

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF NONVIOLENCE

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## The Institutionalization of Nonviolence

The term "nonviolence" has been a controversial one. Over the years many have objected to it on the grounds that it is negative rather than positive in substance and therefore does not hold out a vision of what one is for rather than what one is against. The objection is valid, but it overlooks one benefit obtained by the use of this term. When we speak of nonviolence we highlight the fact that a peaceful world cannot be attained without struggle and resistance. Nonviolence is anti-violence and must be, since violence, unfortunately, is woven into the fabric of our lives. To obtain peace we must resist violence. To resist violence is to resist deeply rooted inclinations, habits, customs, laws, and institutions.

Resistance, of course, is not all that there is to nonviolence, but it is a very important aspect and any glossing over of that fact only leads to misunderstandings. Evidence of such misunderstandings was provided by some of the more common reactions to the largely nonviolent, but often disruptive activities of the antiwar movement in the sixties and early seventies. Peace and placidity have a way of getting equated and it then is assumed that activity that disturbs or disrupts is antithetical to peace, just as it is often mistakenly assumed that aggressive activity is necessarily destructive or violent.

One definition of "placid" is "complacent." Complacency, however, is precisely what is not in order as long as we live in a society and in a world permeated by human destructiveness. Most nonviolent resistance can be seen as an effort to overcome one or another form of complacency and to do so without destroying human life. Since the status quo is often felt to be even more sacred than human life, nonviolent action may be experienced as more threatening than the threat of murder. When Gandhi challenged race laws in South Africa and caste laws and customs in India, he sent shock waves through those nations. Yet had he been a soldier in the army, even a general, whose mission was to defend the existing order, he would not have had the same impact on his opponents. For he and his opponents would have had several things in common - the belief in the need to defend the existing order in their respective countries

(along perhaps with a willingness to disrupt the given order elsewhere), the belief that violence is an acceptable means of defense and that for the most part means can be justified by ends, the belief that violence is necessarily a part of politics. Gandhi sent shock waves through the societies he inhabited both because he challenged the status quo and because his manner and methods in posing this challenge were unorthodox.

Nonviolent action is best known as a protest tactic and when I speak of nonviolent resistance, probably what comes to mind are the movements of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and others. These individuals have helped to develop militant nonviolence into a politically credible strategy of action. Even those who are not principled pacifists admit that this form of activity can in certain sorts of circumstances be effective and provides an alternative to using the vote (which may be unavailable to an oppressed group or, if available, not an effective way of protecting its rights) or to using the gun (which also may be unavailable or ineffective). The work of Gene Sharp, particularly his encyclopedic The Politics of Nonviolent Action, describes in great detail the wide range of tactics that a nonviolent movement may employ and makes it evident that such tactics have often been successful.

It is indubitable, however, that neither nonviolent action as a form of strategy for pursuing limited goals nor principled pacifism have eliminated war nor come close to creating an environment in which the use of violence is in general disapproved. When nonviolence is used as a form of strategy the emphasis is often on nonviolence as a means rather than as an end. The end may be anything from securing the right to vote to obtaining better working conditions to ending a particular war. Even in this last case the objective is only to bring a halt to a particular instance of violence, not to attack large-scale organized violence itself. Generally it would not be appropriate to reproach the various nonviolent campaigns and movements for this limitation. No group is obliged to "save the world" or, more precisely, to make the elimination of political violence its concern. Moreover, the various movements and campaigns do make some contribution to the solution of this larger problem, even when this is not their primary aim, simply by eschewing violence in situations where the use of violence might be expected. That is, by not behaving in the expected way they help to break the habit of violence in situations such as those they face.

Probably Gandhi came closest to intending through his example to do something about the total violence problem.<sup>1)</sup> Certainly he did not think of nonviolence as merely a short-term strategy or tactic and, even though his immediate aim was the liberation of India from British domination, he always had in mind larger goals. Nevertheless, when the Indians finally won their struggle and independence was at hand, a state or rather two states - India and Pakistan - came to be and in the crucial respects they were states like any other, that is, states armed and ready to use arms in the pursuit of their interests. Some have attributed this outcome to the fact that Gandhi was assassinated just at that time and so was not there to lead the people of India along a more innovative path. In truth, the matter was probably decided long before he died by the nationalistic character of the movement he led and by his failure to convert his colleagues in the Indian National Congress to his own unconventional aspirations. For post Congress leaders, as well as for most of the Indian people, nonviolence, or ahimsa as they called it, remained a means rather than an end to be pursued for its own sake.

Furthermore, Gandhi himself was not always clear about the nature of his vision for India. He had written before World War I in his famous essay Hind Swaraj that the Mother of Parliaments (the British Parliament) was a prostitute, a gibe which made it clear that modern national institutions did not provide a model he believed that India should aspire to copy. Yet when questioned by a reporter shortly after the First World War he spoke of a "parliamentary government of India in the modern sense of the term for the time being" as the goal to be pursued.<sup>2)</sup> Parliamentary government, in other words, was an acceptable goal as a transition step. It does not appear, however, that Gandhi had a clear notion of how India was to pass beyond this transitional step to institutional arrangements in which a reliance on armed force would be eliminated. 'One step enough for me,' was a phrase he liked to quote.<sup>3)</sup>

Thus Gandhi failed to institutionalize nonviolence in his country. The phrase "the institutionalization of nonviolence" may, though, seem somewhat opaque. What does it mean? Nonviolent action, I have already indicated, refers to behavior that is not merely unviolent, but to behavior that is unviolent in situations where the use of violence might be expected. It would sound peculiar if I were to say, "I bathed nonviolently" or "I greeted my friend nonviolently,"

but it does not sound peculiar to say "The Indian liberation struggle was largely nonviolent," or "She resisted her attackers nonviolently." In recent years theorists of nonviolence have made us familiar with the concept of "structural violence," which they contrast with the "direct violence" of the gun. "Structural violence" is the violence perpetrated by institutional arrangements which result in harm to human beings, e.g., economic arrangements which result in some going hungry even though the food with which they might be fed is available. This concept is more complex and more controversial than that of direct violence, but if accepted makes it possible to speak of "nonviolent economic systems" or "nonviolent educational practices." That is, it makes sense to speak this way if one believes that prevalent educational or economic practices systematically harm persons. In speaking of a nonviolent economic system one is saying something meaningful because one is contrasting such a system with existing institutionalized practices which cause some to go without the necessities of life even when they are willing to help produce these necessities (but no one will employ them) or when illness or other disability prevents them from being producers or when their efforts in the production process are not needed. In each of these cases it would seem that the adage "he who does not work shall not eat" should not hold, yet in only too many cases it does.

