
PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL

An Experiment in Nonviolence

1981



1991

Ten Years On. . .

ANNUAL REPORT 1991

FROM THE VISION IN 1981...

Peace Brigades International was established in September 1981, at Grindstone Island in Ontario, Canada, by a group of experienced nonviolent activists from four continents. Their vision was of an international network of volunteers working for the nonviolent resolution of conflicts and a respect for human rights. They launched PBI with a "Founding Statement" which began:

"We have decided to establish an organisation which will form and support international peace brigades. We find this historically and morally imperative.

Peace brigades, fashioned to respond to specific needs and appeals, will undertake nonpartisan missions which may include peacemaking initiatives, peacekeeping under a discipline of nonviolence, and humanitarian service. We also intend to offer and provide similar services to similar efforts planned and carried out by other groups.

We appeal in particular to:

- peoples of diverse cultures, languages, religions and social systems ready to contribute in new ways to the nonviolent resolution of conflict;*
- all those who seek to fulfill the high principles and purposes expressed in the Charter of the United Nations; and*
- all who work to preserve human life with dignity; to promote human rights, social justice and self-determination; and to create the conditions of peace."*

...TO THE REALITY IN 1991

Ten years later, the vision is still very much alive in the form of two well-established projects in **Central America** and **Sri Lanka**, both of which are backed up by international **project committees** and **project offices** with full-time staff. At the local level, the vision is kept alive in 14 **PBI country groups** in Europe, North America and the South Pacific. These groups raise funds, recruit and train volunteers for the projects, and maintain an international **Emergency Response Network** to respond to crises facing the teams in the field.

Internationally, PBI is now governed by a triennial **General Assembly** which appoints a 6-person **Directorate** and various **international committees** to coordinate finances and the exploration of new projects. The **international office** which oversees this side of the work was moved in 1991 from the USA to London, England following the appointment of a new full-time **international secretary**.

After eight years working in Guatemala, four years in El Salvador and two years in Sri Lanka, plus a number of shorter and one-off projects in various other parts of the world, PBI now has a wealth of practical experience to bring to its original vision.

Over 250 people have now had first-hand experience of PBI's work as peace team volunteers, and many more have been through PBI's volunteer training programmes. With this pool of experienced peacemakers and the collective understanding of both what is desirable and what is possible, PBI is ready to respond to the new challenges it will face in the years ahead.✻

GUATEMALA TEAM: A LOOK BACK AT 1991

1991 marks a tumultuous year for Guatemala. On the one hand, hopes soared when direct negotiations between the Serrano administration, backed by sectors of the military, and the guerilla insurgents began in April and continued throughout the year due to the ceaseless mediation by the National Commission for Reconciliation (CNR). In addition, and after more than 10 years of exile, the 45 000 refugees living in UN-sponsored camps in Mexico set the date for massive returns in mid-1992. Then, in what may have been the most spectacular event of the year, Guatemalan indigenous groups hosted the widely acclaimed October 1991 "Continental Gathering of 500 Years of Indigenous, Popular and African-American Resistance," uniting 48 indigenous nations from 26 countries throughout the hemisphere.

Sadly, these signs of hope were overshadowed by a deeper, more devastating reality. Harsh structural adjustment policies, meant to revive Guatemala's battered economy, brought increased hardship and poverty for the majority of the population. Heightened labour and popular activity was met with repression. Clashes between government forces and the guerrillas intensified as each round of peace talks approached.

Not surprisingly, the "vote of confidence" handed down by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva just one month after President Jorge Serrano's installation was marred by the continued deterioration of human rights conditions back home. The expulsion of three

PBI workers on the heels of the "Olga Maria" Farm incident was unexpected from an administration which spoke so often of peace, and it stunned the diplomatic community. Within six months, a myriad of prominent individuals and organisations were calling for concrete examples of the Serrano Administration's desire to bring an end to decades of impunity. Among these figure the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, the Organisation of American States, the People's Permanent Tribunal, the UN experts on torture and on human rights and Guatemala's own Human Rights Attorney.

In response, several of the cases most frequently cited by international groups were solved. The most notable were 1) the 16-year prison sentences given to two soldiers for the December 1990 massacre at Santiago Atitlán; 2) The capture of the civil patrol leaders from Chunimá, Chichicastenango wanted for kidnapping and assassinating several members of the Mutual Support Group (GAM) and the Council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ); and 3) the extradition from the U.S.A. of a former member of the Presidential Guard charged in the assassination of renowned Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Mack.

However, many view this handful of examples as "cosmetic"; designed to appease international critics but lacking in true political will. The list of unsolved cases is far greater. Assassinations, disappearances, kidnappings, forced recruitment, threats and intimidations occur with regularity against individuals and groups working for social justice by nonviolent means.



Guatemalan women and children at a weaving cooperative

PBI photo

TEAMWORK

Such a climate of uncertainty played an important role in shaping the work of the Guatemala team. Requests for escorts skyrocketed, especially during successive waves of violence. As in years past, the team diligently cultivated public relations with high-ranking officials in the government, the military, the diplomatic corps and the churches in order to insure the safety of PBI volunteers and those along whose side they stand.

In May, for the first time since 1985 when PBI established a constant presence in Guatemala, the team was granted special six-month renewable visas through the auspices of the Guatemalan Congressional Human Rights Commission. The visas afford PBI volunteers greater legitimacy in the eyes of the government and are more appropriate for the type of work realized by PBI.

