

# Peace Brigades International

## *Nonviolence in Practice*

1990 Annual Report

### PBI's HISTORY

Peace Brigades International is an international network of volunteers committed to the nonviolent resolution of conflicts and respect for human rights by means of negotiation, mediation and nonviolent action.

Founded at Grindstone Island, Canada in 1981 by experienced nonviolence activists from four continents, PBI establishes international peace teams and regional representatives in areas of violent repression or conflict.

These peace teams and representatives can flexibly pursue avenues not open to governments or politically aligned organizations, since PBI has the unusual status of a private, non-profit, non-partisan presence that is international and nonviolent in character.

PBI does not seek to impose solutions from the outside. Rather, the PBI role is to try to keep open a safe space for the nonviolent peace and social justice initiatives undertaken by people from that region. PBI volunteers are present in order to learn as well as to serve.

Much of the work of the peace teams has been accompaniment of threatened individuals or groups working for nonviolent social change. PBI volunteers provide an international presence that serves as a deterrent to aggression in headquarters of different groups, at special events, or in the homes of threatened individuals either through regular visits or continual

presence as an escort.

At the same time as PBI recognizes the importance of protecting the lives of people working for human rights and social justice, it also appreciates the need to move beyond crisis intervention and contribute to the construction of a just peace. To this end, PBI volunteers have offered workshops in nonviolent conflict resolution, sharing methods and tools that give people an alternative to violence in their work for change.

PBI first sent an exploratory peace team to Guatemala in 1983. Many human rights activists have documented a state of terror in that country which over the past 20 years has claimed the lives of over 100,000 civilians. In 1985, PBI responded to a request for a protective presence from GAM--the Mutual Support Group of relatives of disappeared persons--two of whose leaders had been recently assassinated. PBI accompaniment in Guatemala has since expanded to serve 15 other social justice organizations, including unions, indigenous people's organizations, students and peasant groups.

In June 1987, PBI was invited into El Salvador by the Salvadoran Lutheran Church and Salvadoran human rights organizations. The team has provided a daily presence in offices of groups whose members have been threatened, and has accompanied the process of repopulation of refugees, providing protection from military retaliation. Team members in both Guatemala and El Salvador have also done ongoing work in the area of peace education.

A PBI team arrived in Sri Lanka in October 1989 following an escalation of violence in the southern part of the island. A conflict between the government army and a guerrilla group known as JVP had resulted in widespread killing of civilians. Lawyers representing families of detained and disappeared persons were themselves being threatened and requested PBI protection.

In addition to maintaining long-term peace teams, PBI has:

- co-sponsored with the UN University for Peace in 1988, a series of consultations on Social Defense in Costa Rica and Nicaragua;
- and sponsored in October 1990 a Working Seminar on Reconciliation for Sri Lanka at a nonviolence training institute in Vedchhi, India. ❖



Members of PBI's Guatemala and El Salvador teams gather in Guatemala City. PBI Photo



## Guatemala Team: The Year In Review

1990 was a year of stark contrasts for Guatemala. On one side, efforts to reach a negotiated resolution to the internal conflicts spearheaded by the National Commission for Reconciliation (CNR) reached unprecedented heights. The CNR was instrumental in arranging national dialogues between the guerrilla movement and various sectors within the country (including political parties, the religious sector, the popular movement and business interests) with positive results. At the same time, the country witnessed a heightened wave of violence against those attempting to organize for human rights and social change, escalating repression in the countryside, an increase in guerrilla activity, and an extreme economic crisis that was fueled by corruption within the government and economic policies mandated by the International Monetary Fund.

For the PBI team in Guatemala, this contradictory situation meant it needed to continue work in the midst of uncertain and destabilizing conditions. In spite of the very fragile atmosphere existing in the country, the team was not the recipient of any direct attacks or intimidations like those it had suffered in 1989. However, the increase of violence and repressive acts against individuals and groups working for social justice by nonviolent means meant that petitions for escorting services and presences within groups increased significantly.

