the better future.

On the documentation

Originally the plan had been to organize a physical conference in Bielefeld, but we failed to

secure funds for that. One reason was that the foundation to which we had applied did not manage to find reviewers for our proposal in time. It seems that for the academic landscape – at least in Germany – the topic is so far away from any interest by academicians that nobody felt inclined or qualified to judge our proposal. Therefore, we decided for the no-cost-option of an online conference.

Many of the speakers at the conference have provided us on our request with a script of their presentation. Some gave us their powerpoint presentations with the permission to document these. These have been marked in this paper with this symbol on the right.

Below, you can see the program and which presentations are documented. Left out here are the times for breakout groups and breaks. In Italics are those speakers whose presentations are not documented in this paper.)

We need to apologize to all native English speakers: Since many of the texts here have not been written by native speakers, there definitely are mistakes. Some parts have been run through Deepl's AI tool, and Brian Martin (thank you, Brian!) had a look at a couple of them but we did not have the resources for professional human proof-reading.

The program

SEPTEMBER 6
Opening Greetings, introductions by Nele Anslinger, Nicklas Boehm, David Scheuing and Christine Schweitzer
Civilian-based defence: an overview of the state of the Art Social defence – State of the Art: Brian Martin Reflecting on My Personal Development Regarding Social defence: From "Against Wars" to Searching For Alternatives: Jørgen Johansen Social Contexts: Karen Kennedy
Forum: Recent experiences with Civilian-based defence: Civilian-Based Defence and Mutual Aid: Learnings from Sudan: Julia Kramer The Evolution and Dynamics of Ukrainian Civil Resistance: Filip Daza Sierra Learning From the "Guardias". Integral Security as a Response To Multiple Phenomena of Violence In Colombia: María Cárdenas Alfonso
Forum: Embedding the defence debate into wider considerations: Prevention and conflict transformation "Integrating the Defence Debate into Broader Contexts: Prevention And Conflict Transformation": Martin Arnold Under Which Conditions Would A "Civilian-Based Defence" Be Feasible ?: Francois Marchand Questioning the Warist Orthodoxy: Pacifist Critical Reflections on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine : Alexandre Christoyannopoulos
Forum: Historical examples and lessons from civil resistance studies regarding protection Civilian Based defence: Conceptual Insights From The Conflict Surrounding the Occupation Of The Ruhr In 1923: Barbara Müller Shanti Sena. An Example for Civilian-based Defence Today? Kevin Kaisig
Forum: Conflict transformation and CBD Subversive Human Love: Towards Needs-Oriented Systemic Conflict Transformation: Anne Dietrich Cultivating a Society to Sustain a Robust Nonviolent Social Defence Praxis: Eli McCarthy
Keynote Talk: Relationship-building As Defence: Rethinking Civilian-based And Military Approaches: Molly Wallace

SEPTEMBER 7
Forum: Reorganizing and Limiting Military Defence: Defensive Defence, Mixing Civilian-Based Defence And Military Defence Civil Resistance and Autonomous Defence: Wilhelm und Hans-Heinrich Nolte *Lukas Mengelkamp* Nonviolent Campaigns and Violent Flanks: the More Violence, the Less Success: Jan Stehn
Forum: How To Organize Resistance, How To Deal With Modern Warfare: How Up-To-Date Is CBD In The Face Of Hybrid War, Automatized Weapons And AI? *Social defence- The Challenges of Repression: Julia Nennstiel* *Civilian-Based Defence Put To The Test: How Up-To-Date Is CBD In The Face Of Hybrid War, Automatized Weapons And AI?: Kurt Jaeger* *Response by Jochen Neumann*
Final Plenary: on discussions in various countries and research desiderata United in unity -how to bring different research traditions together? How to go on from here?

We thank all the speakers and presenters and the two staff persons from the campaign" *Defensible Without Weapons*" helping with organizing the conference, Nele Anslinger and Nicklas Böhm.

Summaries

Brian Martin gives an introduction on the main features of the concept. He emphasizes that there are only very few examples of organized social defence both against coups and against military aggression, and talks about different ways to move towards transarmament to nonviolent defence.

Jørgen Johansen approaches the issue from a biographical point of view, titling his contribution "from ‚against wars' to searching for alternatives". He comments on important writers on social defence, including Galtung and Sharp. The early authors mostly looked towards states to introduce social defence. Brian Martin was one of the first who in the 1980s challenged this conception and proposed social defence by people's action. One issue to which protagonists of social defence have not yet found an answer for is, as Jørgen points out, if its preparation can deter an attack.

Karen Kennedy understands social defence from an anarchist point of view and as a form of revolutionary nonviolence. In her presentation, she focuses on three examples – the international movement Navdanya founded by Vandana Shiva, Extinction Rebellion, and Rojava – for insights into the ways many groups are working towards a future social defence. Particular attention she pays to food sovereignty as a vital part of what social defence must defend.

Julia Kramer focuses her presentation on the resistance movement in Sudan on the issues of mutual aid and activist collective care. She concludes that mutual aid, addressing the wider society, and activist collective care inside social movements, are important instruments of nonviolent direct action in nonviolent resistance and therefore also in social defence.

Filip Daza Sierra presents shortly the findings of his study on civil resistance in Ukraine in the first months after the Russian attack in 2022, and describes how today certain forms of resistance still continue.

María Cárdenas Alfonso describes in her article that was written for the German magazine "Wissenschaft und Frieden" (Science and Peace")" the example of the "Guardias" in Colombia. In the context of the Colombian peacebuilding process, her article aims to shed light on how indigenous, Afro-Colombian and smallholder communities practise collective self-protection through integral security systems in the midst of omnipresent violence in order to secure the (survival) of their communities and ontologies.

Martin Arnold lists four critical questions asked about social defence and answers them, arguing that the evidence about civil resistance in general hints at the chances for success for social defence, and that social defence has the power to deter an attack. He compares military and social defence, listing advantages and disadvantages of both. He concludes that social defence,

without polarising and demonising alleged ‘enemies’, relies on prevention through the strengthening of internal structures and solidarity within society when it comes to protecting itself.

François Marchand starts off with identifying a “spirit of defence” as a precondition for any kind of defence. He then compares two ways of introducing social defence: “top-down” or “bottom-up”, concluding that both may be combined. As examples for both approaches he presents two historical cases in some detail: The resistance in Lithuania and in Kosovo in the 1990s.

Alexandre Christoyannopoulos’ article that we republish from International Affairs, reflects on what nonviolent resistance of Ukrainians to Russia's invasion, on a scale comparable to Ukraine's war efforts, might have looked like. He then carries the discussion to a more general level, advancing pacifist arguments against military options. He raises the issue of deeply ingrained convictions about human nature, and the idea only violence is effective as a last means. To overcome “self-reinforcing militarism and warism”, alternative options like civil resistance should be researched and developed.

Barbara Müller has restudied the unarmed resistance against the Ruhr occupation in 1923. She argues that it is wrong to reduce the concept of social defence to civil resistance. After shortly describing the different stages of the conflict, she comes to the conclusion that conflict management played an essential role in eventually overcoming the conflict, months after the end of the civil resistance period.

Kevin Kaisig gives a short overview over the emergence and institutional history of the Shanti Sena, the nonviolent peace army which was founded in India after Gandhi’s assassination. Its peace work activities across a wide span of conflicts in India and beyond are discussed as examples of social defence. The latter, in terms of the Shanti Sena, evolves around empowering local autonomy, agency, and community. This requires highly skilled, trustworthy, and selfless facilitators.

Anne Dietrich’s topic is conflict transformation. Based on her experience in the civil peace service in several African countries, and (*inter alia*) the teachings of Marshall C. Rosenberg, she argues that all spheres of social systems need to be radically reformed to needs-oriented systems. She calls this the ”new paradigm of subversive love”.

Eli McCarthy starts his argumentation off with a “just peace framework”. He then introduces the practice of unarmed civilian protection (UCP). Taking both together, "investment and development of UCP in the form of local peace teams across communities, along with a turn to prioritize a just peace praxis for engaging conflict and breaking cycles of violence”, conditions would be more fertile for a robust, sustainable social defence system.

Molly Wallace’s topic is relationship-building through defence. It is central for nonviolent defence but also matters for military defence. But while nonviolence “facilitates necessary relationship-building internally, among new/external allies, among the opponent group, and among the opponent’s security forces/soldiers, the violence of armed defence can have divergent—and mostly negative—effects on these forms of relationship-building necessary to successful defence.”

Wilhelm Nolte and Hans-Heinrich Nolte look afresh at the concept of autonomous defence that the brothers had developed in the 1980s. They argue that “on the long path to a civil global society a mix of military and nonviolent defence is a necessary step”. In situations where the goal of the attacker is to occupy a country to settle there, only military defence has a chance to work, as the example of World War II taught. The proposed mix of military and unarmed defence would be territorial: Military outside of towns, unarmed in towns, with armed partisan activities as a third element.

Jan Stehn looks at the role of “violent flanks” in nonviolent campaigns. He presents the findings of Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan who argue that while violent flanks may have some short-term positive effects, in the longer term they have negative effects and endanger the success of a movement.

The conference ended with an exchange on the learnings from the two days. A wider view linking social defence to conflict transformation and relationship-building was one of the issues identified as “new learnings”. The major disagreements were two that were already discussed

in former decades – namely the issue of combining unarmed and armed defence, and the role of the state in moving towards social defence. Christine Schweitzer has added to this concluding chapter a section on social defence in the 21st century which was not presented at the conference.

David Scheuing is editor of the magazine "Science and Peace ("Wissenschaft und Frieden", https://wissenschaft-und-frieden.de/).

Dr. Christine Schweitzer is a researcher at the IFGK and was until end of February 2025 Coordinator at the Federation for Social Defence.

Social defence – State of the Art

Brian Martin

I'm going to give an overview of social defence, starting with some basics and going from there.

To start, consider the very idea of social defence. During World War I, the famous mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote an article, "War and non-resistance"[2] that is probably as good an origin as any other. The point here is that the initial idea is important.

What do we call it? There are several terms for it, and they all mean basically the same thing. I prefer "social defence". Each term in English has somewhat different associations. They all involve "defence".

- Civilian defence
- Civilian-based defence
- Social defence
- Defence by civil resistance

Here are the **core features** of social defence, though there are possible variations and modifications of each one:

- No military
- Resistance by nonviolent action
- Popular participation

Social defence has always been linked with nonviolent action, also known as civil resistance, satyagraha and people power. Successes and innovations in nonviolent campaigns show what is possible in social defence. There's one big difference. Since the first major nonviolent campaigns in the 1800s, there have been thousands of others, but there are no examples of a community systematically adopting a social defence system.

There is an important difference between nonviolent action and social defence, in relation to changing or maintaining society. However, this isn't a rigid difference, as there are exceptions. Given that social defence is about resisting assaults on a society, this raises the question of what it is that's being defended. It's more about values than territory.

> Nonviolent action is about promoting (beneficial) change.
>
> Social defence is about resisting (harmful) change.

How does it work?

The methods of social defence are pretty much the methods of nonviolent action, as famously catalogued by Gene Sharp. In this sense, social defence can be considered an *application* of nonviolent action. However, there are two important additions. One is "maintaining society", which means continuing functions like agriculture, industry, communications, relationships and everything else that nurtures a community of people living together. The second is "international support", which might better be called building and maintaining connections with individuals and groups outside the community defending itself, especially with individuals and groups from places from which threats might arise.

- Persuasion
- Protests
- Obstruction (e.g., strikes, boycotts)
- Maintaining society
- International support

Historical Examples

There are only two good examples of coordinated nonviolent resistance against military invasions: the Ruhrkampf in Germany in 1923 and the resistance to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. There are also several examples of nonviolent resistance to coups: to the Kapp Putsch in Germany in 1920, to the Algerian generals who attempted to take power in

[2] https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/19sd/refs/Russell1915.pdf.

Algeria-France in 1961, and to the attempted coup in the Soviet Union in 1991. In the following, I'll use Czechoslovakia 1968 to illustrate features of social defence. The invasion by half a million Soviet and other Warsaw Pact countries in August 1968 was against a reform movement in Czechoslovakia, so-called "socialism with a human face", which was a threat to the authoritarian Soviet version of socialism.

How is it organized?

Social defence can be spontaneous or planned. In Czechoslovakia it was spontaneous. The Czechoslovak military decided it could only resist for a few days, and therefore did not attempt armed resistance at all. Instead, people initiated a potent resistance without arms. It is reasonable to presume that a well-prepared system of social defence would be more effective than a spontaneous one, just as a well-trained army is likely to be more effective than spontaneous armed resistance.

Social defence can be organised on national, local and global scales. Nearly all writing on social defence assumes that it is national defence, but this is not a requirement. The Czechoslovak resistance was national. It received no support from other countries. A global system would involve preparations in many parts of the world with arrangements to support any community under attack.

At the organisational level, there are several possible models of social defence. It could involve a fully professional force, in essence an army of nonviolent activists. This is not the usual idea. More commonly, most participants are not paid or otherwise rewarded; they are volunteers. There are other examples of volunteers undertaking life-saving service. In Australia, many firefighters and surf lifesavers are volunteers. There is also the possibility of a small number of professionals coordinating a largely volunteer operation. One disadvantage of having professionals as leaders is that they may be targeted by attackers, being imprisoned, killed or coerced by threats to their families. The same vulnerability is present for volunteer leadership. The greatest resilience comes with a network organisation in which no individual is crucial, in the sense that others can step in if needed.

Social defence is often proposed as a replacement for military defence. The process to do this is called transarmament. Just get rid of the military and introduce social defence in its place, and everything else can stay the same. A different perspective is that introducing social defence can involve, perhaps even *must* involve, major changes in the way society is organised, in the political and economic system. For example, workers can take action against an aggressor by shutting down production or making different products. This means workers need the capacity to act without the direction of bosses, who might be arrested, killed or co-opted by the aggressor. Empowering workers to autonomously take decisions is a challenge to the usual power structure in workplaces. This is just one example of how building the capacity for social defence has implications for the way society is organised.

How is it introduced?

In Czechoslovakia in 1968, the nonviolent resistance to the Soviet-led invasion developed spontaneously, without advance preparation. Another route to social defence is that it is introduced by the government, on its own initiative. A third path is citizens putting pressure on the government. A fourth is creating the capacity for social defence through a range of initiatives, for example training in nonviolent action, small-scale renewable energy systems, workers' control and communication systems resilient against takeover. A fifth path is a cascading process of introducing major social changes, possibly through the nonviolent overthrow of repressive governments.

- Spontaneous
- Government-led
- Citizen pressure
- Building an alternative
- Revolutionary change

Social defence is utopian, in the sense that it is an idea very far from realisation. The reason for this is the entrenched power of the military system embedded in the political and economic system through what is commonly called the military-industrial complex (which is tightly tied to the political system), widespread beliefs that violence will always triumph against unarmed opponents, continual alarms about foreign enemies, economic inequality (which reduces people's commitments to society as it exists, and hence their willingness to defend it), widespread reliance on professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers – and soldiers), and people's attachment to their country (which fosters an us-and-them mentality turning foreigners into potential competitors or threats).

- Military-industrial complex
- Beliefs about violence
- Fear-mongering
- Inequality
- Professionalization
- Nationalism

The usual assumption is that promoting social defence involves convincing people (including politicians) that it's a good idea, and when people are convinced they will act to bring about change. Another process is that changes will induce people to think in different ways. For example, when people are involved in groups with members from different parts of the world, they may be less nationalistic and more open to taking action against aggression in other parts of the world.

History of the concept

Stephen King-Hall's book *Defence in the Nuclear Age* was published in 1958.[3] He is pictured on the left. Anders Boserup (above) and Andrew Mack (right) wrote *War Without Weapons,* published in 1974.[4] These are two of many contributions by scholars and advocates in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Nearly all of them were men, white westerners. Despite this demographic limitation, there is much to be learned from studies from this period.

The peak of activity to promote social defence was in the 1980s. Not coincidentally, this was also the time of massive mobilisations against nuclear war. There were initiatives in many countries. Antonino Drago in Italy and Lineke Schakenbos in the Netherlands are among a great number of individuals who played important roles in organising to promote social defence. The history of these efforts remains to be written.

After the end of the Cold War in 1989, peace activism declined and so did interest in social defence, though actually there were some important contributions.

Possible changes to the concept needed now

Introducing a social defence system potentially involves changes throughout society. They include learning about methods of resistance, training in how to use them, designing technological systems so they support resistance, learning skills useful for resisters (learning foreign languages, learning how to be persuasive, learning to avoid using violence, learning how to deal with propaganda, etc.), making plans and running defence drills (by analogy with fire drills), designing communication systems, finding ways for everyone to participate, and adopting political and economic policies that support resistance. Putting all these together amounts to a drastic reconfiguration of thinking, capabilities and systems.

To summarise, there are many potential aspects to social defence. Some of the most important are nonviolence, collective decision-making, preparation, training and international networking.

Principles are fine, but they need to be applied, and there are innumerable ways to do this. Organic farming, for example, reduces dependence on artificial fertilisers and pesticides, and thus makes a community less dependent on industrial inputs that might be destroyed or controlled by an aggressor. Citizens' juries are a participatory form of decision-making, giving ordinary citizens experience in deliberation and increasing commitment to society.

Conclusion

If we think of social defence as progressing through several overlapping stages, from having

[3] https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/19sd/refs/King-Hall1958/index.html

[4] https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/19sd/refs/Boserup-Mack1974.pdf

the idea to being introduced, it seems that we are still in early stages, mainly the idea and research stages, with limited success in promotion and little progress towards introduction. If the idea emerged during World War I, with Bertrand Russell as an exemplary advocate, what does the future hold? In an era with the continual threat of nuclear war, who or what will lead the way to social defence?

For my writings on social defence, see https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/sd.html. I'm always happy to discuss ideas.

Contact me at bmartin@uow.edu.au

Dr. Brian Martin (born 1947) is emeritus professor of social sciences at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He is the author of 23 books and hundreds of articles on nonviolent action, dissent, scientific controversies, tactics against injustice, and other topics.

Reflecting on My Personal Development Regarding Social defence: From "Against Wars" to Searching for Alternatives

Jørgen Johansen

Main issues when I was 14 years old were:

- Environmental threats (pollution, destruction of nature, nuclear power…)
- War (Vietnam, nuclear arms race, armed liberation movements…)
- I engaged in several movements, and I refused conscription
- Relatively early, I asked myself: what are the alternatives?
- For the ecological issues, I engaged in the eco-philosophical movement and met Arne Næss and Sigmund Kvaløy; both serious scholars of Gandhi.
- In Gandhi, I found some possible alternatives to WAR/violence as a way to handle conflicts
- Since that time, I have devoted a lot of time to study, developing, and testing a wide variety of nonviolent means.

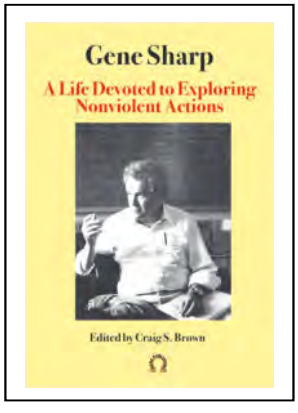
I found some early ideas for alternatives to the traditional military defence:

- "The Political Ethics of Gandhi" by Johan Galtung and Arne Næss published 1955 (extremely important and still only in Norwegian)
- "Defence without a military system" by Galtung published 1958 (also only available in Norwegian)
- These books led me to many of the classical books, like
  - "The Moral Equivalent of War" by William James from 1910
  - "The Power of Non-Violence" by Richard Gregg from 1934
  - "The Conquest of Violence" by Barthélemy de Ligt from 1937
  - and a lot of original texts by Gandhi

<u>Early ideas of "Civil Resistance":</u>

- Most early books (1960s to the first half of 80s) presented ideas about replacing military means with nonviolent forms of action.
- The focus was on territorial defence, just like the military means.
- Few questions about "what to defend?"
- Most works are relatively vague on the practical challenges of implementing these ideas.
- Some interesting historical case studies of nonviolent campaigns and actions were published
- Some studies of unarmed resistance during WWII occurred.
- Too many exaggerated the effectiveness and support for such resistance.

<u>Gene Sharp</u>



His PhD (and later the edited versions) gave us a new framework. He listed categories of hundreds of nonviolent actions. That made it easier to see the width of these political tools.

He collected these cases from social movements and from resistance in times of wars. In his early phase, he was engaged in the pacifist movements.

A new book describing his early years is out:

His main focus was to help us understand how nonviolent actions had been used and function in political struggles. He later developed specific ideas about nonviolent means to replace military strategies and weapon systems. Often, he used the term civilian-based defence (CBD).

One of Gene's goals was to convince leaders of armies, liberation movements and states around the world that CBD was superior. Through the Civilian-Based Defence Association (CBDA) he promoted these ideas and got some positive feedback from a few governments and armies. The Minister of Defence in Lithuania, Audrius Butkevicius, said about the book: "I would rather have this book than the nuclear bomb"

In order to be seen as a "serious defence strategist" he distanced himself from the radical pacifist movements on many occasions. As a member of the Board of CBDA I participated in many discussions about two key questions:

- What are the most efficient ways to promote these ideas?
- Can we change focus from defending territory/border to values?

Some arguments that never took off:

- The concept of non-offensive defence (NOD) with books and a journal originated from Bjørn Møller at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research in Copenhagen. The focus was on military means that could not be used for attacking, like fortresses and short-range guns, and they included landmines!
- Several books in the eighties argued for combining non-offensive military means with unarmed strategies. "Total Defence; an Introduction to a new military debate in Norway" by Galtung and Hansen 1984 was one of them, and Adam Roberts "Security through 'Alternative Defence'".
- Alternative Defence Commission in UK: Defence without the Bomb were some other books in this field.
- Civilian Based Defence did not provide the "fighters"/activists with any protection in the Geneva Conventions of 1949. They were neither civilians nor soldiers and hence lacked the same rights as journalists, medical personnel, Red Cross etc have in war zones.

When Brian Martin, with his book "Uprooting War" in 1984, moved the focus from states to people, values and civil society, he opened up the door to a new perspective. He was not the first one, but that book took some serious steps in the direction of discussing a defence system without having a state as an essential ingredient of the equation. This anarcho-pacifist tradition goes long back in the history of the peace movement (although not always very outspoken/visible). In my view, Brian's core ideas contribute substantially to the development of important perspectives on new defence concepts.

There are many excellent books and dissertations on historical examples

- Barbara Müller (1995): "Passiver Widerstand im Ruhrkampf. Eine Fallstudie zur gewaltlosen zwischenstaatlichen Konfliktaustragung und ihren Erfolgsbedingungen"[5]
- Steven Duncan Huxley (1990): Constitutionalist insurgency in Finland: Finnish "passive resistance" against Russification as a case of non-military struggle in the European resistance tradition.
- Howard Clark (2000): Civil resistance in Kosovo.
- Lennart Bergfeldt (1993): Experiences of civilian resistance: the case of Denmark 1940-1945.
- Gene Sharp (1958): Tyranny Could Not Quell Them (on the Norwegian teachers struggle 1942).

Plus, there are many good books with multiple cases described. Good case studies cannot, and should not, be copied, but they can inspire people to adopt ideas for their own context.

Making it more concrete: Very early in my studies, I felt that many of the cases were avoiding in-depth discussions about the complexities and difficulties. The ideas were too theoretical and often biased. And it wasn't easy to imagine how to implement them in other contexts. I spent some years in the mid-80s writing a book: "Never Again April 9. Civil Resistance in Halden Municipality: an outline for Planning". There, I went through many sectors of society and discussed how they could have acted in case of a military invasion. Examples of such sectors: health care,

[5] "Passive resistance in the Ruhr. A case study to nonviolent conflict resolution between states and the conditions for its success"

factories, schools, public administration, farming, water and electricity supply, transport sector, telecommunication, trade unions, religious communities, peace movements, sports clubs, libraries, cultural organisations. I still think we should do more of that type of concrete planning.

Some key questions for a Social defence

- Defending WHAT?
- How to organise?
- To what degree can we avoid hierarchical structures?
- How and who to make decisions?
- Building on existing networks/organisations or establishing new ones?
- Or a combination of several organisational models?
- How and who should take the lead in the initial phase of building a SD?
- To what degree is it wise to cooperate with the State structure?
- Ministry of Peace/Social defence?
- How do we finance the planning and implementation?

I do not think any state or other strong political/financial power will ever give serious support for training people in nonviolent actions. They know such skills can be used against themselves at the next crossroad. But there is a need for more planning, strategizing, and training. Most armies do not send their soldiers to the battlefield with less than 12 months of training and exercises. There are no reasons to believe that a social defence group needs less training than a military army! How can "we" create something comparable? A new broad-based popular movement with such a goal is possible to imagine, perhaps similar to the early development of trade unions?

Deterrence

An argument used (not by me) is that a robust military defence will deter the "enemy" from attacking. One weakness with the theories and examples of non-military defence is that they are, to some degree, based on what could be done when an attack or occupation is already happening. Many of us argue that SD is the best option to make a country impossible to rule if occupied, but we have little empirical evidence that it can deter attacks. If we want to deter an attacker, we need to convincingly give sufficient evidence that it will be too costly or impossible to control and to exploit the people/territory/resources that they want to take.

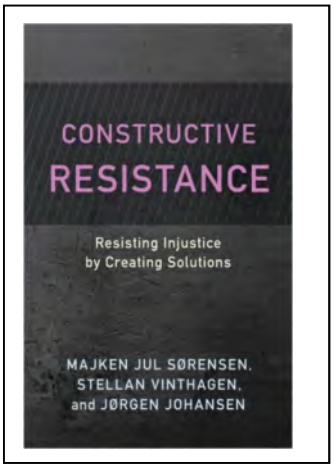
How do we do that? For the moment, we cannot even convince a majority of the activists in the peace movement.

Constructive Social defence

- Less defending against threats
- More focus on building a robust, just, sustainable and resilient society
- Most examples in this book are relatively large scale examples of how to resist injustices by creating alternatives
- I believe we can multiply and expand such projects
- They could be building blocks of a strong Social defence

A lot of hard work to be done!

Let us have some good discussions and creative brainstorming in the years ahead!



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Social Contexts

Karen Kennedy

Introduction

This paper is one interpretation of the concept of social defence. This way of understanding social defence is based on my 2018 – 2022 PhD research (UNE) which engaged with the question, *Whatever Happened to Social defence*? Brian Martin posed the question in 2014 by way of provocation and invitation. While I could not answer the question, I could (based on extensive reading of Martin's texts as well as broader scholarly and activists' texts within nonviolence and pacificism, gain an idea of what was meant by the concept of social defence (SD).

SD can also be called Unarmed Civilian Defence, instead of War, as the group World Beyond War put it. The important terms are, instead of war and/or an alternative to the military. The paper offers insights from the three movements I focussed on as I considered the guiding question, whatever happened to SD? These are Navdanya, Rojava and Extinction Rebellion (XR).

The discussion will then move briefly into the significance of food systems for SD and the relationships between food and war. In his book, *Food or War* (Cambridge University Press 2019) Julian Cribb asked another question that was important to my research. Will we choose food or will we choose war?

From the perspective of social defence we must choose food. Food is the basis of our social contexts. One answer to the question, what are we defending or securing? Is that SD aims to defend vital social systems from multiple forms of violence; structural, epistemological and systemic.

Food systems are vital social systems. This research did not focus on other vital social systems such as communications and transport. These omissions do limit the research. I only used texts written in English which posed another limit to the way in which I learned about the concept. However, my focus on food systems is clearly linked to ecological systems, such as climate, energy, soil, water and seeds. As well as to ethics, politics and systems of learning.

To the best of my knowledge my PhD is the only one on this topic in English, particularly over the last 30 years. There are tens of thousands on nonviolence and nonviolent action, civil resistance and social movements more broadly. The topic is broad and requires a wide angle, systems view lens.

Social defence: Key terms and comments.

Speculation, Recuperation, Responsibility, Anarchism, Pacifism.

Social defence disturbs the military system by imagining that it does not exist. Considered as an alternative to the military, it is clearly a speculative concept. There is no nonviolent jurisdiction within the global system of International Humanitarian law or within any national constitution to the best of my knowledge. Nations that do not have militaries or standing armies (for e.g. Costa Rica, Iceland) have political and military alliances and assurances from big power states. The US, Russia, China, for example.

Neither global social policy nor International Humanitarian Law have been able to sustain arguments for the demilitarisation of politics and polities. Conflicts over vital resources and political ideologies are still solved by the use of collectively organised forms of violence. Vast killing systems continue to be produced and used to defend and secure territories, ideas and resources. Large profits sure up the defence industrial base of the United States, Australia and many other nations.

Defining the non-existent: social defence is a form of revolutionary nonviolence. It speculates on an anarcho-pacifist peace as an alternative to the military system of defence and security. Its aim is to defend vital aspects of society from all forms of aggression and repression. Using unarmed and nonviolent methods.

The concept is contentious and even within peace studies, is marginal. I found it to be incredibly unpopular. For example, I was told by colleagues within peace studies quite early in my research "that no one is interested in social defence". The topic and therefore the concept was not on any other academic agendas here in Australia with the exception of Brian Martin.

The research proposition was that significant and vital aspects of a nascent social defence system are, epistemologically, ontologically and axiologically well developed within agroecology and/or anarchism/grass roots politics as they unfold in myriad prefigurative formations of resistance and rebellion today. That what seems like a farfetched idea is not that hard to imagine.

I used four key ideas from the literature to think about how elements of SD can be applied to existing movements for systems change. To ask, what can we learn from them?

- That Social defence, as an alternative to the military, is possible.
- That it empowers people to take responsibility to work collectively against all forms of oppression and aggression.
- That it will likely be resisted by governments.
- That existing institutions will need to be replaced and alternatives created.

(B. Martin, 2014,2019).

I will come back to these key ideas when highlighting the movements.

As a concept SD does not present anything new. It's re articulation arose in response to the prospect of nuclear war in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is a modern ideal. However, non-warring cultures have precedent and have been explored by Douglas Fry in his book *Beyond War* (Oxford University Press,2007). This work includes documentation of cultures *with* social and ecological systems that have used minimal violence and cultures without systems of warfare. Fry takes a deep view of history which is also evident in the work of some anthropology, archaeology, human geography and other areas that explore human society. From this deeper historical perspective, it becomes clear that *unlearning* is needed if the concept is to be re-booted – so to speak - in the 21st Century. This type of unlearning is at the same time a process of decolonisation. One of the reasons the concept may have fallen off activists and academic agenda's is that nonviolent action is being recuperated.

Recuperation: "When the state becomes the revolution it becomes my enemy again". (J S Scott, Against the Grain, Yale University Press, 2017).

Modern nonviolent action was formulated as action that occurs outside of regular political channels. Now it is mainstream. This complete about turn can be explained by following the processes of recuperation. The modern corporate state has captured and recoded the basis of nonviolent action and then sold it back to polities, as something that governments dreamed up and/or allow through legal mechanisms to facilitate democracy or social cohesion. It is clearly used to bring down some dictators while others benefit.

The fatal blow – you can be nonviolent; indeed, we insist that you are – when it suits us. And when it doesn't – force will be unleashed, unarmed activists will be killed and jailed and the media will fill with miss and dis information. Australian governments have created new legislation that criminalises and further marginalises nonviolent direct action as have other nation states.

Capitalist society recuperates cultural and material challenges to it by absorbing, confusing and then re-coding the substance of the challenge to suit its own logic.[6] Capital then profits by selling and or promoting what has been recuperated back to publics. When thinking about SD and by following the work of Brian Martin, Robert Burrowes, David Graeber and others, nonviolent action has been recuperated by governments and their attendant institutions. The upshot seems to be that Social defence has lost its radical edge. The social effect of recuperation seems to be a compounding lack of will to imagine that alternatives to the military are possible.

Agroecology, the proposed alternative to agribusiness has also been recuperated according to international networks researching and advocating for it. They have found that "strategic

[6] U. Gordon (2009): *Anarchy Alive*, p.51. See also J McQuinn (2009): Post-left Anarchy, 2009, *Anarchist Library*, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jason-mcquinn-post-left-anarchy-leaving-the-left-behind. Anarcha feminists and ecofeminists have also explained the process.

capture of some of the goals, discourses and practices of agroecology… for the purposes of changing everything, so that nothing changes".[7]

Accused of being inconsequential by many, particularly those advocating so called realist politics and policy, anarchists experimenting with social revolutions had a resurgence in the late 20th century when the broad left took a less dogmatic turn and key anarchist tactics such as direct action and prefigurative politics were embraced. Anarchists have a deep historical association with feminism, pacifism and ecological alternatives. They have for as long as we have known about them and increasingly within the revolts of the late 20th and early 21st century put their efforts into creating alternatives based on mutual solidarity, care and individual sovereignty.

While there is no consensus within anarchist movements on many issues, including the use of violence. A deep history offers compelling evidence of their evolution and commitments to pacifism. My doctoral research and the MA (RES 2012) I undertook prior to that suggests that anarchism and pacifism work best when they are kept together. For scholar Joseph Llewellyn, "the commitment to a cooperative social order based on voluntary agreement is common to both anarchism and pacifism, yet barely explored in nonviolent literature".[8] Practical examples of anarcho pacifism that empower people and create alternatives are the Rainbow Family of Living Light and the group Food Not Bombs. Both self-organise, work to empower others, experiment with nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and aim to provide theory and practice of and for alternative social systems.

Militaries like most institutions are based on hierarchies of professionalisation, skills, knowledge and power. As Brian Martin frequently admits, what is most challenging about the idea of Social defence is that it clashes with the "usual dependence on professionals, instead of relying on someone else for defence, it becomes a community responsibility" (B. Martin, Revolutionary Agenda, 2017, p. 7). Within anarchist theory and practice responsibility is a defining principle of prefigurative politics. The basic idea is that individuals and their collectives act to prefigure the future they have imagined. Applied to a future SD, prefigurative politics provide knowledge and practice that places responsibility on each of us. As anarchist researchers paying attention to prefigurative politics, in this instance, Uri Gordon suggest.