Following is a list of organisations for whom PBI provided accompaniment in 1991:

UNSI TRAGUA: United Labour Organisation of Guatemala
GAM: Mutual Support Group for Relatives of the Disappeared
CERJ: Council of Ethnic Communities "Everyone Equal"



PBI team member at work

PBI photo



Exhumations in Pujujilito II, Sololá

PBI photo

CONAVIGUA: National Coordinating Body of Guatemalan Widows
CONDEG: National Council of Displaced Guatemalans
BONIN: unionists at a pharmaceutical company
FESTRAS: (formerly UITA) United Food and Related Workers Federation
UASP: Labour and Popular Action United
STINDE: Electric Company Workers' Union
FENASTEG: National Federation of Guatemalan State Workers
IGSS: workers at the Guatemalan Social Security Institute
CEEM: Coordinating Body of High School Students
STUSC: union workers at the University of San Carlos
CUC: Committee of Peasant Unity
CPRS: Delegates from the Village Communities in Resistance
Representatives of Guatemalan refugees living in Mexican camps
"Pro-Land" of the Southern Coast
UTQ: Quetzaltenango Workers Union
Association of families living in the Guatemala City garbage dump
United Confectioners: (striking) workers at a maquila factory
"La Torre" Farm: union workers at a coffee plantation
Inexport: union workers from a textile company

Sectors Victimized by the Repression and Impunity: a newly formed organisation of mainly indigenous and peasant groups, which has presented position papers to the CNR for use at the peace talks.

It has also brought to light the whereabouts of over 100 mass graves from the early 1980's. The resulting exhumations have exacerbated tensions in the countryside between civil patrollers accused of creating the clandestine cemeteries and members of the popular movement, who risk their lives in identifying family members unearthed during these exhumations.

In El Quiché, a province of Guatemala especially hard-hit by years of repression, PBI expanded its work to include regular visits to CONAVIGUA's new literacy school. As in years past, the CERJ, a local human rights group protesting the military-controlled civil patrols, continued to receive PBI accompaniment. Of particular concern were CERJ members in isolated highland villages, many of whom were assassinated over the course of the year. In the Chunimá case (mentioned above), the team is providing long-term accompaniment to Diego Perebal, who was paralysed in the attack which killed his father and brother (both CERJ members) and remains the principal witness in the case against the civil patrol leaders.

On a more positive note, several communities commemorated as many as three years without any civil patrols. Day-long celebrations were attended by representatives of local and national governments.

Finally, towards the end of the year the team responded to requests from threatened groups in Quetzaltenango, four hours west of Guatemala City, by initiating weekly visits to that town.

REBIRTH AND RESISTANCE: A LOOK FORWARD TO 1992

The popular and labour movement has grown significantly over the past few years. In 1991, these increases were no place more apparent than in the indigenous sector as tens of thousands of highland Indians participated in countless events leading up to the big conference marking 500 years since the Europeans first set foot in the Americas. PBI received requests to be present at most of these events as international observers and, as a result, accompanied delegates to activities throughout the country.

Many of these events included Mayan ceremonies, including rituals dating back well over 500 years and previously performed only in secret. Now, for the first

time in most peoples' memory, young men and women are training to become Mayan priests priestesses so that these traditions will not be lost. For these people October 12, 1991 marks a rebirth of pride in their culture.

1991 has also brought success to other sectors of the popular movement. An Investigative Commission on the Disappeared, which the GAM has ardently requested for the past seven years, was finally created. The GAM, a largely indigenous organisation with a history of nonviolent struggle for human rights, was also awarded one of the 1991 human rights awards presented by the Danielle Mitterand Foundation in France.

Lastly, the townspeople of Santiago Atitlán rejoiced in their nonviolent victory of a year ago, even as they remembered the December 2, 1990 massacre which left 15 men, women and children dead and some 22 injured. During 11 years of military presence, a reported 1 700 villagers were disappeared or killed. Since the base was dismantled in response to the villagers' massive protests following the 1990 massacre, there has not been a single kidnapping or assassination in Santiago Atitlán.✱

PEACE EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

The team's work in this area continued in much the same vein as in recent years. PBI was invited to continue participating in a commission on education and training for the Campaign for Life and Peace, an ecumenical group which grew out of the National Dialogue to promote the defense of life and the construction of peace. The entire team acted as facilitators for one memorable workshop through this organisation in Zacapa with 100 youths on "Choices for Life and Peace." But more and more this group has been building a network of Guatemalan facilitators capable of carrying on this work and we have therefore withdrawn from this commission in keeping with our policy of not duplicating the work that Guatemalans can fulfil.

Throughout the year, PBI received requests to provide workshops for many organizations concerning such themes as planning skills, nonviolent conflict resolution, techniques in negotiation, methodology for the analysis of current social forces, and Guatemala-Spain: 500 years. Among the participants were members of UNSITRAGUA, FESTRAS, FENASTEG, GRUFEPROMEFAM (Women's Group for Family Improvement), FESEBS (Labour Federation for the Bank of Insurance), and STEG (Guatemalan Educators Union).

Several of these groups founded training schools within their own offices and now give peace education workshops to their members more adapted to their own reality. PBI continues to provide logistical support where appropriate in keeping with our principles of non-partisanship and nonviolent action.✱

CENTRAL AMERICA PROJECT

EL SALVADOR TEAM REPORT

The year 1991 saw the peace negotiations in El Salvador propelled jerkily forward in spite of the counterforces attempting to impede the process. Already, by the beginning of 1991 the UN-mediated negotiations between the FMLN and the government were beginning to bear fruit and the possibility for reaching a negotiated settlement was seen as real. Because of the changed atmosphere created by this possibility, the popular movement made more efforts than they had in a long time to participate in the elections. Also the FMLN for their part decided to not act to disrupt the elections as a recognition of the progress being made.

April witnessed still further progress in the peace talks culminating with some substantial agreements including reforms to the Constitution. This marked the first time in Salvadoran history that the constitution has been changed by political means.

By July when agreements were made over restructuring Security Forces, there was growing recognition of the irreversibility of the negotiating process. This was reconfirmed in September with the signing of the New York Accords which provided for civilian control over the military. Finally, on December 31 with the signing of the cease fire agreement the process to a negotiated peace was culminated.

While the process itself to achieve an end to the fighting increasingly became a political process which included not only reaching agreements for a cease fire but the formation of bodies to supervise the implementation of the agreement, the violence, threats of violence and harassment continued throughout the year with increased spurts of violence accompanying each new sign of progress by those forces in opposition to these changes.