In 1990 the Guatemala team did accompaniment work with the following organizations:

- GAM - Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared
- UNSITRAGUA - United Labor Organization of Guatemala
- BONIN - Union workers for a pharmaceutical company
- Inexport - Union workers for a textile company
- CAVISA - Union workers for a glass factory
- UASP - Unity of Labor and Popular Action



*CERJ leader Amílcar Méndez meets with peasants in Quiché.*  
PBI Photo



*Family from Cajolá seeking to work their land camp out in Guatemala City's Central Park* PBI Photo

- CONAVIGUA - The National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows
- CUC - Committee of Peasant Unity
- CONDEG - National Council of Displaced Persons of Guatemala
- UITA - International Food Workers' Union
- STINDE - Electric Company Workers' Union
- CERJ - Council of Ethnic Communities: Everyone Equal
- Representatives of Guatemalan refugees living in Mexican camps.
- Peasants of Cajolá - a group of peasants struggling to obtain possession of land for which they hold a title
- Families evicted from the Guatemala City dump
- CPR - Village Communities in Resistance of the Mountains. The team began a presence with a commission of this group in December. The communities are populated by people who fled to the mountains during the heavy repression of the early 80's because of their desire not to take up arms on either side and are now under extreme pressure from the military.

As a result of the increased repression in the countryside, the team received many more petitions to accompany people to rural areas experiencing problems. Notable among these were requests to accompany people to

## U.S. Congress Responds To Attack On PBI Team

As they say, sometimes good can come from bad. A collective effort on the part of those in the PBI Emergency Response Network (ERN) in the USA prompted 111 members from both houses of the U.S. Congress to sign a letter in early 1990 to then-President Cerezo expressing concern about "the increasing level of violence in Guatemala" and the knife attack against three members of PBI in late December 1989. The signers also requested that Cerezo "do all that [he] possibly can to insure the personal safety of PBI volunteers and other international workers in [Guatemala]."

After her return from Guatemala, Meredith Larson, one of the PBI workers injured in the stabbing attack, worked with her mother and others in PBI-USA to make numerous visits and phone calls to members of Congress concerning the attack, the safety of the Guatemala team, and the increasing level of violence in Guatemala. Liam Mahony coordinated a response from PBI-USA

so that dozens from the ERN made phone calls to their members of Congress about the attack, encouraging them to sign the letter to Cerezo. This combined effort helped produce an unusually high number of signers for the letter.

The letters and lobbying done by those in PBI served to further focus Congressional attention on mounting human rights abuses in Guatemala. The sponsors of the letter in the House of Representatives, Reps. Weiss and Mrazek, worked later that year to pass a stricter aid bill to Guatemala which passed Congress in the summer. Guatemala was then placed on a list reserved for only nine countries based on their poor human rights records, which requires that any aid appropriated be approved by the Chairman of the Foreign Operations Committee before being sent out. The language that accompanied the bill took note of several cases of human rights abuses, including the knife attack on PBI workers.

communities in which a member of CERJ had disappeared or been killed. CERJ is working to defend the right of the indigenous population not to participate in army-imposed civil patrols, and as such has often become a target for those wanting to impose this system.

The kidnapping or assassination of a CERJ member or relative often occurs in a village where a number of men have decided not to participate in the patrols. The resulting death or kidnapping has repercussions for the entire village, as it becomes polarized between those who are being pressured to join the patrols and those being pressured to remain in them. The pressure against those not participating can become so great that relatives and close friends of the victim flee the village, as was the case in 1990 when a number of these relatives and friends took refuge in the offices of CERJ and GAM. PBI team members provided a presence with these people during their stay in the offices and accompanied the return to their villages after the government office for protection of human rights had arranged for them to return.

Another troubled town where the team was asked to accompany people in 1990 was Santiago de Atitlan. This community was the site of a massacre on December 2 in which 15 villagers were killed while participating in an unarmed demonstration against an attempted kidnapping by military personnel. As a consequence of this act, the town demanded and obtained the removal of military personnel from their community. However, the town remains troubled and tense.