To institutionalize nonviolence, then, is to bring it about that commonly accepted practices and institutions which cause harm to persons are replaced by practices and institutions which are not harmful or which at least minimize harm. The practices to be replaced involve the use of obviously harmful weaponry or they may involve blocking people from access to the fulfillment of their needs. To block access, direct harm need not necessarily be threatened. One may accomplish the same result simply by creating an acceptance of the status quo. In other words, structural violence need not be a direct result of or contingent upon the use or threat of direct violence. Habit may be sufficient to maintain it.

It is my contention that the existence of both direct and structural violence is contingent largely upon our notions of what is acceptable. In saying this, I intend to shift attention away from biological and psychological factors which purportedly predispose us to be violent. A remark by the psychoanalyst Robert Stoller with regard to the development of a sense of gender, i.e., of what it is to be a male or female and of which category one fits into, is pertinent.

He says: "We cannot say that the central nervous system is neutral or neuter. Rather, we can say that the effects of these biological systems, organized prenatally in a biologically masculine or feminine direction, are almost always...too gentle in humans to withstand the more powerful forces of environment in human development..."<sup>4)</sup> To many, perhaps to most, the gonads of being male or female as well as one's concept of what it is to be male or female, would appear to be bedrock biologically determined realities. Yet recent research indicates that this is not the case.<sup>5)</sup> The same point, I believe, may be made with regard to aggressive behavior, which many also view as biologically determined. Perhaps all humans engage in gonad form of aggressive behavior. Certainly if by aggressive we mean self-assertive, all do. Yet if we narrow our understanding of aggressive to mean destructive and further narrow our focus to certain gross forms of destructive behavior such as killing, the matter becomes much less clear-cut. The patterns of destructive behavior and the degree of destructive behavior vary greatly from individual to individual, from group to group, and from period to period, so no universal human biological trait appears to make the more gross forms of destructive behavior inevitable behavior on the part of all.<sup>6)</sup> Nor do biological differences between individuals and between groups account in more than a peripheral way for the differences observed.

Even if the role of biology is minimized, one might argue that there are various circumstantial elements that play an important role in triggering violence; e.g., economic disparities. We must recognize, however, that economic disparities themselves exist in part because of our views concerning what is acceptable. Nature is only partly responsible.<sup>7)</sup> More significantly, I would argue that even if such factors predispose, they do not determine. Most violence, especially collective violence, involves choice. We choose to be violent and these choices are facilitated by our belief in the acceptability of violence. Of course, there may be some hesitations concerning circumstantial elements: we may need to invoke the right of self-defense to feel at ease with such a choice. But for the most part the application and interpretation of these guidelines is not stringent. The guidelines are an indication of our qualms: not all violence is acceptable. Yet in applying the guidelines, it often appears that they are used merely as rationalizations after the fact, i.e., after the decision to use violence has been made on other grounds.

Where organized warfare is concerned, it is particularly evident that we are faced with a form of destructive activity that is highly sanctioned. Indeed it is those who refuse to take part in this activity who are ostracized and punished. Even in the case of a war as controversial and ultimately as unpopular as the Vietnam War there is great difficulty in obtaining amnesty for those who refused to take part or who after some exposure to the war opted out of further participation. In church we may be taught that killing is always or almost always wrong, but in school we are taught that killing is wrong only in certain contexts. In other contexts, so we are told, it is right and furthermore, it is required of us. We learn that in the domestic arena every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but that once international borders are crossed, the existence of these rights is a matter to be interpreted quite differently.

We all know the name of the social organism that promotes these beliefs. It is the nation-state, sometimes called the state (or the State). The State, as we know, relies in part on violence to maintain itself in power and to enforce its decrees and legislative enactments. Because it believes it dare not dispense with violence, the State helps to maintain a climate in which some violence is deemed acceptable. Accordingly the intention of the State (if I may speak anthropomorphically) is not that its citizens reject all violence, but that they learn to distinguish between legitimate violence and illegitimate violence. This lesson is a crucial one in the political socialization process sponsored by the State. As just mentioned, those who do not go along with this process may be seriously punished.

One might therefore conclude, as the anarchists have, that the elimination of the State and its replacement by other forms of social organization is the means by which a nonviolent world is to be created. D. A. Santillan, the Spanish anarchist, expressed eloquently his opinion of the modern State which he believed tended inevitably to become a totalitarian State:

...the totalitarian state represents authority raised to the maximum degree. It must fortify its institutions, maintain an army, police force and bureaucracy, which increases enormously the burden of taxation. This sole fact is the best argument to ordain its failure. The modern state is insupportable not only because of its tyranny but because it is excessively expensive and

because its essential functions are obstacles to social development... As a logical complement of the totalitarian state appears the doctrine of nationalism, of race-ism, of anything which suppresses the personality before a more powerful divinity. And nationalism is war. And war is the cause of new calamities, the harbinger of new degradations of feelings and of human thought.

The modern state, having failed in its liberal dressings and in its democratic aspects, has left only the alternative of a totalitarian state, with omnipotent power in economy, and no restraint or moral scruple of any kind, when defending its existence. <sup>6)</sup>

In this view the excesses of the totalitarian State are not an accidental perversion of an essentially viable political form, but the natural outcome of the legitimation of centralized armed power. Once the creation of police, an army, and a bureaucracy are permitted, the worst can be expected eventually to follow. This development, of course, is facilitated when technological "progress" puts at the disposal of the police, the army, and the bureaucracy enormously powerful instruments of control and enormously powerful instruments of destruction.