> *For anarchists and their allies, it will become increasingly important to be involved in building independent, sustainable alternatives and community self-sufficiency…constructive direct action along these lines is especially relevant in the advanced capitalist countries where most anarchists are located and where community ties and basic skills have been thoroughly eroded.*[9]

Governments are unlikely to put social defence on their agendas. Rational argument and even evidence seem to go nowhere. But we do know they go somewhere, they are recuperated, marginalised and subjugated. For anarchists, by name, by deed or by affinity, "the focus is on building "capacity and endurance."[10] It is highly likely that no one is talking about social defence because as David Graeber put it "everyone is afraid of people doing things for themselves."
In my interpretation of the concept, SD seeks to anarchise nonviolence, return it to grass roots participatory forms of democracy and restore its revolutionary potential. Paying attention to XR, Navdanya and Rojava offer insights into the ways many groups are working towards a future SD. However, the fact remains that it does not exist – yet. What the movements I researched help to show that anarchists, pacifists and their allies are not as marginal as authorities make them out to be. That we are in many ways more prepared than is often acknowledged to defend our vital social systems.

XR and Navdanya both assert that systems change requires personal change. As individuals we

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[7] A. A. Fradejas, et a.l, (2020): *Junk Agroecology: The Corporate Capture of Agroecology for a Partial Ecological Transition Without Justice*, ATI, TNI, Crocevia, April 2020, p.7-9.

[8] J. Llewlleyn (n.d.): *Envisioning an Anarcho Pacifist Peace,* Envisioning an Anarcho-Pacifist Peace | The Anarchist Library

[9] U. Gordon (2009): *Dark Tiding*s, 2009, p. 257, https://libcom.org/article/contemporary-anarchist-studies-introductory-anthology-anarchy-academy

[10] Ibid, R Kinna, Govt of No One,

are not on an outside looking in. We do need to be concerned with the ways in which we are part of the current systems and with the ways in which we are able, to the best of our abilities and capacities, to take part in constructing alternatives. As the late Bob Waldrop, author of I Permie and renowned permaculture educator put it, "the government will not save us until we become the government. If you doubt this, watch the news and read the daily paper for a week."[11]

Navdanya

Navdanya is an international movement formed by Vandana Shiva and her colleagues. Their base is in India and they have been operating for over 30 years. Navdanya follow and teach Gandhian politics of self-reliance and use civil disobedience as part of their Satyagraha. In Shiva's words Navdanya is a response to the corporate take-over of seeds and of lifeforms on this planet. (Navdanya Fall Newsletter, 2024). Navdanya construct and run alternative institutions and alternative ways of learning.[12]

Coming back to the four key aspects of SD: That Social defence, as an alternative to the military, is possible. That it empowers people to take responsibility to work collectively against all forms of oppression and aggression. That it will likely be resisted by governments. That existing institutions will need to be replaced and alternatives created.

Navdanya's existence and global reach show that Social defence is possible. Navdanya empowers others to work collectively against the corporate take over of agriculture and lifeforms. They have used noncooperation and civil disobedience in campaigns and in networked and non-hierarchical alliances locally, nationally and globally. As Shiva put, "Why did Gandhi say, Be the change you want to see? He said too many people use to much of an excuse to say, I can't do this because the system must change before I change. But you are a living force in the world. The minute you see you are not alone, that you are interconnected with all other living beings, it changes your potential." (*Seeds of Vandana Shiva*, IMB).

Shiva has faced resistance from capitalists such as Bill Gates, from universities, Individuals and from states. The Indian government has not taken up agroecology which Navdanya teaches and demonstrates. Navdanya support the global peasant movement La Via Campesina through solidarity and through their commitment to food, seed and water sovereignty. All of which act as alternatives to mainstream agriculture – aka – the imperial food system currently in place globally. They support decolonising efforts by reclaiming indigenous seeds and crops, by using forest-based systems of learning and by producing research that shows the damage the 1% have imposed on Unity. Their alternatives stand ready to replace the existing institutions through the practice of Earth Democracy, eco feminism, Gandhian nonviolence and agroecology.

Prefiguring nonviolent alternatives is the challenge all satyagrahis take up. Madha Patkar put it this way, "People can't spend their whole time, fighting, fighting, fighting, we must also demonstrate that there are alternatives."[13] And, as the saying goes, once you have experienced something, it's hard to say that you didn't know about it.

XR

Extinction Rebellion arose in 2018 and operated globally though predominantly in the UK Europe and Australia until the Covid 19 pandemic provided a legal and militarised way to keep people at home.

The movement is still going but has fragmented and lost its original momentum.[14] XR Rebels are still active here in Australia and in the UK and efforts continue to work towards the XR's 3rd demand. The creation of citizen assemblies.

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[11] B Waldrop, *Ipermie, How to permaculture your urban lifestyle, a good-life design guide for Millennials, Boomers and Generation X*, Bob Waldrop, 2013, pdf creative commons, p 1- 466, this quote, p.196

[12] https://www.navdanya.org/index.php

[13] Ibid, p. 16.

[14] https://rebellion.global/

The 1st demand of XR is to tell the truth. The 2nd, to act like that truth is real. Locally, most of the members of Lismore XR (the group I joined) are now involved in off shoot actions that take direct action around climate change issues such as fires and floods. New laws have been enacted to prevent such activists disrupting business as usual. The state and public insist Rebels are nonviolent but only in ways that do not disrupt the economy, public institutions or corporate events.

Groups such as Rising Tide[15] and Disrupt Land Forces[16] are organising along the same kinds of theory and practice that inspired XR and is common of social movements from the 1990's; Mark and Paul Engler's This is an Uprising[17] offers a sound example of the strategies and tactics used.

XR have empowered others to take part in direct actions by offering nonviolent action training and by producing free media and other resources. Rebels provided examples of their theories of social action and nonviolent change. As their rebellions gained support, nation states branded them terrorists, outliers, doom prophets and more. Strictly nonviolent and committed to civil disobedience the movement had to admit that in the context of life and death nonviolence is a privilege. That not everyone is treated the same way when in the courts of laws or the jails of the state that seeks to prevent their civil disruptions.

That in some places, the Syrian War is one example, taking nonviolent action is likely to result in death. As with the SD literature the question of casualties within nonviolent revolts is rarely discussed. Despite the various objection to the movement, not least its spectacular rise, it is widely agreed that XR made a huge impact on the climate movement. My own research concluded, or suggested, that, like other movements solely focussed on climate change, XR had taken their eyes off the ever expanding and polluting military system.

The dots were not joined explicitly. The system keeping the ecological, social and political systems of the ruling system in place are doing so because they have the protection of the military, industrial, technological media complex. The common saying is, that if you take your eyes of the ball, it will hit you in the face. Imagine that same momentum being applied to transitioning out of the military system, to global disarmament.

The experiments of Rojava

Rojava is in part accidental and spontaneous. That it has survived and thrived despite all the hostilities and embargos constraining and surrounding it shows what happens when, as Graeber put it, "suddenly, that 95%, or so of most human populations that is normally told their perspectives count for nothing are suddenly free to find out what they are actually good at and say whatever they want."[18]

Rojava can be seen as practicing revolutionary nonviolence precisely because the distinctions made on ideological grounds about violence and nonviolence simply do not hold. Diversity of tactics is now and arguably always has been discussed and used within nonviolent action literature. Particularly when that literature relates to anarchism and/or pacifism. Pacifists do not a priori rule the use of some violence out of their understandings of the theory and practice. I found Andrew Fiala (ed), *Routledge Handbook of Pacificism and Nonviolence* (Routledge 2018) provided a comprehensive reference to renewed interest into the traditions, philosophy and the social and political considerations of pacifism. A diversity of nonviolent tactics are surely the aim of social defence. It cannot be assumed that these would be successful in situations free of intense armed conflict.

Debates over what counts as violence, for example, property damage continue in the literature. It is clear that states do count property damage as violence. It is also true that individual acts of aggression, repression and violence are not the same as, nor are they treated the same as

[15] https://www.risingtide.org.au/

[16] https://disruptlandforces.org/

[17] http://thisisanuprising.org/

[1818] D Graeber, Foreword, in M Knapp, A Flach and E *Ayboga Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan*, Pluto Press, 2016, p. xvi.

collectively organised violence.

Rojava did not fit into my research in the same way that Extinction Rebellion, Rainbow Family or Navdanya does. In comparison those examples seem relatively straightforward because they are using only nonviolent methods. On the surface this makes it look like they fit seamlessly into social defence and revolutionary nonviolence. In obvious ways, these examples do make the best case studies. Once you move beyond the absolutes it is clear that there is no consensus around what and who is violent and/or nonviolent. What does seem clear is that,

> *the war for the imagination is the only one the capitalists seem to have definitely won. Even when the system completely discredited itself in 2008, no one seemed to have the slightest idea what an alternative would look like*.[19]

Rojava has offered an alternative with international solidarity. It is understood by some but not all, at the official peacebuilding level as an example of a Zone of Peace, within the Syrian Civil War. This line of thinking emerged between 2011 and 2014 and more precariously since.[20]

The instrumental use of an outdated international legal system and rapidly evolving lethal technology is keeping Rojava from providing an example of participatory, feminist and ecological democracy. Bringing Rojava into revolutionary nonviolence is one sure way to pierce the separations of the ruling capitalist culture and the violence of toxic masculinity that many agree underpin it. The women of Rojava made their own decisions, inspired by the mature work of Abdulla Ocalan and by international social anarchists.

What began as a very small group of unofficial female fighters that had taken part in the liberation of Jazira (CIZIRE) canton in the city of Derik has become a women-led armed social defence force with principles, rules and practices, like any other defence force. "They generally do not attack and operate on the principle of retaliation."[21] Commanding positions in the YPJ are rotated and new members and married women with children are not allowed to fight on the front lines.[22]

The experiments of Rojava is not a solution which fits any theory perfectly, it is an evolving revolutionary situation in which people are experimenting with their truth and acting like that truth is real. If SD is both revolutionary and could take place in the contexts of other revolutions, the experiments of Rojava have something to offer. Removing them from considerations of SD would also remove them from the central concepts of sharing and caring. Readers unfamiliar with their experiments will find the documents on the Emergency Committee for Rojava a good place to start,[23]

Food and War

"Food is a weapon of war. When you sell real weapons and arms, you control armies. When you control food, you control society." [24]

Using food as the basis of demilitarising and dismantling the enclosers of the military system could be achieved through agroecology, permaculture and local governance systems of participatory democracy. Even amid the Syrian war, the Rojavans have demonstrated this. There are few signs this is going happen in the current global contexts but that does not mean it is not possible. Hope is evident.

Julian Cribb's work points out that, "contrary to the popular imagery of war, hunger is a far greater killer than military action or disease, though it interacts with both".[25] Cribb's

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[19] Ibid, p. 168.

[20] A Nordagh, Exploring Peace in the Midst of War: Rojava as a Zone of Peace, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol16. No.1, 2021, Ekie Welt, add name and details, UMea, UNSC,

[21] Ibid.

[22] Theory of the Rose, complete the citation.

[23] . https://www.defendrojava.org/rojava

[24] The Seeds of Vandana Shiva (2021), https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4828328/quotes/

[25] Ibid, J Cribb, *Food or War*, p. 1.

fundamental argument is not new and follows the idea of converting Swords into Ploughshares.

For Cribb and many others, "the nation state has reached is used-by date, as a structure for human self-organisation and we may need to explore different structures of self-governance if we wish to survive."[26] Such alternative structures, I contend here, are evident in the concept of Social defence and the alternatives being prefigured by Navdanya, XR, Rojava and Rainbow Family. Cribb does not go into these. However, he did described agroecology, in his 'future of food' chapter, as

> *an approach that combines innovation and tradition has emerged, one that could transform the way we grow food, it's called agroecology and it places ecological science at the centre of agriculture. It's a scrappy movement that's taking off globally.*[27]

People can save the world through food. This is the message of agroecology and permaculture; it is the message of Via Campesina and the movements for food sovereignty. It is the message of scholars, Julian Cribb, World Food Program's' Alex De Waal. It is the message of Indigenous scholar and farmer Bruce Pascoe. It is the message from Food Not Bombs. The solutions are here, the concept of Social defence is here and this conference gives me hope that it may be returned to the agendas of activists and others working towards alternatives.

Agriculture is the system that allows states and corporations to regulate existence. This is biopolitical control and it is now at the molecular level through fourth industrial revolution technologies. In the original GATT of 1948, Agriculture was largely removed.[28] Movements opposing the infrastructures set up to facilitate the current reassertion of the US based global food system have long argued that the WTO is undemocratic, unfair, unjust, ineffective and violent.[29] Just three years on from UNDROP, Mathew Canfield, Molly Anderson and Philip Mc Michael's review of the July 2021 food summit, explains why the 2021 summit is being boycotted by many significant food sovereignty groups and concerned scientists. To begin with, the summit has been called by the WEF, rather than the CFS and the FAO.[30] The chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group signed a

> *strategic partnership with the WEF who are promoting the interests of the worlds' largest corporations through the same ideas that agroecology has advanced through food sovereignty. This move is intended to allay opposition to neoliberal globalization through a new vision of "stakeholder capitalism and multi stakeholder global governance*".[31]

Once again, civil societies' agroecologists are having their conversation at another table.

The politics and formations of food sovereignty offer sustenance to the concept of social defence and enhance the prospects of transitions with multispecies justice. Empowering food, as the movements show is one way to empower people to challenge oppression and aggression. To do this collective organisation and communications are needed to sustain the direct actions being undertaken to defend food producers and the planet. Sitting at their own table, LVC and others are clear that food sovereignty means, "land, water, seeds, bread and solidarity."[32] The

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[26] Ibid, p.199.

[27] Ibid. p. 258.

[28] B Winders (2009): 'The Vanishing Free Market: The Formation and Spread of the British and US Food Regimes.' Journal of Agrarian Change, /vol. 9. No. 3 July 2009; Ibid, P McMichael, WTO.org history, add weblink,

[29] V Baird, Just, open and Green: 14 ways towards a better global trade, *New Internationalist*, Trade in Turmoil, Jan, Feb 2019, p 34-36, P Mc Michaels, The Agrarian Question Revisited, *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1997, Ibid, Commentary, 2016, V Shiva, The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply and other essays in *The Vandana Shiva Reade*r, University of Kentucky Press, 2014, p 1-329

[30] Ibid, Canfield, et. al UNFSS, corporate reset, 2021, p 1.

[31] Ibid, p. 2.

[32] LVC, Several Movements boycotting the UN Food Systems Summit, will hold counter mobilisations, *ViaCampesina.Org*, July 20, 2021,https://viacampesina.org/en/several-social-movements-are-boycotting-the-un-food-systems-summit-will-hold-counter-mobilizations-in-july/ (accessed October, 2021).

UN's 2021 Food summit was seen as a distraction from the real problems the planet faces, has been formed by the world's top 1000 corporations and is "disproportionately influenced by corporate actors, lacks transparency and accountability and diverts critical mass and resources away from the solutions needed…"[33] UNFSS is accused of offering false solutions, renaming failed schemes and ramping up corporate abuse of power. Peasants finally made it onto the rights menu of the UN https://digitallibrary.un.org/record , only to see the system hijacked by the very people it is designed to stop.

Concluding

Modern states command the use of collective violence and call it law enforcement, just war and/ or self defence. Though their laws are enforced to prevent other laws being broken and, in war they are used to prevent humanitarian catastrophe, or provide territorial defence, "the state's presumed right of collective self-defence is the major justification for the use of violence in both cases."[34] From the perspective of Social defence revolutionary nonviolence requires the same kind of focus humans have reluctantly put on climate change also be focussed on military change. The first demand could follow the continuity of revolutionary nonviolence in the same way that XR have. Tell the truth. Then we need to act like that truth is real. Yet even radical activists find it hard to image global disarmament.[35] War is what makes modern capitalism work, food wars provide the evidence for that. War is socially institutionalised and profoundly misunderstood. As Simon Hill put it, "armed forces are not there to protect us, but to protect the powerful. Let's have the courage to say so."[36] Let's also have the courage to reinstate the concept of Social defence and prefigure its future. To remember that vested interests depend on marginalising alternatives to the military but, these alternatives may not be as marginal as they are made out to be.

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[33] Ibid.

[34] R L Holmes, Pacifism and contemporary Morality, in Ibid, A Fiala, p. 108.

[35] S Hill, What if Armed Forces were abolished, *New Internationalis*t, 7, October ,2021, https://newint.org/features/2021/08/09/what-if-armed-forces-abolished.

[36] Ibid.

Civilian-Based Defence, Mutual Aid and Activist Collective Care: Learnings from Sudan

Julia Kramer

Since 2008, I have been working in the context of Sudan and was very close to the movement that toppled the Bashir dictatorship in 2019. While I think it would be much better if a Sudanese activist scholar would speak here today, I decided to take the liberty and opportunity to speak here – for once as most of my Sudanese friends and colleagues are busy with more urgent things right now due to the war, secondly as the context of Sudan – even though it is the context with the most displaced and most starving people on the planet today – internationally is hardly spoken about. And thirdly, it gives me the opportunity to sort my thoughts and information with regards to experiences around civilian-based defence and mutual aid in the context of Sudan, and put them for discussion.

As a content note: What I will speak on will include references to different kinds of extreme direct and structural violence.

My focus is to look at the interlinkages of civilian-based defence and mutual aid as well as other kinds of collective care, and what we can learn about this from the context of Sudan.

I am doing so, as I observe that when we discuss about civilian-based defence, we mostly look at nonviolent action-based strategies and structures, and not so much about the potential human security related risks that civilian-based defence claims to defend. My hypothesis is, that addressing these will work as an enabler for people to get convinced, involved, and actually survive being active as part of civilian-based defence – and hence I am interested to find out whether the currently upcoming debate on the concept of „mutual aid", as well as practices of activist collective care, and experiences like the ones in Sudan, can contribute to fill that gap.

On the structure and sources of my talk:
I will start off with definitions of mutual aid, the Sudanese concept of Nafeer, and of activist collective care. Then I will move on to experiences and practices of the Sudanese movement for Freedom, Peace, Justice and an end to military dictatorship from 2009 up to today, and lastly I will suggest some learnings from this with regards to the concept and practices of civilian-based defence.
I base my input on desk research, own and secondary testimonies, and three qualitative, guideline-based interviews with Sudanese activists in exile, held in August 2024.

Definitions

What is mutual aid? With regards to the concept of mutual aid, I mainly but not only refer to Dean Spade's book „Mutual Aid – Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the next)". In this book, mutual aid is defined as „survival work, when done alongside social movement demands for transformative change" (fold text). „It provides social spaces where people grow new solidarities." (p.2) „Mutual aid efforts cultivate shared analysis of the problem and connect people with social movements that can address the problem." (p.29)

In this way, it is an antidote to the approach of „charity", with its problematic features of paternalism, deservingness-hierarchies, and ultimately stabilisation of an unjust, unsustainable status quo. A common slogan therefore is „Solidarity not Charity". It does not wait for official – in many cases militarised – rescue operations.

As opposed to activities of „survivalists" or „preppers", Mutual aid efforts care for the survival needs and human security collectively on the basis of human rights and vulnerability, and include an outlook on social change towards human rights and human security for all.

The concept and discourse of „mutual aid" is so far mainly shaped in the Global North (even though often addressing survival needs of people who could be considered the „South of the North"). Dean Spade mainly refers to US examples like from the Black Panther Party, the Occupy movement, or the Sylvia Rivera Law Project of Trans and Non-Binary Youth. Other prominent contexts, in which the concept evolved, were hurricanes like the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans area.

It is from this perspective, that Spade considers for people to „live in the most atomised societies in human history, which makes our lives less secure and undermines our ability to organise together to change unjust conditions on a large scale" (p.8.). I would add, that the other limiting factor is that we live in the most economically dependent societies on a global scale. Both of these dynamics lead to us being „forced to rely on hostile systems".

In the context of Sudan, the hostility of the system goes up to the point of army and militia waging war against and actively starving the people. As I speak right now, Sudanese people face multiple crises of war, famine, lack of health care and clean water, displacement (often multiply), and war and climate change related floods.

At the same time, Sudanese communities and cultures may have different experiences and practices that are less based on atomisation and more on collective care, than what we have created and continue to create and re-enact; for example the concept and practices of **„Nafeer"**. Nafeer, as one of my interview partners says, is defined as „helping together in the neighbourhood for things that need many people" – this could be funerals or weddings, repairing houses after a heavy rain or flood, organising food or fuel if there is not enough, transporting the sick etc. Trust and mutual support, especially in the neighbourhoods, as we shall see later, were and are proving as key both during revolution against military dictatorship (as a form of nonviolent resistance similar to social defence) and war.

When looking at the Sudanese resistance and survival experiences, I realised that there is another important aspect at the intersection of nonviolent resistance and actual survival needs, that enable people and the movement to become and stay active and resilient, and actually survive repression: I would call it **„activist collective care"**. This includes structures and patterns of practices with regards to dealing with repression and its effects, that go beyond individual and small group risk and security management. I will bring in examples of this later-on.

Experiences from Sudan

Let us now take a look at how Nafeer / Mutual Aid, as well as Activist Collective Care were practiced in different recent historical phases from the most recent revolution to the current war:

Overview:

- Revolution Phase 1 (2009 – about 2013): Organising, speaking out and breaking fear
- Revolution Phase 2 (2013-2018): Mass mobilisation and build-up. Development of Neighbourhood Resistance Committees
- Revolution Phase 3 (2018-2019): Mass resistance: mass demonstrations and „Chiada sit-in"
- Transition Period and Coup 2019-2021/2023 (Coup 2021): Working on systemic change
- War since April 2023: Mutual aid for survival

Revolution phase 1(2009 – about 2013): Organising, speaking out and breaking fear

Mutual aid: With regards to mutual aid, people were documenting and speaking out on survival issues, but there was no broader mutual aid on a societal level as such (however, due to the Nafeer-related closeness of neighbourhoods, often friends from specific localities were getting active together).

Activist collective care, however, was key from the beginning, for example in terms of livelihood support for prisoner's families, as well as health support and evacuation support for activists under severe repression... From this early stage, Sudanese in diaspora were supporting these practices.

Revolution phase 2 (2013-2018): Mass mobilisation and build-up. Development of Neighbourhood Resistance Committees

Activist collective care **and** mutual aid:
During the second phase, the mobilising and build-up phase, there were efforts to bring the spirit of change and organise people outside of the urban centres of the capital. During this period, also Neighbourhood Resistance Committees as decentralised cells of the revolution came into the picture. They were very much growing out of a „Nafeer" spirit and neighbourhood friends circles. Now, there were trainings on how to become a committee, and the local groups

reached out more intensively towards the „non-activist citizens". They did so, by measures of political awareness raising and debate, but also through mutual aid efforts, that built on the specific needs of the locality. Local people felt much safer to get involved in the movement via the committees, not only as they knew whom to trust in their neighbourhood with regards to spying attempts of the government: Local popcorn style actions also were less exposed, and there were joint security practices, like hiding each other, or informing each other when police or secret service were coming in.

Importantly, local people also were able to have a direct say in the committee's decisions, and could take over specific roles.

> *It was political from the beginning, but the political themes of the committees were starting from the needs of the neighbourhoods. And this is a point of strength. (…) Everything that has to do with the committees comes from a concrete necessity, not from an idea.*[37]

In bigger crises, initiatives beyond individual neighbourhoods joined hands in Nafeer or mutual aid actions: An example is the Nafeer initiative during the floods of 2013 and later.

Revolution phase 3 (2018-2019): Mass resistance: mass demonstrations and „Chiada sit-in"

Activist collective care was practiced during mass demonstrations for example through „bucket boys", protecting demonstrators from tear gas. When the mass demonstration did not cause the step down of dictator Omar Al-Bashir, people occupied the main square in front of the centre of power, the military headquarter (Chiada). The Chiada sit-In lasted over two months, and many forms of activist collective care were practiced there, e.g.:

- Food and water/juices for activists at the sit-in, brought in by different groups
- A first aid station for sick and injured
- A security system that included for example body checks at the entrances. As a trauma sensitive practice, a song was sung along with it, explaining the reason for it and making it fun. There were stone and brick road blocks at the streets leading up to the Chiada, and different neighbourhood committees took over night shifts.
- But also arts and culture are part of collective care: music, poetry, murals, that tell the stories of the problems, formulate the demands, and can include cultural references, humour and remembrance: „Music binds a community together, offering hope and a common identity for refugees engaged in a fierce battle to protect cultural traditions and heritage from those trying to obliterate them".[38]

The Chiada sit-in gave an opportunity for learning from and with each other, and building new or deepen alliances and solidarity:

- Strengthening of committee structure, as big meetings of committees and between committees were suddenly possible.[39]
- At the sit-in you could find everyone from neighbourhood activists, to business people, opposition party members, to women from the street tea sellers union, people with disabilities, to street children – everyone sharing the action, sharing the risk, sharing the food, and sharing in the political awareness and empowerment.
- Ethnic diversity was present: A bus from Darfur came all the way to the sit-in, and the slogan „We are all Darfur" was chanted, which is significant due to the racism within Sudanese society. However, there were limits to the access / visibility of marginalised („African") communities on the big stage at the Chiada; and LGBTIQ+ and other stigmatised groups were not visible openly at that point.

[37] Abdallah, Osman 2024: Sudan Dossier: The Neighbourhood Committees and the Revolutionary Charter. migration-control.info , accessed on 28.125

[38] (Kuka, Hajooj 2015, in: Beats of the Antonov: Film Maker Interview , POV, https://weta.org/watch/shows/pov/pov-beats-antonov-filmmaker-interview , accessed on 27.1.25).

[39] https://migration-control.info/

Transition period and coup 2019-2021/2023 (Coup 2021): Working on systemic change

While everyone continued to try to contribute to the change after the fall of the Bashir regime, there were different approaches to structural change and how far to take the revolution, and a power struggle between the committee structure and other formations (e.g. alliances that included political parties):

- Some activists went to work in the civilian ministries.
- Others focussed on trying to make sure that the most marginalised would not be forgotten and have access to the change processes. An example is the Study „Voices of the Margins"[40] which informs Sudanese civil society, the transition government, aid community and international politics about needs and demands of multi-marginalised women of different parts of Sudan – to emphasise agency and empowerment of these women in a collective transition process.
- During this period, the Neighbourhood Resistance Committees started visiting each other and exchanging more, to understand each other's situations (especially for the committees in the capital Khartoum to understand those in the other states).
- Coordination bodies of the committees developed also more strongly through the work on a „Charta of the People's Revolution To Establish People's Power".[41] For this, local committees sent representatives to a next regional and from there to a national level, in a speaker's council style, with consensus decision making. All decisions were taken back and forth, to be discussed and agreed upon in the neighbourhoods.
- During austerity measures and during the Covid crisis, the committees also for the first time created so-called Emergency Rooms that delivered mutual aid for local communities.

War (since April 2023: mutual aid for survival

A few months into the war, a Sudanese activist said to me: „It is only the people, who help each other survive right now. No official structures of the state nor the international community do so."

Emergency rooms started working almost immediately:

- They organise health support, as the health system almost immediately broke down in many places – due to bombings of hospitals, and as doctors and nurses were kidnapped and forced to work for one of the warring parties.
- They organise rescue teams after bombings.
- They give support for evacuations (practical and information wise).
- They are following up on missing and dead persons.
- They share information, e.g. on checkpoints etc.

They (and other groups, mosques etc.) run street kitchens, to provide food in local communities.

- Often, the distribution is needs-based: E.g. old people are being served first
- From the beginning they were financially supported by rich Sudanese or by Sudanese in diaspora. In few cases / later international people in solidarity started to contribute as well
- Challenges of the street kitchens:
    - They are only functioning as long as people can have access to food markets: Factors for this are money, transport, actual food on the market, and the security situation being not too risky to go and come back with bigger amounts of food. Therefore, new task related committees were formed, e.g. food transportation committees and agricultural committees,

[40] Bana Group and KURVE Wustrow 2021: Voices of the Margins. A Participatory Study on and by Sudanese Multi-Marginalised Women and how "Freedom—Peace—Justice", the Demands of the Sudanese Revolution of 2018/2019, Can be Turned into their Structural Empowerment , https://www.kurvewustrow.org/en/publication/study-sudan , accessed on 28.1.25),

[41] https://migration-control.info/documents/127/Revolutionary_Charter_for_Establishing_Peoples_Po_231030_084027.pdf , accessed on 28.1.25).

even though due to the frontline developments these had to stop working again.
- After about a year into the war, some street kitchens started to be hijacked by one of the armed groups
- In other cases, neighbourhoods decided to take one side in the conflict, and thus were excluded (or excluded themselves) from the NRC network
- A big challenge for the committee organising – and thus also both the Mutual Aid as well as the political organising - is that people are scattered; Many people had to flee and have to re-organise in new places. Also, digital communication is a challenge due to the lack of internet and electricity.

Large-scale displacement is the reason that in Darfur, people built up a slightly different structure with regards to needs of internally displaced people (IDPs). In and around El Fashir, the capital of North Darfur, the situation was for a long time comparatively stable, and many IDPs were coming in, often staying in informal places or camps. A network of active people in the local community started organising an emergency aid system, with different instances of needs assessment, raising of resources/funds for the most severe needs, delivery, and lastly an independent check to make sure that corruption/diversion is avoided.

Lastly, psychosocial support activities can also be a relevant part of mutual aid: Civil society groups organise psychosocial emergency support, e.g. after cases of sexualised violence, whose survivors in many cases are suicidal. They also do group sessions for women and children, with psycho-educative elements, stabilising and resilience strengthening practices and sharing.

With regards to the ongoing war, you may wonder, in how far civilian-based defence is or could be practiced in Sudan, taking into account that this war is not in the interest of the people and any social group beyond the leaders and the former elite, whatsoever.

There are a number of factors:

- Survival challenges are so strong that they absorb almost all capacity of organising (or even more).
- Speaking out for peace means being considered by both sides to be a traitor who is in favour of the other side. So it is extremely dangerous to do so.
- Scattering due to displacement weakened the structures.
- Lack of links to international actors makes Neighbourhood Resistance Committees almost invisible in the international context. They are not part of the „Taqaddum" negotiation efforts (that some of civil society and opposition parties are part of), as they consider this an absorption platform and question its representation as well as the model of Western style democracy.
- At the same time, the international involvement of international actors supporting one side (or at times both sides) of the warring parties, makes civilian-based defence all the more difficult.

But the committees and emergency rooms are still there, right where the immediate needs are, and their activities help people survive and also to stay connected with each other and the values of the revolution. As Osman Abdallah says:

> This takes much of their power from political representation. (…) But in the committees, to be honest, they feel they are the same people doing the same thing. In each and every stage, they represent the dire needs of their immediate society.[42]

And as some say: The revolution is just not over yet.

<u>Conclusions for Civilian-Based Defence In a Discourse of Human Security, Learning from the Sudanese Experiences:</u>

- -**Mutual aid efforts** politicize people right at the point of where their needs are, as they, again quoting Dean Spade, „cultivate shared analysis of the root causes of the problem and connect people with social movements that can address the problem" (p.29) As we see with the example of the Neighbourhood Resistance Committees in Sudan, mutual

[42] migration-control.info

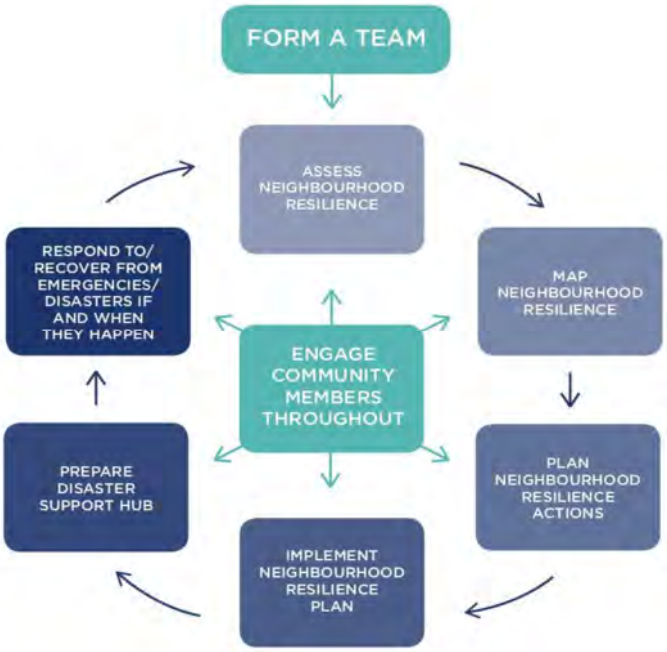
aid builds trust, shared analysis and solidarity, and utilises local capacities under their own control. It thus strengthens broad mobilising from below.
One could even claim that, by answering questions on human security, mutual aid undermines military security models.

- **-Mutual aid and activist collective care together** make it easier to take the risks for action, and allow for steadfastness in a long-term crisis or struggle like civilian-based defence.
- -**Mutual aid efforts** can be a learning and testing ground of the inclusivity of a movement, and a space where power sharing and new self-sufficient structures can be put in practice. However, conflicts may still arise, and conflict transformation modes and methods are necessary to put in place.
- -It surely helps, to be able to build on local collective concepts and practices, like Nafeer in Sudan. Collective organising and psychosocial practices, that help overcoming atomisation, needs learning and practice in the Global North, particularly for people who are positioned as *white*.

In summary: Mutual aid, addressing the wider society, and activist collective care inside social movements, are as important instruments as tools and tactics of nonviolent direct action in nonviolent resistance – all the more so, as in civilian-based defence we are looking at scenarios with potentially longer struggles with extreme violence from the "other side".

Building up agile mutual aid structures strengthens participation and social cohesion, can push transformation forward, and at the same time creates resilience and reduces vulnerability for different kinds of (multiple) crises that we need to expect.