The work of the team then also went somewhat in spurts in that many of the flareups of violence produced by reactions to the unfolding events brought with them a new series of petitions for accompaniment work. Throughout the election period a number of petitions were received related to the harassment at that time. Election day itself was spent accompanying popular movement workers who were visiting the polling places to verify how well the election was being carried out.

Other special cases in the year included accompaniment work with the organisation for

displaced and marginalised people after the assassination of their nightwatchman, religious workers associated with Ecclesiastical Base Communities of El Salvador, and Ernesto Zamora, brother of Ruben Zamora who is one of the political opposition leaders.

Accompaniment work and presences continued also with that we have accompanied in former years such as Mer Gomez, Bishop of the Lutheran Church; Edgar Palacios, President of the Permanent Committee for National Debts; FENASTRAS, National Union Federation of Salvadoran Workers; CRIPDES, Christian Committee of Displaced of Salvador; PADECOMSM, Organisation for the Development of the Morazan and San Miguel Communities; and at various strike sites.

The countryside was the scene of even more intense activity as the two sides jockeyed for position in the issue of who would control the land. The military swept into various areas in which they had not entered in years and the peasants participated in a number of land takeovers.

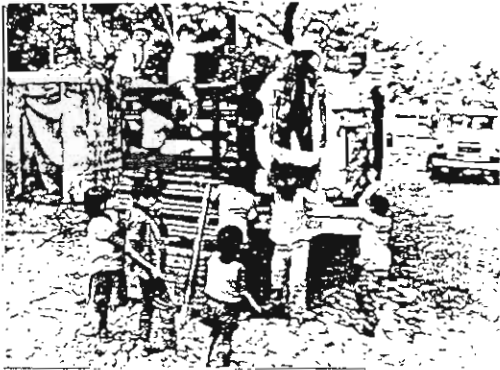
Many rural communities suffered from increased vigilance and harassment by the military. This was especially true of repatriated communities. In some of the newer communities PBI had presences a great portion of the time such as in Ciudad Romero and Nueva Esperanza. Many other communities also petitioned to have visits during the year.



PBI volunteer escorting returned refugees from the Ciudad Romero Community PBI photo

Peace Education in El Salvador

As we look to the future in El Salvador, the landscape has been radically changed by the signing of the Accords and by the various elements being put in place at this time to try to assure that the agreements will be put into effect. This in turn affects what are the felt needs of the people within the country. At this point instead of petitioning for accompaniment, the groups are petitioning basically for Peace Education which they see as one of the elements that could help meet the need they feel to prepare themselves to take advantage of this new opening created by the Accords. Now that there is a cease fire they want to take the next step of trying to resolve the



*Repopulation of Ciudad Segundo Montes
PBI photo*

problems that led to the war in the first place and to create a broad democratization in which all of the people of El Salvador can participate to work towards a new and different future. Therefore, they are asking for training in the skills that will enable them to do that. The new situation then offers a new challenge to PBI.

Peace Education was by far the area in which the team in El Salvador received the most petitions in 1991. As the negotiating process between the government and the FMLN began producing concrete agreements, there was more political space for the people to participate in educational activities. At the same time the toll on the people from years of war (the need to put their efforts into defending their lives, the loss of many valuable leaders, the psychological fears produced by the repression) contributed to feeling a great need for these opportunities in order to help prepare themselves to participate in the peace process.

The workshops conducted covered a number of different themes and were prepared for various groups. Themes included such topics as group formation, interaction of groups, why and how to organize, negotiation, communication, demilitarization, human rights, learning to work together and how to analyse the factors effecting the situation in which one lives.

The goal of the workshops is to facilitate and support the self-education of those who participate by creating an environment where a group of participants can collectively share and learn from each other using each person's experience as a base. In this process they support the building of peace, economic and social justice, respect for human rights, and genuine democracy.

Some of the groups who participated in workshops included PADECOMSM, CEBES, Ciudad Romero, FENASTRAS, UNTAS (National Union of Salvadoran Workers), COMADRES, CRIPDES, Comunidad de Martin Baro, Comunidad de Segundo Montes, the Lutheran Church and ORMUSA (Organisation of Salvadoran Women).

Certainly peace education work in El Salvador had its special challenges. The lack of human and financial

resources that the people had to devote to this aspect of development, the unpredictability of the political space within the country, the challenges to the Salvadoran people to fit space into their schedules for workshops as they wrestle with the realities of providing both moral and material support for their families who often had suffered disappearances, captures or forced recruitments. But these challenges made the opportunities that much more rewarding.*

CENTRAL AMERICA PROJECT OFFICE AND PROJECT COMMITTEE

In order to carry out the Central America Project, it is essential to have a means of coordinating the work done in the support countries with the work done in El Salvador and Guatemala. It is also important to have a means to set policy for the project. These functions are filled by the Central America Project Office and the Central America Project Committee.

The Central America Project Office serves as a supporting unit for the teams in El Salvador and Guatemala and the link between the teams and the rest of the organisation.

It helps to coordinate the arrival of new volunteers, of funds, and to obtain other resources and information needed by the teams. It also serves to distribute information received from the teams to the rest of the organisation which helps the various PBI groups to develop the support necessary to keep the teams in Central America.

Another essential element in developing the Central America Project is the Central America Project Committee. This committee meets 2 or 3 times a year to discuss the work of the teams, to evaluate the needs and to help set direction for the work. Representatives from the teams and other parts of the organisation serve on this committee.*



SRI LANKA PROJECT

SRI LANKA TEAM REPORT

"Scores of people were extrajudicially executed and several hundred 'disappeared', probable victims of torture or shooting in custody. Torture in custody appeared to be in systematic use. Thousands were detained without trial under emergency regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The government took steps to protect those currently under detention, but failed to account for the thousands of 'disappeared' from previous years. In December, it announced that 30 of the 32 recommendations for the effective prevention and investigation of extrajudicial executions, 'disappearances' and torture made by Amnesty International in a report in September are to be implemented."