Santillan's denunciation may appear excessive. Yet developments in the United States in the past decade might be cited in partial support of his theses: a liberal democracy, once almost isolationist in its policies, found itself in a position of pre-eminent power in the world and began to behave accordingly--embarked on a cruel and imperialistic mission abroad, and at home came close to seeing all constitutional liberties destroyed. Having been deflected from this course, it teeters uncertainly, as though it had come to depend on a continuing concentration and aggrandisement of power in order to define its being and purpose. True, the State has not taken over the regulation of all economic affairs, but the ills created by past excesses may lead in this direction or to a welding of corporate and State power. <sup>9)</sup>

In the anarchist view the existence of States and of the State system inevitably leads to war. Therefore every condition of peace in such circumstances is always only temporary. This point of view is echoed interestingly enough by a Marxist writer, Karel Kars, a Czech sociologist and peace researcher. He defines peace "in the narrower or proper sense of the term," i.e., as experienced in a



world society of nation-states, as "a specific form of relationships among states, when collisions between them are not resolved by armed struggle," but "by means of diplomacy." He adds: "Correct policy must know the means by which it can achieve its ends. This applies in time of peace as in time of war. Correct policy must, therefore, as E. Aron has noted with such insight, even in the turmoil of battle think of peace, and in times of peace never forget war. War and peace - and their tools, military means and diplomacy - are mutually complementary and mutually substitutive modalities, neither of which - in the conditions of a class society - entirely cedes to the other."<sup>10</sup>) In other words, as long as the State system remains intact (which according to Marxist theory will be the case as long as class society has not been largely eliminated), peace can only be a temporary lull between wars.

Plausible though it may seem that there will be no institutionalization of nonviolence as long as States in their present form exist, it is necessary to emphasize that the drastic modification or elimination of the State is not in itself a sufficient condition for the attainment of enduring peace. War clearly predates the existence of nation-states. Imperial conquest and the existence of armed forces are not modern phenomena.

War as an institution, on the other hand, has not always existed. War as an institution requires a degree of organization and of conceptual capacity that we do not find in primitive societies, i.e., in societies without a written language, the use of money, and a developed technique.<sup>10a)</sup> In the most primitive societies, the hunting-gathering societies, we find, as Fromm has pointed out, not only the absence of the institution of war, but relatively low levels of violence of any kind. This fact appears to be related to the simple lifestyle of these societies, the absence of hierarchy and domination, and the absence of private property or of a sense of economic scarcity. Sahlins states: "Rather than anxiety, it would seem, the hunters have a confidence born of affluence, of a condition in which all the people's wants (such as they are) are generally easily satisfied. This confidence does not desert them during hardship."<sup>11</sup>) Part of the reason it does not desert them is because what food is found is shared. "...even if one family acquired many nuts and fruits and another failed, the rules of sharing would apply so that no one would go hungry."<sup>12</sup>)

A rather abrupt change occurs with the advent of what we call civilization around the fourth millenium, B.C. By this time written language had been developed, the wheel invented, and cities created. As a result there arose greater centralization of the production process, greater specialization of work, and concomitantly the existence of different classes. According to Fromm, one "consequence of the new mode of production is assumed to have been conquest as an essential requisite to the accumulation of communal capital needed for the accomplishment of the urban revolution. But there was a still more basic reason for the invention of war as an institution: the contradiction between an economic system that needed unification in order to be optimally effective, and political and dynastic separation that conflicted with this economic need."<sup>13)</sup>

War, therefore, appears to be associated more with certain technical advances in human capabilities and with the needs of a particular stage of economic life than with a particular form of political organization. Put differently, one might eliminate the nation-state and still have some form of centrally organized hierarchically structured political entity as long as economic conditions appeared to require such a form of organization. In such a case the institution of war might well persist.

Fromm's explanation of the origin of war seems to be an economic explanation. We should note, however, that the historical data indicate that war as an institution has not come about primarily as a result of the experience of economic scarcity, but to a greater degree as a result of the advent of the possibility of abundance.<sup>14)</sup> Abundance for some, but not for all. If abundance for all were clearly attainable or if abundance for none were clearly the only possibility, then it seems that the existence of organized warfare would be (or has been) less likely. Since the dawn of civilization, however, it is the possibility of abundance for some that has been the predominant human reality.

This possibility of abundance for some arose with the development of tools for increasing the control exercised by individuals and by groups over their environment and over other persons. These tools were of two kinds: conceptual tools and material tools. It is through conceptual tools that some are able to bring others to recognize their "rights" as rulers, property owners, seigniors, etc. With the development of a written language, these conceptual tools are

magnified and records can be kept of these relationships and of the transactions that take place within them. Material tools may be of the sort that enable persons to impose greater control over nature and its products or they may take the form of weaponry by means of which an individual or a group can coerce others and concomitantly take control of the means of abundance.

Thus economic factors appear to be heavily involved with the occurrence of war. But it is not sheer economic need or economic survival that are most often involved. We may, of course, talk that way, even when it is unwarranted, as when Secretary of State Kissinger spoke of what the United States might do if "economic strangulation" were threatened by Arab increases in oil prices. In reality the effect of the raise in oil prices in terms of impact on the capacity to buy the basic necessities of life has been much greater in Third World countries than in the United States. Yet these countries have not threatened the possibility of war. If the United States should do so, it would be because of an unwillingness to modify its lifestyle or to cut down on waste or - what is even more likely - it would be due to geopolitical ambitions only in part linked to economic considerations.

What changes at the time of the appearance of "civilization" and of organized warfare is not the degree of economic lack, but the degree of the capacity to control. With this increasing capacity we note a corresponding increase in the desire to control. (In fact each reinforces the other and it is hard to say which comes first.) When conquest succeeds, what is controlled, of course, are not just new economic assets, but the way of life of the conquered. A civilization, it appears, may be just as anxious to impose its language, its culture, and its religion as to take control of the resources to be found in the conquered territory.