There are different approaches with regards to how mutual aid can be put into practice, that need to be explored and developed further, locally and as part of wider social movements. Just to mention one very different approach, here an example of how the city of Vancouver suggests that people organise in a mutual aid approach to become more resilient neighbourhoods in the face of emergencies and disaster relief, that could also be applied to scenarios of wars and coups:



City of Vancouver: Resilient Neighbourhoods Toolkit, https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/resilient-neighbourhoods-toolkit.pdf, accessed on 28.1.25

Limits of the Approach of mutual aid:

- Practical challenges: How to make mutual aid „corruption-proof“ and „co-optation-proof“? How to deal with questions of leadership, hierarchies, activist burnout, bias and internal and social conflict etc.? Furthermore, we need to consider displacement / forced migration as a challenge, but also potentially as a strength with regards to diaspora support and solidarity.
- Limits of scope of mutual aid: Localised mutual aid cannot, as of today, replace international aid structures in a postcolonial world with multiple intersecting crises – and may as of the nature of emergencies always need support from those (currently) not hit directly by the attack or crisis. Therefore, “International Mutual Aid” in our global neighbourhood needs to be considered part of a decolonialised and decolonialising practice of solidarity among (local and globalised) struggles against militarised systems of oppression and violence.

  Advocacy and other nonviolent action in solidarity need to go along with these international solidarity efforts – also to strengthen civilian-based defence in the respective context.

A final personal statement:

Understanding international humanitarian aid in the context of Sudan as a solidarity practice of Mutual Aid, calls us to action:

While the EU in the context of the 2015 “Khartoum Agreement” to stop refugees from coming to Europe, helped strengthening the RSF militia in the first place,
and while Germany and the EU still closely cooperate with many of the regional and global powers that fight a proxy war in Sudan,
and while apparently we are neither able nor willing enough to properly decolonise global systems, end global militarisation, and implement climate justice –
stopping people from dying from hunger is the very least we need to do.

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The Evolution and Dynamics of Ukrainian Civil Resistance: Key Trends 2024

Filip Daza Sierra

Since the early days of the 2022 large-scale Russian invasion, Ukrainian civil society has emerged as a remarkable force of resilience. While much of the academic and strategic focus has been on the military dimension of Ukraine's resistance, the role of nonviolent civil resistance deserves equal attention. This text explores the evolution of Ukrainian civil resistance, highlighting the key dynamics, actors, and challenges. The analysis draws from recent studies, including *Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War* and follow-up reports produced in 2023, as well as field research such as *Communities at War* by the Centre of United Actions and Larysa Pilgun's insightful investigations on the self-organization and mobilization of Ukrainian society during the war through more than 300 interviews.

Emergence and persistence of civil resistance

In the early days of the invasion, self-organized initiatives spontaneously emerged across Ukraine to address immediate needs. Over time, these grassroots efforts persisted and even formalized their structures to increase operational efficiency. According to the *Communities at War* report, many self-organized groups eventually registered as formal associations to better coordinate their activities and secure resources.

Civil society's power and resilience remain evident in the high levels of solidarity and private donations that continue to meet critical needs. These efforts extend far beyond traditional humanitarian aid, covering areas such as assistance to vulnerable groups; military support and reconstruction; legal aid; evacuation services; and advocacy for justice in war crimes.

The motivations behind these sustained actions are deeply rooted in a shared sense of responsibility and patriotism. Studies show that individuals remain active primarily to assist civilians and vulnerable groups, support the military and their families, and contribute to the broader goal of national defense and victory over the enemy.

The role of trust and reputation

One of the defining features of Ukrainian civil resistance is its reliance on trust and reputation as the foundation of solidarity and volunteerism. Larysa Pilgun's study highlights the importance of informal, horizontal networks in coordinating volunteer activities:

> *The institution of reputation has strengthened in Ukraine. Volunteer activities rely on horizontal connections, without reference to formal organizations or documents. A person must prove their trustworthiness through transparency and accountability—often by providing visual evidence of their work.* (*2022)*

This emphasis on reputation has strengthened civil society's ability to self-regulate. Tools for coordinating volunteer efforts have improved, allowing communities to verify the credibility of individuals and organizations, even under conditions of war. Over time, while emotional motivations such as hatred of the aggressor initially drove participation, these were gradually replaced by rational factors like national security, independence, and self-sufficiency. Values such as freedom, unity, and a commitment to survival through volunteerism have become central to Ukrainian civil society's identity.

Civil society networks as pillars of resilience

Ukrainian civil society has developed robust networks that play a critical role in supporting both civilian and military needs. These networks lead local initiatives, providing shelter, food, and healthcare to those affected by the conflict.

Civil society has also stepped in to fill gaps left by the state. According to Pilgun's report, evidence shows that public organizations and volunteers have been crucial in supplying frontline soldiers with medical equipment and first-aid kits, as the state remains unable to meet these needs.

Beyond direct support, civil society has taken on a watchdog role, promoting good governance and anti-corruption efforts. Organizations have advocated for transparency and

professionalism, particularly in sensitive areas such as war crimes investigations led by the Ministry of Justice. Larger, well-established NGOs have also supported smaller, less formal groups to help them expand their reach and effectiveness.

Independence and challenges in government relations

Despite instances of cooperation with local authorities, Ukrainian civil society has largely maintained its independence from the state. Volunteers distinguish themselves from government actors and often avoid relying on government assistance. However, this independence has also led to bureaucratic obstacles that complicate grassroots organizing efforts. Local groups still require access to municipal resources, but they remain wary of excessive interference from authorities.

Emerging challenges and future priorities

As the conflict drags on, new challenges have emerged, threatening the long-term sustainability of Ukraine's civil resistance.

One of the most pressing priorities is the need to rebuild social capital in frontline and liberated areas. Current budget allocations are heavily focused on immediate security needs—80% of the budget, leaving only 20% for development—which is insufficient for long-term recovery. Human security and development must be prioritized to restore livelihoods and rebuild local communities.

Additionally, growing criticism of President Zelensky's government has started to surface, particularly concerning military strategy and forced mobilization policies. Although doubts about military victory are rising, no clear alternative strategy has been proposed.

Another significant challenge is the psychosocial burden on civil society actors. The continuous strain has created an urgent need for psychosocial support, community dialogue, and mass training to build the capacity of local leaders and volunteers.
Social polarization and internal conflict also pose a growing threat to Ukraine's unity and resistance. The war has exacerbated existing cleavages, making community cohesion and dialogue essential tools for long-term stability. However, with military discourse and budgets dominating the national agenda, these critical social recovery issues risk being overshadowed.

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Learning From the “Guardias”
Integral Security as a Response to Multiple Phenomena of Violence in Colombia

María Cárdenas

This article is a reprint from a text in “Wissenschaft und Frieden”.[43]

Using the example of the “Guardias” within the context of the Colombian peace building process, this contribution seeks to shed light on how indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasants communities practice collective protection in the midst of omnipresent violence through integral security systems in order to ensure pervivencia [44] (their possibilities to remain) of their communities and ontologies. In the face of multiple planetary crises, their practice offers important food for thought on how to overcome the hegemonic understanding of (militarized) security.

Today the "Guardia Indígena" (Indigenous guard), the "Guardia Cimarrona" (Afrocolombian guard) and the "Guardia Campesina" (small-peasant guardia) – short "Guardias" – are the most internationally recognised community-based and integral community protection systems in Colombia. Since the turn of the millennium, they have been strengthened by their communities to protect their *territorio* and their population from armed actors and from being violently exploited for extractive economies. They confront illegal economies as well as legal and illegal armed actors, and are partly involved in initiatives to free "Mother Earth" from possession and monoculture projects, such as the "Liberación de la Madre Tierra".[45] In the face of the omnipresence of violence, the Guardias are both a feasible protection against military violence in the absence of the state, as well as an unarmed alternative to it. That said, their work is often reduced from an Eurocentric perspective to an anthropocentric understanding of security. Although the Guardias can certainly provide ideas for alternatives to militarised security even from such a limited understanding, such a perspective is uncapable of grasping the ontological conflicts that underlie the violence against these communities, and likewise renders invisible the potential inherent in integral community protection systems for overcoming the multiple (in)security crises caused by Modernity/Coloniality (Escobar 2020).

The article is based on my ethnographic research with indigenous and Afro-Colombian peace activists since 2017 (including Cárdenas 2023), as well as an exploratory study supported by the German-Colombian Peace Institute (CAPAZ) in 2019[46]. The goal is to reassess hegemonic notions of security by considering the understanding of security or protection as practiced by indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and peasant communities. The article also offers a reflection on the hegemonic forms or approaches to ensuring security. To this end, in what follows, I will take a closer look at the work of the guardias in the Cauca region.

Background: Armed violence and murders in Cauca

Insecurity and violence have characterized the southwestern Cauca region for decades. Almost eight years after the signing of the peace agreement, the security issue in this region has not lost any of its importance, as both the number of armed actors and the violence against social

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[43] https://wissenschaft-und-frieden.de/artikel/lernen-von-den-guardias. Wissenschaft und Frieden 2024/3, pp. 24-28. Excerpts of this text have already been published as a forum post in Iberoamericana, see Cárdenas 2020. I thank David Scheuing and Astrid Juckenack for their comments on an earlier version and Christine Schweitzer for the translation of the text.

[44] Pervivencia is not to be reduced to survival. Rather, it is a *praxis* to strengthen the communities’ capacity to maintain and (re-)create life – a praxis that is concerned with the communities’ permanence on its own terms and according to their relational ontologies.

[45] See also the movement's website at liberaciondelamadretierra.org/en/.

[46] The study was entitled "Strengthening autonomy or the state? The Different Recognition of the Guardias in the Peace Agreement and their Co-operation in the Territory under the Post-Agreement".

and ethnic organizations and activists have continued to increase. According to INDEPAZ, 1,621 social activists were murdered in Colombia between the day the peace agreement was signed in 2016 and July 3, 2024 (INDEPAZ 2024). In Cauca alone, 324 social activists were murdered, more than a third of whom were indigenous (128), followed by small farmers (79)*, and* Afro-Colombian activists (32).[47] The disproportionate violence against rural and especially indigenous activists is mainly due to their resistance to economic actors and local elites who, following the demobilization of the FARC-EP, are competing for economic and socio-political control of the region and seeking to expand legal and illegal economic practices in the department (Albarracín et al. 2022).

Part of integral protection systems

Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant guardias can be understood as integral community protection systems that can be temporary, semi-permanent or permanent and consist of unpaid, unarmed service that is usually carried out by all members of the community at least once. The motto of the guardia *"Todos somos guardia"* ("We are all guardia") means both that the work of the guardia and the responsibility associated with it cannot be outsourced, and that everyone – from the elderly to children – is an important part of protecting the *territorio* and the community. As a result, the composition of the group is usually relatively heterogeneous, at least in the case of the semi-permanent and temporary guardias, in terms of gender, age and family situation.[48] When the community members serve as guardias, they usually carry on duty the traditional *bastón de mando* – a wooden stick decorated with ribbons in the organisation's colours. They often also wear a scarf and a waistcoat bearing the logo of the organisation to which their community belongs.As the Guardias are part of and subordinate to the political autonomy of their communities, they are organised at community level. Their organisation therefore depends on their respective *gobierno propio* (their autochthonous and autonomous forms of political self-organisation), as well as on the socio-ecological and political context in which they are embedded, is therefore context-specific and cannot be generalized.

The Guardias are also just one element of the community-based protection mechanisms in Colombia, which may also include *planes de vida* (life plans), *medicina ancestral* (traditional medicine), spiritual protection (through *taitas* or *Thê' Walas*, for example), or institutionalised dialogue forums. The visibility of the Guardias is not least because they are easier to grasp from a Eurocentric understanding of security than, for example, the effect of *Thê' Walas*. This has enabled some Guardias in Cauca to access funding from state and international agencies - a dynamic that some communities view with concern due to the (supposed or growing) proximity to Eurocentric understandings of security or their being reduced to it via funding.

For this reason, the look at the Guardias in Cauca region shall not be misunderstood as a generalisation of the Guardias, nor shall their complexity, heterogeneity and context-specific characteristics be invisibilized, as this has also led to a dichotomy of their romanticisation vs. criminalisation in Colombia. The aim is rather to discuss the Guardias in Colombia – and their relative success even in a context of omnipresent violence – as alternatives to a military or militarised enforcement of security, and to reflect what we can learn from them for security, protection, and its achievement.

Integral protection of the "territorio"

The task of the Guardias is to promote security and harmony in an integral way that is not limited to physical security or negative peace (Galtung 1972), but is based on what is often referred to as "control territorial" (territorial control). In simplified terms, *territorio* can be defined as the forms of life and the relationships enacted between all living beings in a certain space. However, *territorio* should not be reduced to a Eurocentric, two-dimensional understanding in the sense of a map, but it is multidimensional and dynamic, includes the vertical,

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[47] Ibid. In comparison, according to the 2018 census, the indigenous population only makes up around 4.4 % and the Afro-Colombian population around 9.34 % of the total population (see DANE 2019, DANE 2023).

[48] Women are therefore not "integrated" into security (as is the case with the military, for example, from a Euro- and androcentric perspective), but, as integral members of the community, they are also an integral part of its protection.

spiritual and temporal dimension, and is also closely intertwined with the human body.

Territorial control therefore also includes what is understood in the Eurocentric understanding of security as control over a certain piece of land: knowing who is on a specific terrain, who is doing what and why. In the context of pervasive violence by multiple actors, it is important to know the routes of armed actors, when they cross the territorio without authorisation, and what relationships they maintain or seek with other actors. Not only does this provide a very good knowledge of the actors in the region and their interests (thereby contributing to the archive of peace and security knowledge of these communities), but it often has immediate practical benefits. For example, when this knowledge enables these communities to rescue forcibly recruited minors from armed actors, to identify illegal mining projects, or even to hand over excavator loaders to the police.[49] Juan Carabalí from the National Protection Unit (UNP)[50] clarifies:

> *People often think of the Guardias as being armed, but that's not true. The Guardia is the one who goes out to negotiate, to etsablish dialogue, to rescue the people who shall be killed [by armed actors], to take them out of the hands of armed groups who want to kill them. Yes, the Afro-Colombian communities do this all the time, and the Indigenous communities, all the time.* (Juan Carabalí, UNP, 23 April 2019).

According to Carabalí, security and protection here are not established through violence (or the threat of it), but through the courage to enter into dialogue and to oppose violence, as well as through the authority with which the Guardias defend their *territorio*.

However, the work of the Guardias cannot be reduced to their negotiation capacities and their dealing with violent confrontations. Based on the aforementioned understanding of *territorio*, territorial control also consists of paying attention to the condition or health of the territory, of the plants and animals, as well as the condition of roads, fences and bridges (research memo of 16 February 2019). Therefore, in addition to Eurocentric understandings of security and their protection of nature, the territorial control of guardias also includes "*minga*" – i.e. community work (e.g. renovation and repair work, helping with the harvest, repairing a house, a fence, a well or a bridge). Besides territorial control, the work of the Guardia also includes mediating conflicts within the community and with neighbouring communities (although depending on the community, this is also carried out by other offices and roles). In many places, the *Guardias* therefore also fulfil functions to strengthen the autonomy and resistance of the community against colonialism and its violence. The Guardia is therefore part of autonomous and integral community protection systems in which people share the task of protecting the pluriverse (a world where many worlds fit) – externally (with regard to armed actors and neighbouring communities), internally (community cohesion), as well as horizontally and vertically (with regard to protecting the territory, nature, and the spiritual space from violence such as extractivism, for example) – often with their own lives.

This draws attention to another aspect of territorial control that goes beyond a Eurocentric understanding of security. It is not only about the protection of a certain group of people and possibly their property, but also about the protection of nature in its own right[51], as well as the protection of the relationships and balance between humans, non-human beings and the spiritual space. This non-Western understanding of "protection" is therefore also about the relationships between humans and 'nature' (i.e. flora and fauna), and the spiritual and emotional relationships that the territory contains, and the laws or rules follow from this.

In academic debates, particularly those of the "ontological turn" or "political ontology", these relational possibilities of understanding the world in its pluriversality are increasingly gaining

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[49] Victor Hugo Moreno Mina (Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Norte del Cauca - ACONC) explained in a lecture I accompanied at the National Police Academy that the Guardia had repeatedly stopped illegal mining in their areas and handed over heavy machinery and delinquents to the police (memo dated 1 November 2018).

[50] The UNP reports to the Ministry of the Interior and is responsible for coordinating and implementing the protection of persons or groups whose lives are threatened as a result of their work.

[51] Thanks to the social struggles of Indigenous and Afro-Latin American communities, many parts of nature (rivers, mountains, etc.) have been recognised as legal subjects in Latin American jurisdiction.

visibility (see FitzGerald 2021). Against this background, territorial control cannot be reduced to being part of territorial struggles, but rather the attempt to protect the territory is an integral part of ontological struggles, such as suggested by Arturo Escobar (2020). The Guardias are therefore protecting the pluriverse from its destruction through ontological annihilation, which is put forth by the monocultures of Modernity/Coloniality (here not limited to cultivation). The many murders of Indigenous, Afro-Colombian or peasant activists in Colombia mentioned earlier therefore not only point to the necropolitical dimension that subjects racialised life to capitalist logics (Ruette-Orihuela et al. 2023), but also to the ontological dimension of violence, as those murdered are central actors for keeping resistant knowledge and the organisation of ontological resistance alive.

Effects of the peace agreement since 2016

The National Protection Unit (UNP) has admitted its shortcomings in protecting the rural population from violence. Especially in Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, the official security measures are often unable to prevent murders,[52] and cases, where the security personnel of UNP contractors were linked to the paramilitary, have become public.[53] Against this backdrop, and with the aim of expanding the legal framework of the autonomous protection mechanisms[54], the legal acknowledgment of autonomous protection systems was included in the Colombian peace agreement of 2016 as part of the ethnic chapter (cf. Cárdenas 2019). Among other things, it guarantees that

> *The ethnic and cultural perspective will be incorporated in the design and implementation of the Security and Protection Programme for the communities and organisations across the country's territories. The strengthening of ethnic peoples' own security systems, recognised at national and international level, such as the Indigenous Guard (Guardia Indígena) and the Cimarrona Guard (Guardia Cimarrona), will be guaranteed.*[55]

This had far-reaching consequences: First, the political and legal recognition of Afro-Colombian and indigenous Guardias was an important political achievement in recognising and protecting the ways of being and relating to the world of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Their non-anthropocentric, integral understanding of security was recently reaffirmed in a ruling by Colombia's transitional justice mechanism, the JEP: Afro-Colombian communities from Northern Cauca succeeded in having the Cauca River recognised as a victim of the armed conflict and granted the right to reparation and non-repetition. As a result of the ethnic chapter, it is therefore possible to observe an influx of non-Eurocentric ontologies into Colombian jurisprudence.

Second, the Guardias were strengthened financially, structurally and ideally by security institutions such as the National Protection Unit (UNP). In 2019, the UNP worked with 78 collectives across the country, most of them Indigenous and Afrocolombian communities, and individually with around 800 Indigenous and 500 Afro-Colombian activists in need of personal protection (as of February 2019, interview with the UNP on 23 April 2019). The measures include material (vests, walkie-talkies, etc.) and immaterial protection (training in ethnic rights, human rights and international humanitarian law, etc.), but also spiritual protection (for example, to harmonise the territory; ibid.). This dynamic has certainly contributed to increasing the visibility of the Guardias.

Although the 'Guardia Indígena' is particularly strong in Cauca, the number of Afro-Colombian

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52 Pablo Elías, Director of the UNP, in CIEDH 2020, p. 5.

53 See Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (2018).

54 The legal framework of the Guardia depends on the general legal framework of the communities: For the indigenous and Afro-Colombian population, ethnic rights in Colombia are based on Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization, which was approved by Colombia through Law 21 of 1991 and enshrined in the 1991 Constitution and Law 70 of 1993. Consequently, the Guardia Campesina has no legal framework, while the Guardia Indígena (since 2001) and the Guardia Cimarrona (since 2013) are subordinate to their local authorities, either the Cabildo or the municipal council.

55 Final Agreement, p. 219. Accessed on: https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Colombian-Peace-Agreement-English-Translation.pdf

municipal councils with their own Guardias *has also increased* in recent years. According to Victor Hugo Moreno Mina (ACONC), there were nineteen Afro-Colombian Guardias in the 43 community councils in Cauca in 2019 (interview with Victor Hugo Moreno Mina, 22 February 2019*)*. After an international cooperation-funded workshop for interethnic Guardias in 2018, the interethnic Guardia was also established in Cauca, consisting of indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant groups to learn from each other, strengthen each other and, for example, to jointly apprehend illegal and armed actors. In view of the omnipresence of violence by numerous legal and illegal armed actors and illegal economies in Cauca, as well as the negligence or weakness of the state in confronting it, the Guardias have continued as an indispensable security system, but also as a symbol of the autonomous and integral construction of peace after the peace agreement.

"Todos somos guardia" - we are all "Guardia"

According to Edgar Alberto Velasco Tumiña (Autoridades Indígenas del Sur Occidente – AISO), this has led to the

> *[indigenous guard] being an icon of resistance to war in many parts of the world. We have learned to lose our fear, our fear of war, of the armed forces, and we resist the landowners, the multinational corporations and the government itself*.

The narrative of the Guardia as a defender of the territory and as a peacemaker has increasingly allowed for alliances with a variety of actors since the peace agreement was signed, many of whom are located outside their communities and/or *territorio*: with international cooperation, the student movement, environmental protection movements or the urban left. More recently, the creation of the interethnic Guardia (consisting of the "Guardia Indígena", "Guardia Campesina" and "Guardia Cimarrona") is itself an attempt to work together across *territories* and to bridge ethnic or *racist* divides.

One example of the symbolic significance that the Guardias have achieved beyond their territories was their central role in the national strike of 2021, in which they stood in solidarity with the mostly urban population and helped to protect them from repressive violence by state security forces and vigilantes.[56] However, their growing popularity and their cooperation with actors from urban areas has also made them more vulnerable to criminalization and defamation.[57] Along with the rise of diversifying and competing violent actors in Cauca, who are intensifying the violence against rural communities, the work of the Guardias has become more difficult: in the first six months of 2024, 89 social activists have already been murdered, many because of their resistance to legal and illegal extractivism. One of the guards who lost her life in this context was Carmelita Ascue Yule, an elder and Nasa governor from Cauca. She was murdered on March 16, 2024, while trying to protect minors in her community from forced recruitment by a dissident group of the FARC.

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[56] During the national strike, more than 80 people partaking in the demonstrations were murdered, mainly by state security forces (see Prieto 2022). On the national strike in Colombia in 2021 and its violence, see Cortés and Cárdenas 2021.

[57] For example, in a tweet during the highly polarised climate of the 2021 national strike, ex-President Álvaro Uribe "confused" the Guardia of the indigenous organisation CRIC with the ELN guerrillas, see: El Espectador 2021.

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Social Defence Under Fire.
Serious Questions and Answers

Martin Arnold

Historical Framework

Until the early 1990s, there were important impulses for social defence (SD) in many countries. Since the world situation changed, these have hardly been pursued worldwide. Due to the war in Ukraine and its consequences in the West, they were revived in many countries in 2022. They are particularly important since modern warfare, with its destructive power, threatens to destroy everything that is to be defended, and since nuclear deterrence carries the danger of substantial self-destruction of humanity. Ever shorter warning times for attacks increase the probability of triggering an automatic mechanism for the destruction of humanity. Anyone who takes this risk seriously must look for alternatives. Social defence could be one such alternative.

In Germany the campaign 'Wehrhaft ohne Waffen' (Defensible Without Weapons) was formed. Because social defence calls upon the entire population to take action, civil society initiatives have begun to prepare it. Volunteers, groups and individual paid staff are building up social defence 'from below' in various regions of Germany, and have begun to win over institutions and state agencies for it. Social defence (SD) is thus becoming more than just a theory. It is to be made visible. These efforts should introduce it as a serious alternative into the security policy discourse and achieve support for it 'from above'. The groups are doing practical SD development work in their respective regions. In addition, researchers are currently developing new answers for today.

Serious concerns:

Some people are hesitant to participate because they have serious objections.

I will formulate four points of criticism as questions for the concept and try to answer them.

It is undisputed that military and social defence have the same goals: to prevent war and to protect the population from the possible effects of war.

It is also clear that there can be no 100% guarantee of success for any approach (in wars, at least one side usually loses).

Question 1: What are the reasons why nonviolent defence against military might be successful?

Nonviolent resistance can be successful because it is based on undermining the aggressor's motivation and refusing to cooperate with him. In doing so, a population offers such resistance in a unified and organised manner, possibly in a decentralised way. This happens in dialogue with aggressors at all levels and in the refusal to cooperate with their goals, for example through boycotts or strikes. This makes it very difficult for aggressors to achieve their goals. Military power is based on control over the population, and if this control cannot be enforced because the population persistently refuses to obey, even in the face of repression, the occupation becomes ineffective. So far, SD has never been carried out in the proper way because systematic preparation is part of the concept. But there are historical examples of social defence approaches. The Indian struggle for independence under Gandhi's leadership and the Norwegian teachers' movement during the German occupation in the Second World War show that nonviolent resistance has the potential to persuade powerful military opponents, even ones who unscrupulously ignore the rules, to give in. It can drive up the moral and material costs of effective rule and thus effectively undermine the ability and the will to do so. Preparation includes both methodical and mental elements, such as dealing with aggressors and repression in a nonviolent way. Research by US social scientists Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan[58] shows that

[58] Chenoweth, Erica and Maria J. Stephan, Maria J. (2011): Why Civil Resistance Works. The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. New York: Colombia University Press.

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between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent uprisings were twice as likely to be successful as violent ones.

Question 2: Why can good preparation of social defence deter potential aggressors from invading, that is, achieve a deterrent effect?

In 1958, the British World War I veteran and Commander Stephen King-Hall presented a concept for social defence: *Defence in the Nuclear Age*. Nonviolent defence can, according to him, be prepared publicly in such a way that potential aggressors refrain from military aggression. Because it would become clear to them that the effort of military aggression and the various costs up to a possible success would entail too high a risk of failure.

King-Hall was aware of the powerful nonviolent approach and the strong actions with which, under Gandhi's leadership, India had fought for independence from the then most powerful state on earth ten years earlier.

Well-prepared social defence can deter military aggression because it signals to a potential aggressor that an invasion or attempted domination would incur significant costs and have little prospect of lasting success. If the population is informed, organised and prepared in advance to resist en masse even in the face of repression, aggressors may be dissuaded because they know that their military superiority will not be enough to achieve their goals. Determined civilian resistance could make them realise that the invasion might not only be difficult and costly, but also unsuccessful in the long term, thus calling into question the value of military intervention.

Question 3: What are the disadvantages and advantages of social defence compared to military defence?

Disadvantages:

- **Dependence on mass participation:** Social defence requires a high degree of social unity and possibly a willingness to take life-threatening risks, which can be difficult to achieve during preparation.
- **Limited immediate effectiveness:** Compared to military defence, nonviolent resistance may not provide immediate solutions in life-threatening situations.
- **Less of a deterrent:** Some aggressors may interpret the absence of military defence as a weakness and be more likely to try to achieve their goals by force.

Advantages:

- **No threat to others:** Military build-ups for the purpose of 'deterrence' can make others feel threatened, whereas preparing nonviolent defence avoids this risk.
- **Legitimacy and moral superiority:** Social defence is based on the principles of active nonviolence. In dialogue with soldiers and political leaders, this can reduce their will to use force or to repress, and can foster support from outside.
- **Less destruction:** Since there is no physical fighting, the infrastructure is preserved and there are far fewer deaths than in military conflicts, partly because soldiers have more inhibitions about killing unarmed people than they do about being threatened by armed people.
- **'Dynamic continuing work without collaboration'** (Theodor Ebert): If there are common interests in maintaining the infrastructure, it may be possible to work together with the aggressor, while at the same time consistently refusing to cooperate with his actions to achieve the goals of the aggression.
  When French troops wanted to force more coal deliveries in the Ruhr area in 1923, the workers went on strike, so that in the first three months less coal reached France than previously in ten days.
- **Broad participation:** All sections of society can participate in the resistance, regardless of physical strength or military ability. Public displays of unity can help to strengthen cohesion. In 1940, for example, many people in Norway wore paper clips on their clothes as a sign of their resolve to stand together against the Nazis.
- **Weakening the occupiers:** Social defence undermines the authority and legitimacy of

the occupying power on the one hand, and its ability to enforce its goals on the other. This can be more effective than military resistance.

- **Faster success:** Historically, armed struggle lasted on average three times as long as its nonviolent counterparts. In Nepal, for example, a general strike ended a ten-year civil war in a short period of time in 2006.[59]
- **If it fails, preservation of society:** Society remains intact even if the struggle fails, and can resume the fight another day (Czechoslovakia 1968... Charta 77)

Question 4: *Why is the following accusation untrue: "Preparing social defence requires creating an enemy image and demonizing opponents"?*

The accusation that social defence requires an enemy image is not true because the concept is not based on the identification of a specific enemy, but on the defence of universal values such as human rights, democracy and self-determination. The aim of preparing social defence is to strengthen the society's ability to organise itself and to resist, regardless of who a potential aggressor is. Instead of creating images of the enemy, it promotes awareness of the power of active nonviolent action and the importance of civil courage.

This approach is based on *peace logic*.[60] In contrast to security logic, the other parties involved in the conflict are not regarded as 'enemies' to be fought or as 'bad' or otherwise devalued, while 'we' see ourselves as 'the good guys'. Rather, it is trusted that there is also internal resistance in their ranks to harming other people, and the aggressors are consistently treated as potential comrades-in-arms for justice and humanity, even against appearances.

They are addressed as fellow human beings with the aim of jointly reducing harm on the basis of human rights and the legitimate basic needs of all people, which is why the responsibility and actions of one's own side are also critically assessed and further developed under these standards.

In many cases, this has led to disobedience on the part of important sections of the 'security forces' and thus to the disempowerment of military-backed rule. This happened, for example, in the systematically prepared nonviolent ending of the dictatorship in the Philippines in 1986: the disempowered Marcos left the presidential palace of his own accord by helicopter after he had been promised free passage.

Thus, social defence, without polarising and demonising alleged 'enemies', relies on prevention through the strengthening of internal structures and solidarity within society when it comes to protecting itself.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Audré Lorde:
"When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." Audré Lorde

Dr. Martin Arnold, born in 1946, studied Protestant theology in Bethel near Bielefeld and in Heidelberg. From 1972 to 1974 he was a vicar in Bielefeld, and until 2010 he was a pastor of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland in Leverkusen, Langenfeld and Essen. From 1997 to 2005 he taught at the Philipps University of Marburg (peace and conflict research). Since 1997 he has been a volunteer at the Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution (IFGK). In 2010 he received his doctorate in the field of goodness from the University of Siegen.

[59] Ukrainians vs. Putin: Potential for Nonviolent Civilian-based Defence. https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/blog_post/ukrainians-vs-putin-potential-for-nonviolent-civilian-based-defense/

[60] Birckenbach, Hanne-Margret (2023): Friedenslogik verstehen. Frieden hat man nicht, Frieden muss man machen. Wochenschau-Verlag

Under Which Conditions Would a "Civilian Based Defence" Be Feasible?

François Marchand

Would a nonviolent defence[61] of Ukraine have been possible? This question makes no sense since only an armed form of defence was operational in February 2022 to face the Russian invasion. Could a nonviolent civilian defence have been prepared and operational in Ukraine before the Russian invasion? This is a question we can ask ourselves. In other words, is a kind of civilian-based defence (CBD) feasible and under which conditions?

It is this question that I am trying, not to answer, but at least to clarify. Nonviolent civilian defence was an area of research in the 1970s and 1980s.[62] It sought forms of defence based on nonviolent methods, organized and prepared for identified threats (at the time the USSR and/or an authoritarian putsch). The organization could be carried out by a state or a public authority recognized by a majority of the population. This research remained conceptual and speculative because no CBD experiment was carried out at that time. And it must be admitted that the possibility of setting up a CBD system, even as a complement to military defence, seemed difficult! Most of this research came to an end in the 1990s when the threats it was intended to counter disappeared.

Today, new threats are emerging (Russia, but also the rise of authoritarian political forces) and the concept of CBD is returning as a new concern for researchers and defenders of democracy. I will examine the feasibility of a CBD in terms of four crucial elements: the level of motivation of the population in the face of threats, the feasibility of the "top-down" approach, the feasibility of the "bottom-up" approach, and the lessons learned from the very rare cases of CBD implementation since the 1990s.

I consider that the main specificity of CBD vs. civil resistance is this process of preparation and organization to face the conflict; it is this process that brings the dissuasion factor of a CBD and it is this process of preparation that I try to analyse in regard to how it can be feasible.

CBD as a means of creating and developing a "spirit of defence"… ?

The "spirit of defence" is the basis of all forms of defence and remains one of the key words of French defence strategists today as it was in the 1980s: since 2021, the new official review of the French Ministry of Defence is called: "Esprit de défense, la revue du monde de la défense".[63] But how can we develop a "spirit of defence" in the population when we constantly assert that nuclear deterrence protects us?

With a CBD approach, we have a partial answer, but a concrete answer, to this objective: developing civilian participation in defence through the preparation and implementation of CBD elements. It is not the least paradox that this impact of CBD arouses interest among several military strategists and can become a strong argument for its introduction into the civilian world. A French general, a little disappointed, told me in 1985: "In France, no one is interested in defence… except military people… and nonviolent people" (sic).

The fact remains that mobilizing a population around defence in peacetime remains a challenge. One of the differences between civil resistance and civilian defence is that civil resistance is practiced by volunteers whereas civilian defence requires the participation of the entire population.

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[61] I use the English term "Civilian-based defence", alias "defence civile non-violente" in French, alias "Soziale Verteidigung" in German. These concepts are close, even if they are not completely equivalent. (Nonviolent civilian defence or CBD can be defined as the organization, anticipated by the political leaders of a country, a nation or a human community, of an unarmed defence based on non-collaboration with the invader.

[62] See in particular: "La Dissuasion civile", by Jean-Marie Muller Jacques Semelin and Christian Mellon, FEDN ed. "The 7 swords" 1984. Study carried out at the request of the French Ministry of Defence.

[63] See the site of the Ministry : https://www.defence.gouv.fr/esprit-defence-revue-du-monde-defence

Feasibility of "top-down"?