### *Peace Education Workshops*

In 1990 the team continued expanding its activities in the area of peace education. GRUFEPROMEFAM (Feminine Group for Family Improvement) was again a major recipient of workshops. Women from this group participated in workshops on negotiation techniques, cooperation and group-building skills, conflict resolution, communication skills within organizations, and women and violence.

The team also had more requests from a number of other groups including the committee of women affiliated with UITA, UNSITRAGUA, STEG (Guatemalan Educational Workers Union), Professional University Women from the University of San Carlos, and a group of teachers from Tierra Nueva. Among the themes for these workshops were negotiation skills, methodology for the analysis of current social forces, participatory techniques, conflict resolution, peace education, and peace and the arts.

The team also participated in a committee on training and education for The Campaign for Peace and Life, an ecumenical group that grew out of the National Dialogue to promote the defense of life and construction of peace in Guatemala. As participants in this group, the team gave a workshop on Life and Peace and assisted the committee in organizing fora on issues related to building peace. ♦



*PBI Guatemala team hosts the diplomatic corps at a reception for the new PBI house, April 4, 1990. PBI Photo*



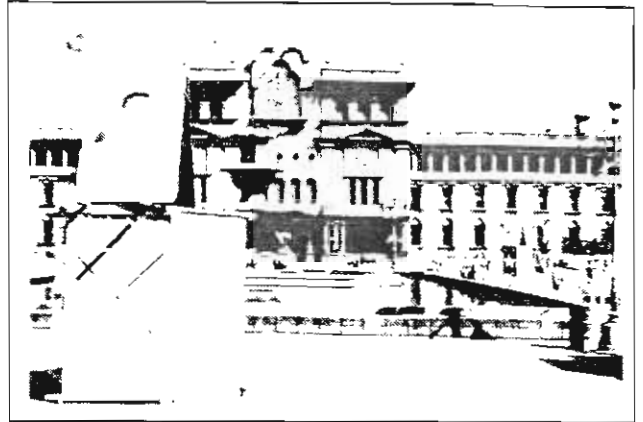
## Elections and Their Impact on PBI's Work in Guatemala

1990 was an election year in Guatemala. The process of selecting the successor to President Vinicio Cerezo began early in the year as nearly a dozen candidates vied for public support. In addition to historically conservative parties like the MLN (National Liberation Movement) and MAS (Solidarity Action Movement), the modern conservatives such as PAN (National Advancement Party) also declared candidacies. All parties in the running, however, had their base among the political right, with opposition parties either staying in exile or maintaining a very low profile within the country.

Cerezo's hand-picked successor, Alfonso Cabrera, ran into political trouble when a relative became implicated in drug-trafficking. In addition, an acute attack of pancreatitis just days before the election took him out of the race for good. Jorge Carpio of the UCN (National Centrist Union) arose as the victor of the first round in early November after mustering one of the richest campaigns in Guatemalan history. Owner of the second largest daily in Guatemala, *El Grafico*, Carpio was nearly equaled in votes by Jorge Serrano of MAS, who surprised observers and later went on to beat Carpio



Mayan priests in Chimaltenango



Presidential elections increased political tension in 1990.  
PBI Photo

handily in the January run-off.

The election period was marred with violence as extra-judicial assassinations, shootings and random violence dramatically increased. Known historically as a time of increased violence, many in the popular movement reported increased intimidation and threats. PBI was swamped with requests for presences and escorts. The violence reached a crescendo on December 2 with the massacre at Santiago Atitlan, an incident that claimed the lives of 15 men, women and children, and left at least 20 wounded. The army was held responsible by the Human Rights Attorney.

Serrano, an active member in the National Reconciliation Commission, won the elections for a variety of reasons. He is a skilled orator and statesperson. He enjoyed the backing of the fundamentalist Protestant churches in Guatemala, of which he is an active member. While some claim that he inherits a stronger position *vis a vis* the Guatemalan army than Cerezo did, Serrano has much less public support as evidenced by the 55% abstention rate in the elections. His early declarations that he will "give orders to the army" remain to be tested. His announced plan to hold direct negotiations with the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) will likely be a sticking point with the army.