Accordingly, factors even more basic than economic need seem to be at work in making war as an institution widely acceptable.<sup>14a)</sup> One such factor, I would maintain, is the desire of human beings to transcend or to compensate for their apparently mortal status. By identifying with a cause, by attempting to impose a lasting imprint upon the world, by seeking to mock death, a sense of overcoming death may be achieved. Achilles is the prototype of the individual who believes he

can earn a form of immortality by doing heroic deeds even though he thereby brings his biological existence to a premature end. Men in fact have doubtless believed that this was a part of their "superiority" over women, that they transcended their biological identities through adventures, including the adventures of war, which involved great risk, whereas women were bound up in their biological identities. Women "merely" sustained biological life, while men attained the realm of meaning. It is doubtless true also that women, to the extent that they have identified with the goals of men, have supported them in their quest for the transcendental.

Where the quest for higher realities is concerned, however, the danger of idolatry always lurks nearby. Men pursue an Absolute so as to escape their finitude. They may then become confused into thinking that making the ultimate sacrifice is the same as making a sacrifice for that which is ultimate. To some extent, therefore, it is correct to say that human beings pursue death, but this is not due to a death instinct, but to their (i.e., our) metaphysical desires. Race, tribe, nation, religion, or ideology easily become our idols, our false absolutes. These idols, it appears, arouse intense emotional enthusiasm much more easily than something as abstract as the notion of human rights which pertain to all. Though it may appear ironic that so much human carnage should result from a desire to overcome mortality, to the participants it evidently has not seemed illogical.

The acceptance of war is facilitated by the existence of deep needs, though not purely physical needs, which this institution satisfies. The transcendence of death, though, requires that something remain after death, whether it be the soul, one's earthly fame, or a new geopolitical reality. Destruction is acceptable when something is expected to emerge from or to survive the ashes. The advent of nuclear war has put these possibilities in question and clearly has affected the foreign policies and military behavior of the "superpowers."

In spite of the sobering effect of nuclear weapons, however, war at the "conventional" level has continued. The London Institute for Strategic Studies lists eighty military conflicts between 1945 and 1967 and a Hungarian analyst

using somewhat different criteria counts ninety-seven between 1945 and 1969. As we know, the world has not become more peaceful since then. The record with regard to arms control is not more encouraging. Arms control negotiations have yet to result in any reduction of arms. As Herbert York has pointed out, "So far, after almost thirty years of attempts to achieve some kind of serious disarmament, not one single nuclear weapon has ever been destroyed or even moved as a result of an agreement to do so."<sup>15)</sup> The latest SALT agreements have provoked considerable controversy because they "limit" strategic arms at levels beyond what is already possessed. Moreover, they permit a qualitative arms race, while setting quantitative restrictions at very high levels - 2400 strategic delivery vehicles for each side (with no quantitative restrictions on the number of MIRV's each strategic vehicle can carry).

Even though there may be no intention to use the nuclear weapons that a growing number of nations are amassing, these weapons are perceived as politically important in the struggle for power. The belief is that the mere possession of such weapons provides important leverage and that superiority with regard to such weapons provides a major political advantage, whether their possessors intend to use them or not.<sup>16)</sup> There are deleterious consequences of this state of affairs, though, even if the weapons are never used. The expenditure of energy and treasure involved in the acquisition of these weapons is considerable. Furthermore, the non-use of these weapons is not guaranteed, no matter what their possessors may wish. In this regard the increasing proliferation of these weapons is especially ominous.

These points are well known. They are indicative of the fact that politics as usual continues in spite of the new weaponry and the dangers it brings. The persistence of politics as usual makes me sceptical about the feasibility of the most frequently proposed model for the "institutionalization of nonviolence." This is the negotiated disarmament model or the disarmament-cum-world-government model. In this model it is expected that as a result of

negotiations among governmental elites, major arms reductions or even an elimination of arms can be brought about. In some scenarios, such as the one proposed by Clark and Sohn, the reduction in levels of arms possessed by nations will be accompanied by the building up of a world police force. Though the police force under the Clark-Sohn plan would be smaller than the existing U.S. armed forces, it would in extreme circumstances be permitted to use nuclear weapons. This is sufficient to indicate that the term "police force" may be misleading. We are not talking about a "cop on the beat" simply provided with new insignia.

Though a true elimination of arms at the national level would constitute a drastic change in world affairs and would markedly alter the way in which nations could conduct themselves in both domestic and foreign affairs, this appears not to be fully recognized by those who are given the task of negotiating disarmament. Another hypothesis, of course, is that it is recognized, but that there is no serious desire to bring about real disarmament and that therefore the task is approached in a manner rather different from what would be necessary if general and complete disarmament were really sought. Thus the task in fact is approached as a technical one. There is little discussion of the social, psychological, and economic changes that would have to accompany or precede a major reduction of arms levels. Nor is attaining such changes generally mentioned as the major obstacle to be overcome in the next round of arms negotiations. Instead, technical obstacles are mentioned, and technical problems, such as how to determine when there is "parity" between two sides. The idea that a concept such as "parity" and its role in the thinking of strategists is itself a major part of the problem and itself a major obstacle to disarmament is only occasionally noted (usually not by the official negotiators, but by persons on the "sidelines") and even then the deep implications of this kind of problem are generally skirted.

To put the matter as bluntly as possible: the disarmed State would no longer be the State as we know it. And in a disarmed world, should we ever be so fortunate as to attain one, power relations would be altogether different. It seems, therefore, that we must be excessively naive if we believe that those whose present identity and power are altogether intertwined with and dependent

upon the existence of the State would be the very persons who would not to change drastically or eliminate this political entity and at the same time modify profoundly political relations in the world. Even if a few officials in government should be inclined in this direction, it is hard to imagine concerted action by leadership figures in many governments all working together to bring about this kind of result. One may allow for individual idealism without expecting the miraculous.