Setting up CBD will create a counter-power in the society, even in a democratic country. By organizing in advance non-cooperation with a possible usurping power, it is offering a tool which can turn against the organizing power. It is certain that the establishment of CBD would reduce the power of public authorities, and would put up a risk for the organizing power, even a democratic one.

As early as the 1980s, in France, we had identified this major problem: the apprehension, even the reluctance of all public authorities for an organization which, in fact, gives power back to citizens, particularly in the event of a crisis. This was an obstacle to the development of our proposals in France, even if, very often, this was not expressed clearly.

And this is also one of the reasons why it will be difficult, even in a democratic country, to organize CBD from above.

However, it seems possible (feasible?) to me that state defence organizations prepare some partial but basic elements of a CBD, adapting some initiatives to the perceived level of threats; for example, studies in some sensitive sectors, trainings of volunteers, or even call for participation in "social defence maneuvers". This point is an area of research for the years to come, as it had been in France in the 1980s.

Feasibility of "bottom-up" ?

In the 1980s in France, after a first study carried out at the request of the Ministry of Defence (published as "Dissuasion civile"), we launched practical researches on CBD with some public funding - not with state public authorities but with grassroots citizen organization: electrical energy union (CFDT EDF), local authorities, the huge French associative network (8 million associations).

I have no doubt that resuming this basic work is possible if funding for research, for training and for operations is found. A very vast field of research and experimentation is opening. For the reasons expressed in the previous paragraph, it will be difficult to find public funding at the national level, at least initially, but it will be necessary to seek public funding at the local level, research funding, and private foundations.

Analysis of two examples of CBD implementation.

The lack of historical examples of CBD prevents a solid assessment of its efficiency and therefore of its feasibility. However, two (at least?) historical cases since 1990 deserve analysis: Lithuania against USSR/Russia and Kosovo against Serbia: in these two cases, a nonviolent defence organization participated effectively in the dissuasive effect facing the risk of a military occupation, but remained relatively short-lived (less than 10 years).

The **Lithuanian** case[64] is the most interesting and could be considered as mixed realization top-down (led by the Ministry of Defence) and bottom-up (auto-organization of the population during and after the revolution): After a remarkable and victorious nonviolent civil resistance common to the three Baltic countries, Lithuania was the first to declare its independence on February 24, 1990. The new political power in Vilnius decided to implement a defence policy including a traditional armed component and a CBD component to face (dissuade) the threat of occupation by Soviet and then Russian armed forces which threatened until 1993. After 1993, the threat diminished, but the construction of a CBD by the Ministry of Defence continued and was consolidated in parallel with the development, under the leadership of NATO, of the armed component. Consolidation involves both decrees organizing the CBD in the structures of civil society (administrations, businesses, associations, etc.) and through civilian training structures. In 2004, Lithuania joined NATO. It then suffered the rise of the Russian threat after the invasion of Crimea. It has then increasingly concentrated its defence efforts on the military aspect leading to a gradual fading of the CBD up to its virtual disappearance in 2022. In another article, I

[64] A large part of my information is coming from Grazina Miniotaite who was first a Sajudis activist up to 1990, then directly involved in the policy of CBD in the Ministry of Defence up to years 2000; she published a lot of papers and research between 1992 et 2002.

had the opportunity to detail this entire period and I summarize here my conclusions concerning the conditions for setting up and the feasibility of a CBD:

- Strong support and great credibility of nonviolent civil resistance among a large majority of the population just after independence.
- No weapons available or very few in the first years of independence.
- The reality of imminent threats (Soviet/Russian at least until 1993) which required a lot of resources and motivation to be devoted to defence. (A strong "spirit of defence").

The case of Kosovo is a typical case of bottom-up realization: Kosovo organized a parallel political and social power from its declaration of independence in 1990 to face Serbian domination. It also offers us another relevant case study – I will not develop it here, but we find conclusions quite similar to those that I have just stated for the Lithuanian case: strong support from the Albanian majority of the population (spirit of defence), no military means (before the development of the armed resistance by the KLA in 1997), dissuasive effect since, for seven years, the Serbian army refrained from invading Kosovo.

In both cases, Lithuania and Kosovo, the rise in power of NATO was an obstacle to maintaining a CBD!

But… the Ministry of Defence of Latvia is currently, since 2018, implementing a concept of "comprehensive defence" including civil disobedience, as an option for civil resistance in case of invasion… with the support of NATO! I am a bit disappointed!

What can we conclude?

1. The "spirit of defence" in the population is the key factor of feasibility for any type of resistance or defence, armed as well as nonviolent, and this spirit (motivation, commitment, …of the population) is motivated by the presence of a threat.

2. I will not have definitive conclusions on the feasibility of CBD, but I can affirm that: on the one hand, this feasibility is not the same in times of peace and in times of crisis, and on the other hand, the more it can be prepared in times of peace, the more possible and feasible it will be in times of crisis.

3. Top-down or bottom-up? Probably both according the events. These two processes are complementary: Top-down in peace time and bottom-up in crisis or threatening times?

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Questioning the Warist Orthodoxy: Pacifist Critical Reflections on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Alexandre Christoyannopoulos

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When Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the widespread assumption across the West was that there was a binary choice to be made: step up, help Ukraine's military efforts to fight back and adjust spending priorities accordingly, or let Russia win. Now was not the time for naive pacifist idealism. Russia initiated the war, and Ukraine and its allies were forced into a military response.

However, to characterize and dismiss pacifism as naive idealism is to misunderstand what it stands to contribute, even to a seemingly clear-cut case like this one. Pacifism is a broad church, and few pacifists oppose all war from a purist absolutist position. Pacifists do differentiate themselves by criticizing war and committing to alternative options much more stringently than others; however, their rationales for doing so can be grounded in different lines of argument, and their analysis often extends beyond war alone to broader critiques of numerous components of 'the war system'—including the military-industrial complex, the political culture of militarism, and the assumptions about the legitimacy and efficacy of political violence that underlie dominant orthodoxies about war.[65] It does not take long, therefore, for a closer reading of pacifism to reveal that it has much to offer to International Relations (IR) on 'relevant subjects such as war, violence, security, defence, protection, peacebuilding and the like', and that its historical 'subjugation' in academia, in the dual sense of its silencing and its denigration as naive, 'sets the boundaries of acceptable discourse on questions of war'[66] and serves the interests of what Cady describes as 'warism' and its associated political economy.[67]

Russia's invasion of Ukraine nonetheless does appear to present pacifism with a striking challenge. It is rare that military operations can genuinely claim to meet the strict criteria of 'just war theory', yet Ukraine's response is a strong contender.[68] However, few pacifists would deny the legitimacy of efforts to stifle the colonial ambitions of Vladimir Putin's Russia. The critical question is *how*. Ukrainians and their allies were presented with the view that the only possible option was military. But was it? Were alternative modes of effective resistance available? Could the military response have been rooted in potentially questionable assumptions? And is the

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[65] Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, 'An anarcho-pacifist reading of International Relations: a normative critique of international politics from the confluence of pacifism and anarchism', *International Studies Quarterly* 66: 4, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac070; Andrew Fiala, ed., *The Routledge handbook of pacifism and nonviolence* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Andrew Fiala, *Transformative pacifism: critical theory and practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Kimberly Hutchings, 'Pacifism is dirty: towards an ethico-political defence', *Critical Studies on Security* 6: 2, 2018, pp. 176–92, https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2017.1377998; Richard Jackson, 'Pacifism: the anatomy of a subjugated knowledge', *Critical Studies on Security* 6: 2, 2018, pp. 160–75, https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2017.1342750; Cheyney Ryan, 'Why pacifism now?', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 1, 2023, pp. 65–75, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00004.

[66] Jackson, 'Pacifism', p. 166.

[67] Duane L. Cady, *From warism to pacifism: a moral continuum* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

[68] Peter Daly, 'Is the war in Ukraine a just war?', *National Catholic Reporter*, 8 Sept. 2023, https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/ncr-voices/war-ukraine-just-war; Jakub Grygiel, 'Russia's unjust attack and Ukraine's just war', *Public Discourse*, 13 March 2022, https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2022/03/81091; Siniša Malešević, 'The moral fog of war and historical sociology', *European Journal of Social Theory* 26: 4, 2023, pp. 490–501, https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310231165218; Michael Walzer, 'The just war of the Ukrainians', *Wall Street Journal*, 25 March 2022, https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-just-war-of-the-ukrainians-11648214810. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 4 Nov. 2024.)

military path that was chosen likely to generate better outcomes in the longer run?

This article aims to explore these questions. The first section reflects on what nonviolent resistance to Russia's invasion, on a scale comparable to Ukraine's war efforts, might have looked like. The second identifies and critically discusses, from a pacifist perspective, two deeply ingrained assumptions that underlie the path that was chosen instead. The third develops the pacifist critique further by critically reflecting on some of the wider implications of that path. The article builds on a growing literature that, in recent years, has begun to give greater consideration to pacifism and nonviolence in IR[69] and in cognate disciplines such as philosophy,[70] political theory[71] and civil resistance studies.[72] It also builds on literature on 'civilian-based' (or 'social') defence[73] and on unarmed peacekeeping and unarmed civilian agency in violent conflict.[74] More generally, research on pacifism and nonviolence has been gaining growing momentum, although, in turn, it is raising plenty of further questions.[75] This article aims to contribute to this momentum by tackling directly one example among the most challenging that are levelled at pacifists.[76]

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[69] Richard Jackson, 'Pacifism and the ethical imagination in IR', *International Politics* 56: 2, 2019, pp. 212–27, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-017-0137-6; see also the special issues of *Critical Studies on Security* 6: 2, 2018 and *Global Society* 34: 1, 2020.

[70] Ned Dobos, *Ethics, security, and the war-machine: the true cost of the military* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Robert L. Holmes, *Pacifism: a philosophy of nonviolence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Todd May, *Nonviolent resistance: a philosophical introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2015); Cheyney Ryan, 'Pacifism(s)', *Philosophical Forum* 46: 1, 2015, pp. 17–39, https://doi.org/10.1111/phil.12053.

[71] Iain Atack, *Nonviolence in political theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, *Violence and political theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2020); Hutchings, 'Pacifism is dirty'.

[72] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why civil resistance works: the strategic logic of nonviolent conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Erica Chenoweth, 'The role of violence in nonviolent resistance', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26: 1, 2023, pp. 55–77, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051421-124128

[73] Robert J. Burrowes, *The strategy of nonviolent defence: a Gandhian approach* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996); Brian Martin, 'Social defence: a revolutionary agenda', in Richard Jackson et al., eds, *Revolutionary nonviolence: concepts, cases and controversies* (London: Zed, 2021); Grazina Miniotaite, 'Lithuania: from non-violent liberation towards non-violent defence?', *Peace Research* 28: 4, 1996, pp. 19–36; Jack Salmon, 'Can non-violence be combined with military means for national defence?', *Journal of Peace Research* 25: 1, 1988, pp. 69–80, https://doi.org/10.1177/002234338802500107; Gene Sharp, *Civilian-based defence: a post-military weapons system* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[74] Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Jeremy Allouche and Felicity Gray, 'Introduction: enacting peace amid violence: nonviolent civilian agency in violent conflict', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 2, 2023, 161–80, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00019; Ellen Furnari, Randy Janzen and Rosemary Kabaki, eds, *Unarmed civilian protection: a new paradigm for protection and human security* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2023); Rachel Julian, 'The transformative impact of unarmed civilian peacekeeping', *Global Society* 34: 1, 2020, pp. 99–111, https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2019.1668361; Rachel Julian and Christine Schweitzer, 'The origins and development of unarmed civilian peacekeeping', *Peace Review* 27: 1, 2015, pp. 1–8, https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2015.1000181; Nerve Valerio Macaspac, 'Indigenous geopolitics: creating Indigenous spaces of community self-protection and peace amid violent conflict', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 2, 2023, pp. 181–207, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00013; M. S. Wallace, *Security without weapons: rethinking violence, nonviolent action, and civilian protection* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017).

[75] Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, 'Pacifism and nonviolence: discerning the contours of an emerging multidisciplinary research agenda', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 1, 2023, pp. 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00011.

[76] Neta C. Crawford, 'The critical challenge of pacifism and nonviolent resistance then and now: from Sand Creek, and Ukraine to climate change', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 1, 2023, pp. 140–57, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00012; Lulu Garcia-Navarro, 'How the Russian invasion changed this Ukrainian pacifist's mind', *New York Times*, 1 March 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/01/opinion/ukrainian-pacifist.html; Marc LiVecche, 'Just war response to pacifism's say on Russia–Ukraine war', *Providence*, 12 April 2022, https://providencemag.com/2022/04/just-war-response-to-pacifisms-say-on-russia-ukraine-war; Michael Maier, 'When pacifism is wrong: an interview with Andrew Gilmour', Berghof Foundation, 3 April 2023, https://berghof-foundation.org/news/when-pacifism-is-wrong; Slavoj Žižek, 'Pacifism is the wrong response to the war in Ukraine', *Guardian*, 21 June 2022,

This article therefore simultaneously makes several original contributions. Firstly, it applies pacifist lines of analysis to a new case-study—and specifically to a conflict likely to leave a considerable mark on European histories. Doing this both enriches pacifist analysis and provides a reading of the Ukraine war that draws attention to aspects of it that are understudied. Secondly, it provides critics of pacifism with reflections with which to review their appreciation of what pacifism can contribute to difficult questions in IR. Thirdly, it paves the way for concrete proposals, rooted in pacifism, for states and their populations to consider as alternatives to military defence—including for those involved in the ongoing war in Ukraine.

More generally, with the accelerating climate emergency, growing geopolitical tensions in an increasingly multipolar world, the proliferation of small arms and weapons of mass destruction, the continuing development of new technologies of war and the ongoing expansion of military budgets, the threat of war is not expected to abate. Demonstrating that effective responses to security challenges as acute as military invasion need not contribute further violence and destruction may be important to help de-escalate current and future tensions, and potentially to interrupt the mutually reinforcing cycles of warism and organized violence. This study should therefore resonate beyond academia to help inform public debates and policies pertaining to defence, security and foreign affairs.

This article focuses on responses to Russia's full-scale aggression, not on what caused it in the first place, although to some extent the discussion in the later sections speaks to the causes. Neither is the aim of this article to condemn—especially from a distance—those in Ukraine who have adopted violent means to defend themselves. Such responses are understandable, not least given the prevailing assumptions discussed below. It is also harder to opt for alternative ways of responding and resisting invasion when the alternatives are little known, under-researched and poorly understood. This article's attempt to redress that comes too late to alter recent history. But the challenge of how to respond to and indeed prepare ahead of a potential invasion will confront populations again in the future. It is especially upon the planning for such future eventualities that this article hopes to have an impact.

Nonviolent 'resistance'?

How can people hope to resist nonviolently and effectively something like a full-scale invasion? Sharp famously listed 198 methods of nonviolent resistance in 1973.[77] These methods escalate from symbolic protests (for example, speeches, petitions, posters, leaflets, marches, picketing or teach-ins) to non-cooperation (consumer boycotts, refusals to pay, industrial or general strikes, boycotting elections or slow compliance) to more confrontational forms of intervention (civil disobedience, hunger strikes, sit-ins or nonviolent occupation). Others have been tried since Sharp produced his classification,[78] and the internet has opened even more possibilities.[79] Some of these nonviolent tactics were used at the start of the Ukraine war,[80] including in Russia, although they were rare and violent conflict soon came to dominate.

The effectiveness of nonviolent resistance

Can such nonviolent methods ever be effective? Discussions between partisans of violence and nonviolence are often frustratingly inconclusive: historical examples can be traded of preferred

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https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/21/pacificsm-is-the-wrong-response-to-the-war-in-ukraine.

[77] Gene Sharp, *The politics of nonviolent action*, in 3 vols (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, 1973)

[78] Global Nonviolent Action Database, https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu.

[79] Mary Joyce and Patrick Meier, 'Civil resistance 2.0: 198 nonviolent methods upgraded', The Commons, 2012, https://commonslibrary.org/198-nonviolent-methods-upgraded.

[80] Felip Daza, *Ukrainian nonviolent civil resistance in the face of war: analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022* (Barcelona: International Catalan Institute for Peace and International Institute for Nonviolent Action, 2022); Felip Daza, 'Civil resistance in Ukraine: exploring the dynamics and impacts of social emancipation forces to counter the 2022 Russian invasion', *Peace Review* 36: 1, 2024, pp. 14–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2024.2339399; Marta Kepe and Alyssa Demus, *Resisting Russia: insights into Ukraine's civilian-based actions during the first four months of the war in 2022* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2023).

methods that seem to have 'worked' and rejected ones that 'failed', and anyway many campaigns often include examples of *both* violent and nonviolent tactics, making it hard to determine which method was decisive in a campaign's 'success' or 'failure'. Nevertheless, one major study in 2011 by Chenoweth and Stephan reshaped the debate,[81] because it surveyed 323 cases of violent and nonviolent resistance across the time period 1900–2006 and found that, while success is certainly not guaranteed, nonviolent resistance seems overall to succeed twice more often than violent resistance. Moreover, when it succeeds, nonviolent resistance generally begets societies that are more respectful of human rights and democratic principles than when violent resistance succeeds. These findings are not undisputed and have been nuanced by some,[82] but Chenoweth and Stephan's main conclusions have yet to be convincingly disproved, and their pioneering work has prompted a growing number of studies refining and building upon it.[83]

One of the most contested aspects of Chenoweth and Stephan's analysis concerns the methods of resistance that are situated at the boundary between violence and nonviolence. Several critics argue that what they term 'unarmed collective violence'—which includes acts of 'vandalism, property destruction, rioting, or street fighting conducted without the use of weaponry (aside from improvised objects, like stones)'[84]—*increases* the chances of success.[85] Others, however, disagree (including on how 'violence' is defined and measured to begin with) and overall, taking all the scholarship in the aggregate, the empirical impact of unarmed collective violence on campaign outcomes to date remains ambiguous.[86] In any case, even if unarmed collective violence was to prove relatively effective, it still amounts to violence of a different nature—of a lower scale and gravity—than military violence.

There is also a related scholarly debate on the effect of 'radical' (and potentially violent) flanks on 'moderate' (typically nonviolent) campaigns' outcomes. Here too, overall, the research is inconclusive so far: it may be that having a radical flank threatening escalation sometimes increases chances of success for nonviolent campaigners, or that it discredits them.[87]

Either way, when it comes to applying these findings to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, critics can argue that Chenoweth and Stephan's database covers examples primarily of domestic resistance, not interstate war. Nevertheless, many cases in that database are examples of

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[81] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works*.

[82] Chenoweth, 'The role of violence in nonviolent resistance' provides an exhaustive literature review.

[83] Mauricio Rivera Celestino and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, 'Fresh carnations or all thorn, no rose? Nonviolent campaigns and transitions in autocracies', *Journal of Peace Research* 50: 3, 2013, pp. 385–400, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343312469979; Erica Chenoweth and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, 'Understanding nonviolent resistance: an introduction', *Journal of Peace Research* 50: 3, 2013, pp. 271–6, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313480381; Erica Chenoweth and Kurt Schock, 'Do contemporaneous armed challenges affect the outcomes of mass nonviolent campaigns?', *Mobilization* 20: 4, 2015, pp. 427–51, https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-20-4-427; Erica Chenoweth, Jonathan Pinckney and Orion Lewis, 'Days of rage: introducing the Navco 3.0 dataset', *Journal of Peace Research* 55: 4, 2018, pp. 524–34, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318759411; Dustin Ells Howes, 'The failure of pacifism and the success of nonviolence', *Perspectives on Politics* 11: 2, 2013, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592713001059; Sebastian Kalicha, 'Une critique anarchiste de la justification de la violence', in Collectif Désobéissances libertaires, ed., *Une critique anarchiste de la justification de la violence: réponses aux écrits de Peter Gelderloos et des tendances autoritaires au sein du black bloc* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 2019); Sharon Nepstad, *Nonviolent struggle: theories, strategies, and dynamics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[84] Chenoweth, 'The role of violence in nonviolent resistance', p. 58.

[85] Alexei Anisin, 'Debunking the myths behind nonviolent civil resistance', *Critical Sociology* 46: 7–8, 2020, pp. 1121–39, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520913982; Mohammad Kadivar and Neil Ketchley, 'Sticks, stones, and Molotov cocktails: unarmed collective violence and democratization', *Socius*, vol. 4, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118773614.

[86] Chenoweth, 'The role of violence in nonviolent resistance'.

[87] Anisin, 'Debunking the myths behind nonviolent civil resistance'; Chenoweth and Schock, 'Do contemporaneous armed challenges affect the outcomes of mass nonviolent campaigns?'; Chenoweth, 'The role of violence in nonviolent resistance'; Elizabeth Tompkins, 'A quantitative reevaluation of radical flank effects within nonviolent campaigns', in Patrick G. Coy, ed., *Research in social movements, conflicts and change* (Leeds: Emerald, 2015).

resistance to repressive and authoritarian regimes. Actually, this is the alternative path one would presumably have to envisage: nonviolent Ukrainian resistance first to Russian invasion, but also probably then to repressive occupation. The discussion that follows here, then, is inevitably speculative,[88] imagining a counterfactual history of a different Ukrainian response to Russia's full-scale invasion. But given that historical experiments cannot be rerun with altered variables (in contrast to experiments in the natural sciences), such speculation is inevitable when considering alternative historical paths, even if the discussion leaves more questions than answers. Besides, such speculation is no less questionable in terms of the certainty of its prognosis than any foreign policy advice given in the present about the future. Moreover, such a thought experiment provides a challenge to militaristic 'common sense' and opens themes for discussion further below.

Comparing scenarios in the context of Ukraine

The 2013/2014 Euromaidan protests that toppled Viktor Yanukovych's Kremlin-leaning government provided Ukrainians with considerable experience in trialling and adapting nonviolent methods of resistance. It was within days of the success of the Euromaidan that Russia began its war in Ukraine by invading Crimea, its operations in Donbas following just weeks later. Between 2014 and 2022, the conflict with Russia somewhat 'frozen' but still on Ukrainian minds, Ukraine pursued a strategy of nearly doubling its military expenditure[89] while seeking a closer relationship with NATO.

What if—instead of, or on top of that—Ukraine's government had implemented a strategy and policy of mass training of its entire population in nonviolent methods of resistance? Advocates of nonviolent resistance since the time of Gandhi have always stressed the importance of training and planning.[90] It takes discipline and training to remain nonviolent when facing violent repression. Nonviolence training also involves learning about a wide variety of nonviolent campaigns, successful or otherwise, as sources of inspiration and creativity. Rolling out a programme to train the entire Ukrainian population in nonviolent resistance would, of course, have required considerable financial and administrative effort, in turn calling on the full organizational capacity of the Ukrainian state. Had such a strategy been pursued, how might have things unfolded from 24 February 2022?

One could start by reflecting on how the Russian regime's perceptions (and descriptions) of Ukraine might have been different in that scenario. Without Ukraine's military buildup and its courting of NATO membership, some of the arguments with which the Russian leadership chose to justify the 2022 invasion would have looked weaker and been harder to sell to domestic audiences and potential international supporters.[91]

Regardless, let us imagine Russian troops crossing the same lines on 24 February 2022. Ukrainians might have met them without weapons. They might have come out in the streets. They might have blocked the roads. They might have addressed Russian troops directly (often in the Russian language), perhaps with posters, songs and leaflets, as well as by using diverse media channels. Would this have prevented Russian violence? Probably not. It is likely that Russian troops would still have shot, wounded or killed resisting Ukrainians, driving over civilians and

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[88] Similarly to Majken Jul Sørensen, *Pacifism today: a dialogue about alternatives to war in Ukraine* (Sparsnäs, Sweden: Irene, 2024).

[89] According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's military expenditure database (available at https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex), in the seven years to 2014 (inclusive), Ukrainian military expenditure averaged 2.6% of GDP, or an average amount of US$3.663 billion annually (at constant 2022 prices and exchange rates). Between 2015 and 2021 this increased to 3.8%, averaging $5.926 billion per year, an average increase of $2.3 billion per year. (Accessed 13 Nov. 2024.)

[90] Nepstad, *Nonviolent struggle*; Gene Sharp, *Waging nonviolent struggle: 20th century practice and 21st century potential* (Boston: Extending Horizons, 2005); Sørensen, *Pacifism today*; Stellan Vinthagen, *A theory of nonviolent action: how civil resistance works* (London: Zed, 2015); Stellan Vinthagen, 'Praxis of emerging liberations: a transdisciplinary knowledge-making of how to liberate within-against-and-beyond systems of violence', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 1, 2023, pp. 114–29, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00002.

[91] Sørensen, *Pacifism today*.

marching onwards. But Ukrainians would continue to *not* resort to violence. Reports of this response would circulate in news and social media outlets. As time went on, Russian soldiers would likely have continued to obey orders, but some at least would soon presumably begin to find the confrontation disturbing. Some would question official Russian narratives. Some would be traumatized by the violence they would be inflicting on peaceful Ukrainians who were meeting them nonviolently. Whether every cog of the Russian operation would continue to cooperate in the invasion and kill stubbornly nonviolent Ukrainians trying to stop them is an open question.

Let us imagine nonetheless that Russian troops would roll on and eventually conquer all of Ukraine. There would have been many Ukrainian casualties, but no violent retaliation. Now, however, would begin the challenge of occupying Ukraine, changing its political structure, reframing media and educational narratives, and managing Ukraine to the tune called by the Russian government. Ukrainians would have been prepared for such a scenario. They would continue to resist, nonviolently but tenaciously, at every turn. Like the Norwegian teachers who refused to deliver the Nazi curriculum, the Dutch doctors who refused their profession's nazification, the Polish teachers who organized underground education during their country's occupation, and like the many workers in heavy industry and public administration across the territories occupied by Germany during the Second World War, they would refuse to collaborate despite threats, arrests and persecution; they would go slow, they would strike; and they would operate parallel channels to carry on with what the occupying power would want to stop.[92] There would be petitions, industrial strikes, sit-ins, civil disobedience, occupations and boycotts. Ukraine's allies would join in with economic and political boycotts. A growing number of opponents to the invasion might additionally organize similar actions within Russia. But few Ukrainians would be found to collaborate with the occupation, and a potentially growing number of Russians might struggle with it, too.

In fact, during the earliest stages of the Russian invasion in 2022, various nonviolent initiatives to resist it *were* implemented at grassroots level by groups of civilians.[93] However, these were few and far between; they tended to be under-reported and were drowned out by the louder drums of war. They received little government support, and little amplification or discussion in mainstream media. Had such initiatives benefited from much more government planning and preparation, the Russian leadership might have found itself increasingly unable to govern, stretched across a vast occupied country and facing growing domestic discontent. It would have worked hard to vilify Ukrainian's nonviolent resistance, but it would have struggled to do so, since glimpses of the reality would have percolated across Russia via social media, returning soldiers and word of mouth, which Russians would contrast and triangulate with official narratives. The invasion and occupation might still have been violent, with tens of thousands of Ukrainians killed and wounded, but Ukrainians would have been trained to remain nonviolent in their resolute and stubborn resistance. They would have been prepared for the 'moral'[94] or 'political jiu-jitsu'[95] of nonviolence, sometimes called the 'backfire effect',[96] whereby the resolutely nonviolent resistance to the opponent's violence shifts the moral high ground and erodes the consent needed from the opponent's own population to carry on.[97]

Civil disobedience scholarship reflects on the apparently greater effectiveness of nonviolent resistance as being partly owing to such actions pulling apart the pillars of support for the

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[92] Martin, 'Social defence'; Andrew Rigby, *Sowing seeds for the future: exploring the power of constructive nonviolent action* (Sparsnäs, Sweden: Irene, 2021); Jacques Semelin, *Sans armes face à Hitler 1939–1945: la résistance civile en Europe* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2013); Sørensen, *Pacifism today*.

[93] Bryan Carey, 'Ukraine reflections: pacifism, violence, and nonviolent resistance', Peace Catalyst, 14 March 2022, https://www.peacecatalyst.org/blog/2022/3/14/ukraine-reflections-pacifism-violence-and-nonviolent-resistance; Daza, *Ukrainian nonviolent civil resistance in the face of war*; Nonviolent Peaceforce, 'Ukraine', https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/ukraine.

[94] Richard Bartlett Gregg, *The power of nonviolence* (London: James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1960).

[95] Sharp, *The politics of nonviolent action*.

[96] Brian Martin, 'How nonviolence works', *Borderlands E-Journal* 4: 3, 2005.

[97] Sørensen, *Pacifism today*.

regime, in contrast to how violent resistance often pulls them tighter together.[98] Adversaries, when violent, are more easily othered and dehumanized. Their actions can easily be framed as threatening, justifying greater coordination and mobilization in the name of security and self-defence. When an adversary consists of civilians who are addressing an invading nation's troops respectfully and with a disturbing absence of violence, despite violence having been perpetrated against them, doubts are more likely to start creeping in. The minds of the chief architects of the operation might not be affected, but those of the innumerable cogs of the war machine might. How long would the violence continue? How sustainable would it be in the face of increasing numbers of defections—among troops on the ground and perhaps officials higher up—and the possibility of nonviolent discontent arising among the population of the invading nation? Indeed, how long would Putin's regime last, not only in Ukraine but also in Russia?

To be clear: nonviolent resistance would not be a path devoid of violence and human suffering. There would probably still be many thousands of Ukrainian victims, and great harm might need to be absorbed, with no guarantee of success. But how does this compare to the actual path taken since February 2022? By November 2024, according to some estimates, at least 12,000 civilians and 542,000 soldiers—many originally civilians but conscripted, hence counted as soldiers—had been killed, and many more wounded.[99] Millions have been displaced, and cities like Mariupol and Bakhmut have been destroyed. At the beginning of 2024 the Kyiv School of Economics estimated the war's economic costs to date as over US$600 billion.[100] The path taken since February 2022 has therefore been very violent, with no end in sight nor any guarantee of Ukraine's eventual success at the time of writing. There are also wider implications of this military path, which are considered below.

The impossible but crucial question becomes: is it certain that such a path of full-scale nonviolent resistance would have been worse in process *and* outcome than the military path that was taken? The nonviolent path might have been challenging, uncertain and ultimately violent, but so has been the military path. Both scenarios involve considerable suffering, and neither path is guaranteed to work. But whether the objectives are restoring Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, protecting Ukrainians from mass atrocities[101] or protecting Ukrainian culture from erasure, the warist path's record to date is ambivalent at best, and the future still uncertain. Yet there was little questioning of the military reaction. The Ukrainian people and government mobilized and fought, heroically, and Ukraine's allies supported the military response by providing weapons. Why was the nonviolent path not considered? While one possible reason is that nonviolent resistance methods are not widely known and remain under-researched, not least in security studies and in think tanks close to political power, another is that defaulting to a military response rests on deeply ingrained assumptions about the operation of organized violence.

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[98] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works*; Howes, 'The failure of pacifism and the success of nonviolence'; Nepstad, *Nonviolent struggle*; Brian Martin, 'How nonviolence is misrepresented', *Gandhi Marg* 30: 2, 2008, pp. 235–57; Kurt Schock, 'Nonviolent action and its misconceptions: insights for social scientists', *Political Science and Politics* 36: 4, 2003, pp. 705–12, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096503003482.

[99] The numbers are contested and difficult to verify, but what is clear is that the vast majority of civilian casualties are Ukrainian. It also seems widely agreed that Russia's military casualties are substantially higher that Ukraine's. One good summary of the different numbers and sources at the time of writing was Mersiha Gadzo, 'Record high deaths in the Russia–Ukraine war: What you should know', *Al Jazeera*, 16 Oct. 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/16/russia-ukraine-wartime-deaths.

[100] Tymofii Brik, Tymofiy Mylovanov, Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili and Ilia Murtazashvili, 'Introduction: special issue on the political economy of the war in Ukraine', *Journal of Public Finance and Public Choice* 39: 1, 2024, pp. 2–9, https://doi.org/10.1332/25156918Y2024D000000006.

[101] On violence ostensibly to protect civilians: Helen Dexter, 'Pacifism and the problem of protecting others', *International Politics*, vol. 56, 2019, pp. 243–58, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-017-0134-9; M. S. Wallace, 'Standing "bare hands" against the Syrian regime: the turn to armed resistance and the question of civilian protection', *Critical Studies on Security* 6: 2, 2018, pp. 237–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2017.1367359.

Deeply ingrained assumptions

The instrumental efficacy of violence

Among the assumptions about the operation of violence that pacifists question, two seem particularly pertinent to the Russia–Ukraine war. The first is the assumption, which is widespread in military circles but also across wider popular culture, and is reinforced by national myths and collective memories, that violence is instrumentally effective: that is, it provides an effective means to an end, at the very least as a last resort.

There are reasons to doubt this. In the first place, in any violent conflict, if one party wins, the other loses: therefore violence can be said to fail at least half the time.[102] Moreover, those against whom violence is used might respond by complying, or by resisting.[103] Furthermore, few wars in the past century have ended in decisive military victory: indeed, one lesson from examples such as the Vietnam War, the Soviet and NATO military interventions in Afghanistan, or the current Russia–Ukraine conflict, is that states with larger military capacities do not necessarily win wars.[104] Dissident terrorism and armed insurgencies also frequently fail,[105] as does violent counterterrorism until more diplomatic, longer-term solutions are envisaged.[106] Contrary to dominant assumptions in IR about military violence, the empirical record suggests that it is not particularly effective at achieving stated policy goals, nor does a greater ability to inflict such violence guarantee success.

What using violence does guarantee, however, is a trail of damage—whether it results from interpersonal violence (including gender-based violence) or material destruction (including environmental destruction). Military violence destroys infrastructure. It aggrieves victims and their relatives, brutalizes perpetrators and traumatizes all concerned. To paraphrase Arendt, violent means may not secure the ends for which they are ostensibly deployed, but they do transform the world—to a more violent one.[107] That does not mean that particular interests cannot be advanced by using violence: political agendas and careers can be advanced; competitors can be discredited; specific targets can be killed; profits can be made from the production of the means of violence; and images of decisive action can be projected. Pacifists have long been concerned about precisely how those kinds of interests weigh heavily on decisions to wage war.[108] But the efficacy of violence in achieving stated policy aims is nonetheless questionable.