Serrano did serve in the Council of State under the Rios Montt regime in the early 80's, and the fact that he has failed to disassociate himself from that violent era led many to question his intentions to seriously reduce the alarming human rights violations in Guatemala. This fact, along with Serrano's statements of the army's place in Guatemalan society paint a murky future. ❖

# PBI in El Salvador

## *PBI Meets a Changed El Salvador*

The first tasks of the team which returned to El Salvador in April 1990 were to examine and assess the new and different situation so as to adjust the work to the changed conditions, priorities and requirements; to renew contact with the grass-roots organizations with which PBI had worked in the past, helped by the fact that PBI volunteers had been maintaining contact as much as possible; and to achieve the degree of official recognition and guarantees to ensure the safety, permanence and freedom from obstruction of the team and its work. The team consisted initially of four long-serving members of the 1989 team, gradually building up to a team of nine by November 1990.

Characteristics of the situation in El Salvador during 1990 with particular meaning for PBI's work included the following: 1) the peace negotiations between the government and the FMLN, now under UN auspices, 2) the continuation of the war, with varying levels of intensity, and with constant rumors of another "November '89" style offensive, 3) an immensely dynamic and broadly based civic peace movement coordinated by the Permanent Committee of the National Debate (CPDN), 4) a broad "convergence" or coordination of opposition

political parties and of labor, peasant and other grass-roots organizations, including both the traditional left and those oriented to the Christian Democrat Party, 5) labor unions and other grassroots organizations focusing more clearly on their members' basic needs, as well as on the peace process, 6) and in the capital (but not in the countryside) from April to October, a more relaxed atmosphere. Labor union offices were not attacked, riot police were not present at demonstrations, and there were fewer arrests in the city compared with 1989.

As a consequence most of the organizations and individuals whom the team had provided accompaniment in the past, did not see having a constant presence as a priority. The team continued to accompany Lutheran Bishop Don Medardo Gomez on an on-going basis, while making frequent visits to other organizations so as to be aware of any security problems which might arise. From mid-October onwards, the national level of tension rose sharply to the approaching anniversaries of the FENASTRAS (National Federation of Salvadoran Workers) bombing (October 31), the FMLN offensive (November 11) and the massacre of the Jesuits (November 16), combined with stronger than ever rumors of a new offensive. This situation created new requests for a PBI presence which was provided for the FENASTRAS office and for other individuals and organizations.

## **Return To El Salvador Backed By International Community**

The Armed Forces' arrest and harassment of many international workers, including PBI volunteers, in November 1989 during the FMLN offensive in El Salvador, led PBI to leave the country until safe conditions for working there were restored. In April, PBI sent a delegation to El Salvador for extensive meetings to ensure that such conditions existed and to lay the groundwork for PBI's return.

The delegation's arrival was accompanied by an international campaign affirming the need for PBI's work. If PBI was to provide any security for Salvadorans, the Salvadoran authorities needed to know that the international community was aware of its purpose and activities. The delegation, then, carried individual letters from 87 members of Parliament and Congress from Switzerland, Canada, Spain, United States, Italy, Sweden, France and Germany, as well as from the World Council of Churches, Pax Christi International, labor unions, religious communities and bishops, development organizations, and local officials.

The delegation was composed of Eve Scarfe, a member of the El Salvador team for most of 1989 and 1990, John Lindsay-Poland, then Chair of PBI's Central American Project Committee, and Lotti Buser, European Coordinator of PBI's Central American Projects. Their 17

meetings included a wide range of Salvadorans, from President Cristiani to an agricultural cooperative in the coastal province of La Libertad, from Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez to the Christian Committee of the Displaced.

The visit came during a remarkable opening in Salvadoran political life, when hopes for a negotiated solution to the eleven-year war were heightened. Labor leader, Humberto Centeno told the group that PBI should return to El Salvador and open dialogue with a wide variety of groups, making its presence as public as possible. President Cristiani, while his reception was cool, promised to help facilitate PBI's legal status in the country. Bishop Gomez had received threats to his life and feared that those opposing negotiations might attempt to ruin them by attacking advocates for the process such as himself. Rev. Edgar Palacios, Coordinator of the National Debate Committee, was excited at the possibilities of PBI's Peace Education workshops at the grassroots level.