Introduction to "Sri Lanka: Summary of Human Rights Concerns During 1991", Amnesty International, January, 1992

When PBI first sent a team to Sri Lanka in 1989, the South of the country was in the midst of an insurrection led by the JVP (People's Liberation Front). By the end of 1990, that uprising had been effectively crushed by the Sri Lankan armed forces and pro-government vigilantes, at a cost of as many as 60 000 disappeared over a 3-year period. Most of these are presumed dead, but several thousand are still held in detention camps.



Mural painted by Sri Lankan children

PBI photo

Meanwhile, conflict continues in the North of the country, between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Since the withdrawal of the Indian Peace-Keeping Forces from Sri Lanka in 1990, the Tamil Tigers have assumed effective control over Jaffna Peninsula, although the whole peninsula remains under siege. Meanwhile large areas of the ethnically-mixed East remain dangerous and unstable, fought over by government forces, Tamil Tigers and other armed groups. Ordinary Sri Lankans caught up in this violence continue to suffer some of the worst human rights abuses in the world.

According to the latest report by the United Nations Human Rights Commission's Working Group on Disappearances, there were over 1 000 alleged cases of involuntary or

enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka during 1991, the vast majority of these in the East.

A PBI team was established in Sri Lanka in November 1989. After six of its lawyers had been assassinated while presenting habeas corpus petitions, the Sri Lanka Bar Association invited us to Sri Lanka to provide its activist lawyers with protective accompaniment. In December of 1990, our primary "client" - Batty Weerakoon, the attorney for Dr. Manorani Saravanamuttu, mother of the murdered journalist Richard de Zoysa - began feeling more secure. And we began gradually to taper off our accompaniment of him.

"they were told that all visa applications would be refused. . . with thousands of telegrams flooding in from concerned supporters, the government relented. . ."

Although the project originally envisaged being of use to lawyers, a variety of individuals and groups have used the protective services of PBI. 1991 saw many changes over the months. There is some continuity, such as regular attendance with two grassroots development groups: the Negombo United People's Organisation and the Interfaith Fellowship for Peace and Development. We also continue to be in touch with human rights organisations, the Mothers' Front and the Organisation of Parents and family Members of the Disappeared (OPFMD) being two. The OPFMD asked for our attendance at rallies, at Kegalla and Kurunegala, in central Sri Lanka. There have also been many occasional escorts, to or from the airport, for asylum-seekers leaving or returning to the island, or attending at high-profile cases at the High Court, protecting key witnesses. Clients included a doctor, a monk and a journalist. The Movement for Interracial Justice and Equality asked for an escort when their printing press was smashed.

Some other clients used a daily escort for a few months. For example a Buddhist monk, the Venerable Sammitha, was escorted in Baddegama, a village in the deep South which has lost very many young men in the disappearances in 1989, and where there is still great fear. Sammitha stood for and was elected to the local council. In March, April and September, the team provided daily observers at a garment factory and a plastics factory. Union leaders felt strengthened by support, and one



*PBI volunteer Nina Ravitz escorting refugees in Batticaloa
PBI photo*

dispute was peacefully resolved, but the other was broken up by police action.

In late 1991, requests for accompaniment have decreased. The situation outside of the North-East region is far from ideal, but death threats and abductions are far less common than when we were called to Sri Lanka in 1989. The team has quiet periods when they just maintain our contacts in Colombo with Sri Lankan and international organisations and diplomatic staff. They also monitor newspapers for our monthly Project Bulletin.

Our team had a crisis of their own in March, when they were told that all members' visa applications would be refused. Since this threatened continuation of our work, PBI's Emergency Response Network (ERN) was alerted. With thousands of telegrams flooding in from concerned supporters, the government relented and granted the visa extensions. Volunteers have to use 'tourist' visas, since we began work in Sri Lanka without waiting for permission. Application for official 'NGO' status is now underway. This operation of the ERN also gave a foretaste of how it could work in event of a threat to our clients.

Investigations in the East

Since the summer of 1991, the team has visited the Batticaloa region five times to study the feasibility of our active presence among refugees in the war zone there. They have talked with clergy, local government and medical workers and development groups to explore this.

The team's reports suggest that a PBI presence in Batticaloa could be very useful. With its displaced people, militarisation, disappearances, detentions, and massacres, this region is sometimes called the El Salvador of Asia.✽



SRI LANKA PROJECT COMMITTEE (SLPC) AND PROJECT OFFICE

Members of the SLPC include interested PBI representatives from different regions of the world. They are seldom able to meet and make decisions through consultation by correspondence and occasional conference calls by telephone. The SLPC provides some continuity of policy by advising short-term volunteers. The team was glad to receive a visit by Devi Prasad, a member of PBI's Directorate, as well as the SLPC. Devi is an experienced Gandhian peaceworker, who could offer helpful guidance and inspiration.

Responding to proposals from our Project Office in Bangkok, in November 1991 the Sri Lanka Project closed that office and sought to relocate in Europe or North America. We sought a new site that would be less isolated from the rest of PBI, and which would be closer to our resource and volunteer base. We looked for a site where an active PBI country group would be on hand to provide support.

Joy Boustred, a former volunteer with the Sri Lanka Project and Sri Lanka contact person for Britain, was appointed to the position of Project Coordinator, opening the Project Office in Halifax, England in February of 1992.✽



*Joy Boustred, Sri Lanka Project
Coordinator PBI photo*

EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK

Between the 1st of February 1991 and the 5th of December 1991, PBI's Emergency Response Network was activated 8 times, including 3 times on behalf of the Guatemala team, 4 times for the El Salvador team and once for the Sri Lanka team.

In general there has been a diversification of the addressees to whom the faxes and telexes are sent. The range has spread to include military chiefs as well as the Minister of External Affairs, the Human Rights Commission. . . etc., although it has fallen back especially on the President and the Ministry of Defense of each country, as has been done up to now.

The Cantabria (Spain) group is responsible for the Emergency Response Network for Europe. During 1991, they organised the responses to various difficult situations on the request of the teams, including three cases concerning the detention or threatening of PBI volunteers. The group was

provided with a fax to reduce operation costs and to enable a much quicker diffusion of urgent calls in Europe.