Yet when a country like Ukraine is facing invasion, the widespread assumption is that the only way to resist effectively is with violence, that coordinated efforts to repel the invasion on the battlefield can succeed and—with enough training, financial and material support from allies,

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[102] Robert L. Holmes and Barry L. Gan, eds, *Nonviolence in theory and practice* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2012).

[103] Richard Jackson, 'A defence of revolutionary nonviolence', in Jackson et al., eds, *Revolutionary nonviolence*; Wallace, *Security without weapons*; M. S. Wallace, 'Wrestling with another human being: the merits of a messy, power-laden pacifism', *Global Society* 34: 1, 2020, pp. 52–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2019.1668359.

[104] Stephen Biddle, *Military power: explaining victory and defeat in modern battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Howes, 'The failure of pacifism and the success of nonviolence'; Jackson, 'Pacifism and the ethical imagination in IR'.

[105] Max Abrahms, 'Why terrorism does not work', *International Security* 31: 2, 2006, pp. 42–78, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2006.31.2.42; Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works*.

[106] Richard Jackson, 'CTS, counterterrorism and non-violence', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 10: 2, 2017, pp. 357–69, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2017.1334851; Wallace, *Security without weapons*.

[107] See Hannah Arendt as cited in Helen Dexter, 'Terrorism and violence: another violence is possible?', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 5: 1, 2012, pp. 121–37 at p. 133, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2012.659920.

[108] Alberto Castelli, *The peace discourse in Europe, 1900–1945* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019); Christopher Coyne, *In search of monsters to destroy: the folly of American empire and the paths to peace* (Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 2022); Andrew Fiala, 'Just war ethics and the slippery slope of militarism', *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 19: 2, 2012, pp. 92–102, https://doi.org/10.5840/pcw201219210; Andrew Fiala, *Against religion, wars, and states: the case for Enlightenment atheism, just war pacifism, and liberal-democratic anarchism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013); Sebastian Kalicha, *Anarchisme non-violent et pacifisme libertaire: une approache théorique et historique* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 2020); Ryan, 'Why pacifism now?'.

fervour and determination—that they will do so. This course of action certainly has had an impact and has helped advance particular agendas and economic interests, but the strategic aims ('repelling the enemy', 'liberating all of Ukraine', 'winning the war') have been far from secured.

Human nature

A second deeply ingrained yet questionable assumption is that fighting back when attacked is 'human nature', and that this applies to states as much as individuals. Firstly, pacifism should not be conflated with passivity.[109] Pacifists do not deny any 'natural' inclination to respond and indeed resist. The question is, how. For example, when an individual is under attack, a range of options—including pleading, screaming, acting disturbingly crazy, even physically resisting short of *lethal* force—could be considered before pulling a gun and shooting the attacker. Projected onto wider groups of individuals, plenty of possible responses can be creatively envisaged before resorting to lethal violence: hence the numerous methods of nonviolent resistance listed by Sharp in the 1970s, and later expanded.

Violence between states is in any case substantially different to violence between individuals.[110] Individuals have instincts and emotions. Their physical integrity can be destroyed. States are institutions; they are complex administrations, the effective operation of which is hindered, if anything, by overpowering emotions. What has been termed the 'war machine' requires its every cog to perform its function coldly and rationally. Moreover, even when a state is 'destroyed', its former territory and many of the people occupying it remain. A state is therefore not 'destroyed' in the same way an individual can be. The governing regime and elite might be replaced, but the nature of the threat that a state faces is not identical to an individual.

Furthermore, for a state to be able to retaliate violently when attacked requires a type of preparation that is also different and more complex to the equivalent that individuals may undertake. For states, violent retaliation requires a standing army (or at least trained reserves or paramilitaries that are readily available), hence also the mobilizing of human resources, a programme of training and discipline to create obedient soldiers, the production or purchase of weapons, narratives about 'our' culture and that of threatening others—in short, what has been described by some scholars as a 'war system'.[111] And that, in turn, generates its own self-fulfilling hazards, including the classic 'security dilemma', the potential attracting of pre-emptive attacks, ill-advised militaristic hubris and the leaking of militaristic culture beyond strictly military settings onto wider culture and society.[112]

Individuals might train and prepare themselves for violent aggression and purchase weapons, but the 'human nature' analogy fails to capture what it takes for a state to be ready to 'fight', and the impact that has on its identity and political economy. Anthropomorphizing states—i.e. treating them in discussion as if behaving like human beings—is thus an approach that rests on questionable shortcuts: it obscures the 'constitutive' impact (to be discussed in more detail below) of states preparing themselves to react with violence.[113]

The claim that 'violence is inherent in human nature' can be problematized anyway.[114] In the

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[109] Duane Cady, 'Pacifism is not passivism', *Philosophy Now*, vol. 105, 2014, https://philosophynow.org/issues/105/Pacifism_Is_Not_Passivism.

[110] Milan Rai, 'Abolishing war part 2', Peace News, 2011, https://peacenews.info/blog/2011/abolishing-war-part-2; Ryan, 'Pacifism(s)'.

[111] Ryan, 'Pacifism(s)'.

[112] See for example Dobos, *Ethics, security, and the war-machine*.

[113] See for example Alex Prichard, 'Collective intentionality, complex pluralism and the problem of anarchy', *Journal of International Political Theory* 13: 3, 2017, pp. 360–77, https://doi.org/10.1177/1755088217715789.

[114] Duane L. Cady, 'A time—and a project—for pacifism and nonviolence studies', *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence* 1: 1, 2023, pp. 41–51, https://doi.org/10.1163/27727882-bja00005; Douglas P. Fry, ed., *War, peace, and human nature: the convergence of evolutionary and cultural views* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); William C. Gay, 'Pacifism, feminism, and nonkilling philosophy: a new approach to connecting peace studies and gender studies', in Jennifer Kling, ed., *Pacifism, politics, and feminism: intersections and innovations* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Jackson, 'Pacifism and the ethical imagination in IR'; Maija Jespersen, 'Challenging Hobbes: is war inevitable?', *Global Society* 34: 1, 2020, pp. 21–35,

first place, it is often accompanied by questionable gendered mindsets, practices and expectations about feminine and especially masculine 'nature'—which are then reflected, for instance, in warist prescriptions of compulsory conscription for all men within certain age limits.[115] However, given that human beings tend to live peacefully most of the time, the 'natural' human condition is arguably peace, not war. That is not to deny that violence can and does erupt, for instance in response to perceived threats, injustices or greed, but the 'natural' inclination is arguably to live in peace. Why violence erupts when it does, and how that can be prevented or confronted, are obviously important questions, but they are questions that pacifists approach with eyes as wide open as those of their counterparts in other schools of thought. The difference is that the pacifist analysis of violence is especially concerned with how it can be drastically minimized.

Of course, when another country is launching an invasion, a natural inclination on the part of the invaded state's citizens is to resist. But it is a separate, further, and not inevitable step to frame the only possible reaction as having to be violent. Moreover, the natural inclination of Ukrainians to resist is not the same phenomenon as what moves the Ukrainian state to enact the organized reaction it had planned for such an eventuality. It might therefore be 'natural' for Ukrainians to be moved to resist Russia's invasion, but to assume that such a reaction cannot be anything but violent, and that this is inherent in human nature, is to oversimplify human nature and to fail to notice the role that questionable assumptions about it play in such an analogy.

The military path's productive impact

Beyond identifying alternative ways in which Russia's invasion might have been resisted under a strategy of collective nonviolent resistance, and highlighting deeply ingrained assumptions that are central to a state's defaulting to a military response, a pacifist critique of the war would also express concern with the wider consequences of the military path that was chosen. This is because pacifists worry not only about the legitimacy and effectiveness of violence as an instrument, but also about its 'productive' or 'constitutive' impact—in other words, about how it transforms the agents of violence in the process.[116]

Self-reinforcing militarism and warism

Wars tend to stimulate a hardening of attitudes and dehumanization towards the human beings who happen to be on the other side. The invasion started as an operation orchestrated by the Kremlin without obvious massive support from the Russian population, at a time when many westerners still favoured engagement and interaction with Russians. Western sanctions and support for Ukraine, however, have hardened Russian distrust of the West.[117] Conversely, public opinions in the West have coalesced towards greater allegiance to NATO, a sharper identification with 'the West' and with 'liberalism', and a consolidated perception of Russia, China

https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2019.1668363.

[115] Brian Ferguson, 'Masculinity and war', *Current Anthropology* 62: S23, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1086/711622.

[116] Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, 'On politics and violence: Arendt contra Fanon', *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 71, 2008, pp. 90–108, https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300328; Hutchings, 'Pacifism is dirty'; Jackson, 'CTS, counterterrorism and non-violence'; Jackson, 'Pacifism and the ethical imagination in IR'; Jackson, 'A defence of revolutionary nonviolence'; Cheyney Ryan, 'Pacifism, just war, and self-defence', *Philosophia* 41: 4, 2013, pp. 977–1005, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-013-9493-7; Ryan, 'Pacifism(s)'.

[117] Anatol Lieven, 'Why Russian intellectuals are hardening support for war in Ukraine', *Responsible Statecraft*, 6 June 2022, https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/06/06/why-russian-intellectuals-are-hardening-support-for-war-in-ukraine; NORC, 'New survey finds most Russians see Ukrainian war as defence against West', NORC, 9 Jan. 2024, https://www.norc.org/research/library/new-survey-finds-most-russians-see-ukrainian-war-as-defence-against-west.html

and 'illiberalism' as enemies.[118] Wars, then, forge and reinforce 'imagined communities'[119] out of bitter histories of violence and mutual distrust.[120] By contrast, nonviolent methods of resistance cultivate a higher degree of mutual respect, treating the human beings on the other side with dignity and addressing them in ways more likely to stimulate a change of will and possible reconciliation.[121]

Wars also accelerate processes of centralization and hierarchical statebuilding. Pacifists (especially anarcho-pacifists) have long warned that 'predatory political power' results from the 'centralisation' of 'killing for political ends'.[122] War generates pressures to centralize command and control. States at war can easily be tempted to infringe human rights and instigate repressive policies to maximize the mobilization of resources for the war effort.[123] This includes the compulsory military conscription of citizens identified as human 'resources'—a practice pacifists have long denounced and campaigned against. In this particular war, thousands of Ukrainian and Russian citizens have found themselves forced to enrol (and consequently potentially kill, or themselves die), and thousands more are expected to, not by choice but because their governments have identified them as resources at their disposal.[124] Both states have also implemented crackdowns on those who have objected or sought to opt out;[125] and the war has renewed discussions about reintroducing or extending conscription across Europe.[126]

The conflict has also had multiple economic consequences of concern for pacifists. The defence industries on both sides have seen considerable growth in revenues and profits, and enviable rises in share value.[127] In terms of opportunity cost, every penny of government budgets spent in the military-industrial complex is money not spent on other priorities, such as public health, education or other public policies contributing to 'human security' and 'positive peace'.[128] As other scholars have noted, it is not uncommon that war economies become entrenched, generating their own self-reinforcing dynamics through well-oiled lobbying operations, revolving doors between the defence industry and policy-makers, funded collaborations with research institutes and universities, an appetite for cultural productions (such as films and series)

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[118] Timothy Garton Ash, Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, 'United West, divided from the rest: global public opinion one year into Russia's war on Ukraine', European Council on Foreign Relations, 22 Feb. 2023, https://ecfr.eu/publication/united-west-divided-from-the-rest-global-public-opinion-one-year-into-russias-war-on-ukraine; Fred Lewsey, 'War in Ukraine has widened a global divide in public attitudes toward US, China and Russia', University of Cambridge, https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/worlddivided.

[119] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* [1983] (London: Verso, 2006).

[120] Jackson, 'Pacifism and the ethical imagination in IR'.

[121] Sørensen, *Pacifism today*; Wallace, 'Wrestling with another human being'.

[122] See Cheyney Ryan, 'War, hostilities, terrorism: a pacifist perspective', in Jorg Kustermans, Tom Sauer, Dominiek Lootens and Barbara Segaert, eds, *Pacifism's appeal: ethos, history, politics* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 14.

[123] Ryan, 'War, hostilities, terrorism', p. 22.

[124] Ben Hall, 'Army conscription becomes toxic issue for Ukraine's leaders', *Financial Times*, 1 Jan. 2024, https://www.ft.com/content/3ce63abc-9a71-427b-8e11-ab5309288845; Polina Ivanova and Roman Olearchyk, 'Russia raises conscription age as fighting intensifies in Ukraine's south', *Financial Times*, 27 July 2023, https://www.ft.com/content/760cc6c5-9d91-493d-94ca-86215c552fd7.

[125] War Resisters' International, 'Ukraine', https://wri-irg.org/en/taxonomy/term/157; War Resisters' International, 'Russian Federation', https://wri-irg.org/en/taxonomy/term/185.

[126] Rod Thornton, 'Ukraine war: why many NATO countries are thinking of introducing conscription and the issues that involves', The Conversation, 8 April 2024, https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-why-many-nato-countries-are-thinking-of-introducing-conscription-and-the-issues-that-involves-227080

[127] Alexa Phillips, 'Ukraine war: how weapons makers are profiting from the conflict', *Sky News*, 10 June 2022, https://news.sky.com/story/ukraine-war-how-weapons-makers-are-profiting-from-the-conflict-12624574; Paula Reisdorf, 'Weapons makers profit handsomely off Ukraine war, three months after Russian invasion', *CorpWatch*, 24 May 2022, https://www.corpwatch.org/article/weapons-makers-profit-handsomely-ukraine-war-three-months-after-russian-invasion.

[128] Luke Glanville and James Pattison, 'Ukraine and the opportunity costs of military aid', *International Affairs* 100: 4, 2024, pp. 1571–90, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiae122.

shaped and censored by the defence establishment, and so on.[129] In other words, war injects renewed vitality to the military-industrial complex and opens opportunities for it to sink deeper roots in the wider political culture and economy. The consequences of this war on the economies of the nations concerned will therefore be felt for years to come.

The war has also triggered a realignment and hardening of international and geopolitical alliances. NATO has rediscovered its *raison d'être*, enjoying renewed support among its members' populations, and being able to deploy its processes and operational capacity with renewed urgency. Countries with histories of geopolitical neutrality have joined it (for example, Finland and Sweden) or have come under pressure to contribute to the war effort (notably Switzerland). Belarus is now more tightly aligned with Russia, whose cooperation and coordination with Iran and North Korea has also intensified. The way in which tensions played out when opposing geopolitical alliances hardened in Europe in the twentieth century is unlikely to reassure pacifists that such a geopolitical trajectory is the safest way to preserve peace in the twenty-first. The dangers of escalation are real, including to nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

These reactions across state capitals illustrate the self-reinforcing, self-fulfilling and inherently dangerous productive impact of warist paths. The war system is fed by, and in turn further fuels, an ingrained mindset embedded in geopolitical practices, wider political cultures and the military-industrial economy, which in turn constitute the conditions for future conflicts, reinforcing the attractiveness of war as an option in the present and future. Putin's calculations and Russia's aggression grew out of such a context in the first place (a militarized and coercive political culture, nostalgia for geopolitical grandeur and a distrust of NATO), and the warist reflex by Ukraine and its allies demonstrates militaristic logics embedded across Europe and beyond. This conflict thus illustrates how war becomes a recurring sedimented practice which constitutes and perpetuates the conditions for its reproduction. Pacifism provides the theoretical lenses to bring this into focus, as well as tentative proposals to interrupt this warist cycle.

Whither pacifism?

Instead, however, the Ukraine war has reinvigorated the 'subjugation' of pacifism in the public discourse.[66] [130]Numerous commentaries, including by some with historic sympathies for pacifism, came out as supporting this particular war, thus reinforcing the framing of pacifism as too categorical and naive. Pacifism has therefore been dismissed as if its only contribution to the discussion would be some principled and categorical rejection of all wars. Not only does this ignore the deeper and richer critique that pacifism can contribute along the lines sketched in this article, but it also overlooks the reality that few pacifists have ever actually embraced a categorical rejection of all wars in all possible circumstances. As I have explained elsewhere:

> *Some pacifists reject all war due to a belief that killing is always wrong, but others reject war based for example on the view that human judgement is always fallible, or that modern technology has made it impossible for wars to be fought solely between combatants, or simply that war is never effective in bringing about desired results. Some even concede that 'just wars' are theoretically legitimate but contend that the criteria for such 'just wars' are hardly ever met in reality (thereby blurring the distinction between just war theory and pacifism at this end of the pacifism spectrum). For some pacifists, therefore, it is conceivable that violence could be legitimate in theory or in very specific and limited circumstances*.[131]

What that implies is that it is not inconceivable for a pacifist to see *some* military response to Russia's full-scale invasion as not incompatible with their pacifist critique, presumably provided

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[129] Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood war machine: US militarism and popular culture* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2007); Coyne, *In search of monsters to destroy*; Dobos, *Ethics, security, and the war-machine*; Fiala, 'Just war ethics and the slippery slope of militarism'; Fiala, *Against religion, wars, and states*; Henry A. Giroux, *The university in chains: confronting the military-industrial-academic complex* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2007).

[130] Jackson, 'Pacifism'.

[131] Christoyannopoulos, 'Pacifism and nonviolence', p. 3. See Cady, *From warism to pacifism*; Cady, 'A time—and a project—for pacifism and nonviolence studies'.

the violence is strictly limited and contained, its necessity constantly reappraised and its wider productive impact never overlooked, underestimated or left unquestioned. One can therefore maintain a critical pacifist awareness of the questionable efficacy of violence and of war's constitutive impact, while contributing to Ukrainian efforts to resist Russia's invasion. One can also still ask whether nonviolent resistance might have had, and may still have, a role to play. Put differently, to dismiss pacifism offhand in light of this war is to ignore and close the door to a critical lens that potentially offers important observations about both this war and the planning for any other future conflict.

However, the dominant reactions to Russia's invasion rested upon and reaffirmed unquestioned assumptions about the legitimacy, necessity and effectiveness of war as a policy option. Politically, but also economically and culturally, the war led to an escalation of militarism and militarization not just in Ukraine and Russia, but also in the wider region and beyond, potentially rendering future war not less, but more likely and destructive. That is, the war has hardened militaristic mindsets and policy decisions, to the detriment of pacifist critique, but also illustrating precisely some of the core concerns of that critique.[132]

Contrasting security horizons

It is possible that this military path might lead to a victory for Ukraine and its allies. In such a scenario, would it be reasonable to expect an even more militarized but now wounded Russia to accept the peace of the victors? Even if Putin's regime were toppled by a coup, as can happen to autocratic regimes when a military adventure fails, would the new regime be likely to be less militarized, less threatening and less worried about NATO or EU enlargements? However, it is also possible that Russia might win the military conflict. In that scenario, every independent state bordering it would be fearful of the Kremlin's next move. Ukraine would vow revenge, and tensions would remain high across Europe, with military-industrial complexes at heightened capacity. The same effects might conceivably be observed in the case of a mixed outcome based on current demarcation lines. In short, no peace extracted from the current warist path seems particularly primed to deliver demilitarization or the ingredients for peaceful coexistence.

In contrast, it is possible to theorize a different kind of peace that might conceivably have emerged in the case of Ukraine from a path of committed, large-scale nonviolent resistance. First, the contours of such a peace, following a Ukrainian victory, might have been inferred from the empirical record of successful civil disobedience campaigns.[133] The Russian population (and a growing number of its troops) might have struggled to see the enmity of the 'enemy'. Loyalty shifts might thus have weakened the Russian regime. The Ukrainian example might have inspired and rejuvenated Russian civil resistance, which in turn might have brought about dramatic, bottom-up political change in Russia and ushered in a new regime that was more respectful of democracy and human rights. Similar changes might have been stimulated in countries such as Belarus and Georgia. Meanwhile, Ukraine would have regained its independence, and the civil leaders of the resistance might have replaced controversial figures such as Stepan Bandera as national heroes. Previously antagonistic populations might be more likely to work together. Moreover, instead of producing accelerated militarization, the economic structures and cultural productions of Ukraine and its allies might be directed to more constructive and peacebuilding-orientated activities.

Of course, the path of nonviolent resistance could fail, just as the warist one could. But which would *fail* the worst? Which of the two paths would leave, in its wake, societies that are less militarized and less dehumanized, possessing more effective tools and techniques for resistance to continue despite the failed outcome? Moreover, whether comparing paths to victory or paths to failure (and leaving aside questions of comparative *ethical* merit), the question remains as to whether the military option will produce more promising longer-term outcomes

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[132] Andrew Alexandra, 'Political pacifism', *Social Theory and Practice* 29: 4, 2003, pp. 589–606, https://doi.org/10.5840/soctheorpract200329428; Christoyannopoulos, 'An anarcho-pacifist reading of IR'; Dexter, 'Pacifism and the problem of protecting others'; Dobos, *Ethics, security, and the war-machine*; Jackson, 'Pacifism and the ethical imagination in IR'; Jackson, 'Pacifism'.

[133] Sharp, *The politics of nonviolent action*; Sharp, *Waging nonviolent struggle*; Sørensen, *Pacifism today*.

for Ukrainian and wider European security. One of the reasons warism continues to appeal is that it can parade what appear to be tangible results on the battlefield. For Ukraine and its allies, the warist response has brought the invasion to an uneasy standstill—for now. But it should not be overlooked that considerable territory has been conceded, the lines of demarcation are unstable, the likely outcome is uncertain, the human and material costs are high and rising, and militarism is further ingrained across Europe. Nonviolence works differently. It *can* have tangible results on contested front lines, but these might be less immediate: for example, more territory might be ceded in the shorter term, because instead of violently imposing one's preferences on the adversary, the focal battleground for the nonviolent path is the opponents' mindset. Nonviolent resistance seeks to address rather than destroy adversaries, and it does not feed the war machine.

Pacifism and nonviolent civilian defence provide the possibility of breaking out of perilous yet sedimented warist logics, clearing a path to a different European horizon. While suddenly stopping all western arms supplies to Ukraine would risk precipitating military defeat, it can be argued that it is not too late to train European citizens—including Ukrainians—in nonviolent resistance. Warism is neither the only nor the best response to Russian expansionism, whether for Ukrainian or wider European security. Investing in mass training in nonviolent civilian defence seems at least as likely to deliver security in Europe than betting on traditional great power realpolitik, extended deterrence and growing militarism.

Conclusions

When one state orders its military to invade another, it is sometimes portrayed as the moment when pacifist fantasies must be cast aside: when laudable but naive delusions about peace must make way so that cold, hard-headed military realism can confront the situation. Yet that is also precisely when the pacifist critique is at its most relevant—not necessarily the more absolutist pacifism of some, but the insightful, nuanced and rich arguments that emanate from across the pacifist tradition. Holding to a pacifist view need not mean accepting and not resisting a territorial invasion, although it does mean giving much greater consideration to options short of lethal force when considering how to resist. At the very least, the growing evidence concerning the effectiveness of methods of nonviolent resistance merits closer scrutiny and serious consideration. The assumptions that violence is effective and natural to humans deserve critical scrutiny, and the wider constitutive impact of the military path must not be overlooked.

Analysing the war in Ukraine through a pacifist lens encourages critical reflections on the path the conflict is taking, on what path could have been taken instead, and on decisions yet to be made. It is too late now to rerun the Ukrainian response to Russia's full-scale invasion. But it is not too late to consider the pacifist critique and the potential for nonviolent options, whether in *parallel to* or *instead of* violent tactics, as the conflict continues to unfold. Nor is it too late for policy-makers and broader publics to think ahead to potential and future conflicts across the world, with these pacifist considerations in mind.

Pacifism draws attention to the self-fulfilling risk inherent in military planning and preparations for future wars. The inherent instability of the ‘security dilemma’ has long been recognized even in traditional IR circles, yet the same militaristic policies are pursued as if doing the same thing over and over can be expected to produce different results. Meanwhile, militaristic preparations transform the societies that embark on them into more militaristic societies that thereby also feel more threatening to their neighbours. Mimetic cycles of instability and insecurity thus are repeated and reinforced, again and again, with ever more threatening weapons. Yet just as violence or aggressive action tends to trigger mimetic violence or aggression, nonviolent resistance grounded in respect for the humanity of one's opponent can trigger mimetic respect, too. Put differently, one pacifist insight is that, to have a future where we do not feel threatened by our neighbours, we also need to ensure that they do not feel threatened by our own policies in the first place.

Whether a path of nonviolent Ukrainian resistance to Russian invasion might have yielded better outcomes is an unprovable counterfactual. More generally, whether nonviolent resistance might be effective in such scenarios will not be known until tried on a large enough scale. This would require planning and large-scale training in nonviolent resistance methods, as well as popular support. In turn, such preparations would require greater research dissemination and

critical discussion of pacifist research and analysis. Having illustrated the analytical depth and originality of pacifism by applying it to such a major event in recent and ongoing European history, this article paves the way for further research and its wider dissemination.

Howes observed that, given the 'weight of extensive empirical evidence', it might be proponents and 'practitioners of violence', not pacifists, who are 'the tragic idealists':[134] idealists, because their assumptions about how their preferred methods will play out lack realism, and tragic because of the enormous suffering this causes. The war in Ukraine has been tragic so far. The idealism with which actors on both sides started out has been fading. It is an opportune moment to consider what pacifism can offer both to this conflict and to all future scenarios when the drums of warism become louder.

Autor's Notes

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[134] Howes, 'The failure of pacifism and the success of nonviolence', p. 438.

Civilian Based Defence: Conceptual insights from the conflict surrounding the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923

Barbara Müller

I am very grateful that this conference dares to put the concept of CBD to the test. This gives me the opportunity to discuss with an expert audience what I consider to be some serious shortcomings in the concept. To this end, I will refer to the historical case study of "Passive resistance against the occupation of the Ruhr" in Germany in 1923.

The historical case

First, a brief refresher on the facts: Due to failures in the delivery of reparations in forms of coal and wood, French and Belgian troops, equipped for war, march into the Ruhr region on January 11, 1923, occupy it and close it off from unoccupied Germany in a ring. Initially there are around 40,000 men, which later increase to 100,000. The occupying powers claim control of the occupied territory and call on the government, institutions and population to cooperate. The German government protested against this invasion. It considers it an injustice contrary to the treaty and announces that it will not cooperate in this action itself. It stopped further deliveries of reparations, arguing that the occupation of Germany's most important production area would deprive it of the basis for these payments. Over the next few days, this confrontation leads to a civil resistance, initially in the Ruhr area alone, then throughout the Rhineland, which has been occupied by Allied troops since the end of 1918. This action directly affected 4-5 million people in the Ruhr, and millions more in the occupied Rhineland.

What goes down in the literature as "passive resistance" essentially consists of a general non-cooperation. It consists of:

- Withdrawal of information
- Protest and rallies
- targeted strikes
- Refusal of orders
- Refusal to cooperate.

This is complemented by a mobilization for cohesion. A constructive program to mitigate the interventions in economic life could be considered: State emergency work and payments for damages and disadvantages, welfare for deportees. The economy helps itself by redirecting business processes or ordering a shutdown. In many places, the hallmark is paid inactivity in companies.

The most important means of repression are: Arrests, convictions, fines, imprisonment, expulsion of resisters, killing of saboteurs. There are roadblocks, curfews, closure of authorities and public institutions by force. The usurpation and control of power is carried out by introducing identity cards, levying taxes and customs duties. The transportation and removal of goods is started on one's own initiative, in addition to the requisitioning of goods. The balance of violence during the period of passive resistance is:

- Over 100 civilians killed
- A death sentence carried out
- 50-70 known rapes
- 300,000 children evacuated to unoccupied territory
- Approx. 180,000 displaced persons
- Thousands arrested
- Approx. 26 soldiers killed

This "passive resistance" lasted from 11.1. - 26.9.23. Most of the well-known authors who worked on the concept of civilian-based defence (CBD) (Sharp, Ebert, Roberts, Sternstein) dealt with this case, even considering it a precedent for the development of the concept (Roberts).[135]

[135] Roberts, Ziviler Widerstand, p. 27.

Theodor Ebert in particular saw it as one of the most prominent historical case studies of CBD. He was fascinated by how the "statesmen, officials and citizens acted with almost instinctive certainty and with a respectable success for the improvised procedure according to the concept of CBD." In my doctoral thesis on this case study, I wanted to find out: What did the "respectable success" consist of?[136] The factual outcome of the resistance looked like this:

- The resistance was broken off unilaterally after nine months when the financial resources were exhausted;
- The currency was ruined.
- People accused each other of betraying the "united front".
- The suspended reparation payments had to be resumed.
- Trade unions - strongly involved in the resistance - were very weakened as organizations.
- The victory of the occupying forces seemed complete.
- Far-reaching French plans, including the dissolution of German statehood, seemed feasible. In this situation, it was French's own allies who put a stop to French ambitions.

My doctoral thesis at the time nevertheless followed the logic that something must have gone wrong with the resistance. I tried to find out: What could have been done better in terms of management and implementation? Why, and this was also a question, was the foreseeably too cost-intensive resistance not adapted to the country's own strengths? What policy was pursued with it? Inwardly, I remained attached to an understanding of CBD that also underlies this conference. I quote from the program flyer, in which CBD is understood as a "concept of nonviolent resistance designed to address internal conflicts or wars of aggression. This approach involves organized and trained citizens using nonviolent methods to confront military forces and compel them to with draw."

The conceptual short circuit

This reduction of CBD to a nonviolent resistance is - as I see it today, after having studied the concept and the case more intensively - a crucial mistake. Why? I come back to the case study. The people involved at that time did not know CBD, but they had the same goal, which is what CBD is supposed to achieve in the case of military occupation: the maintenance of their self-determination, the freedom to act and not to act according to their own rules and laws. This is what they struggled for nine months with the occupation.

But this story continued after the breaking off of the resistance! And the fact is that by July 20, 1925, the Ruhr had been completely cleared of troops. How did they get the troops out again? Was that no longer CBD? Can only resistance in direct confrontation with armed military power achieve this goal and be called CBD? That seems pretty counterproductive to me.

CBD must include a concept that makes it possible to get occupiers out of the country without using force of arms! In my opinion, concept development in the 1960s/70s was not yet at an end. The concept developers themselves had already noticed that there was more to consider. Adam Roberts commented: "the more concrete economic, political, military and ideological environment of civil resistance" is "generally not given any attention".[137] It can be added here that the history of the conflict is also ignored, but this is the decisive key to the development and transformation of the conflict. This short circuit has had serious consequences. Unfortunately, this one-sided, resistance-focused perception has led to the actual relevance of civil resistance to the occupation of the Ruhr being lost.

What does the historical case really tell us?

The German government had two options: get the army going or surrender. Both options were rejected. That opened a third door: what now developed was the worldwide first nonviolent societal self-defence against military aggression from a standing start. So if - even in current debates - the reference to this third way between war brings an "impossible, utopian"

[136] Ebert, Soziale Verteidigung, pp. 19 and 23

[137] Roberts, Civil Resistance, p. 39

response, one can point out that it has already been practised. Defending one's own country without violence against military occupation in such a way that the occupation disappears and the country's sovereignty is restored. And there was:

- No planning for the resistance
- no educated and trained people and also
- not the expectation that the resistance alone will get the troops out of the country again.

Perhaps it is now a little easier to understand my discomfort with the current definition of CBD. But it doesn't have to stop there. After all, this case shows a complete picture of how a military occupation was successfully reversed using non-military means alone. So let's complete the picture and take a new look at the complex events in fast motion.

Ruhr occupation 1923 re-read

1. History: The conflict management practiced to date at diplomatic and expert level reaches an impasse. A dynamic of escalation is ignited, followed by confrontation.

2. Invasion: The military occupation escalates the conflict into a one-sided armed conflict. However, this is not accepted, no German troops appear on the scene. In this case, it must be said differently: previous military threats or sanctions have regularly led to short-term submission. In this case, this will not happen again.

3. The escalation is now asymmetrical: soldiers equipped for war on one side; on the other, the representatives of companies, authorities, institutions; but also the population as a whole, that is guided by the slogan: We don't want to be part of this! They express this in a wide variety of ways using the same means that they have previously used in their internal social struggles.

As a result, the previous passive resistance to the implementation of the Treaty of Versailles is no longer invisible. It becomes open non-cooperation and thus exposes itself to unprecedented repression. However, this resistance fulfills the task of putting a stop to the march of violence. It prevented the first two goals of the violent invasion: control over coal distribution and recognized rule over the occupied territory. However, the resistance itself now becomes the target of repression, as submission must first be enforced. The government sees the activities of the people in the occupied territory as a commitment to the national cause. A comprehensive organization of financial support was established. Initially, very different sections of the population in the occupied territory worked together in the resistance. Their cohesion broke down after a few months without the resistance as a whole being abandoned.

4. During the period of resistance, diplomatic conflict management behind the scenes focused on isolating France. All mediation initiatives from the international arena are blocked or thwarted in good time during this period. The British assessment on August 12 that the invasion was not covered by the Treaty of Versailles was seen as a major success of this policy. However, this does not have any consequences for Britain's practical behaviour.

5. By the summer, new, more solution-oriented concepts for factual issues emerged behind the scenes in various German ministries, as well as initial approaches to actually tackle previous failings, for example in the restructuring of the country's own currency. In other words, something has been set in motion behind the scenes in Germany at the level of substantive conflict management, but remains hidden.

6. In the summer, the currency collapses and loses its function as a means of payment. This puts the restructuring of the currency at the top of the new German government's list of priorities. The continued financing of the resistance or the collapse of the state are opposed to each other. The resistance is broken off. The people are placed in the care of the occupying powers and encouraged to cooperate. At the same time, support payments are stopped. In the fall, economic power struggles lead to mass unemployment, dumping wages and forced overtime. The solidarity community of the resistance period within the country is dissolved.

7. In the occupied territory, German sovereignty is virtually suspended and the occupying powers negotiate as they see fit with groups of people of their choice. Government action in Berlin is focused on parrying attempts at insurrection and subversion and preserving democracy. At the same time, the currency is being restructured. With regard to the occupied territory, the

German government is now aligning itself with the allied powers Great Britain and the USA, with whom it sees a broad consensus on how the conflict should be tackled more constructively in future. This is the key to success; the mantra here is the territorial integrity of Germany as a prerequisite for obtaining reparations. This only becomes apparent in the London Agreement in the summer of the following year.