Based on all the information gathered, the Central American Project Committee met by conference call and decided that a PBI team should re-enter El Salvador as soon as possible and begin work. The team returned to El Salvador in late April.

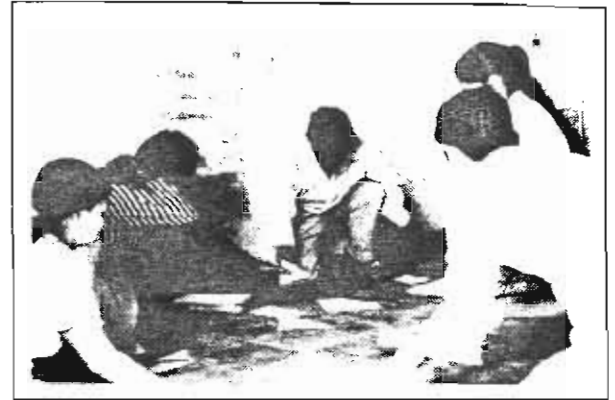


Throughout the year, PBI provided a presence as requested at a wide range of special events, such as peace marches, peace festivals and religious ceremonies organized by the CPDN in the capital and in provincial cities (San Miguel, Usulután and Chalatenango), and inaugural ceremonies at new "re poblaciones" (repopulation centers for refugees and displaced people returning to

*PBI members accompanied the repatriation and repopulation movement, being with the refugees or displaced people as they struggled through bureaucratic and military obstacles.*

the countryside) such as "Comunidad Ignacio Ellacuría" in Chalatenango province, and "Comunidad Martín - Baró" in Morazán province. Team members also accompanied a caravan of several thousand people in 32 buses from Ciudad Segundo Montes and other communities in Morazán, who were attempting to attend a peace march being organized by the CPDN in San Salvador on September 15 (Independence Day).

As in past years, PBI members accompanied the repatriation and repopulation movement, being with the refugees or displaced people as they struggled through bureaucratic and military obstacles. Two examples where substantial difficulties were encountered were the repopulation organized by CRIPDES (Christian Committee for the Displaced) in San Vicente province in December and the case of the Salvadoran refugees in Panama. In the former PBI volunteers accompanied the



*Peace education workshops help facilitate grassroots participation in the peace process.* PBI Photo

27 families (about 150 people) during 6 days that they were encamped on a roadside blocked by the military. Eventually they were allowed to resettle though not in the place they had intended. In Panama the 600 Salvadoran refugees in the "Ciudad Romero" settlement had decided to repopulate, and Salvadoran church organizations requested the PBI team to accompany the process.

### *Workshops with Grassroots Organizations*

1990 saw a growing demand for peace education workshops within the context of the grassroots organizations' need to give more impetus to the peace process. Two series of workshops were held as part of the CPDN's program of activities, one in San Salvador and the other in the countryside.

Workshops were also held with the social services division of the Ministry of Education, and with groups of psychologists and mental health workers, PBI members also participated in conferences on international law, and on the psychological effects of war and violence.

### *Legal Matters*

It was not possible in 1990 to obtain legally recognized status for PBI in El Salvador, nor to solve the problems of longer-term residence permits for individual members. This was despite the fact that the team followed the procedures recommended by President Cristiani to the Exploratory Commission in April, 1990, has maintained contact with designated members of the President's staff, and invested considerable time and effort in these matters. It is hoped that these efforts will bear fruit in 1991.



*Grassroots organizations united in 1990 to work for a negotiated end to the war as well as to meet their economic needs.* PBI Photo

## The Refugees Of Ciudad Romero

Since 1980, 610 Salvadoran refugees from the war-torn Department of La Union have lived in Panama. There, in an isolated and densely wooded area, they founded a self-sufficient community in exile: Ciudad Romero.