I find it essential to emphasize these points even though they leave me open to charges of anarchism (in the pejorative sense of this term), anti-Americanism, and other "heresies." To be sure, recent post-Watergate polls show widespread "suspicion and scepticism" towards governmental institutions,<sup>17)</sup> especially at the federal level, yet there still remains a tendency on the part of most Americans to believe that if we just had better leaders, our problems might be resolved. Most people find themselves so preoccupied with their own personal survival and well-being and that of their families that they are little inclined to believe that they themselves must provide part of the solution for the large-scale political, economic, and social problems that face the world as a whole. That is the job of the politicians and the diplomats, and though there may be less and less faith in these figures, we do not hear large numbers clamoring to have the politicians' work returned into the hands of the people. The situation is similar with regard to the military. It too gets a rather low rating in recent polls. It is clear that the United States, had it wished to do so, in the recent past might have virtually blown Vietnam off the map. It is equally clear that, that option having been rejected (by those in positions of final authority), American destructive force could not solve the essentially political issues involved in another country's civil conflict. Yet in spite of this failure of American armed force and others (e.g., the Bay of Pigs fiasco), among the general populace we do not hear a great deal of questioning concerning the proper role of the Pentagon and the military; and very few are willing to consider the possibility of dispensing with armed force altogether. Nor is there much recognition that some of the most shining episodes in American history have involved the effort to substitute nonviolence for violence, going back even to pre-Revolutionary times.<sup>18)</sup> Instead, as is graphically illustrated by the amnesty

issue, patriotism continues to be equated by most people with a willingness to support the military and to serve in it without protest, no matter how misguided its mission or how ineffectual its mode of action. Disillusionment unfortunately does not necessarily shake loose conventional thinking.

Of course, there are significant reasons for this state of affairs. Major social change cannot be brought about without incurring great risk, expending great effort, and exercising great imagination. If all nations do not disarm at once, for example, then some nations or groups will have to do so before the others—and assume the corresponding risks. In fact, as the institution of war demonstrates, many persons are willing to run great risks when convinced that that is what they ought to do or when otherwise strongly motivated. The principle lack is perhaps a lack of imagination, for most are exceedingly unimaginative in determining the content of their "ought." Some philosophers and psychologists find this inevitable, since they believe that our sense of "ought" merely replicates social demands. Such theories appear to oversimplify the phenomenon of human moral reasoning and the innovations and advances that we note in this regard. Nevertheless, it is true that moral imagination seems to be manifested more often by individuals than by groups. Generally we are not surprised to see groups persisting in old ways, even though the ways are no longer appropriate or may even be seriously destructive.

The results so far of my reflections may therefore seem discouraging. To come seriously to grips with the violence problem will require a transformation of the seemingly well-entrenched nation-state, a transformation that we cannot expect to be accomplished by work of the political elites associated with existing States. At the same time we find a widespread apathy and sense of powerlessness among average citizens, who, while angry at or frustrated by the behavior of the State, do not expect to be able to change the State and even continue to use it as a vehicle for achieving a sense of identity and of personal significance. Furthermore, while average citizens, especially since the advent of atomic weaponry, may experience considerable fear with regard to what the State may do with the weaponry that has been put at its disposal, they fear equally or more



what might happen should weapons be renounced in a world where other nations still retain them.

I do not, however, find the situation altogether hopeless. The reasons for hope lie in part in the negative characteristics of our present situation. These involve:

(1) The recognition of the ineffectiveness of armed force in many situations. The United States, for example, finds that its possession of nuclear weapons does not enable it to impose its will, since their use cannot be threatened without incurring unacceptable risks. Moreover, the possession of these weapons by the superpowers is leading to an extremely dangerous and "counterproductive" situation, since many smaller nations are now acquiring or hoping to acquire these weapons too-- a process that cannot be halted as long as the right to possess arms of no matter what kind is considered an attribute of national sovereignty. Finally, the United States is experiencing that maintaining a large arsenal and fighting costly foreign adventures has severely unbalanced its economy; and while there has been some loose talk about invading Arab oil fields, it is generally recognized that the use of military force will not solve these economic problems. The image of the "pitiful helpless giant" therefore is in some ways appropriate; and as the giant shows greater and greater signs of paralysis, it is always possible that there will be an awakening of the people who inhabit the giant and an effort to regain greater control over their existences.

At the other end of the scale, the small and very small nations are burdened with a different set of problems. They cannot protect themselves militarily against their oversize neighbors. The Sikkinese have little recourse against India; the Czechs had little against the Russians; the Dutch, the Finns, the Swedes, etc., are similarly vulnerable should their considerably more powerful neighbors become belligerent. In other words, their armies are already of little use to these countries. Consequently, they are more open than most to the possibilities of nonviolent defense.

(2) A growing awareness of our economic interdependency, of the limitations in natural resources and of the fragility of our environment.

This awareness may, of course, lead to a last mad scramble for the means of existence and to a cataclysmic conflict. Less dramatically, it may lead to interventions by the larger nations against the smaller ones with varying degrees of success. Here again, though, there may be a growing recognition of the futility of attempting to settle these matters by means of arms, of the fact that to wreak destruction in any part of the world is to destroy a part of the resources upon which we depend or may be dependent ourselves.

(3) The already mentioned sense of alienation from and distrust of conventional authorities and institutions. This is a necessary though not sufficient condition of serious change. Every revolutionary political change has been preceded by a development of this kind. When the authority of traditional institutions is put in question we are enabled to see everything afresh, to ask: Why? What for? To what end? (and) What do we really desire?

These characteristics of the contemporary situation make it possible to believe that we may see significant change in the years ahead. To the extent that our interest is in promoting a delegitimization of violence and a corresponding institutionalization of nonviolence, the following sorts of developments will be significant:

(1) A serious transnational human rights movement. There are those who argue that "rights" are abstractions and that changes in our notions about rights, even the promulgation of legal documents defining new rights, is essentially meaningless activity as long as economic and political power remain distributed in a grossly uneven way. At one level the objection is correct. It is not enough for political elites to sign a piece of parchment (which may be done with the greatest hypocrisy) for the document to have an impact on the life of a people or peoples. The American Bill of Rights is a meaningful document because of its roots in our history and because of the institutions which give it support (these include our educational institutions). But most international human rights documents do not have the benefit of this kind of support. I would argue, though, that we cannot dispense with a concern for basic rights just because of the failure of a certain sort of human rights activity in the past. Ultimately it is a

consensus concerning rights that will make possible and necessary the renunciation of the use of destructive force. The linkage is clear: If I recognize my neighbor's right, I will not impose on him by violent means. If my neighbor recognizes my right, I shall not need to defend myself by violent means.