Nearly 2,000 people participate on the USA Emergency Response Network. In times of emergency, 100 regional "key callers" activate the portions of the network in their areas, specifying the nature of the crisis and the response requested. Other peace, human rights and governmental groups and networks are contacted by the ERN coordinator.

In addition, individuals who can't participate in a network can support the ERN by preauthorizing and prepaying for telexes to be sent in their names in crisis situations. This system strengthens the ERN by allowing us to respond instantaneously, as well as to have our message continue to go out from the network participants over a period of days or weeks.✽

NORTH AMERICA PROJECT

The North America Project has continued to develop slowly and steadily during 1991. The outbreak of war in the Gulf caused postponement of the second weekend of a three-part training being held for people in the Northeast interested in becoming involved as observers in situations of conflict. The postponement made it possible to hold the second part of the training at the Native Elders Conference in Peterborough, Ontario, where participants were able to take full advantage of a gathering organised by First Nations people to help raise cultural awareness and understanding of Native issues among non-Natives.

Soon after completing the three part training, NAP received an invitation to meet with members of the Mohawk communities of Kahnawake and Kanasatake near Montreal. As a result of meetings with representatives of all groups in the communities, PBI was invited to give trainings in June to the Human Rights Watch Committee working with the communities. In addition, we were asked to speak to young people in the schools and to offer training in nonviolent crowd control to the security committees of the two communities in preparation for large Pow Wows planned for July.

These trainings provided a wonderful opportunity for the PBI training team of ten

people to learn a great deal more about First Nations culture as well as about the political situation of the Mohawk people. Part of the training was held in The Pines, site of the armed confrontation between the Sûreté de Québec and Mohawk Warriors a year before. PBI's internationalism was especially valued, above all because one of the trainers was himself an indigenous person from Central America.

Meanwhile the NAP committee has continued to meet, explore the work, and develop the infrastructure to support a new project while the rest of the organisation has been going through the process of investigating and approving it. Fortunately this process has coincided with a period of efforts to address First Nations issues in the legal and political arenas which has led to fewer blockades in Canada in 1991. PBI-NAP hopes to be prepared to respond to future requests from First Nations people and to support people committed to nonviolence in potential conflicts across the continent.✽



Simulated road-block confrontation at North America Project training in Kingston, Ontario

PBI photo

COUNTRY GROUPS: The Support Base of PBI

PBI-AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

PBI became established in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1991. In June and July Yeshua Moser made an extensive tour of the country following a similar tour in Australia. He worked very hard with 28 stops in 60 days! This covered many smaller towns as well as the main cities. There was good media coverage in addition to the diverse groups Yeshua spoke to in person.

The response was such that before Yeshua left in early August a group had come forward to co-ordinate the Emergency Response Network here, and we had held a 5-day training workshop. From this training we accepted 3 people for service in Sri Lanka, hopefully during 1992. We also became aware of the need for "basic" level workshops in all aspects of nonviolence. To achieve this we will be able to draw on a pool of trainers who were involved in running workshops a decade ago. Several have already indicated interest in doing so.

Fundraising was begun on a small scale; we produced a 1992 calendar which sold well, and a greeting card which continues to sell, as well as a number of "one-off" stalls, etc.

We look forward to the continued growth of PBI including strengthening the links with Australia, the establishment of local groups, extension of the ERN, and most important of all, the departure (and return!) of our first volunteers for Sri Lanka.

PBI-Aotearoa, Peter Watson, P.O. Box 68111, Newton Auckland 1, Aotearoa/NZ✳

PBI-AUSTRALIA

PBI-Australia joined the world-wide family of PBI country groups in 1991, after several years of contact with PBI through PBI's Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, Peter Jones. The first PBI training was held in Sydney in May 1991, yielding several potential volunteers for the Sri Lanka team. In October there was a weekend training in Brisbane. The first PBI-Australia newsletter was produced, and the beginnings of an Emergency Response Network have been organised. The Australian group is still struggling to find its feet, with only one active local group in Brisbane by the end of 1991, and a loose network of supporters, based mainly in Sydney and Melbourne.

PBI-Australia, P.O. Box A243, 2000 Sydney South, New South Wales, Australia✳

PBI-BELGIQUE

The year 1991 saw the birth of the first local PBI group in Belgium. Until now there was only one country group based in Brussels, with few active members, of which some are always travelling here and there, leaving us with all the daily work that a country group has to achieve, and little energy to devote to general development of the activities.

Françoise Denis, back in August from the El Salvador team, started a new group in her city, Verviers, and they immediately began with one of our constantly delayed objectives: to elaborate a presentation booklet on PBI. The first draft had been printed at the time this report was sent out. Immediate results of the existence of the local group have been noted in terms of membership and fundraising in the area; more people actively took part in the Emergency Response Network actions.

We still have only one active member in the Flemish part of the country, but some activities took place in the North of the country, giving us the hope of new developments in the future in that area. A \$1 000 grant has already been received from a Flemish NGO.

We now hope that the return in 1992 of another volunteer from the El Salvador team will allow us to have new developments in our work.

PBI-Belgique, 35 rue Van Elewijck, B-1050 Bruxelles, Belgique✳

PBI-BRITAIN

In 1991, PBI-Britain successfully recruited, trained and sent 2 volunteers to Sri Lanka and received one returned volunteer from Guatemala. We also raised money for the Sri Lanka Project and successfully increased the amount sent to \$12 500, thanks to CAFOD and Christian Aid.

Our own financial position has been a bit rocky, but we had a good response to an appeal letter sent out in May.

Over the years we have accumulated a contact list of nearly 400 people. This year it was felt necessary to focus our energies on active members as our resources are very limited. We also had to increase membership subscriptions to a more realistic level (£21 instead of £2 per year).

Twelve people attended our country training, many of whom hope to volunteer with PBI in the coming year.