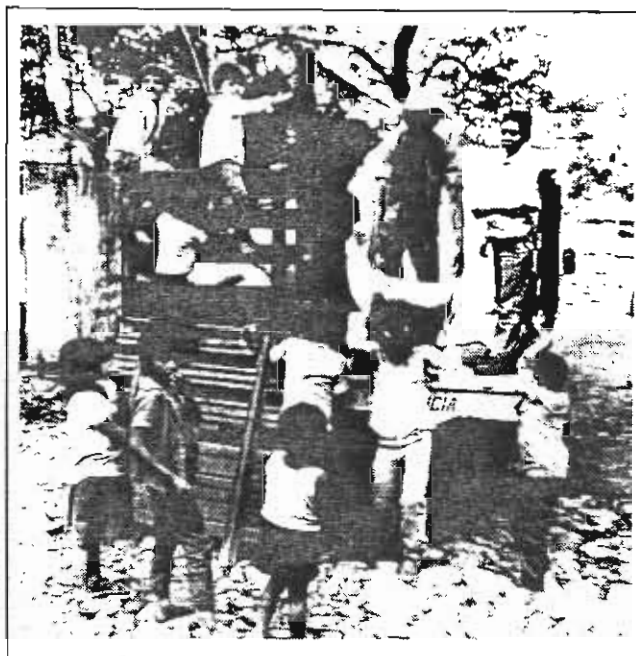
Now, like thousands of other refugees in the last two years, they have decided to return to El Salvador. They don't have the officially required papers. They have no means of transportation. And, despite the fact that the constitution guarantees them such a right, they don't know if the government will let them enter the country and settle on the land they have chosen.

On November 19, after a difficult four-day journey, a group of 110 refugees from Ciudad Romero arrived in Panama City. Two members of the Salvadoran team - Pepe and Stewart - joined them in Panama City on November 19. They were the only foreigners there to share those difficult days of nonviolent struggle in defense of their rights as refugees.

On December 1, Stewart and an Australian journalist left from Colón for the Belen river, where the refugee community was located. They travelled in a fragile "cayuco," a traditional homemade craft made from a large tree trunk and powered by an outboard motor. For twelve hours the group were brutally tossed in every manner possible. It was as if someone was continually throwing barrels of water on them. In the midst of the crossing, the motor died, stranding them for a half hour. Near the end of the trip the motor failed again, leaving them at the mercy of the raging sea during the hour-and-a-half repair job. The two had planned to return in two days in the company of 120 refugees in a hired boat. But technical difficulties postponed the trip for a week, and finally, one of the two was able to return; Stewart had to stay, even though he had brought only enough clothes for two days.

The return trip was an authentic odyssey: 170 people huddled in a little boat, the majority in the stern covered with an awning, the space filled with smoke and the vomit of seasick people and pigs, while some ten people sprawled in the prow in constant danger of being tossed into the sea. Two more similar trips were necessary in order to finally reunite all of the community in the capital on December 23.

In Panama city the refugees held a sit-in in front of the Salvadoran Embassy to protest bureaucratic delays in their repatriation. Finally, in mid-January 1991, "Ciudad Romero" reached El Salvador, accompanied by PBI, and is resettling in Usulután province.



*Residents of repopulation rebuild their community after many years' absence. PBI Photo*

What follows are selections from a report written by Stewart while in Panama.

*They were gathered in a church. There were 110 of them--seniors, men, women, and children, some of whom seemed to be no more than seven or eight years old.*

*They were about to eat their first decent meal and spend their first dry night sleeping indoors in days. They had just completed a four-day trek through the jungle that separates Ciudad Romero - the name they had given to their refugee settlement - from the nearest road. While a Spanish nurse who had accompanied them on their journey tended to their cut and blistered feet, we listened to various accounts of the hardships of the journey: how they had to slash their way through underbrush with machetes; how they had to climb up and down slippery slopes to cross mountains; how they had to make a stretcher for someone injured in a fall; how they had to use ropes to get across swollen rivers; how they had to sleep sitting in the mud, covered only with a small piece of plastic.*