A people's movement to achieve a consensus on human rights, if successful, could be expected eventually to lead to very different behavior and very different institutional arrangements than now exist. We see a glimmering of this possibility in the reaction of large numbers, especially those associated with the churches, to the world hunger problem. At least in certain circles in the "developed" countries, including the United States, reducing personal consumption, aiding the development of agriculture abroad, and sharing with the hungry both at home and abroad is no longer seen as a matter of charity. According to a recent newspaper report, a group of thousands of evangelical churchmen who met last summer in Lausanne, Switzerland, spoke of "our duty to develop a simple lifestyle."<sup>19)</sup>

When those of us who belong to the more "privileged" sectors of humankind are brought to recognize that an adequate recognition of the rights of others may entail foregoing some of these "privileges," we may well be inclined to resist. In my own view, a good many of these "privileges" involve the privilege of being wasteful--and will be dispensed with to our own benefit--but I realize that many do not perceive the matter in this way and that the achievement of a consensus where economic rights are concerned will be especially difficult. Various factors, though, including our increasing interdependence may lead to a populist-based attempt to achieve such a consensus. A movement of this kind, if it arises, will be of great importance for the institutionalization of nonviolence.

(2) Experiments with nonviolent defense. Such experiments have already occurred on an ad hoc basis. Nonviolent resistance, especially in the Scandinavian countries, was more successful during World War II than is generally recognized. While it could not prevent invasion, it did prevent the nazification of certain of the countries that were invaded and it did save lives. The Scandinavian countries continue to maintain a high level of interest in nonviolent defense, though none has yet taken the step of "transferring" to this form of defense.<sup>20)</sup> One can imagine that other small countries outside of northern Europe may develop an interest in this form of defense.

(3) The development of unarmed world peacekeeping forces. Though UN peacekeeping forces are lightly armed, a case can be made that arms have not contributed significantly to whatever effectiveness these forces have manifested - and they ~~have~~ been effective in certain situations. UN actions such as the one in the Congo which have involved a major reliance on arms have been highly controversial in their impact. It appears therefore that there is good reason to experiment with completely unarmed peacekeeping and peacemaking forces.

In the early 60's, the international nonviolent movement attempted to create a nonviolent World Peace Brigade to intervene in conflict situations. As so often happens with nongovernmental efforts, it eventually foundered due to organizational problems and a lack of financial support. Yet the World Peace Brigade undertook one significant, though little known, action in Southern Africa. In 1962 it offered its assistance to the independence movement in Zambia (at that time part of the British-controlled Central African Federation). In response to a suggestion from Kenneth Kaunda, an international march was organized that was to cross the border from Tanganyika into Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) to coincide with a general strike there. The threat of the march and strike combined with other developments led the British to negotiate a compromise with Kaunda; and just two years later Zambia had become an independent republic. In Gene Keyes' words, "The World Peace Brigade had bent its knees but didn't have a chance to jump; its 'non-event' had hastened a solution to prevent race war, but because 'nothing had happened'" the World Peace Brigade did not get proper credit.

Unarmed peacekeeping forces cannot solve all the world's problems, but the creation of such forces and their deployment in an ever broadening range of contexts could help to break the reliance on the use of armed force and the belief in its necessity.

(4) The development of alternative technologies. The English economist E.F. Schumacher has coined the phrase and written a book entitled Small Is Beautiful. As Schumacher makes clear, he does not believe that the small-scale is always to be preferred to the large-scale. Nevertheless, it is obvious that large-scale industry and technology has brought with it a host of problems.

These involve (1) the need for vast resources in the form of matériel to process and of tools to carry out the production process and a consequent scrambling by big business organizations and by different countries to gain control for themselves of scarce natural resources; (2) resource wastage, in part because the very scale of the production process tends not to foster frugality; (3) shocks to the environment because of the heavy pressure put on it; (4) uniformity in production, since there is less chance for creativity when one has a few large centers of production than when one has many small centers of production; (5) alienation of the worker, who becomes literally a small cog in a very big machine over which he feels he has no influence; and (6) "overdevelopment" of some areas at the expense of others and an unhealthy dichotomy between the urban and the rural.

With large-scale production, output may be maximized over a certain period of time; but eventually a price is paid in terms of resource depletion, environmental damage, worker dissatisfaction, and violent conflict among competing units. The alternative technology movement, a movement which already exists, is a movement to develop technologies which satisfy basic human needs but do not require large-scale capital and resources in order to be set up and operated and do not deplete resources at a rate that is incompatible with human survival. Alternative technology is essential to the development of a nonviolent economics.<sup>21)</sup>

(5) The development of democracy in the workplace and of worker self-management. This point is closely related to the preceding one. At present the workplace for many is a place that increases their sense of alienation and atomization rather than their sense of self-actualization and of accomplishment - whether we have in mind a sense of personal accomplishment or a sense of taking part in carrying out meaningful commonly shared tasks. While it may be impossible to eliminate entirely hierarchy and authority (especially where authority is based on greater knowledge and experience), it is certainly possible to reduce the prevalence of irrational hierarchical structures in the workplace. The result will not only be to reduce the structural violence implicit in a situation where power differentials have no raison d'être. Indirectly one may expect other results as well. It is only with the democratization of the workplace that such basic

questions as: why work? what should be produced? what kinds of relations should hold between those who produce? can come to the fore.<sup>22)</sup> It is probably only in the process of answering these questions that it will be possible to overcome consumerism and the drive for increasing material possessions, along with their associated evils: wastage of resources, attempts to gain control of resources for the special purposes of one group, nation, etc., and the violence that often goes along with such attempts. While worker control may temporarily exacerbate competition of a destructive kind between different production units, the humanization of work nevertheless makes possible higher levels of integration and cooperative effort between units, since the source of worker satisfaction is shifted in part from product (in the sense of monetary reward) to process. For ultimate effectiveness, of course, worker democracy must be integrated into broader forms of communal democracy; i.e., worker democracy cannot be expected to attain its highest potentialities within the framework of the State.<sup>23)</sup>