PBI-Britain, Steve Graham, c/o Greenleaf Bookshop, Box 35, 82 Colston St., Bristol Avon BS1 5BB, England✳



PBI-CANADA

After a shaky start, PBI-Canada in 1991 made satisfactory progress in a number of areas: PBI-Canada took large steps towards separating its operations from the Central America Project while continuing to share office space, equipment and personnel with CAP. Meanwhile, PBI-Canada helped to start the North America Project (NAP) and hired Alaine Hawkins, former coordinator of CAP, as fundraiser for NAP.

There is now a PBI-Canada Newsletter. The PBI-Canada mailing list has been brought up to date with the help of Dirk Sprenger, a German volunteer working for CAP. A National Coordinating Committee (CNCC) has been established and meets regularly. New PBI groups developed in Hamilton, Ontario and British Columbia.

An agreement was reached with McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario and ratified by the International Directorate, on archiving PBI files. McMaster's Archives are beginning to receive and organize all those PBI files which are superfluous to PBI's day to day operations. It is expected that information on PBI and its history will become increasingly available to a broader, international audience of academics and activists.

The Peace Education Project "Hear Our Neighbours' Voices", where three former CAP volunteers speak in Canadian schools about their experiences in Central America, is going very well. The favourable response to the project suggests a growing public interest in PBI-related education and training.

PBI-Canada, 192 Spadina Ave., Suite 304, Toronto, Ont. M5T 2C2, Canada✳

PBI-e.V. DEUTSCHLAND

During 1991, PBI e.V. became an official association with legal status in Germany. This status means an increase of bureaucratic work but it gives more possibilities to act as an independent institution and it leads to better identification for the PBI volunteers and people committed to this kind of peace work. After the foundation of PBI e.V. there were 43 members who joined the organisation and identified with the ideas of PBI.

The German newsletter mailing list increased from 353 to 612 addresses, which is mainly due to lectures by Björn Sendel, Christiane Schulz and Heike Kammer. The infrastructure of our office hasn't increased in the same way. We still have one half-time paid staff person. We can only manage to do the work because of the good and engaged service of the volunteers and some paid contract work.

As there are more and more Germans taking part in the international trainings (8 people in the Sri Lanka

training); we will have German volunteers in all projects in the following year.

For the first time, we made a concerted effort to publish our activities in different newspapers and newsletters of the peace and solidarity movement.

We published a booklet with PBI information, new pamphlets about PBI projects, 2 German newsletters (600 for Germany, 400 for Switzerland, 200 for Austria) and different articles about PBI in newspapers and in the "Christian" media (with a focus on Guatemala).

We have groups in Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt and Hamburg; in other towns there are activities to build new groups. The groups take on work/duties, so that we have a division of labour. We want to emphasize this process.

The year 1991 was a satisfactory year for PBI-e.V. Deutschland. This was due to the commitment of many people, to whom the idea of non-violent work in conflicts and improving human rights situations is appealing. Although our work is incomplete, and we have made mistakes, we are

satisfied in general and hope to strengthen to positive developments.

PBI-e.V. Deutschland, Werner Huffer, Engerserstr 74A, D-5450 Neuwied, Deutschland✳

PBI-ESTADO ESPAÑOL

At the moment there are seven base groups in Spain; three of them are new, having worked for a year. The first groups were born in 1987 with the arrival of volunteers from the teams, from there Peace Brigades began to operate in Spain.

The work of the groups is to keep themselves informed about the teams; to maintain contact with them through correspondence, reading the weekly faxes that they send. We also try to discuss and define what the organisational principles of Peace Brigades are and to know and deepen the ideological bases of Peace Brigades at weekend meetings on themes such as nonviolence, the teams, meetings on the Emergency Response Network. . .

Furthermore, each group organizes Peace Brigades publicity in their own area, planning talks with volunteers who are returning from the teams, providing knowledge about Peace Brigades as an organisation and the ways to help out. Each one organizes their own publicity campaign. They also are in charge of activating the ERN of their area and of keeping their members informed about what is happening and how it was resolved.

At the National Assembly all groups are represented by two representatives. At this meeting, the groups' priorities for the year are defined. This year the priority is publicity and recruitment of volunteers. On the national level there is a National Publicity Coordination which is in charge of creating new groups; to support their work until they get the rhythm of the work, to invigorate and prepare the summer meeting along with the other groups. At the summer meeting people are invited to get to know the organisation and work on the ideological bases of the organisation; decision-making, consensus, nonviolence, nonpartisanship. . . all this during a week and in an invigorating form.

PBI-Estado Español, Marga Aguilera, c / Murillo 33, 5 Dcha, E-28010 Madrid, España✳

PBI-FRANCE

PBI-France, Jean-Jacques Samuel, Communauté de L'Arche de Bonnecombe, F-12120 Cassagnes Begonhès, France✳

PBI-ITALIA

PBI-Italia, Filippo Alossa, Via Maria Franza 14A, I-10010 Calea di Lessolo (TO), Italia✳

PBI-NEDERLAND

During 1991, increased fundraising efforts brought in a higher income than in 1990. The Catholic Dominican Order enabled PBI-Nederland to acquire a fax machine of their own.

An advisory group was set up, including some well-known people in Holland. Three volunteers returned from the Sri Lanka team, which led to various articles about PBI being published in the Dutch press.

PBI-Nederland, Evert A. Huisman, Hardesteinstraat 6, NE-8012 E.T. Zwolle, Nederland✳

PBI-ÖSTERREICH

PBI-Österreich, Thomas Tkadletz, Stauraczgasse 7/12, A-1050 Wien, Österreich✳

PBI-SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland we lament that there is still no PBI group in the Italian-speaking part of our country, although it would make our work even more complicated, given that each region speaks a different language.

PBI-SCHWEIZ: German-speaking part
In 1991 we were able to better inform our members by sending them the German newsletter.

We had two volunteers on the teams, a woman in El Salvador, and a man in Sri Lanka, who were the first Swiss volunteers in these projects. We still have two

members of our group working with PBI at the European or international level. Therefore, we do not dedicate all our energy to the international level.