*Yes, they were certainly tired when we first met them, but they were not sleepy. They were far too excited about going to El Salvador and about being in contact with civilization to even think about going to sleep. Only at about two in the morning, after talking, singing and playing music did some of them finally get some sleep.*

*Yet everyone seems to be in good spirits, and there is a real sense of cooperation and community. Here in the church, if you forget to take your money out of your pockets before washing your pants, you can set it out to dry on a piece of newspaper in the middle of the floor, and no one will steal it. I know, because I've seen it happen. ♦*



## The Sri Lanka Team in 1990

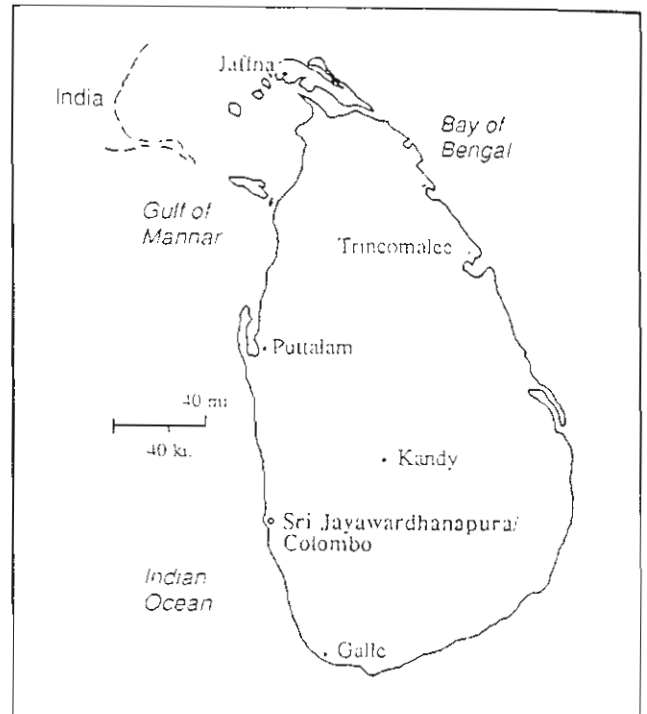
Circumstances changed drastically in the island nation of Sri Lanka in 1990, surprising all observers of the situation. The year began with the continuing insurrection of the People's Revolutionary Front (JVP) and the ongoing counterinsurgency campaign orchestrated by the government, filling the roads and rivers of the South with corpses. The stalemated war between the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) dragged on past deadline after deadline for the withdrawal of the Indians. In January, JVP leaders were located in hiding and virtually all were killed while in custody. Though the JVP has not disappeared, their activity has been reduced substantially.

In March, the IPKF did finally return to India, giving the island a brief period of peace as the struggle in the northeast became largely political. Various Tamil groups jockeyed for position before anticipated regional elections, while the government negotiated details of some kind of resolution with the Tigers. But in June, Tiger groups in the east seized a large number of police officers, starting a full-scale war between LTTE and the Sri Lanka government, with bombings of civilian areas by the Air Force and attacks on border villages by the Tigers. Even food and medical convoys organized by the Red Cross were subjected to aerial attack. Despite the continuing violence, the "victory" over the JVP opened a tenuous space for the reorganization of popular groups, quickly occupied by trade unions, women's groups and new human rights organizations.

Prominent among these were associations of the families of the disappeared. (Educated estimates of the number of disappeared in Sri Lanka over the last three years range as high as 60,000.) The government responded to this renewed activity with an order in late July for police in the south to shoot demonstrators on sight.

At the start of 1990, PBI had just three volunteers in the field, working primarily with two lawyers engaged in habeas corpus litigation for disappeared people. As conditions changed, and thanks to the continued presence of long-term volunteers, the nature of our work also changed.

Early in the year, the team began to occasionally accompany some religious leaders under threat for their reconciliation work. That brought PBI in contact with the Nequmbo United People's Organization (NUPO), a grassroots coalition involved in empowering smaller groups to organize and plan strategies for improving



their situation. Following serious threats to some of the field workers of NUPO, the team began to provide a weekly presence at the NUPO offices, including during meetings of the fledgling Human Rights Network, which brings together representatives of a wide range of groups to search for effective ways of defending basic rights. The team has also been providing a presence at the public rallies of the Organization of Family Members of the Disappeared throughout the southeast.