8. In the occupied territory, there are efforts to create a new state. The French occupying power, as the regulatory power, views this with benevolent neutrality. Civil war-like situations develop in various places. The prospect of the dissolution of German statehood in the West led to the final isolation of France among its allies. It has to abandon its plans and refrain from sanctions in future. The Hitler coup on November 9th also opens the French Prime Minister's eyes to what could be expected of Germany after the end of democracy: not a regional patchwork of individual states as in the 19th century - easy for France to control, but an aggressive nationalism that would definitely not pay any reparations. After that, Berlin democracy would once again become an interlocutor for France.

9. In the winter of 1923/24, the situation in Germany stabilizes with the currency restructuring. Internationally, the climate of public opinion changes from thinking in terms of war to more understanding. Elections in France bring a new government to power. This is the climate change that facilitates the first treaty arrangements in which Germany was able to cooperate. The course for this was nevertheless set in the most hopeless phases.

The Essentials of CBD

After this short gallop through a complex history of conflict, I would like to extract what I see as the essentials of CBD and how I would describe it in today's terms.

1. Civil resistance (=1923+100 years more experience in non-violent action)

2. Smart control and clever focus (WHO controls nonviolent resistance?)

3. Peace-logical foreign policy and permanent conflict management (=nonviolent conflict resolution XXL)

4. Fair internal burden sharing (=from greed and lust for power → sustainable society)

5. Material support services

6. Care for prisoners, displaced persons (= solidarity in action)

For me, this in turn gives rise to central processes of CBD, each of which has its own tasks.

Core process 1: Resistance to repression

Tasks:

1. thwart attack targets effectively, in a focused manner and at the lowest level of escalation (removal of files)

2. reduce the impact of repression (e.g. fighting for release)

3. reversing the effect of repression (from enemy to friend...)

4. protection from repression (no more arrests, tactical retreat)

Core process 2: Conflict management

Tasks:

1. de-escalation of the situation

2. conflict management towards a negotiated solution

3. achieve a fair balance of interests internally

Support process 1: Survivability of the attacked system

Tasks:

1. maintain or restore infrastructure

2. secure or organize material survival opportunities for the population or threatened population groups

Support process 2: Cohesion

Tasks:

1. propagate the inclusive resistance slogan

2. provide orientation

3. support for injured parties

That, I believe, is what we can take from ancient history for today and tomorrow: that the option of a non-violent national defence is possible at any time; and that it is worthwhile to further develop non-violence in the challenges of our democracies today.

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A publication by the author on the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 is being prepared by Irene Publishing: https://irenepublishing.com/, please note the announcements.

Dr. Barbara Müller, historian, wrote her doctoral thesis in 1995 on passive resistance to the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 as a case study in the development of CBD. She lives in the countryside in a small village in the Hunsrück, is active in the local peace movement and works at the Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation.

The Shanti Sena Perspective on Civilian-based Defence Today: Explorative Reflections

Kevin Kaisig

> *My dear Gandhiji, in the Punjab we have 55 thousand soldiers and large-scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our forces consist of one man, and there is no rioting. As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One-man Boundary Force*. (Dhiman, 2015, p. 1)

These are the words of Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of British India, addressing a letter to Gandhi, who is in Calcutta, on 26 August 1947. The country had just gained its independence and the gruesome partition into India and Pakistan was shaking the subcontinent to its core. Nevertheless, here is the shanti sena, the nonviolent peace army, working at its best.

As early as in1913, there are references of Gandhi thinking about the establishment of a peace brigade or a peace army. Eventually, the idea developed that the shanti sena could and should replace the military and armed police in an independent India (Gandhi, 1938, 1946; Nagler, 2004, pp. 222–232; Weber, 1996, pp. 43–52). The Khudai Khidmatgar, the brave Pashtuns in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), provided a first vivid example of how a nonviolent army could step into existence and fight for independence, autonomy, and peace – even in the face of particularly repressive British colonial forces and the highly relevant geopolitical position of the NWFP at the "gate to British India", the Khyber Pass. The Khudai Khidmatgar, born in 1929 out of the long-standing social uplift activities at the impulse of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, listed at its peak 1938 up to 100,000 members (Easwaran, 1999; Stephan, 2009; Weber, 1996).

In this article, I look at the history of the Shanti Sena which became institutionalized only after Gandhi's assassination. I reflect upon what can be learned from this practical experience with regards to civilian-based defence today, i.e. nonviolent conflict transformation in cases of internal violent strife or wars of aggression. Nonviolent conflict transformation aims at changing the logic of the conflict and unjust conditions between the actors to it. Underlining common humanity, it seeks to establish a new relationship and better conditions for all parties (López Martínez, 2004, pp. 1114–1116). The article is the written equivalent to a presentation given at the conference "Civilian-based defence put to the test" from 6-7 September 2024. Thus, in its development the article can only sketch out some empirical examples, but it advances a series of arguments which are informed by a review of scientific literature, primary sources, and field work in India. During the latter, I participated in a course about nonviolence at Gujarat Vidyapith which can be regarded as a shanti sena educational institution.

In the text, I make a distinction between the historical organization Shanti Sena and the concept *shanti sena* which connotes a particular way of intervening in societal conflicts. I further elaborate upon this in the third section.

The article presents, first, the institutional history of the Shanti Sena, second, an example of nonviolent conflict intervention by the Shanti Sena in the Chambal Valley, and, third, reflections about civilian-based defence today.

The Shanti Sena: Institutional history

The Shanti Sena was formally established, i.e. as a proper organization, in 1957, and the activities of the organization span until 1990 (Weber, 1996, pp. 69–104). Very broadly, its coming into existence is related to conditions which are quite unique. The historic example of the nonviolent struggle for Indian independence and towering incidents, like Gandhi's peace work in Calcutta depicted above, had unequivocally demonstrated to the whole of the Indian population that nonviolent means were effective. Furthermore, the Gandhian movement had set up a series of educational institutions where nonviolence was weaved into a new pedagogic approach, nai talim, aiming at uplifting human potential and speaking to body, mind, and heart. Shanti Sena members were recruited from these "graduates" and they found support, guidance, and mentorship in important leaders of the movement. Renowned leaders like Vinoba Bhave, Narayan Desai, and Jayaprakash Narayan played an important role in advancing the

cause of the Shanti Sena and in mobilizing others. The need of the hour was urgent and violence in its different forms was very present and tangible: poverty, inequalities, the colonial legacy and grave instances of violence between Muslims and Hindus, amongst others. In this setting, the Bhoodan movement under Vinoba Bhave addressed a fundamental issue. The land gift movement could convince large landowners to give up parts of their property voluntarily and pass it to the poor. Some lands came under the collective ownership of villagers (Gramdan). These newly created commons had to be administered and secured collectively. This meant managing internal conflicts nonviolently and autonomously, as well as having a response for threats from outside. The practical need for a peace army arose which could accompany a land and property reform constructively (Bhave, 1963; Büttner, 1995; Carr-Harris, 2021; Desai, 1969, 1980; Narayan, 1964, 1977; Weber, 1996).

The notion behind the Shanti Sena was quite ambitious. It was to become a nonviolent security force which could eventually replace armed state police and military. In an ideal situation, there would be one Shanti Sainik (peace soldier) for every 5,000 people, five Shanti Sainiks in each village and 500,000 in all India. These numbers were never attained, and it is difficult to tell how many Shanti Sainiks were enrolled at the peak of the Sena's activities in the 1960s. However, estimates revolve around more than 15,000 members in 1967, while having a presence in all the Indian federal states (Weber, 1996, p. 89). The members took a pledge on joining the peace army which entailed to give their lives for peace if necessary. On the structural side, the Shanti Sena was set up as a bottom-up, non-hierarchical organization. Local leaders who were familiar with their contexts and who had a standing of trustworthiness were at the centre of the decision-making process. Regional and national bodies of the Shanti Sena provided support to the local leaders, gave advice, and coordinated measures which went beyond the local reach. In the same vein, Shanti Sainiks organized their funding locally. They asked for voluntary donations by the populace which were collected in a container in the Sainik's house, the Sarvodaya Patra. Donations could be nonmonetary as well. In any case, the Shanti Sainik was dependent on the good will and the support of the people he or she wanted to serve. Constant training and preparation were of utmost importance to the Shanti Sena. To this end, it held regular training camps, created a youth and a women's organization, and it cooperated with Gandhian educational institutions (Almeida, 2008; Bhave, 1963; Desai, 1969; Radhakrishnan, 2008; Weber, 1996, pp. 69–104).

The following table gives an overview of the scope of conflicts in which the Shanti Sena aspired to intervene nonviolently. The illustration remains on a "peacekeeping level" since peacebuilding activities are hard to grasp quantitatively. It should be understood having in mind that the Shanti Sena sought to integrate peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding activities (Galtung, 1976).

Table 1: Own illustration based on Weber (1996, pp. 104–138).

Type of deployment	Examples
Ethnic violence, riots	Baroda 1965, Ahmedabad 1969, Bhiwandi 1970
Organized crime/banditry	Chambal Valley 1960-1972
Refugees	Bangladesh Liberation War 1971
Civil war/separatist war	Nagaland 1947-1976
International war	War between India and China 1962
International conflict intervention	Cyprus Resettlement Project 1974
Humanitarian aid, development	India: floods, food crises, epidemics

Nonviolent conflict intervention: the Chambal valley

The case of the Chambal valley 1960-1972 serves as a good example to illustrate how the

Shanti Sena operated in violent contexts. The following account must remain superficial, but it gives an idea of the qualitative aspects of peacebuilding. During that time, the Chambal valley was known to be dangerous, to be the home of bandits, the infamous dacoits. They engaged in robbery, kidnapping, extortion, murder and other crimes, and frequently clashed with the Indian security forces. In 1960, Vinoba Bhave conducted a month-long foot march through the valley and visited 26 villages. He had secured the authorities' support for his mission and went out to talk to gang members, trying to convince them to lay down their weapons. In the course of his march, he managed to convince 20 dacoits to surrender and upon leaving the valley, he set up a peace mission which was to continue his work. It became clear, that at the heart of crimes and killings lay pervasive poverty, the lack of prospects, a highly unequal distribution of land, as well as rivalries and feuds between families and clans.

During the next ten years, the peace process stagnated, but Vinoba and his 20 dacoits had shown a way forward by their courageous example. In 1970, four members of the Shanti Sena founded Joura Ashram, a small community living project right in the Chambal valley region. Their goal was to live with the valley population and to give new energy to the peace process. They got in contact with the villagers and set out to build relationships, to become part of the community with all its complexities, hardships, and enjoyments. They played with the children on the streets. They talked to the villagers and asked questions. Why do so many young people join the bandits? Why is there no road? Why is there so much poverty? Why are there blood feuds?

Not everybody was fond of their coming. One night, a group of armed dacoits appeared and attacked without warning. The Shanti Sena members were heavily beaten up, so much so that they were close to falling unconscious. They were tied up with a rope and given a warning. If they were still here the next week, they would be shot on the spot. The Sainiks, in a long and painful struggle between courage and fear, confidence and doubt, decided, in the end, to stay, whatever the consequences. A week later, when the dacoits returned, the bandits were utterly surprised. Confused, they did not resort to beatings, but they sacked everything they could find and left the Sainiks with nothing but their underwear. Upon leaving, they repeated their warning and made it clear that, this time surely, it would be the last one. Again, the Sainiks decided to stay. In a way, they were now equal to the people of the Chambal valley, in poverty and in suffering.

The Sainiks' commitment gained them the trust of the populace. The bandits did not return, and the Shanti Sena could engage in peace work. The Sainiks received food and donations from the villagers, and they began to organize collective work projects. The villages in the valley were isolated and badly connected, so the Shanti Sena convinced many young people to join hands and build a road together. Getting to know and working with the villagers, they started to understand the intricacies of the social fabric, of local culture, and the weight of structural injustices. They began to understand connections and the ways of how to get in touch with gang members to talk to them. Eventually, the Sainiks of Joura Ashram undertook long nocturnal walks to secret spots in the valley and met with members of the dacoits. A window for communication and mutual understanding had flung open. In 1971, it became evident that the dacoits were willing – in general – to put an end to violence and to surrender if structural injustices could be reduced and a face-saving way be found. Madho Singh, a powerful gang leader, got in contact with Jayaprakash Narayan, in turn a leading figure of the Shanti Sena with nationwide reputation, and asked the Sainiks to mediate a peace process. The Shanti Sena accepted and whereas Jayaprakash Narayan negotiated on the government level, the Sainiks negotiated with the dacoits. Thus, the Shanti Sena was able to establish a line of communication which, in 1972, issued in an arms' surrender of 450 dacoits at Joura Ashram. Until 1974, about 1,000 dacoits surrendered. They went to prison voluntarily and got guarantees for land access and rehabilitation after their sentence (Carr-Harris, 2021; MGSA, 2020; Reubke, 2006; Sharma, 2024; Weber, 1996, pp. 108–115; Zanella, 2012).

Reflections about civilian-based defence today

Civilian-based defence is commonly understood as nonviolent resistance to foreign military invasions, occupations, and internal usurpations. Sometimes this seems to go along with the implicit assumption that civilian-based defence is to be orchestrated top-down by the government or by experts and integrated into the otherwise unaffected structures of society (Sharp &

Jenkins, Bruce, 1990, p. 6). This stands in contrast to the notion behind a nonviolent peace army such as the Shanti Sena and it neglects global inequalities and structures of exploitation that are at the core of geopolitical rivalries between hegemonic powers. Thinking in terms of the Shanti Sena, one cannot hope to assert geopolitical aspirations or to protect exploitative structures through civilian-based defence. This would be a contradiction. As long as defence means protecting, i.e. maintaining, accumulated power, economic wealth, inequalities or access to resources, "defence" is bound to lead to violent conflict and war. In the words of Albert Einstein: "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it".

In India, the colonial experience has shown with great clarity that trade, "western" education, and development served as the means to create dependencies. Internal divides and conflicts were used as an excuse or actively provoked in order to "provide security" and establish imperial rule (Gandhi, 1939). In polemic terms, violent "tribes" had to be "civilized" by providing them with the Empire's products. They would only buy them if they needed them, and this meant separating them from their land – which in turn opened up the possibility to exploit the resources that were hiding untouched across the territory (Gandhi, 1928, pp. 7–12). It is here that the peace army, the Shanti Sena, finds its purpose. Its civilian-based defence is different in that it turns around creating sustainable, peaceful environments. This entails bottom-up autonomy and self-rule, the de-concentration of power, and the common access to land. In these environments it is easier to manage internal conflicts autonomously and to resist deliberate attempts to divide. A society without these capacities would be hard-pressed to resist wars of aggression from outside nonviolently.

The conflict around our relationship with land and the earth is, in fact, centuries old. Since the development of intensive agriculture in Mesopotamia 3,000 years ago, it traverses structural injustices like poverty, colonialism, and patriarchy (Gandhi, 1939; Krippendorff, 1985, pp. 39–53). Today, the conflict between individualized and property-based lifestyles, on the one hand, and indigenous, communitarian, commons-based lifestyles on the other is more present than ever in the face of climate change and its consequences. The meanings attributed to land – a resource to be exploited vs. the source of life to be heeded – mark the difference between "defence" as an assertion of power and defence as an assertion of peace. Gandhi's talisman is very much relevant for the Shanti Sena:

> *Whenever you are in doubt […], recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her].* (Nayyar, 1958, p. 65).

For civilian-based defence to endure, the Shanti Sena ties the application of nonviolence to conflicts in general, to all spheres in life, to relationships with other human beings, and to relationships with the earth. It becomes a way of life. Violence originates from a *desire* to harm or a willingness to accept harm – this is what the Sanskrit word "himsa" refers to (Galtung, 1969; Nagler, 2004, pp. 43–45). "Ahimsa" on the other hand means the nonexistence of any such desire or acceptance – which requires a tremendous, active commitment – and is translated as nonviolence. Thus, violence and nonviolence represent the archetypical conflict that surrounds any decision in life. "Shall I bear with those who create difficulties for me, or shall I destroy them?" (Gandhi, 1932, p. 10). Our relationship to land and to the environment is a mirror of the decisions that we take with regards to other human beings. Extractivism, for instance, often entails landless people who are forced to migrate and to live in impoverished slums.

In this article I make a distinction between the historical organization *Shanti Sena* – which, very broadly, was active in India between 1947-1990 – and the concept *shanti sena* which connotes a particular way of intervening in societal conflicts. As a concept, shanti sena can denote any group of well-organized and trained volunteers who intervene nonviolently in conflicts with a view to empower local autonomy and agency (Ebert, 2015; López Martínez, 2004, pp. 203–206, 2016; Nagler, 2004). This type of conflict intervention is not about (re-)establishing the monopoly of violence and control, but about establishing a pluripolarity of nonviolent, independent, self-ruling, and interconnected societies, e.g. in the form of autonomous village republics (Gandhi, 1939). But it is an essential characteristic of the nonviolent approach that it manifests in different forms and that it creates diversity.

The concept of shanti sena is furthermore tied to a particular way of being in and seeing the world. Members are acutely aware of the interconnectedness of life. While acting locally, they

think in terms of global humanity – as opposed to, for instance, perceiving countries as principal dividing categories of the world. They describe themselves as being conscious of the unity of life. This state of consciousness gives meaning and informs action. In the words of Ela Bhatt:

> *The self, society and nature are co-related like oceanic circles or a bunyan tree. I for one, in my work experience, gradually, have realized the complete unity with people and the planet and human development. We see world crisis when these links are broken*. (Bhatt, 2015, p. 6; Easwaran, 2011; Nagler, 2004).

It is in resistance to the logic and consequences of violence and in the construction of nonviolent institutions that consciousness rises and expands, mostly in marginalized and suppressed populations or individuals. While being least seen and considered, those people create through their everyday actions the knowledge to overcome war. Those who embody nonviolence and a sense of unity generate trust. They lift themselves and others up, liberate themselves and others and they can be believed to have no hidden interests. They become capable of peacebuilding (Carr-Harris, 2021).

The Shanti Sena and the case of the Chambal valley, in particular, highlight this hard currency for nonviolent conflict transformation: trust. The Sainiks in the Chambal valley gained trust through their personalities and character, their empathy, their capacity to build human relationships and to organize collective work. They gained trust through their capacity to suffer violence and to retain their humanity. It is here that civilian-based defence connects with the core of nonviolence: an inner, emotional struggle. The Sainiks in the Chambal valley bore with the violent bandits and put all their efforts into finding a way ahead. This meant dealing constructively with fear, anger, humiliation, and trauma up to putting their lives at risk. They could do so, because they saw life and its purpose differently. In a way, the Shanti Sena extends the logic of the commons which is applied to land use, e.g. during the Bhoodan movement, onto human life. The Sainiks perceived their agency as a gift, entrusted to them, to serve collective humanity. Their experience hints that the possibility of civilian-based defence is inextricably linked with conceiving differently of nature and human life: the commons are defended nonviolently.

In conclusion, the Shanti Sena constitutes an important historic experience when thinking about civilian based defence today. It demonstrates that civilian-based defence works. But it is not a tool for any purpose. Since it is based on trust, its actors are bound to live up to their highest potentials. Thus, in line with the ways of the Shanti Sena, preparing for civilian-based defence means putting personal development, emotional intelligence, consciousness, human relationships, and community center stage. The task of setting up civilian-based defence is fundamentally one of educating oneself and others in nonviolence and designing tools and actions to delve into the depths of human consciousness.

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Subversive Human Love:
Towards Needs Oriented Systemic Conflict Transformation

Anne Dietrich

The declared aim of social defence is/are, from the call of papers for this conference, to

… protect social institutions and infrastructures,

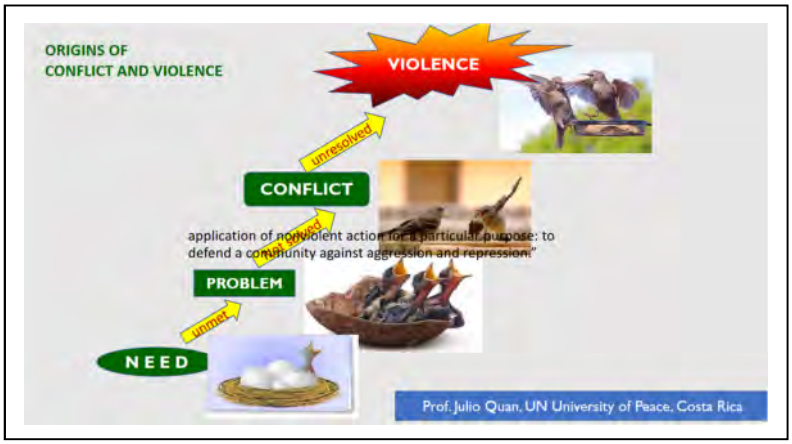
… preserve life,

…< uphold?> democratic and self-determined ways of life and

…cater for the necessities of life

without surrendering to an attacker.

In their seminal work *Social Defence*[138], Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin write: "Social Defence is an application of nonviolent action for a particular purpose: to defend a community against aggression and repression."



For this presentation, I am adopting the following, widely used, understanding of the term "VIOLENCE": Violence describes the destructive use of force that causes harm or damage to human beings or their environment.

Marshall C Rosenberg: "Violence in any form is a tragic expression of our unmet needs."

The current systems for defending and providing safety- not only territories but also societal, political, and moral values as well as spheres of power and geo-strategic influence, and often being portrayed as 'preserving the lives of 'our' population' - are

- Systems of legitimized violence: retributive justice/ punishment, and military 'defence'
- Systems of 'rights' the violators of which are punished/ killed

These systems have been unable to overcome cycles of violence and to transform conflict into socio-political change that is acceptable to all involved.

Tragically, they have been leading to the suffering of millions of the people they were meant to protect, and the destruction of much of our planetary home.

<u>Hypothesis 1</u>

If the goal of nonviolent conflict transformation is to "overcome violence in all its forms", we need to transform

Ø what is being perceived as violence by ALL actors of the conflict/s

AND

Ø the systems of violence our societies are organized in.

[138] Social Defence by Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin (p147), First published 2019 by Irene Publishing www.irenepublishing.com

Hypothesis II

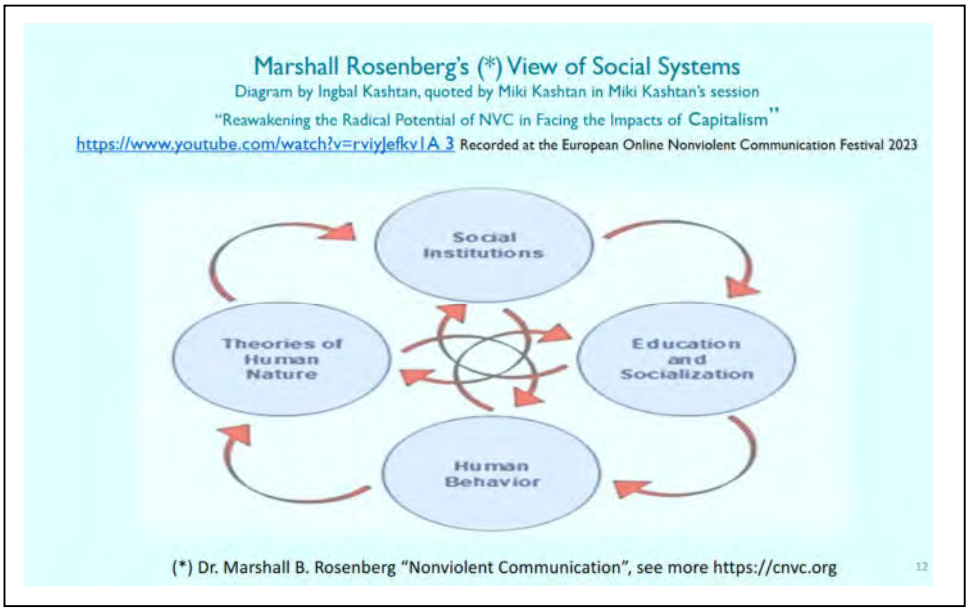
WE NEED A NEW PARADIGM (system of concepts)

Ø to protect life

and

Ø to reduce suffering

caused by violence in all its forms.



If an aim of social defence is to 'protect social institutions and infrastructures', we need to create institutions and infrastructures that work for all, so that the people organized in them are willing(*) to protect and have capacity to adapt according to needs.

Robert Burrowes identified, in "The Strategy of Nonviolent Defence: A Gandhian Perspective", 'power and will' as the two elements determining the capacity of a society to protect itself against aggression.

If social defence wants to preserve life, we need to identify how we can use and scale up the experiences of Unarmed Civilian Protection, e.g. by Peace Brigades International and Nonviolent Peaceforce, to create permanent, community based, structures of unarmed civilian protection.[139]

If social defence wants to <uphold> democratic and self-determined ways of life

AND

<cater for> the necessities of life,

we need to train critical masses of people in **consensus decision making** and joint responsibility for social systems that care for everyone's needs. We need to develop a **needs-based economic system** (Manfred Max-Neef) which cares for the most vulnerable and has sufficient capacity and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

Research questions

- What are the conditions for system change in the four spheres?
- How can needs-oriented systems be constructed?
- Who can be the actors in each of the systems that need to constructed, and what can be their strategies of transition from the old to the new systems?
- How far and how long does the construction of needs oriented systems need to be complemented by violence-based protection against suffering, before it can be replaced by unarmed civilian protection?
- What do we imagine a situation would look like where 'defence' is no longer required and fully replaced by unarmed civilian protection?

[139] https://www.peacebrigades.org

https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/

The duality principle of nonviolent systems' change

For me, a helpful orientation can be found in some basic principles of nonviolent change.

One of the most pertinent and most complex concepts I found in my search for guidance on the duality principle of nonviolent systems' change is the concept of the "Two Hands of Nonviolence" by Barbara Deming.[140]

The core principles:

I act to stop and overcome the violence,

AND

I make myself vulnerable and show respect and humility towards the author/s of the violence.

In her book On Revolution and Equilibrium, Barbara Deming writes :

> *With one hand we say to one who is angry, or to an oppressor, or to an unjust system, 'Stop what you are doing. I refuse to honor the role you are choosing to play, I refuse to obey you, I refuse to cooperate with your demands, I refuse to build the walls and the bombs. I refuse to pay for the guns. With this hand I will even interfere with the wrong you are doing. I want to disrupt the easy pattern of your life.'*
>
> *But then the advocate of nonviolence raises the other hand. It is raised outstretched — maybe with love and sympathy, maybe not — but always outstretched . . .With this hand we say, 'I won't let go of you or cast you out of the human race. I have faith that you can make a better choice than you are making now, and I'll be here when you are ready. Like it or not, we are part of one another.*[141]

When we want to overcome violence, we make a choice to confront violence, AND to connect with what is alive in 'the other'.

The two hands of nonviolence can guide us to more clarity:

- Be clear that you want to stop what you see as harmful to life
- Reach out to connect with what is alive in those you see causing harm

The core question:

In our struggles to overcome violence and injustice, will we be able to

- Stop violence from occurring, by applying 'protective use of force', until we gradually manage to achieve cooperation for needs-based systems?

and, at the same time

- open pathways to a new paradigm of dialogue and seeing the human beings in whom we see as the actors of violence?

Often, we will hear a NO to our change proposals, even for our request for a conversation… in that case, we may need to find another strategy to protect life from the violence we see happening.

That is what we call *protective use of force*.

Marshall Rosenberg said:

> *…when we use the protective use of force, we don't see the other person as evil or bad and deserving of punishment… Our intent is simply to prevent it (what we are fearful of) from continuing until we can have access enough … (to) help them to see other ways of meeting their needs and our needs*.[142]

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[140] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Deming

[141] Deming, Barbara: On Revolution and Equilibrium. Liberation, February 1968. From the collection: ed. Staughton Lynd and Alice Lynd. Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History. Revised Edition. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995

[142] Transcript M.B. Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKJ1BCXKt_w&list=PLPNVcESwoWu4lI9C3bhkYIWB8-

M.K. GANDHI: “It is the acid test of nonviolence that in a nonviolent conflict there is no rancour left behind, and in the end the enemies are converted into friends.”

Social defence

Social defence – understood as a function of nonviolent systemic change –not only stands in the tradition of the practice of revolutionary struggles but IS, as such a revolutionary and transformative practice.

It demands from us to transform our social, psycho-social, economic, political, and protection systems, in the tradition and spirit of Gandhi’s constructive program.

I would like to frame the dual strains of energy to

Ø radically transform all spheres of social systems to needs-oriented systems–rather than resisting or destroying them - ,

while, at the same time

Ø holding needs of all living beings with care, as the new paradigm of subversive love.

Resources to explore, learn, and contribute to nonviolent change towards needs-oriented systems

- U-lab: Leading From the Emerging Future An introduction to leading profound social, environmental and personal transformation, Otto Scharmer (Theory U) and others. September 12, 2024 -May 30, 2025, https://mitxonline.mit.edu/courses/course-v1:MITxT+15.671.1x/
- Nonviolent Global Liberation (NGL) https://nglcommunity.org/about/who-we-are/ a community of people passionate about transforming our current global crises into a world that works for all, based on principles of collaboration and willingness.
- The Work that Reconnects (WTR) Joanna Macy, and others, on Systems Thinking, Deep Ecology and Deep Time, Spiritual Traditions and Undoing Oppression. https://workthatreconnects.org/
- Ekta Parishad, a mass-based peoples' movement for land rights with an active membership of 250,000 landless poor promoting nonviolence as a way for the struggle, dialogue, and constructive actions towards building a peaceful and just society. https://www.ektaparishadindia.com/

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Cultivating a Society to Sustain a Robust Nonviolent Social Defence Praxis

Eli McCarthy

Introduction

How do we cultivate the kind of society which can better envision, implement, and sustain a robust nonviolent social defence praxis?

This presentation acknowledges Gene Sharp's claims that activating social defence does not require us to wait for a radical change in human virtue, and that the capacity to be stubborn is a fundamental psychological basis for nonviolent resistance. At the same time, I am asking and making an argument for what conditions might better enable a sustained and robust nonviolent Social defence praxis.

For example, living in U.S. society, a key orienting assumption is often that 'peace comes through strength,' which is normally interpreted and envisioned as the presumed strength of intimidation, threat, or dominance. In turn, this vision is implemented through massive investment in military weapons, technology, research, soldiers and broad deployments for the sake of 'defence.' At times, the vision of dominance manifests in economic or political positioning. Such a vision shows up in some other countries to different degrees.

However, what if some prominent initiatives promoted a shift in our primary social vision and commitments? For instance, what if such initiatives promote a positive reverence for dignity and life, including the well-being of our ecological system, then how might this impact our style of Social defence? A key step in such a social shift seems to be our approach to engaging conflict.

I. Engaging conflict: just peace framework

Too often, political, academic, or civil society leaders responding to large-scale conflict will narrow the analytical framework to national interest, international law, and just war reasoning; while others focus on strategic nonviolence, peacebuilding, or pacifism. Although there may be some value that can arise, they too often miss key dynamics and fall short of more sustainable peace.

For instance, national interest can minimize the common good of all people and the deeper needs of parties in a conflict. International law provides rules but falls short of forming people and communities to follow the rules or engage conflict in a constructive way. Strategic nonviolence can focus too much on shifting power and devalue dignity, empathy and reconciliation. Peacebuilding can miss or devalue the role of nonviolent resistance and shifting power when dialogue is insufficient.

The emerging just peace framework from communities experiencing violent conflict provides a way to address some of these shortcomings. In turn, this framework can be critical to envisioning, implementing, and sustaining a robust Social defence praxis.

A just peace framework or process has arisen from and within a pastoral approach that listens to the experiences and voices of people in conflict situations across various cultural spaces. This orientation envisions a just peace as a way of cooperation for the common good, the prevention of violence, and a focus on the transformation of conflict by nonviolent strategies. 'Just peace' refers to positive peace– rooted in just relationships and societal systems that respect the dignity of all people and the earth, our common home.[143]

Just peace norms operate in three distinct spheres or categories that may overlap in time and space. They apply to all stages of conflict. Strategies and actions chosen must enhance or at least not obstruct these norms. Such just peace strategies and actions are always contextual

[143] *Just Peace Ethic Primer: Breaking Cycles of Violence and Building Sustainable Peace*, ed. E. McCarthy, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020)

with attention to those most impacted by a situation. Sustaining spiritual disciplines are critical to the fruitful exercise of these norms.

1) Develop virtues and skills for constructively engaging conflict (ius in conflictione)

- Virtuous habits- hospitality, courage, nonviolence, justice, compassion, mercy
- Education and training in key skills- nonviolent communication, civil resistance, analysis of root causes, intersectional, and needs-based analysis.
- Participatory processes, inclusive of as many stakeholders as possible, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Form more nonviolent communities, institutions, cultures

2) Break dynamics or cycles of violence (ius ex bello)

- Reflexivity: keeping the means consistent and congruent with the ends
- Re-humanization of all stakeholders: language, labels, and narratives we focus on.
- Conflict transformation: address root causes; consistent dialogue, trust-building initiatives, trauma-reduction, meeting human needs of all
- Acknowledge responsibility for harm: via statements or more formal restorative justice mechanisms
- Nonviolent direct action: enhance civil resistance, unarmed civilian protection, nonviolent civilian-based defence
- Integral disarmament: create conditions and actualize the reduction of armed weapons along with the reduction of bitterness, hostility, and hatred within persons and communities

3) Build sustainable peace (ius ad pacem)

- Relationality and reconciliation: promotes across all sectors of society, such as inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, or truth and reconciliation commissions.
- Robust civil society and just governance: re-distribution of political power.
- Ecological justice and sustainability: long-term well-being of people, non-human animals, and the environment
- Human dignity and human rights of all: including adversaries by ensuring human rights and cultivating empathy for all actors.
- Economic, gender, and racial justice: focus on the marginalized and vulnerable

Advantages of a Just Peace Ethic

This approach would better form us as peacemakers by enabling us to imagine, develop, and stay committed to nonviolent practices. It also better enables us to transform conflict, get to the root causes, and build sustainable peace. It is consistent with human dignity and ecological care, whereas war significantly distorts and damages both. For instance, war and killing increases trauma, domination, and even moral injury, while lowering empathy and a sense of gift of all persons. The just peace approach is less likely to lead to the structural and cultural violence of being prepared for war(s) as well as a corresponding arms race, as these divert needed resources and often exacerbate mistrust. It also helps us better stay out of and break cycles of violence, which even wars that appear just still get us stuck in. The just peace ethic will also better enable us to move closer toward outlawing war. In turn, the just peace ethic is more likely to actually prevent, limit, and defuse an ongoing war. This approach is more likely to cultivate alternative defence mechanisms locally and across larger societies.