(6) The building and strengthening of communities: it is communities, in various forms, that must replace States and the relations characteristic of States, especially insofar as these involve a reliance on violent coercion or the threat of it; and it is intercommunal relations that must replace international relations (at least to the extent that the nation is equated with the State). It is not possible in the space limitations of this essay to convey all that I mean by the concept of community. I prefer to stress one seemingly negative characteristic of a community. In a community no one is an outcast. In an extreme case an individual may be expelled from a community; in such a case, the individual would not be sequestered in some special place within the community (e.g., in a prison or mental asylum), but sent out to find another community where he or she could begin anew. This is the extreme case. Otherwise the community seeks to see that the ties among its members and their sense of mutual responsibility are not broken. (These same remarks would hold even where the community was not a geographically defined entity. There are symbolic as well as physical means of turning persons into outcasts without freeing them for new possibilities; these means too would be avoided in a genuine community.)

As we know it is characteristic of the societies in which we presently live that the aged, the mentally disturbed, the deviant, etc., are relegated to special

locations and special institutions where most often they cease to interact with the "normal" members of the community and instead interact only with each other and their custodians. This is the "out of sight, out of mind" approach to social problems. What is out of mind, though, is not necessarily out of reality and our problems cannot be made to vanish so easily. Moreover, to the extent that we rely on the State to keep certain sorts of people locked away, we strengthen it and its coercive apparatus. Finally, a mechanistic approach of this kind tends to strengthen the spirit of violence. To use force majeure to make problems or problem persons vanish is not identical with killing, but it is very similar to what we do when we kill and the readiness to do the one and the other appear to be interrelated.

In communities as I envisage them there would be something resembling law, since a process for making agreements, for implementing them, and even on occasion for enforcing them, appears indispensable to group existence. But the enforcement procedures would be rather different from those with which we are most familiar and would not include a reliance on killing or the threat of it, i.e., a reliance on capital punishment, or a reliance on exclusionary policies, i.e., a reliance on prisons as we know them.

(7) The building of transnational federations. The creation of transnational links is desirable in itself insofar as it helps us to overcome the intellectual and spiritual limitations of purely nationalistic perspectives. It is necessary because of our actual interdependence, which exists not only in the economic realm (where to some extent it can be overcome by the creation of autonomous styles of living and autonomous economic communities), but in the cultural, spiritual, and political realms where it cannot be overcome, or at least cannot be overcome without doing serious damage to our humanity. With the development of modern technology, transportation, and communication, all human life on this planet is now in fact in interaction. It is therefore necessary to create the structures through which this interaction can occur in a constructive and peaceful way. This will require, I believe, a network of transnational federations of different kinds of communities: professional groupings, religious groupings, cultural groupings, economic groupings, etc. The development of such groupings - or federations - will not serve the cause of peace, however, if they see themselves merely as special interest groupings. There must therefore be federations of federations and attempts at harmonization at all levels. The result, however, need not and

should not be world government as popularly construed. A transfer to the global level of the institutions of the nation-state is, as I have already indicated, neither desirable nor very likely.<sup>24)</sup> That is not to say, though, that there should not be political institutions at the global level or that these institutions should be without significant decision-making and decision-implementing powers. What is required is the development through a process of cultural transformation of new modes and means of implementing decisions in which there is not a reliance on the force of arms. Such developments have already occurred in numerous domains of social existence; I think it is not impossible that they occur in all domains, in particular in the domain of transnational existence.

(8) The progressive elimination of racism and sexism. Racism and sexism are two particularly blatant manifestations of the human tendency to inhibit some persons from self-actualization for the sake of promoting the convenience and "self-satisfaction" of one group as opposed to another. Both involve structural violence and both may result in direct violence. We are all familiar with the phenomenon of race wars. While we may view the "war between the sexes" as nonviolent, we cannot overlook the violence that occurs within the family and in intimate relationships - the high incidence of murders of passion, cases of child abuse, etc. Nor can we overlook the frequent occurrence of rape, at least in certain countries and cultures. Sexism appears to support the worldwide violence system in another way. The division of roles between the sexes has served to accentuate the dominating, violent, warrior-like characteristics of the male. Thus the overcoming of sexism could and should include the overcoming of the subordination of what still tend to be regarded as "feminine" values: a concern with the preservation and nurturance of human life, a nonviolent approach to social conflict, a willingness to cooperate for the sake of the larger unit, a spirit of gentleness. It is clear that humanity cannot survive without the integration of these behaviors and attitudes into the fabric of social existence as a whole. Such a development forms only one part of a feminist program (the other side of this program involves making it possible for women to exercise freely all of their capabilities (of a creative kind), not just those that a male-dominated culture has denoted as "feminine") and would even be rejected by some feminists. But it is a development that is crucial, I believe, if there is to be an "institutionalization of nonviolence."<sup>25)</sup>



Some of the developments described above exist only in the most embryonic form. Others have a much more visible and strongly perceived existence. My intention in listing them has not been to prophecy about the future, but to encourage what is most hopeful and most integrally linked to what is desirable. In this way social theory may attempt to give modest assistance to social practice.