PBI-Schweiz, Lotti Buser, Bäumlhofstrasse 190, CH-4058 Basel, Schweiz

PBI-SUISSE ROMANDE: French-speaking part
A priority of the year 1991 was to produce a quarterly newsletter and to send it to about two hundred people close to PBI. We keep up with the Emergency Response Network and keep in touch with individuals, institutions and groups who share PBI's objectives.

In October of 1991, we welcomed the PBI European Assembly.

The national office is moving to Lausanne, where Philippe Beck is to take on the position of secretary as of April 1992.

PBI-Suisse Romande, Philippe Beck, C.P. 178, CH-1000 Lausanne 3 Cour, Suisse✳

PBI-SVERIGE

1991 was a year in which three local groups were founded - Uppsala/Stockholm. Lund and Gothenburg. Even so, we don't have as many active members as we would like. By an international comparison, a great number of Swedes have participated in the teams as volunteers. Since May of 1991, Henrik Frykberg has been responsible for the European coordination of the Sri Lanka Project. The number of people interested in the work of PBI has increased, although the media has focused much more on parts of the world other than those where PBI has its projects. This situation makes it even more important for PBI to inform people about the situations in these "forgotten" areas of conflict.

During 1991, five national meetings were held, including the annual meeting in Stockholm, February 16th. The other national meetings were on April 27th in Linköping, July 5th in Runnö outside Oskarshamn, October 5th in Lund and November 30th in Uppsala. The average number of participants was 7 or 8 people. PBI-Sweden had 42 supporting members at the end of 1991, and about 30 active members.

The Swedish Newsletter was published 4 times. From April this work was done by the new group in Uppsala/Stockholm. It has been sent to about 200 subscribers and interested people each time. The monthly bulletins from the teams have been distributed to about 35 people in English and Spanish.

On May 5th a PBI orientation weekend took place with 14 participants. During 1991 we have had 3 volunteers on the teams. Henrik Berg - Sri Lanka, 6 months; Lars Helmersson - Guatemala, 6 months and Anders Malmsten - still in Guatemala.

PBI-Sverige, Sandeslätt 59, S-42436 Angered, Sverige✳



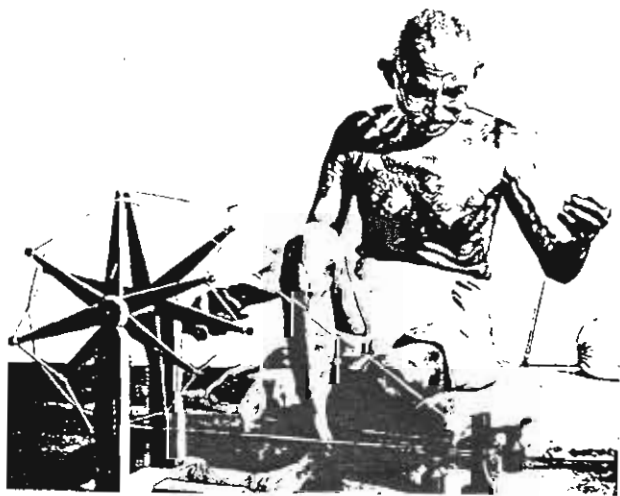
PBI-USA

For PBI-USA, 1991 was a year of organisation-building and outreach. Within the organisation, the new national steering body, the National Coordinating Committee, held its first two meetings and established a working committee structure. Special attention went to regional development and outreach, strategies for best supporting PBI volunteers on the teams, and strengthening PBI's links with diverse cultural groups within the U.S.A. The year saw five U.S.A. speaking tours by returned volunteers. Those tours spread news of PBI and the work we do to old friends and new, from East Coast to West, Kansas to New Mexico. Speaking tours, orientations to PBI and volunteer trainings, along with the monthly Project Bulletin, USA Report and emergency response alerts kept information flowing throughout the country. Meanwhile, new regional support groups focussed on local organizing in San Francisco and South Dakota.



In a year marked by the Gulf War offensive and economic distress in the U.S.A., PBI continues to carry out our mission of supporting the teams in El Salvador, Guatemala and Sri Lanka, and hold on to our vision of peace.

PBI-USA, Mary MacArthur & Randy Divinski, Box 1233, Harvard Square Station, Cambridge MA 02238, USA*



March 29, 1991

THE INDEPENDENT

Peace activists reports recent events in Guatemala

Peace Brigades International in Guatemala succeeding in teaching nonviolence

St Louis resident David Schenck has recently returned from a 15 month stay in Guatemala as a Peace Brigades International team member. Last night, March 28 in 135 Noble Hall Schenck reviewed Guatemala's current political and economic situation, describe the work of Peace Brigades International and discussed his own experience of recent events in the war torn country. A psychiatric social worker and graduate of St. Louis University, Mr. Schenck served as a coordinating committee member of PBI in Guatemala, where he provided protective accompaniment to threatened Human Rights workers and popular leaders.

On December 2, within hours of the military massacre where 15 civilians were killed and 19 wounded in Sanüago Atülan, Schenck accompanied Amilcar Mendez to the site of the killings. Mendez had just returned from the U.S., where he had received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award.

Peace Brigades International was founded in 1981 as a nonpartisan support network for both local and international initiatives in nonviolent action and reconciliation. PBI sends unarmed peace teams invited into areas of violent repression or conflict. Their work is to reduce the violence and

support local social justice initiatives through a) protective accompaniment of those whose lives are threatened; b) fostering reconciliation and peace dialogue among conflicting parties; and c) educating and training in nonviolence and human rights.

For over a year in Guatemala, Mr. Schenck accompanied members of the Mutual Support Group of the Families of the Disappeared (GAM), union leaders like Byron Morales of UNSITRAGUA (Union of Guatemalan Labor Unity), and Amilcar Medez of the council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ). Mendez spoke at the Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in June of 1990.

An on-going, growing commitment to nonviolence prompted Schenck to devote 15 months to PBI in Guatemala. He previously worked with Casa Arco Iris, a sanctuary for Central American refugees in the St. Louis area.