II. Local defence: mainstreaming unarmed civilian protection (UCP)

Likewise, political, academic, or civil society leaders too often consider safety, security, or protection within a narrow set of institutional options of the military, armed peacekeepers, police, or armed civilian units. These institutions may have some value and yet also have demonstrated

patterns of cultivating generational trauma, dehumanization, sexual abuse, and cycles of violence. The proven and growing practice of unarmed civilian protection and accompaniment in neighbourhoods, schools, political demonstrations, gang conflict, and war zones provides a way to address some of these limits, which can be critical to envisioning, implementing, and sustaining a robust Social defence praxis.

Sustainable security depends in large part on identifying people with credibility in the social context, building trust across key communities, re-humanizing the people impacted by the violence, taking strategic risks without killing, as well as creating space for the root causes to be seen and addressed. This is precisely what the proven practice of unarmed civilian protection offers.

Organizations like Cure Violence, DC Peace Team, and Meta Peace Team effectively offer UCP to mitigate and prevent gun violence, as well as de-escalate harmful conflict in neighbourhood situations, events, and political demonstrations. They also offer the community training in nonviolent conflict skills, and thus, help cultivate the habits of rehumanization, courage, and active nonviolence in the community. Such training includes nonviolent communication, bystander intervention and de-escalation, conflict transformation, trauma awareness, restorative justice, meditation, and anti-racism.

Many cities in the U.S. have created community-based, unarmed alternatives to police intervention, such as related to situations of mental health, domestic violence, and the unhoused. There are also a number of countries, such as Britain, that have primarily unarmed police working their streets, neighbourhoods, and events.

In addition, this security practice of unarmed civilian protection and accompaniment has been effectively saving lives in major war zones, such as Ukraine, South Sudan, Iraq, Colombia, the Philippines, etc. Over 60 organizations offer UCP/A in over 30 areas of the world. "Mounting research, now being collected at the Creating Safer Space UCP Research Database, demonstrates the effectiveness of unarmed civilian protection at saving lives, creating safer spaces, changing conflict trajectories, and reducing levels of violence."[144]

If local communities and societies invested, trained, and broadened this practice of UCP, we would become the kinds of people who better imagine, pilot, and persist with society-wide or national Social defence mechanisms. Key sectors ripe for further development would be schools and universities, religious communities, social service institutions, and community-based alternatives to policing.

III. Becoming a society for robust social defence

The praxis, i.e. the logic and habits, of UCP can cultivate fertile soil for the roots and growth of a robust, sustainable Social defence system.

The logic and habits of UCP include: acknowledge the dignity of all people, re-humanization of those being dehumanized; growth in empathy, humility, solidarity, courage, mercy, and hospitality; participatory processes; deep, cross-sector relationality and lines of communication; as well as willingness to risk discomfort, status, and even one's life to protect people without harming others.

Notably, in the 2019 book on Social defence by Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin, they argue that such a strategy is about defence of society or community, more so than territory (63). This entails defending practices and institutions that enable cooperative living, i.e., a social system and the positive values underlying that system more than a territory. They argue that defending values such as respect for life, inclusiveness, and supporting those in need "can reduce the tendency to demonize potential enemies" as well as minimize fear and hatred.

They also argue that social movements are the most promising basis for normalizing Social defence. One of the key differences between military defence and Social defence is the potential higher level of participation in the latter. Nonviolent social movements can cultivate such a

[144] Marie Dennis, "If there is a Israel-Hamas Ceasefire, Unarmed Civilian Protection Should be Sent In, National Catholic Reporter, May 21, 2024. https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/if-there-israel-hamas-cease-fire-unarmed-civilian-protectors-should-be-sent

participatory ethos (126). If we integrate these insights with the broad, local praxis of unarmed civilian protection, then we may enhance the conditions for a robust, sustainable Social defence system.

One recent example of UCP and nonviolent resistance actions in the context of mass violence and invasion is Ukraine. Since Nov. 2022, the Nonviolent Peaceforce has offered unarmed civilian protection during the war by protecting vulnerable persons, such as children, elderly, people with disabilities and illnesses. NP has facilitated safe access to humanitarian services, transit through Ukrainian military checkpoints, and relocation from places of danger. They work at the frontlines and de-occupied areas, often supporting local Ukrainian volunteer networks.3[145]

In the same conflict space, impactful and substantial nonviolent resistance is also active. The International Catalan Institute for Peace released a report on the broad range and deep impact of courageous Ukrainian nonviolent resistance and non-cooperation to the Russian invasion.[146]

Over the first five months of the war, they identified over 235 nonviolent actions, and found that nonviolent resistance has hindered some of the Russian authorities' long-term military and political goals, such as the institutionalization of military occupation and repression in the occupied territories. Nonviolent resistance has also protected many civilians, undermined the Russian narrative, built community resilience, and strengthened local governance.

Of course, these data points of UCP and nonviolent resistance action in Ukraine still have much room for growth and integration to meet the present challenges of their context. Further, in this conflict there is much more to be done to develop UCP broadly as local safety units and to turn toward a just peace orientation.

Nevertheless, in Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar and other contexts of various intensities there may be a lot of potential as UCP and nonviolent resistance become better integrated and mutually supportive.[147] For example, UCP can accompany school directors, local government officials, religious leaders, humanitarian aid, and human rights defenders. UCP can engage with soldiers to minimize harm and support local ceasefire negotiations. UCP can develop robust early warning, early response context-based mechanisms and networks. In turn, UCP can increase civic space and confidence for nonviolent resistance, as well as provide protective presence during actions such as worker strikes. UCP rooted in dignity, empathy, and participatory processes can also better ensure that nonviolent resistance efforts include a robust constructive program to build social cohesion, resilience, and care for the marginalized. Meanwhile, nonviolent resistance can enhance UCP by confronting additional power dynamics, such as structures and policies as well as key institutional pillars of support. Shifting such power dynamics also creates more civic space for UCP across various sectors of society.

In turn, if there is a corresponding investment and development of UCP in the form of local peace teams across communities, along with a turn to prioritize a just peace praxis for engaging conflict and breaking cycles of violence; then the conditions will be more fertile for a robust, sustainable Social defence system.

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[145] https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/ukraine/

[146] Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Resistance in the Face of War," Oct. 2022. https://www.icip.cat/ca/un-informe-de-licip-i-novact-documenta-235-experiencies-de-resistencia-noviolent a-a-ucraina/ .

[147] Creating Safer Space, "Policy Brief," 2024. Policy-Brief-5-Digital.pdf (creating-safer-space.com)

Relationship-building As Defence: Rethinking Civilian-based and Military Approaches

Molly Wallace

1. Introduction

a. Motivating question: *How can we respond nonviolently to (direct) violence?*

i. Without an answer to this question, we will never escape cycles of violence, due to the ubiquity of arguments for the necessity of (violent) self-defence.

ii. →Critical to identify and explore nonviolent strategies for mitigating and defending against violent attacks/aggression.

iii. Also necessary to assess the actual effects and utility of military violence/armed defence rather than assume that it "works."

iv. Neither nonviolent nor violent defensive strategies are ever guaranteed to be effective.

b. Nonviolent defence: The use of nonviolent methods to maintain a community's (whether a country or a smaller community) autonomy or integrity in the face of armed aggression.

i. Understood within the following spectrum of nonviolent action, from nonviolent resistance (NVR) to unarmed civilian protection (UCP).

ii. Because nonviolent defence is situated between NVR and UCP on this spectrum, it borrows dimensions of both, and we might expect to see elements of either NVR or UCP at various stages of nonviolent defence, depending on whether violence prevention/protection or maintenance of autonomy is the primary purpose in a particular instant.

Taxonomy of nonviolent action: nonviolent resistance, nonviolent defence, and unarmed civilian protection (adapted from Wallace, M. S. *Security without Weapons: Rethinking Violence, Nonviolent Action, and Civilian Protection.* Routledge: 2017.)

Wrong confronted: Injustice ←----------→Violence **Objectives:** More substantive, political (Justice)←----------→Thinner, humanitarian (Security) **Partisanship:** Partisan ←----------→Nonpartisan			
Type of nonviolent action	***Nonviolent resistance (NVR):* partisan action to challenge injustice** (e.g., an oppressive regime, human rights abuses, an Apartheid state)	***Nonviolent defense:* partisan action to maintain the integrity of one's (political) community against violent attack and occupation** (e.g., a land invasion, military occupation, or takeover by local armed groups)	***Unarmed civilian protection (UCP):* non-partisan action to prevent (or protect people from) violence** (e.g., a civil or international war, inter-communal violence, or other armed attacks or abductions)
Objective	Victory in a struggle for justice	Defense of one's political community	Protection and security

c. In considering nonviolent defence, I'll be developing the following thesis: Relationship-building is critical to the success of both nonviolent defence and armed defence, but the violence required in armed defence actually, on balance, harms the relationships necessary for its success whereas the nonviolence required in nonviolent defence facilitates the cultivation of these relationships.

2. Relationships and relationship-building

a. **Relationship:** itself a neutral term—can be marked by either trust or distrust, equality or inequality, respect or abuse

b. **Relationship-*building*:** more heavily laden with positive value—even if not necessarily characterized by perfect trust, equality, or respect, moving in this direction.

c. **Relationship-building in context of nonviolent action:** strengthening these connections between actors and also leveraging these relationships for the purposes of resistance, defence, or security.

d. **Considerations/distinctions:**

   i. Is relationship-building happening *within* a community or *across/between* communities? Bonding or bridging?

   ii. Is the relationship being built between actors of roughly equal power or between actors with severely unequal power?

   iii. What is the depth of the relationship being built, the kind of trust being developed, and the extent to which a common identity is emerging?

   iv. What is the intended or actual outcome of the relationship-building: resistance against oppression/injustice or violence prevention/civilian protection? (Or somewhere in between in the case of defence?)

3. Relationship-building and nonviolent defence

e. ***How do relationships and relationship-building matter to resistance, defence, and security?***

   i. To help us answer this question, it is useful to consider…

f. **The twin strategic aims of nonviolent defence (Burrowes 1996):**

   i. **Defence:** "to consolidate the power and will of the defending population to resist the aggression"

   ii. **Counter-offense:** "to alter the will of the opponent elite to conduct the aggression, and to undermine their power to do so"

   iii. To accomplish these aims, defenders must strengthen their own and weaken the opponent's **center of gravity** ("the finite pool of social resources that support their strategy").

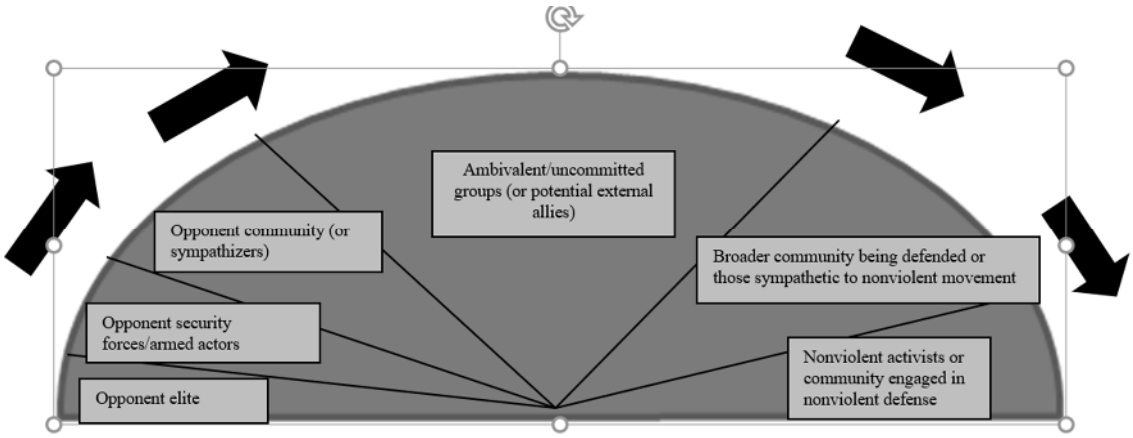
      1. →Useful to clarifying and assessing utility of any approach to defence.

      2. Burrowes (1996) writes: "the utility of a rifle is not measured by its ability to shoot but by its capacity to destroy [the opponent's] center of gravity."

         a. Helps us see how killing a huge number of the opponent's troops doesn't help the cause of defence if it simply reinforces the opponent's will—and thereby capability—to conduct the aggression.

   iv. *Relationship-building—in various forms—helps consolidate "our" will and capability to resist and weaken "their" will and capability to continue the aggression.*

g. **Spectrum of supporters/opponents and the relationship between will and power**



Spectrum of supporters/opponents in nonviolent resistance or defence (adapted from Wallace, M. S. *Security without Weapons: Rethinking Violence, Nonviolent Action, and Civilian Protection.* Routledge: 2017. Earlier version in Oppenheimer & Lakey 1965.)

i. Opponent is not monolithic: There are openings for relationships with some members of the opponent group that can weaken the overall capability of the opponent to carry out aggression.

ii. How are will and power/capability related?

1. A change in attitudes/will on the part of groups progressively closer to the opponent elite is experienced as a change in power/capability for opponent elite itself, as its power is determined by the flow of obedience of various groups/institutions in response to its directives.

2. Therefore, it's possible for the opponent elite to still *want* to carry out aggression (unchanged will) but to no longer be *able* to (diminished capability)—because of the changed will of the people who would otherwise carry out these orders or policies.

iii. Though my focus here is on the different forms of *relationship-building* necessary to instantiate these shifts in support—in will and power—it is important to remember these are relationships being strengthened, sustained, and *leveraged* in the service of non-cooperation and disruption—getting more groups of people to withdraw cooperation from the injustice or aggression being resisted.

h. Forms of relationship-building important to success—strengthening relationships progressively along this spectrum

i. Strengthening relationships *within* the community or movement

1. **Nonviolent resistance (NVR):** Mass, broad-based support critical to success → greater resilience, more tactical innovation, more widespread disruption, and higher likelihood of loyalty shifts (Chenoweth & Stephan).

2. **Nonviolent defence (in the form of nonwar communities, peace territories, or zones of peace):** Internal cohesion/unity, collective nonviolent identity, and community institutions all help mitigate risks of standing up to armed actors and strengthen hand of community in these interactions (Kaplan, Anderson & Wallace).

3. **Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) and community violence prevention:** Strong relationships and social networks can alert community members to security risks and help collectively manage/mitigate them (Baines & Paddon, Gray, Howe), and relationships between "credible messengers" and at-risk or gang-involved youth in the same community can help move the latter away from participation in violence (Butts et al., Cosy Gay).

ii. Strengthening relationships with external or potential allies

1. **NVR:** Relationship-building with external allies can activate the "great

chain of nonviolence" (Galtung), strategically leveraging dependence relations with opponent.

2. **Nonviolent defence:** Relationships between local and international activists can lead to the presence of the latter (for instance, ISM activists standing with Palestinians defending their land or homes from IDF), raising costs of violence for opponent.

3. **UCP:** Similar mechanism, which has long been employed by international UCP teams: Relationships between local civilians under threat and international allies who can provide an extra layer of protection through their proactive presence and accompaniment (through connection to home governments and global networks).

iii. **Strengthening relationships with members of the opponent group/country**

1. **NVR:** Intentional relationship-building and joint activism with members of the opponent group, especially in conflicts characterized by a power disparity, where members of opponent group can leverage their identity and position to more effectively influence key pillars of power in their own society.

2. **Nonviolent defence:** Same idea but also putting bodies on the line to defend land and homes of others from the security forces of one's own country.

3. **UCP and community violence prevention:** Building cross-cutting relationships across lines of difference, conflict, and polarization as a direct source of immediate violence prevention/de-escalation in crisis situations (Varshney, Wallace, Coleman). Humanization but also maintaining essential lines of communication during crises.

iv. **Strengthening relationships with the opponent's security forces/soldiers or other armed actors**

1. **NVR:** Relationship-building between nonviolent activists and security forces tasked with repression to encourage loyalty shifts and refusal to carry out orders (Binnendijk & Marovic, Nepstad, MacNair).

2. **Nonviolent defence (including nonwar communities, peace territories, and zones of peace):** Combination of relationship-building/fraternization and resistance (both demonstrations and strategic leveraging of dependence relations) can be especially powerful (Deming, Mouly et al., Kaplan, Daza).

3. **UCP:** Relationship-building between UCP actors and "all parties" in an area, including armed actors, means that these relationships can be leveraged in crisis moments to protect civilians (Furnari, Gray, Oldenhuis et al., Mahony, Wallace).

i. **Relationship-building**—when pursued and leveraged in full recognition of power relations, and as part of a broader nonviolent strategy—**is instrumental to necessary shifts in power that dismantle oppressive systems, to the preservation of a community's autonomy in the face of aggression, and to the de-escalation/prevention of (and protection from) violence.**

i. Through:

1. consolidating and strengthening the unity of the community or movement and its will and capability to resist and

2. peeling away members of the opponent group so they start to have questions about their participation in an unjust system or in violence, withdraw their cooperation, and thereby weaken the opponent elite's capability to carry out aggression or sustain an unjust system.

ii. It is important to recognize, especially in light of common critiques that relationship-building with the "enemy" (especially a more powerful enemy) constitutes a

form of co-optation and giving in, that it actually has the potential to facilitate radical change and immediate forms of protection.

1. Although it is not typically recognized as a decisive form of action, the slow, steady, unflashy work of relationship-building—facilitated by nonviolent discipline—is vital to resistance, defence, and security—and can even have immediate power-shifting and/or protective effects when leveraged strategically in key moments.

4. Relationship-building and armed defence

j. **Armed defence:** should also be judged by its ability to strengthen the will and power of the defending community to resist and to weaken the opponent's will and power to continue the aggression.
   i. →Relationship-building matters here, too.
   ii. Key question: *How does the violence of armed defence—as compared to the nonviolent discipline of nonviolent defence—influence these forms of relationship-building critical to success?*

k. **Effects of nonviolent or violent defence on these critical forms of relationship-building**
   i. Effects on relationships *within* the community or movement
      1. Nonviolence:
         a. Facilitates relationship-building with and mobilization of diverse segments of society due to lower moral, physical, etc. barriers to entry (Chenoweth & Stephan) → large, broad-based movement
      2. Violence:
         a. May appeal to smaller subset of population and/or may have a broader initial rallying or unifying effect due to close connotations between violence and defence, as well as violence and radical/revolutionary action.
         b. BUT violent resistance/defence may alienate many others within one's own society, especially as a war wears on and harmful effects on own and other population (especially civilians) become apparent.
         c. So, one's own use of violence—even if initially "defensive"—can facilitate divisions within one's own society, weakening cohesion and the will and power to resist.
   ii. Effects on relationships with external or potential allies
      1. Nonviolence:
         a. Broader range of international allies likely to be sympathetic to/supportive of a movement that is nonviolent.
         b. → Note that it is the *opponent's* violence (not one's own)—and especially in contrast to one's own *nonviolence*—that is most likely to trigger outrage and move allies to one's side. (Sharp, Martin)
      2. Violence:
         a. Some allies may remain; others may walk away (opens up space for arguments about moral equivalency); still others may find plausible arguments for supporting opponent (who is now also under attack).
   iii. Effects on relationships with members of the opponent group/country
      1. Nonviolence:
         a. Creates an opening for members of opponent group to stand in solidarity, especially through creation of cognitive dissonance that sparks questioning of the dominant narratives they may have internalized

demonizing one's own group.

2. Violence:

a. Makes it less likely that members of the opponent group will be receptive to joining in solidarity, if their own community members are being harmed through violence. Hinders ability to build relationships with them.

b. Likely to strengthen will of opponent to conduct armed aggression (which they probably perceive more as defence)—though always possible that it could instead weaken their will, as is the intent of military action.

iv. Effects on relationships with the opponent's security forces/soldiers or other armed actors

1. Nonviolence:

a. Opponent soldiers more likely to be receptive to community appeals when they aren't being directly threatened or harmed.

b. Harder for them to justify using violence in return; draws out more contradictions/cognitive dissonance, raising questions about legitimacy of orders.

2. Violence:

a. Opponent soldiers likely to fall back into violent response mode—what they've been trained for—reinforcing their motivating/justificatory framework and will to fight, and making cognitive dissonance unlikely.

b. Soldiers' human needs threatened through threats to personal safety → more difficult to build relationships with them.

l. **Argument:** While the nonviolence of nonviolent defence facilitates necessary relationship-building internally, among new/external allies, among the opponent group, and among the opponent's security forces/soldiers, the violence of armed defence can have divergent—and mostly negative—effects on these forms of relationship-building necessary to successful defence.

i. Although one's own use of violence—if it is widely understood as legitimate—can sometimes serve to strengthen internal relationships and collective identity and mobilization necessary to resist aggression (due to its strong cultural associations with resistance and defence), it is more often the *opponent's* violence that serves this purpose, unifying the populace and strengthening relationships at home and abroad with allies.

ii. By contrast, as one's *own* (even initially defensive) violence begins to take a toll over time both at home and on the opponent group's civilians (particularly if this violence is understood as disproportionate and/or illegitimate in some way), it tends to have the opposite effect, fraying, fracturing, and weakening relationships at home and abroad, diminishing the will and power to continue the defence.

1. It also makes it inordinately harder to build relationships with those on the receiving end of that violence: members of the opponent group (who might otherwise be sympathetic to the defence's cause) and the opponent's soldiers/security forces — relationships that would be critical to weakening the opponent's will and power to continue the aggression.

5. Conclusions

m. Relationship-building is critical to successful defence, but the violence required in armed defence largely makes it harder to build these relationships whereas the nonviolence required in nonviolent defence facilitates the cultivation of these

relationships.

n. This framework for thinking about defence helps us more clearly articulate why armed defence may not often go as well as anticipated or be as decisive as we presume it to be, while also clarifying the potential viability of a strategy of nonviolent defence.

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Civil Resistance and Autonomous Defence

Wilhelm Nolte und Hans-Heinrich Nolte

I. Introduction

My brother and I are grateful to the organisers for this very interesting and productive conference and for the opportunity to revisit an old piece of research. [148] We belong to the generation that experienced the Second World War. We lived through the Allied bombing of our town, an unsuccessful attempt to escape from the Red Army[149], the difficult living conditions of the time and, perhaps most of all, the growing, albeit very slow, knowledge of the war crimes committed by our fathers' generation. Wilhelm Nolte is a soldier by profession and Hans-Heinrich a historian, both retired.

Our fundamental conviction is that civil resistance is the only form of defence against aggression that is worthy of human dignity. But our lecture is not about beliefs or values, but about the limited question of practical politics: does the concept work as an instrument of the state in defence?

We present two main arguments. One argument is about ideas - religions, starting with the Jains[150] and parts of the Christian tradition highlighted in the Sermon on the Mount[151], but also the teachings of the Crusades, play a role in creating political habits. After secularisation humanistic reasoning can play a similar role [152], but so can falsifications and ideological constructions.

The second argument is social and economic - those who conquer a country in order to gain more value or wealth need the inhabitants to do the work, and by using them the conquered peoples can assert at least some of their interests. But then again, countries and whole continents have been conquered and the indigenous people wiped out or driven out by new settlers.

Fostered by clan wars, imperial campaigns, Christian crusades, colonial expansions[153] or national border struggles, answering war with war has become a general, transnational habit of global culture. Changes in habits are possible, but they take a long time in history. Therefore, we propose that a mix of military and non-violent defence is a necessary step on the long road to a civil global society.

II. Mix of methods needed

Beginning with Thoreau[154] and Tolstoy[155], the concept of civil disobedience as an instrument of

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[148] Hans-Heinrich und Wilhelm Nolte (1984): Ziviler Widerstand und Autonome Abwehr, Baden-Baden:Nomos. [Following cited as Nolte, Nolte: Autonome Abwehr].

[149] Which though were not as poor as the living-conditions of the people living in Eastern Europe, see for a comparison Bernd Bonwetsch Ed.: Kindheit und Nachkriegsjugend in zwei Welten. Deutsche und Russen blicken zurück, Essen 2009 (Klartext).

[150] Jaina Sutras, translated by Hermann Jacobi, parts 1-2 = F. Max Müller Ed.: The Sacred Books oft he East, Vols. XXII f., Reprint Delhi usw. 1964 (Motilal Barnasidass).

[151] I use the translation Vinzenz Hamp et al.: Die Heilige Schrift, ³Aschaffenburg 1960, here Matthew 5-7. Taking into account the connectivity of Eurasia during the Axial Period, one may even look for intellectual connections between the two religions, as is suggested by the fact, that the story of the deluge is told in the Gilgamesh-Epos as well as in the Bible.

[152] For instance in Erasmus „Querela pacis" 1517, translation in Kurt von Raumer Ed.: Ewiger Friede, Freiburg 1953 (Karl Alber) p. 211 – 248.

[153] For up to date introductions see the contributions to the topic, Hans-Heinrich Nolte Ed.: 'Expansionismus und Kolonialismus im Weltsystem', in WeltTrends Nr. 195, January 2023, p. 16 – 47; for an overview the same: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien 2009 (Boehlau).

[154] Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862).

[155] Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoj (1828 – 1910).

nonviolent defence has a long history. [156] One of its greatest successes was Mahatma Gandhi's[157] contribution to the freedom of India and the end of colonialism in general. After the Second World War, the debate continued in the English-speaking world. [158] In the late 1960s, with the growing controversy over nuclear weapons, the discussion gained momentum in West Germany.

From the very beginning, it was a problem in this debate that the most convincing example, that of Gandhi, had to be seen as an exception in the history of nonviolent struggle, because not only the long Indian tradition of non-violence (Jains), but also the long period of British rule, which in some parts of the country lasted for centuries, had created an intimate, though of course rather one-sided, orientalist knowledge of the other. The long period of occupation, eventually organised as a separate empire, [159] enabled Gandhi to draw successfully on the Christian traditions of the British. And the second, secular argument also proved valid - the British needed Indian labour and intelligence to make profits.

Other cases of civil defence, such as Prague in 1968[160], failed to achieve the goal of defending the country against a foreign invader - though we pay tribute to the courage and imagination of the defenders. We learned a lot from Barbara Müller's talk yesterday on the Ruhr in 1923, but in our view, which focuses on the state, it is central that civil defence did not stop French and Belgian troops occupying the territory. However, the experience that a certain degree of defence was possible without military instruments offered hope in the Cold War era and was part of the background to attempts since the 1950s to develop "non-military defence", as Johan Galtung wrote in the 1950s. [161]

Our main argument in the 1984 debate[162], however, was that social defence had no chance against an enemy who wanted to expel or even destroy the population (or part of it) of a region. Our example was the German Nazi system[163], where both arguments apply:

1. The ideology of Nazism excluded all Jews as "non-Aryans".[164] The concept of "race" behind this ideology was a fake, the Nazis found no biological indicators to define who was Jewish, and turned to religious ones such as circumcision or grandparents' religion. [165]

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[156] With a long historical list for modern times, see Gene Sharp: The Technique of Non-Violent Action, in Adam Roberts Ed.: The Strategy of Civilian Defence. Non-violent Resistance to Aggression, London 1967 (Faber & Faber), p. 87 – 105. Starting in antiquity Hans-Heinrich Nolte: Geschichte zivilen Widerstands, in Nolte Nolte: Autonome Abwehr, p. 13 – 140. Compare in this volume the contributions of Jørgen Johansen, Brian Martin and others.

[157] For the German-language reader see Gita Dhrampal-Frick Ed.: Mahatma Gandhi: Gewaltfreiheit, Stuttgart 2015 (Reclam). For my view Louis Fisher: Mahatma Gandhi, translation Berlin 1955 (Ullstein); Herbert Fischer: Mahatma Gandhi, Köln 1982 (Pahl-Rugenstein). Indian context: Michael Mann: Geschichte Indiens, Paderborn 2005 (Schöningh); Gita Dharampal-Frick Hg.: Schwerpunkt Indien in ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR WELTGESCHICHTE [following ZWG] 17.1 (2016). For post-Gandhian India Dietmar Rothermund: India. The Rise of an Asian Giant, New Haven 2008 (Yale UP).

[158] Ted Dunn Ed.: Alternatives to War and Violence, London 1963 (Clarke & Co.), Adam Roberts: Nations in Arms - The Theory and Practice of territorial defence, Houndsmillls, ²Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1986.

[159] Hans-Heinrich Nolte: Kurze Geschichte der Imperien, Wien 2017 (Boehlau) p. 318 – 334.

[160] Grundlegend Gordon Skilling: Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution, Princeton/NJ. 1978 (Princeton UP).

[161] Johan Galtung: Zur Strategie der nichtmilitärischen Verteidigung, in Galtung, Anders verteidigen, translated, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1982, S. 217 – 286, definition for instance S. 231.

[162] Nolte Nolte: Autonome Abwehr.

[163] Alex Kay (2021): Empire of Destruction, A History of Nazi Mass Killing, New Haven/Mass (Yale UP) p. 294, counts 12.885 million civilian victims, including 5.8 million Jews. If you include the – though only estimated - number of people starved to death in the countryside of the USSR, the number will be still higher: Hans-Heinrich Nolte: Geschichte Russlands, 4. Auflage Stuttgart 2024 (Reclam 1442) p. 265 f.

[164] Introductory Peter Longerich: Politik der Vernichtung, München 1998; short Hans-Heinrich Nolte: Exklusionen und Genozide, in Ders.: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien 2009 (Böhlau) p. 307 – 325; genocide against Jews p. 318 – 323.

[165] Hans-Heinrich Nolte Ed. (2020): Erinnerungen an Krieg- und Nachkrieg, Barsinghausen (Selbstverlag), p. 7 – 40, 69, 76 – 84, one „Breslauer" surviving as Christian p. 76-84, pastors confirming entry im Kirchenbuch p.

2. The expulsion of the Jews also brought material benefits, what was called "Aryanisation".[166]

This racism became genocide. Social and economic arguments no longer worked, as research in Belarus[167] shows in detail: the German government needed Jewish labour to exploit the occupied territories, but the desire to kill was stronger. The only way for the Jews to survive was to fight. [168] And another case: the Poles had no other way of living in western Poland, which Germany wanted to turn into a German "Warthegau", than by military victory (of its allies).

Genocide was outlawed in international law, but this did not remove the threat. And forced migration has not been so strictly outlawed. Horrifying as it is, the argument that military defence is necessary against enemies who try to expel you and settle in your country has been confirmed by the official forced migrations after 1945 (Germans from the regions east of the Oder-Neisse, Poles and Ukrainians in Eastern Europe, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs on both sides of the new borders in India, Chechens and other "punished peoples" in the USSR, the population of the Chagos Islands[169], Rohinja, etc.). And the expulsion of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh[170] and the attack by Hamas on settlements in Israel, killing Jews simply because of their ethnicity, happened in 2023. [171]

In order to take a first step towards the transition to a global civil society - which is to be hoped for, worked for, but by no means to be expected as a "law of history" - we argue for a mix of methods in defence. Specifically, we propose to plan the defence of open fields with appropriate forms of conventional warfare, but the defence of cities with non-violent methods. In any case, as Jørgen Johansen has pointed out, nonviolent methods must be learned and trained[172] before action is taken.

III. Three elements of defence

The prevention of war is a fundamental objective of our proposed mix, which has its place within a strategy of prevention. A strategy of preventing war requires a convincing capacity to defend itself. A 'promise' that a society will defend itself by non-violent means will not deter imperial interests or nationalist expansion. Aggressors will only refrain from invasion and war if they are confronted with a defensive capacity that makes it impossible for them to profit from acts of war. This capacity for defence must be based on confidence in one's own ability to prevent and, if this fails, to defend. It is therefore necessary to demonstrate publicly that the

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91 note 87; Jewish members of the Red Army surviving as Muslims: Pavel Poljan: Obrechennye pogibnut, Moskva 2006 (Novoe izdatel'stvo).

[166] As example Claus Füllberg-Stolberg: "Wie mir bekannt geworden ist, beabsichtigen Sie auszureisen" in: Carl-Hans Hauptmeyer u.a. Hg.: Die Welt querdenken, Frankfurt 2003, p. 219 – 234.

[167] In Belarus before 1941, Jews made up a large percentage of artisans and traders, many working for Belorussian Kolkhozy. Following the German attack those Jews who survived the first wave of murder by the „Einsatzgruppen", were herded into newly erected „Ghettos" and forced to work for the German Army. Despite clear statements that without the Jewish workforce production would break down, the Jewish population was murdered systematically, mostly in 1942. Fundamental for the occupation of Belarus: Christian Gerlach (1999): Kalkulierte Morde, Hamburg (Hamburger Edition). My local research to this context: Hans-Heinrich Nolte (2003):' Destruction and Resistance. The Jewish Shtetl Slonim 1941 – 1944', in: Bernd Bonwetsch, Robert Thurston Eds.: The Peoples War, Urbana 2000 (Illinois-University-Press) p. 29 – 53; Ders.: Slonim , in Gerd Ueberschaer Hg.: Orte des Grauens, Darmstadt 2003, S. 237 – 249 (Primus-Verlag).

[168] Which they did, see Shalom Cholawsky (1998): The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II, Amsterdam:Harwood, p. 193 – 270.

[169] See Hans-Heinrich Nolte (2009): Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien:Böhlau, p. 327 – 342.