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1. In speaking of the "total violence problem" I am referring both to direct and to structural violence; see page 4 of this paper.
2. Geoffrey Ashe, Gandhi, Stein and Day, New York, 1968, p. 210.
3. Ibid., p. 211.
4. Robert J. Stoller, "The 'Bedrock' of Masculinity and Femininity: Bisexuality," in Psychoanalysis and Women, edited by Jean Baker Miller, M.D., Penguin Books, 1973, p. 283.
5. Ibid., pp. 260-284.
6. This point is emphasized in Erich Fromm's synthesizing work The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.
7. Nature "distributes" resources unevenly; this initial "distribution," however, is (even in humanity's earliest history) the object of a redistribution by humankind. This redistribution involves human choice and human determinations concerning what is acceptable.
8. D. A. de Santillan, After the Revolution: Economic Reconstruction in Spain Today, Greenberg, Publisher, Inc., New York, 1937, pp. 109-110.
9. Whether the corporation "controls" the State or the State the corporation may turn out ultimately not to be of great significance - in fact, just a case of one appearance replacing another appearance; behind appearances is the reality of an amalgamation and concentration of economic and political power. Any crisis in the United States is likely to strengthen this tendency, for the short run anyway.
10. Karel Kasa, "On the Marxist Theory of War and Peace," Journal of Peace Research, 1968, no. 1, p. 6.
- 10a. The word "institution" is crucial. War of a kind, of course, predates the advent of civilization. As Quincy Wright states: "There are...senses in which war is an organic phenomenon, others in which it is a human phenomenon, others in which it is a phenomenon of civilization, and others in which it is an achievement of very recent times. We must be careful to define precisely what we mean by war, before we can hope to locate its origin." (A Study of

War, University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 36.) And further: "War in the sense of a legal situation equally permitting groups to expand wealth and power by violence began with civilisation. Not until the arts of writing, agriculture, and animal husbandry had developed was it possible to organize a permanent human group or state larger than the primary man-to-man contact group, with a distinction of ruler and ruled, a clear conception of property, and a body of law, distinct from the mores, to regulate these relationships, to preserve internal order, and to formulate social interests. Only under these conditions could war become institutionalized as a rational means to political and economic ends." (*Ibid.*, p. 39.)

11. Quoted in Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
12. E. R. Service, The Hunters, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966, quoted in Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
13. Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
14. An illustration of the same phenomenon is found in the movie Jane Goodall and the Wild Chimpanzees, which shows peaceful chimpanzees beginning to have serious fights among themselves and with baboons when humans bring large quantities of bananas on the scene and each animal has the possibility of acquiring more than what will fill his momentary needs. See also Jane van Lawick-Goodall, In the Shadow of Man, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1971.
- 14a. It should be emphasized that I am discussing what makes war as an institution so widely acceptable and accepted, not why men take up arms in particular cases. Once the institution of war is accepted, there may, of course, be all sorts of reasons why men resort to armed struggle - for defense, for national aggrandisement, for liberation from oppression, etc. In many cases these reasons provide excellent "justifications" (though we must keep in mind that an action may be justified without being the best possible in the circumstances). In my view the acceptability of war does not arise from its "inevitability," whether that inevitability be viewed as the result of human biology or as the result of human economic needs. Again, I am not saying that economic need does not have anything to do with the origins of a particular war. What we see in the present, for example, is an increased tendency to

resort to arms on the part of certain groups that have been deprived (often by means of arms) of needed basic material resources by other groups intent on gaining control over more than they needed. It is correct to see this as a kind of "reactive" violence, I think. But the existence of this kind of violence does not explain the origins of war or the general acceptability of war. Nor is it true that the genuine needs of the oppressed make the adoption of armed struggle by them inevitable. Here again we are dealing with a choice. Whether it is the best possible choice is always arguable. It should be noted, for example, that while arms may aid the oppressed in gaining liberation from a particular oppressor, such a victory is a limited one. The power of all oppressors and potential oppressors would be undermined to a much greater degree should general and complete disarmament take place. The absence of a mass movement in favor of the latter is, I believe, not due to the fact that the goal seems "utopian" or to the fact that some believe their short-term ends will be better served by continuing to rely on arms, but to the fact that most people find it as a general proposition more desirable to maintain the possibility of armed struggle than to eliminate it. Humankind has not yet made up "its" mind that the goods that may be achieved by maintaining this possibility are of much less weight than the goods that may be achieved by renouncing it - and creating the social institutions necessary to support such a renunciation.

15. Herbert York, "Deterrence by Means of Mass Destruction," Sane World, May, 1974, p. 61.
16. See Marshall D. Shulman, "SALT: Through the Looking Glass," in Arms Control Today, Feb., 1975. Shulman speaks of the "myth of the rational political utility of strategic nuclear weapons above a deterrent level." Whether these weapons have rational political utility even at that level - however that might be determined - is questionable.
17. The Boston Globe, March 13, 1975, pp. 1 and 6.
18. The War Resisters League calendar for 1976 will be entitled Peace and Justice: Creative Nonviolence in the American Past. It will contain vignette descriptions of persons, episodes, and groups that have contributed to the history of nonviolence and nonviolent action in this country. An expanded version may be published as a book edited by Larry Gara and myself.

19. The Boston Globe, March 29, 1975, p. 13.
20. The term "transarmament" is used to indicate that those who rely on nonviolent means are not without a form of arms, though they are without weapons in the conventional sense.
21. A nonviolent economics must be a variety of steady-state economics. Steady-state economics is just what we have not had throughout the history of organized warfare. Alternative technology is one crucial component of a nonviolent steady-state economics. See E. F. Schumacher, "Alternatives in Technology," Alternatives, Amsterdam, vol. 1, no. 1, March, 1975.
22. See Paul Cardan, Modern Capitalism and Revolution, A Solidarity Book, Bromley, Kent, England, 1965, p. 90.
23. The linkage between nonviolence and democracy in economic life may not seem apparent. Democracy may bring more conflict than before. The postulate here is that democracy, when it permeates the crucial aspects of day-to-day living, will result eventually in satisfactions that reduce the inclination to resort to violence and reduce the power of the social structures that facilitate organized violent conduct.
24. See pages 12-14 supra.
25. I have devoted more space to sexism here simply because its connections with the violence problem are less recognized and perhaps less easily perceived than the connections between racism and violence. The world economic order is at present a white-controlled, white-dominated order and every day large numbers die unnecessarily as a result.