Schenck currently lives in St. Louis and was born and raised in the historic community of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.

(Editors note) A complete interview with Mr. Schenck will appear in next weeks Global Current.

"There is a union leader... who has had a rough 1990 so far. He has been robbed or attacked in the street or at his home eight times, the most recent attack having occurred this week, when three armed men ransacked his house at 2:00 A.M, threatening to kill him and his family if he got out of bed... We've been asked to stay with him pretty much all the time. It's another example of how precarious some people's lives are, and how rapidly our work can change."

-David Schenck, PBI volunteer for Guatemala

PROJECT EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

The main task of the Project Exploratory Committee during 1991 was to accompany the investigation of the North America Project (NAP). Meanwhile, the contacts and development of NAP in the field were carried out by PBI members in the area; PEC contributed by proposing some criteria for domestic projects, linking the NAP exploration with the established PEC procedure, involving the rest of the PBI groups through consultation, and asking critical questions. It was not easy to keep in touch or to find interest outside of North America; the exploration process was very slow.



PBI-NAP training in a Mohawk community PBI photo

At the beginning of 1991, the Gulf War was at the public forefront, and received much attention and many questions about a possible role for PBI in the Iraq crisis; many PBI people were personally involved in Peace Camps and other anti-war activities. But as PBI we came to the conclusion that the scale of this conflict was too large for such a small organisation like PBI. The same was true for the Yugoslavian conflict.

During 1991 we also came up with a final version of our PEC procedure. A major obstacle was the lack of funds, so that no meeting of the European PEC took place, and it was only by chance that three members were able to meet at the spring Directorate meeting.*

PBI AT THE UNITED NATIONS

In June 1991, PBI was given official recognition by the United Nations as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) registered with the UN's Department of Public Information. With this new status, PBI is able to make official representations to the UN General Assembly and to solicit additional support for our work from the international diplomatic community. Thambydurai Muthukumaraswamy and Mary MacArthur of PBI-USA attended the 1991 annual NGO conference in New York as delegates of PBI.

René Wadlow, PBI's representative to the UN in Geneva, has continued his work with the UN specialized agencies and international NGO's based there. PBI's presence in Geneva has been especially

valuable during the sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights which in 1991 looked at the human rights record of Sri Lanka.*

DIRECTORATE ACTIVITIES IN 1991

The International Directorate was able to hold only one face-to-face meeting during 1991 due to financial constraints. This took place in April at Woolman Hill, Massachusetts, USA and was attended by the five currently serving directors and Mary Link, outgoing International Secretary. Missing was the "at large" member to replace Klaus Jensen. Marie Catherine Menozzi was subsequently appointed to this position. For the rest of the year the Directorate met by conference call.

Each director took on a specific area of work: Marcela Rodriguez Diaz (Colombia) served as the representative on the Central America Project Committee since she is based in Mexico and has recent experience working on the El Salvador Team; Devi Prasad (India) served on the Sri Lanka Project Committee and was able to visit the team in October; Ueli Wildberger (Switzerland) served as chair of the Project Exploratory Committee and kept in contact with the European Assembly; Marie-Cath Menozzi (France) has also kept in touch with the European Assembly and the European training committee; Carl Kline (USA) served on the SLPC, on the National Coordinating Committee of PBI-USA, and on the North America training committee; Elaine Hawkins (Canada) served as coordinator of the Directorate, on the International Finance Committee, the North America Project Exploratory Committee, and PBI-Canada.

The chief tasks of the whole Directorate during 1991 were hiring a new International Secretary and deciding the new location of the International Office. The Directorate had to contend with problems of being so scattered (in a geographical sense) in carrying out its work. The effort and dedication of Mary Link, Heidi Gulick and Tim Wallis were critical in making it possible for the Directorate to carry out its functions.*



Directorate members and former International Secretary at Woolman Hill PBI photo

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England✳

PROJECT BULLETINS

PBI Project Bulletins were published 11 times during 1991, with 14 to 16 pages each of detailed information about the teams' work. Each team writes its own report, including observations, newspaper articles, photos and cartoons, analyses of the political situation and general issues, and of course, the work of the team itself. The Project Offices receive this material from the teams, compile, edit and send it on to be put into the unified Project Bulletin. The English edition is distributed by the PBI Mailing Project in Syracuse, New York, USA; the Spanish edition was done in 1991 by PBI-Estado Español in Spain.

To subscribe for a year: send \$25 US (or less for low income) to PBI Mailing Project, 340 Midland Ave., Syracuse, NY 13202, USA. Or send 4000 pts. (Spanish, 3000 in Europe) to PBI-Asturias, Apdo. 4036, E-33208 Gijon, España.✳

VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

PBI trainings offer challenges as well as information. The training group works together like a team, facing surprises (courtesy of the trainers!) and roleplays that simulate the realities of nonviolence work in a context of civil war. Participants commented on dual challenges to the head and heart: "I liked the linking of the personal and the political, and the in-depth discussion that ensued." "It really renewed me, my faith and hope."

Trainings also served as an impetus to local organizing in the places where they were held. They give a concrete task for local organizers to take on, combined with the involvement of new local people who attend the training or introductory weekend, the infusion of new information, and the personal contact with PBI trainers and returned volunteers.

In North America in 1991, PBI held three trainings for new volunteers and others, focusing on the Central America and Sri Lanka Projects. Of a total of 55 participants - some attending an introductory weekend only, others staying for the week - 22 people were accepted to serve with a PBI field team.

The European Training Coordination produced and distributed a thick and concise manual for future volunteers, to provide a much better knowledge of PBI's history, structure, non-violent principles and methods, and projects before attending a European Training. Two trainings for each project, Central America and Sri Lanka, were held in 1991. Much higher efficiency was achieved thanks to a continual evaluation of the content, methods and results of the trainings.✳



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EDICION ESPAÑOL: Contactarse con la Oficina Internacional por un ejemplario en español de este informe.