[170] Philipp Ammon: Schach und matt – der jähe Untergang Arzachs, in Neue Zürcher Zeitung 16.10.2023 https://www.nzz.ch/meinung/der-untergang-arzachs-im-bergigen-karabach-ld.1759448

[171] The murders of Hamas 7.10.2023 clearly fall under §2 of the Genocide-Convention. We know, that in Israel there are plans for the expulsion of Palestinians, see Gilbert Achcar: Die israelische Rechte und ihre Pläne für Gaza, in Le Monde diplomatique, German Dezember 2023 S 6 f., but we do hope, that these are ideas of a minority which will not be implemented.

[172] For instance with the Verein „gewaltfrei handeln e.v." – www.gewaltfreihandeln.org.

existing instruments of defence are working well.

In the "Autonomous Defence" model, we propose three types of defence forces: military, civil resistance and protection of civilians. [173] They should be as equal as possible and financed by the state. Citizens would have a general duty to serve, but with the possibility of serving in special resistance teams. They would be free to choose the service for which they wished to take responsibility. This free choice could replace alternative service for conscientious objectors. [174]

Citizens who serve in the civil resistance forces are limited in their basic rights as soldiers and are subject to the same state requirements regarding defence training and the formation of reserves. On the other hand, they have the same rights in terms of payment, free health care, support for their families and protection, for example, in the exchange of prisoners. The cost of training and equipment must be borne by the state.

In terms of both deterrence and defence, the three forces are functionally interdependent. The resistance forces are obliged to defend the cities that are not militarily defended, recalling the option of an open city in international law. The military forces are obliged to defend the countryside, the rural areas. Following Ebert's terminology[175], the resistance forces create high costs for an aggressor to stay in the cities (stay price), while the military forces create high costs to enter these rural territories (entry price). The protection forces are obliged to serve the civilian population in both urban and rural areas. The three forces operate autonomously according to their own concepts and rules.

The military forces follow the model of an area-based network defence, using military weapons in a hierarchical structure, like a "spider in its web".[176] However, they do not fight in cities. The Resistance Forces operate according to methods of non-violent defence, [177] which need to be trained in peacetime. The protection forces extend current concepts of military-civil cooperation to include cooperation with resistance forces. Overlaps, such as air defence in front of cities and borders between cities and rural areas, need to be decided in peacetime.

Autonomous defence is a recurring theme in the work of two of the authors quoted above - Theodor Ebert and Lutz Unterseher. At first glance, their positions seem incompatible: the former (*1937) in political science and peace research, the latter (*1942) in sociology and military expertise; the former associated with pacifist strains and the Protestant Church, the latter a cosmopolitan security consultant working between North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. But they are linked by their search for alternatives in defence. Both concepts were developed in the heat of the Cold War. Ebert's concepts remained important in many social groups, such as the Federation for Social Defence, Unterseher was able to accomodate his concepts to actual wars.

Ebert wanted to abolish war, not least through massive conscientious objection to military service and, in the case of occupation, through "continuing without collaboration". Unterseher wanted to undermine war by means of a minimalist but highly effective conventional armament, which would only develop defensive power through its network capabilities and be able to deny an aggressor the use of a certain territory.

At the only hearing on alternative defence organised by the German government at the height of the protest movement against further nuclear armament forty years ago, neither side

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[173] Nolte, Nolte: Autonome Abwehr, p. 143 – 272; for an early presentation in English see: Dietrich Fischer, Wilhelm Nolte, Jan Øberg: Winning Peace - Strategies and Ethics for a Nuclear Free World, New York - Philadelphia - Washington, DC - London 1989 (Crane Russak), Part II: Preventing War – Protecting People, p. 75-133 .

[174] GG § 12a has to be changed in some points.

[175] See Theodor Ebert (1981): Ziviler Widerstand - mix oder pur - Zur Kontroverse zwischen Militärstrategen und Friedensforschern über die Zukunft wehrhafter Neutralität, in: Ders.: Soziale Verteidigung - Formen und Bedingungen des Zivilen Widerstands, Waldkirch 1981 (Waldkircher Verlag), p. 73 – 103, resp.: p. 89.

[176] Lutz Unterseher (2023): Vertrauensbildende Verteidigung für die Ukraine - Grundlagen und Programm, Berlin:LIT-Verlag, resp.: p. 124ff.

[177] Compare the literature in footnote 175.

won.[178] Today, in the face of new US plans to station modern nuclear weapons and intermediate-range systems in Germany, it is again tempting to ask about alternatives. But there is reason to fear that the old criticism of alternative strategies will be repeated. During the hearing, Ebert was criticised for accepting "as a radical alternative to military defence the occupation of one's own territory by an aggressor" and for overestimating "the possibilities of resistance against an occupying power acting decisively". Unterseher's concept of regional defence was attacked because it would "abandon parts of the Federal Republic for a dubious temporal advantage" and thus was "a strategy inviting war rather than preventing it".

Autonomous Defence aims to combine the strengths of both concepts, thereby creating new capabilities for preventing war and/or defending a country. Our 1984 book was of course late in the debate, and with Gorbachev interest in alternative defence strategies waned. The 1990s brought a general hope for 'peace', and advocates of nonviolent resistance focused on violence within societies.

Now the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought back to the fore the question of the possibilities and strategies of "social defence in militarily conquered cities". Ulrich Stadtmann returned to Ebert's "do not recognise, do not cooperate".[179] This new debate on social defence picks up on a central point of the 1984 hearing: does the concept really accept the occupation of the country under attack? Stadtmann focuses on "civilian resistance in open cities". By arguing that military defence should focus on rural areas rather than cities, Stadtmann moves to a point where social defence and conventional defence of regions could be allied. Lutz Unterseher, looking at Ukraine, argues that defence should be comprehensive, but "with the exception of conurbations and other densely populated areas".[180]

The structures for autonomous defence outlined above are related to the capacity needed to prevent war - especially in combination with the renunciation of nuclear threats and/or responses. The renunciation of nuclear violence in autonomous defence is a culmination of nonviolent resistance by the whole of society, perhaps its overarching constituency.

As noted, autonomous defence is conceptualised as a pause. Freedom of choice opens up further steps towards a completely non-violent future of war prevention and defence. The more citizens opt for civil defence, are trained and maintain public structures, the larger the urban spaces that can be demarcated and "socially" defended. And the smaller the territories that would have to be defended by networks of soldiers.

As far as we know, few new concepts of social defence have been proposed since Theodor Ebert. We hope that this conference will be a starting point not only for conceptual developments in the coming years, and that the idea of a mix will play a creative role in these developments.

Wilhelm Nolte, a child of the war from the proud town of Zerbst, which a bellicose colonel surrendered to the 40-minute American bombing raid three weeks before the end of the war, which destroyed the town and burned it to the ground. Conscripted mountain infantryman, professional war prevention officer, documentalist; writer, editor, poet; focus: peace. Author of 'Autonomous Defence' (1984), a non-violent resistance strategy that integrates the anti-nuclear movement, co-author of 'Winning Peace' (1987; 'Winning Peace', 1989) and initiator and co-editor of analyses for the General Staff Training (1991, 1998). Since 1994 freelance editor for peace research. In addition, for many years database manager of the war database of the Working Group on the Causes of War (AKUF) at the University of Hamburg and managing

[178] Alfred Biehle (ed) (1986): Alternative Strategien. Das Hearing im Verteidigungsausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages, Koblenz 1986. Its final valuation refers to previous assessments as for example: Amt für Studien und Übungen der Bundeswehr: Strategie-Synopse - Kritiken, Argumente, Vorschläge (akt. u. erw. Aufl.), VS - NfD, Bergisch-Gladbach1984, p. V-1-10.

[179] Ulrich Stadtmann: Nicht anerkennen, nicht kooperieren - Soziale Verteidigung in militärisch eroberten Städten, in: Wissenschaft und Frieden 2022.2, p. 15 – 17.

[180] Unterseher see FN 32, p. 124.

director of the Working Group for Peace and Conflict Research (AFK).

*Hans-Heinrich Nolte, * 1938 in Ulm, childhood in small towns in Central Germany (Zerbst, Detmold, Rauschenberg) and the Ruhr (Oberhausen), exchange student in the USA (Elmhurst near Chicago). Studied History and German in Marburg, Münster and Göttingen, where he completed his doctorate on Muscovite Russia. Research fellow at the MPI for History, 1975 Professor of Eastern European History in Hanover. Founding editor of the ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR WELTGESCHICHTE (ZWG). Research on Russian religious and social history, historiography and foreign policy: Religious Tolerance in Russia Göttingen 1969 (Muster-Schmidt); History of Russia, 4th edition Stuttgart 2024 (Reclam 14442). Studies on the Second World War and the genocide of the Jews (Slonim); global historical research on the history of the world system and world history (History of Civil Resistance 1984 (at Nomos), World History 15th-19th Century and 20th Century Vienna 2005 and 2009, History of Empires Vienna 2017 (all published by Böhlau). Studies on inner peripheries in European history (Göttingen 1991 with Muster-Schmidt; Austrian Journal of Historical Science 2020) and research on the position of Eastern Europe and Russia in the world system (Yearbooks for the History of Eastern Europe 1980, Competing Imitation, in Z. 2023); End of the USSR (ZWG 2023). Visiting professor in Vienna, Voronezh and Lincoln/Nebraska.*

Nonviolent Campaigns and Violent Flanks: the More Violence, the Less Success

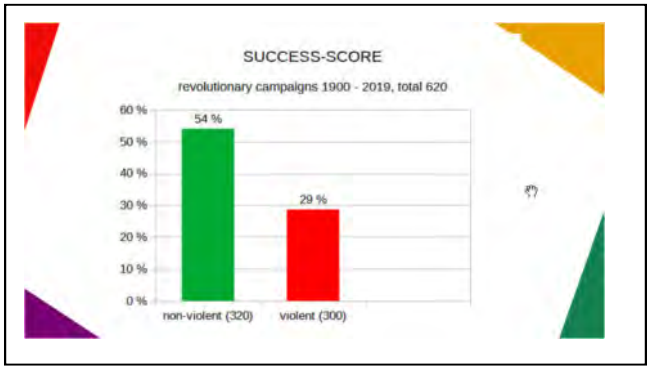
Jan Stehn

Can a mix of military and nonviolent defence measures be effective to defence a country against an external aggressor? Could such a mix have complemental synergy-effects or does nonviolent resistance and military defence will trouble and disturb each other?

In my talk I want to give you some insights to the research of a similar question: What effects have violent flanks alongside a nonviolent campaign? Of course social movements and national defence are different but nevertheless the research from the experiences in revolutionary movements could give us hints what we have to take into consideration.

Shortly to my person: I started my nonviolent activism in the midst 70th mainly in the anti-nuclear and the peace movement. So I experienced a lot of movement debates about nonviolent and violent protest actions. At that time there were in the movements strong factions promoting open resistance concepts which include street violence with mass protest. To perform nonviolent actions like sitting blockades we had to go separate ways than the main movement. From this experience it is for me an impressing development that nowadays in the climate movement nonviolence is an unquestioned basic and the 'radical flanks' are today the nonviolent activist like 'Last Generation'.

Mainly I refer in this talk to the research of Erica Chenoweth. Chenoweth is an acknowledged professor of public policy in US. In the nineties she studied military science and when she joined a seminar of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict she was very sceptical in view of successful single examples of nonviolent mass movements like the people power movement in Philippines. To examine this question, she built together with US-American political scientist Maria J. Stephan a database on global revolutionary movements since 1900 and grouped them in mainly military ('violent') and civil-resistance (demonstrations, strikes, civil disobedience … 'non-violent') based campaigns[181] and found out that non-violent movements were nearly double so successful than violent. The results, first published 2010, shaped the debate about the potential of non-violence and influenced further research.

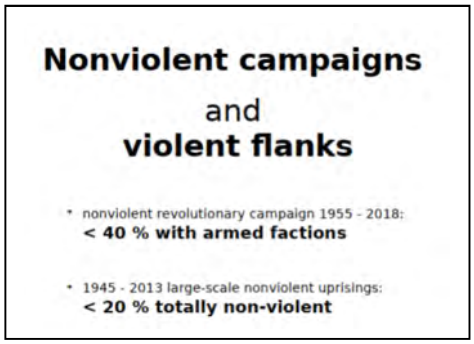


In following years the database was developed and deepened with different aspects of movements and deliver now an analyse instrument for further research and debate about strengths and strategies of social movements. Results you can find in the 2021 published book 'Chenoweth: Civil Resistance what everyone needs to know'. One chapter is discussing the consequences of violent flanks accompanying non-violent movements.[182]

[181] Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) data project: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/navco

[182] 'Chenoweth: Civil Resistance what everyone needs to know' 2021, 'Civil Resistance and Violence from within the Movement', Page 142

Unarmed violence (to punch, kick, hit other, throw sticks or stones, Molotov cocktails, 'riots'), often occur in nonviolent - revolutionary movements.[183] [184] But nearly 20 % totally rejected and avoided violence, including property destruction and street fighting.[185] Nearly 40 % were accompanied with armed factions. Armed groups have often emerged when nonviolent movements begin to weaken, often in situations of extreme repression. Then the more radicals decide to escalate their methods and include armed actions. For example 1961 after the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa the 'Umkhonto we Sizwe' ('Spear of the Nation') emerged as the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC).



What are the effects of violent flanks for nonviolent movements?

In this chart I give an overview about benefits and drawbacks of violent flanks:

	benefits	drawbacks
immediate, short-term effects	• **Spontaneous & disorganised possible:** Violence can be used spontaneously by individuals or small groups. Discriminating from the high level of preparation and discipline that nonviolent campaigns require. • **Express people's anger:** Violence can give immediate and dramatic expression to anger, rage and despair over injustice and humiliation. • **Surprisingly used → encouraging success:** Violence can be immediately successful if the opponent does not expect it and is not prepared for it, which has a positive effect on the determination of the movement. For example, violence can be used quite successfully to disrupt or prevent events organised by the opposing side. • **Strong publicity effect:** Violence, especially when it arose, attracts a great deal of attention and media coverage and triggers public debate. • ***Self-protection from repression:*** This is an argument that is often used to justify violence, but the escalation of violence often has often the opposite effect - see drawbacks	• **Injured & deaths:** Escalation can lead to serious injuries or even fatalities. • **Withdrawal & distancing:** Non-violent activists withdraw. More: sympathisers and supporters distance themselves. • **Peaceful events lose attention:** Peaceful actions by the movement lose public attention and are at risk of being marginalised. • **Public debate about ‚law and order', not content:** The public debate focuses on the escalation of violence and on 'law and order', but not on the content and demands of the movement and does not report in a sympathetic way. • **Internal debates up to a split:** The debates in the movement are focussed on the question of the use of violence, which takes up time and energy and can lead to a split in the movement.

	benefits	drawbacks

[183]For example: Polish Solidarity, Hong Kong's pro-democracy campaign 2019, Egyp 2011

[184]But among over 2500 large-scale reformist campaigns 1955 - 2018 only 26 % with street fighting, riots alongside primarily nonviolent action.

[185]Examples are: Honduras 1944, CSSR 1989, Mongolia 1989, Georgia 2003, Thailand 2005 , 2013, Togo 2012

long-term	• **Cost of repression increases:** The state needs more resources (police, military) to put down the movement. • **Opponents have to 'isolate themselves:** The people, groups and institutions attacked by violence have to 'isolate' themselves for their own protection - this reduces the opportunities for open contact. The state and the elite thus isolate themselves from society. • **Solidarity and outrage mobilisation:** Overreaction by the state and victims of the resistance can lead to solidarity and further mobilisation. • ***strengthening the negotiating position of the non-violent movement?*** *A militant wing of the movement could encourage the state's willingness to accommodate the non-violent, more moderate part of the movement.*	• **defamation & repression ↑** **participation & support ↓** Repression and risks for activists but also for supporters of the movement are increasing dramatically and are often accepted / tolerated by the public. The defamation of the movement as 'terrorist' etc. is also more likely to be believed when movement is accompanied by violence. If the violence of the movement is perceived and judged as inappropriate and illegitimate, the movement loses its supporters. Especially the more neutral and weak supporters are lost. • **Male dominance ↑, diversity ↓** Militant resistance is often heavily male-dominated and more ethnically homogeneous - which narrows the potential of the movement. • **State superiority:** The repressive apparatus is usually far superior to the movement in terms of its means of violence. The movement therefore operates in a field where the opponent is strong. • **Cohesion of state-supporting factions↑** The threat of a violent movement promotes cohesion among the ruling factions. • **State as protective power:** Violently escalated conflicts also harm and injure bystanders (collateral damage) - who then also feel threatened by the movement and seek protection from the power apparatus. • **Authoritarian solutions ↑, civil war ↑** Violent conflicts brutalise people. Escalated conflicts regularly result in serious human rights violations. The focus narrows to a friend-enemy mentality. This makes constructive conflict resolution very difficult. Even after the victory of an insurgent movement, authoritarian, violent structures and behaviours often prevail. Civil wars and authoritarian regimes are more likely when the movement was accompanied by violent flanks. • **External dependencies:** Armed resistance on a larger scale is only possible with external support - this leads to dependencies and a loss of self-determination.

You can measure the drawbacks of violent flanks in the statistic results:

The negative effects of accompanying violence in nonviolent movements are well studied:

1900 - 2019 (320 nonviolent movement): 65% without accompanying violence were successful but only 35% with accompanying violence.

The low success rate is due to lower participation (-17 %). Above all, various studies indicate that participation decreases in the following year of violent actions.

This is true in authoritarian regimes as well as in democratic ones and in both poor and rich societies. Scholars who have studied reformist campaigns and protest events have come to the same conclusion across different national and cultural contexts.[186]

It is therefore not surprising that regimes try to infiltrate social movements with the aim of provoking violent protest.

Chenoweth points to two exceptions:
In (racially / ethnically) deeply divided societies, even non-violent movements have a hard time gaining support across this divide. And in the case of very hated regimes, violence from the resistance movement can be positively received by the population and lead to further mobilisation.[187]

But how can a non-violent mass movement maintain non-violent discipline?

- if repression increases and counter-violence is propagated as a 'last resort'?
- when the regime infiltrates provocateurs into the movement?

Chenoweth stress how important it is that the nonviolent movement uses the full range of nonviolent action possibilities: In phases of strong repression, grief and anger, it may be wiser to pause with large public protests and instead de-escalate the direct confrontation with fasting actions, silent marches or periods of reflection. Strikes and other forms of non-cooperation also reduce the risk of direct (violent) confrontations.

- Participants in non-violent actions should be well prepared: In training courses, participants learn to react in a non-violent way, even in a confrontational situation.
- Guidelines and self-commitments of the participants are important – in simple (memorable) sentences.
- Specially prepared peacekeepers can de-escalate confrontational situations.
- Preliminary talks and agreements with groups prepared to use violence can secure the space for non-violent activists to act.
- Good public relations work helps the movement to communicate and explain its goals, its approach and its consistent adherence to non-violence.

There are a number of movements that have been able to maintain their nonviolence even under massive repression (see footnote 5). The conditions for this are strong organisational structures and leadership qualities.

Lesson learned

Chenoweth summarizes and concludes:

> *In sum, fringe violence may sometimes achieve some short-term process goals like media attention; the perception of self-defence; a bond among a radical, militant core; or catharsis after blowing off steam. It liberates people from hierarchical systems and allows participants to avoid the problem of over-policing within the movement, which can*

[186] Steinert-Threlked and others analysed protest events across 24 cities from 5 countries between 2014 and 2017 and found that protester violence tends to shrink crowd sizes at subsequent events.

[187] An example are the successful mass-protests against the Egypt dictator Husni Mubarak, which were accompanied with violent street-violence, 2011.

reinforce the problematic power relationships that the movement is fighting against.

But movements that do not adhere to nonviolent discipline often find that fringe violence has undermined their longer-term strategic goals, like building an increasingly large and diverse movement, encouraging outsiders to support the movement's goals, and winning over defectors from various pillars of support. Nonviolent campaigns with fringe violence may occasionally win a battle, but they tend to lose the war.[188]

*Jan Stehn (*1957) is nonviolent activist and studies the power and strategies of nonviolent movements. He lives near Berlin and is engaged in the Federation for Social Defence (Bund für Soziale Verteidigung) und Wehrhaft ohne Waffen.*

[188]Chenoweth, Civil Resistance, p. 172

Conclusions and Outlook

Christine Schweitzer

In the final panel that concluded the conference, a number of points were collected by the participants on a pad (see picture on the right), and discussed afterwards. A few aspects stood out:

- Include conflict transformation into any concept of social defence. One participant formulated this as follows: "In future I will speak of civilian-based politics instead of defence. That means, that the civilians come into the core of politics and that politics will be pursued by civilian and non-armed ways only."
- Include learnings from other fields of nonviolent action and conflict transformation, in particular the importance of building relationships and mutual help to strengthen communities, and to focus on the needs of people rather than on the needs of a state.
- A wider understanding of what all is about – one participant put this as "including Mother Earth when thinking about violence", another of "relationship-building with the environment".

There were also at least two clear disagreements in the (virtual) room. Neither of the two could be considered to be new – the same questions have already been discussed lively in the 1980s and the early 1990s.

- One was the proposal to combine unarmed defence with defensive, autonomous armed defence. Some saw it at least as a way to come to 'transarmament' and overcoming the current trends of militarization including weapons of mass destruction. Such a change of politics was needed now, and larger goals could only be reached taking one step after the other, the argument goes. Defensive defence might reach more people and convince them than rejecting all military options. Others thought that nonviolence only 'works' when there is no parallel strong violent flank because violence and nonviolence operate on different logics. Combining both might make total defence stronger, but if the wish is to avoid death and destruction, it does not work.
- The other was about the role of the state in preparing for social defence. Some could social defence imagine only in a process of general societal transformation and empowerment of the people, others hoped that states could be convinced to introduce social defence as a security policy. It would not make sense to ignore the role of states and of nation-building that is still going on in many parts of the world, it was argued.

Additionally listed as disagreements were if there is a need for a concrete threat in order to convince people to develop social defence, and a tension between empirical evidence and normative assumptions (for example on nonviolence).

Other open questions identified in the last round were the issues of preparation and training, including of training for police, military and diplomats. The question if the preparation of social

defence can deter a potential aggressor was asked, and how to convince / reach more people beyond the "small bubble" of social defence. It was also asked if nonviolent strategies and tactics can be an answer to any kind of aggression, thinking for example of the genocide by Germany in World War II. Other issues discussed were how social defence can be linked to dealing with other threats like the climate crisis, and that a reform of the United Nations should be taken into focus.

Looking to the future, a number of needs and suggestions were collected:

- More case studies to learn from for social defence
- Films, books, games that promote social defence
- A book that finds so much attention like in Germany the "Weizsäcker-Study" in the 1970s[189].
- More workshops and conferences (perhaps one in France, organized by Alternatives Nonviolentes?)
- Contact email list for the participants of the conference.
  (This has been created: social-defence@lists.wehrhaftohnewaffen.de. It is public and everyone is free to register here: https://wehrhaftohnewaffen.maadix.org/mailman/postorius/lists/

Outlook: Social defence in the 21st Century

When reading papers from the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, the discussion on social defence was led by peace researchers, with the peace movement taking up the concepts and debating them. I myself complained in article in 1989 that social defence was "a theoretical concept of peace research", and that they "dominated the strategies, methods and modes of achieving impact".[190] I then argued in favour of social movements as those in whose hands the realization of social defence should and would lie, a view shared by many nonviolent activists. Much more recently, Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin put forward in much more detail how a grassroots movement could help to build the capacity for social defence.[191]

Today however, there are very few academicians interested in social defence. Those who are, are mostly those of an elder generation that already took part in the earlier debate decades ago. What is new in the 21st century? Are the studies and papers written before the mid 1990s still of relevance at all? As a short answer: Yes, they are, but the concept needs adaptations, and this also needs input from peace research. The changes in the context are due mainly to three factors:

- Changes in the geopolitical framework since the end of the Cold War.
- Technological changes in warfare and means of repression.
- An increased knowledge-base regarding tactics and strategies of nonviolent resistance.

Changes in the geopolitical framework since the end of the Cold War

As to the legitimization to maintain a military, there were at least three changes in threat analyses since 1990/91. After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the Western military for some time was not sure for what it still might be useful. In the end, the powers behind maintaining the military proved strong enough: new tasks and legitimizations were found under the framework of "humanitarian intervention". The wars and genocide(s) of the 1990s – the wars in the former Yugoslavia with Srebrenica and the genocide in Rwanda 1994 that both became symbols for protection failing made it easy to establish this new framework. The concepts of

[189] This refers to this book: Carl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker, Wege in der Gefahr: Eine Studie über Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft und Kriegsverhütung, 1976. The study by this philosopher found much attention in intellectual circles in Germany.

[190] Christine Schweitzer, ‚Die Botschaft hör ich wohl…', in: graswurzelrevolution Sonderheft Soziale Verteidigung, Nr. 123/124, 1988, pp44-46.

[191] Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin (2019): Social Defence, Ed: Irene Publishing

human security and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) were two concepts born in that period, both recognizing an armed component though their main focus was on civilian means.

Less than ten years later, another framework replaced the humanitarian intervention, one much more powerful: the "war on terror" proclaimed after 9/11. The Western wars of aggression against Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003 became catalysts for a strengthening of military capacities to conduct war in far-away settings against opponents whose military capacities were inferior to those of the attackers. Still in 2019, Jørgen Johansen and Brian Martin could write in their book and probably few would have disagreed with them:

> *Defending against military invasions might have been relevant years ago, but today the possibility of invasion and conquest of any large country is minimal. Therefore, defence against foreign aggression is not a good rationale for social defence.* (p. 152)

Of course, it could be argued that this was a point of view that might not have been shared by many countries that also then were under threat by their neighbours – northern Syria and Iraq by Turkey, DR Congo by Rwanda-supported militias, the situation in the two Koreas, Taiwan fearing annexation by the PR of China for example. The list also includes countries in the European neighbourhood like Ukraine that suffered from half-clandestine Russian aggression since 2014 as does Georgia since the early 1990s. But the main lesson and the reason why this is quoted here is: Threats develop enormously quickly and cannot always be predicted. Who would have thought in 2024 that in January 2025 Denmark would send military vessels to the Arctic sea to maintain a presence in the face of the U.S. government's veiled threat to take Greenland by force? And who would have thought that the same government openly speaks of ethnic cleansing in Gaza, one of the crimes listed in the R2P policies?

Another newer development is the globalization in the economic sphere. Its consequences people felt world-wide during the Covid 19 epidemics when protective masks had to be important from China and a small number of pharma enterprises made horrendous profit from selling their products. The same could be observed now in the war against Ukraine: termination of grain exports caused hunger in African countries and blocking gas and oil exports from Russia led to an energy crisis in Europe.

Technological changes in warfare and means of repression

The development of new weapon systems and the so-called modernization[192] of existing ones started in the 2010s. Much of what is now legitimized with the war in Ukraine was actually planned years ago – new generations of armed drones, FCAS[193], hypersonic weapons, new generations of nuclear weapons, to name only the probably most outstanding ones.[194] The big jump in the development of Artificial Intelligence adds a new dimension to these developments.

The war in Ukraine is a strange mixture of such modern and very old instruments of warfare: On the one hand there are the armed drones and hypersonic weapons, on the other side there are tanks like in World War II and trenches reminiscent of the first World War.

AI is not only important in regard to the possibility of automated weapon systems, but in particular also for technologies of surveillance and repression. Face-recognition and speedy evaluation of large amounts of electronic information are only two elements here. Other modern technologies for surveillance include drones and all the technologies used to monitor or cut-off electronic communications.

Taking even one step further back when looking at the concept of social defence: Most of the books on social defence were written before the invention of the internet and before communication through mobile phones. Turning road signs like in Czechoslovakia 1968 is not

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[192] Some people argue that at least in regard to nuclear short-range weapons, it is more than modernization but rather new types of weapons.

[193] Future Combat Air System, New Generation Fighter), a combination of an aerial refuelling aircraft (remote carrier), unmanned remote carriers and new weapons and communication systems.

[194] For German readers, the publications by the Informationsstelle Militarisierung (https://www.imi-online.de/) are recommended to read up on these weapon systems.

particularly useful in the time of Google maps and its military equivalents… Electronic media allow for much easier communication between many more people - but can also more easily be closed down by the opponent. For that reason, Johansen and Martin recommend low-tech solutions to overcome these threats – even carrier pigeons replacing phones and computers.

Last not least, the critical infrastructure in modern society – water, food distribution, heating, health care – are much more dependent on electricity and the working of the electronic networks than they were in earlier times. Protagonists of social defence have suggested that for more resilience more decentralized systems as well as storage of necessary good would be needed.[195]

An increased knowledge-base regarding tactics and strategies of nonviolent resistance

As mentioned, a multitude of studies on civil resistance has been produced since the turn of the century. They enriched the knowledge on such resistance several aspects, inter alia on methods of repression and 'authoritarian learning'[196], the role security forces and the importance of winning them over, the importance of a mix of various methods, a discussion on the role of so-called 'violent flanks, and last not least the theoretical underpinning of the concept of Unarmed Civilian Protection[197]. Very often quoted is the study by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephen who compared, based on the NAVCO data bank, unarmed and armed anti-regime, secession and anti-occupation campaigns.[198] They proved that nonviolent resistance is quite successful, and certainly more successful than armed resistance. Most of the studies however do not use the term 'social defence' even when including cases of resistance against occupation or coups d'états.

One book I think is as important as the study by Chenoweth and Stephan but has received far less attention is the book *Opting Out of War* edited by Mary B. Anderson and Marshall Wallace.[199] Anderson's organization, the Collaborative for Development Action, collected 13 cases in which communities or entire regions successfully stayed out of a violent conflict surrounding them. The term 'social defence' is not used by them, but the examples reveal what is meant by social defence: the defence of a way of living against military attack. The conclusions they draw from the examples are noteworthy. For example, dialogue with the armed groups played a crucial role. The communities spoke and negotiated with them, often compromising, and in some cases they had to endure a temporary or permanent occupation. Some other key factors were the anticipation of the conflict, weighing up of the costs of participation in the war versus non-participation, choosing a 'non-war identity' while the surrounding communities choose one of the identities of the conflict, a legitimate government (leadership structure with little hierarchy.

These findings are of relevance for social defence. In particular I would point out two issues that are debated in the bubble: Their examples show that people do not need to adhere to a nonviolent philosophy and be always nonviolent. The authors quote one community explicitly calling themselves "warriors". But what was needed was the determination not to use weapons in *this* conflict. None of them mixed violence with nonviolence. The second is that people stood side by side with their leadership, not against their government, and often the leadership was of a rather decentralized character.

Regarding an increased knowledge-base, perhaps especially outstanding is the issue of authoritarian learning. Earlier books on civil resistance and social defence all report that the aggressors or plotters of coups were surprised when not meeting with armed resistance. This has

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[195] See Johansen & Martin 2019, esp. pp 100

[196] See for example Heydemann, Steven (2024): Authoritarian Learning, Oxford Handbooks online

[197] See for example Furnari, Ellen (ed.) (2016) Wielding Nonviolence in the Face of Violence., Eds. Institut für Friedensarbeit und Gewaltfreie Konfliktaustragung, Norderstedt:BoD

[198] Chenoweth, Erica and Maria J. Stephan, Maria J. (2011): Why Civil Resistance Works. The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. New York: Colombia University Press. An Update is this here: Chenoweth, Erica (2021): Civil Resistance. What everyone needs to know. Oxford University Press

[199] Anderson, Mary B. und Wallace, Marshall (2013) Opting Out of War. Strategies to Prevent Violent Conflict. Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers

fundamentally changed now. They know how civil resistance works and how to repress it.[200] This could be observed in many of the modern uprisings or defence against coups, from Belarus to Myanmar.[201] Therefore, a preparation for social defence needs to take this into account, including the possibility of a far disproportionate use of violence to discourage resisters or to tempt them to change to violent tactics.

What else?

The so-called Doomsday Clock of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* has been put forward in January 2025 to 89 seconds to midnight. It is worth quoting their statement which is probably one of the best summaries of the multitude of risks we are facing. [202] It lists several areas of risk: First, the risk of nuclear war, stating that in the war against Ukraine "the conflict could become nuclear at any moment because of a rash decision or through accident or miscalculation." Also the Middle East conflict creates such risks and the " nuclear arms control process is collapsing, and high-level contacts among nuclear powers are totally inadequate given the danger at hand".

Second are the effects of the climate change, and the unwillingness of governments to respond adequately. Third are the risks of new pandemics and the risk that terrorists or countries would develop biological weapons. Fourth on their list is the incorporation of artificial intelligence in military targeting, and the competition in space. Their list concludes with this point here which is also of high relevance for social defence:

> *The dangers we have just listed are greatly exacerbated by a potent threat multiplier: the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories that degrade the communication ecosystem and increasingly blur the line between truth and falsehood. Advances in AI are making it easier to spread false or inauthentic information across the internet—and harder to detect it. At the same time, nations are engaging in cross-border efforts to use disinformation and other forms of propaganda to subvert elections, while some technology, media, and political leaders aid the spread of lies and conspiracy theories. This corruption of the information ecosystem undermines the public discourse and honest debate upon which democracy depends. The battered information landscape is also producing leaders who discount science and endeavour to suppress free speech and human rights, compromising the fact-based public discussions that are required to combat the enormous threats facing the world.* …(ibid)

What does this have to do with the concept of social defence? The answer is: a lot. We need unarmed alternatives to dealing with conflict and to responding to war with war. We need civil resistance to stop authoritarian governments, to enforce the protection of nature and climate. We need Unarmed Civilian Protection to protect ourselves and our neighbours from attacks. We need to find a way to combat disinformation because social defence requires a certain degree of unity.[203] Last but not least, we need to maintain hope that changes are possible. All the successful uprisings in the past show that this is not as unrealistic as it may seem in the winter 2024/25.

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[200] See Chenoweth 2021, quoted above

[201] See Chenoweth 2021, quoted above.

[202] https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2025-statement/

[203] This is no new issue. See Brian Martin on this: "What's wrong with misinformation?" https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/24sts.html , and "Misinformation: what isn't studied," https://social-epistemology.com/2025/01/29/misinformation-what-isnt-studied-brian-martin/