An important case, both for PBI's work and for the country, began in February with the kidnapping and killing of noted journalist Richard de Zoysa. (See page 9) PBI escorted Dr. Saravanamuttu and her lawyer Batty Weerakoon 24 hours a day throughout the legal process, which ended when the Attorney General determined that there was "not enough evidence" to proceed. The team still escorts them on an as-needed basis while they continue to struggle for an impartial investigation of the case.

The PBI team in Sri Lanka grew considerably in 1990, from four volunteers to seven as we enter 1991. Additionally, the PBI directorate removed a geographic limitation which had been placed on the project, opening the possibility of work in the Northeast.

One handicap to the team's work has been a lack of female volunteers. As the new year begins, two are scheduled to arrive, but this is an area in which we would like to improve. Our goal is to have a stable gender-balanced team to respond to the increasing requests for PBI's services as our presence and role is more widely understood.





*PBI escort Yeshua Moser accompanies Batty Weerakoon during his human rights work. PBI Photo*

## The De Zoysa Case

For most of 1990, the PBI Sri Lanka team has played a role in Sri Lanka's most controversial human rights case. In February 1990, Richard de Zoysa, once a government broadcaster but more recently a prominent human rights journalist, was murdered.

His mother, Dr. Manorani Saravanamuttu, witnessed the abduction and identified two members of the death squad involved. The two are high-ranking Colombo police officers. Both Dr. Saravanamuttu and her attorney, Batty Weerakoon, received death threats for pursuing the case in the face of police unwillingness to investigate. PBI provided Dr. Saravanamuttu with around-the-clock accompaniment until she could temporarily escape to Europe.

In Europe, Dr. Saravanamuttu spoke at many human rights forums, attracting widespread public attention. In October, the European Economic Community prominently singled out the de Zoysa case in their joint donors' statement on aid to Sri Lanka. It noted "with regret that the enquiry into the killing has made such little progress.

Dr. Saravanamuttu returned to Sri Lanka and team members continue to escort her as she works on behalf of the Mother's Front, an organization of mothers of the disappeared that has recently come under severe pressure from the government. The de Zoysa case is the first time that a highly credible, English-speaking witness has been willing to identify the perpetrators in a

death squad murder, thereby linking a death squad with the state security apparatus. Many mothers in Sri Lanka in recent years have witnessed abduction or killing of one of their children, but they dare not speak out for fear of reprisals against their other children. As Richard was her only child, Dr. Saravanamuttu says she has nothing more to lose.

The case has been doggedly pursued by Mr. Weerakoon, both in the courts and in Parliament. He is determined to make the facts of this case known, despite the high assassination rate in Sri Lanka for human rights lawyers. For many months the team provided Mr. Weerakoon with an escort 24 hours a day, at home and in the courts. While these long hours have tapered off, PBI continues to escort Mr. Weerakoon as needed. The team is honored to provide nonviolent security for these two courageous people who are essential to human rights reform in Sri Lanka. ❖



## The Structure of PBI

PBI is a democratic and decentralized international organization made up of groups and individuals functioning currently in 18 countries. The 12 **Country Groups** that are presently part of PBI are: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. Additionally, PBI has **Regional Representatives** in Southeast Asia, Central America, and Australia.

At this time, the country and regional groups fund, recruit, train and support three international volunteer **Peace Teams** in Guatemala, El Salvador and Sri Lanka and are exploring a new North American Observer Project. The teams are overseen by two **Project Committees**, one for Central America and one for Sri Lanka, which meet several times per year. The project committees include representatives of the teams, PBI-Europe, PBI in North America and the project offices. **Project Offices** in Bangkok (for Sri Lanka) and Toronto (for Central America) are responsible for the daily administrative support to the teams. The safety and effectiveness of team members is also backed up by an **Emergency Response Network** of individuals in Europe and North America who respond to crises facing volunteers or the people with whom they are directly working.

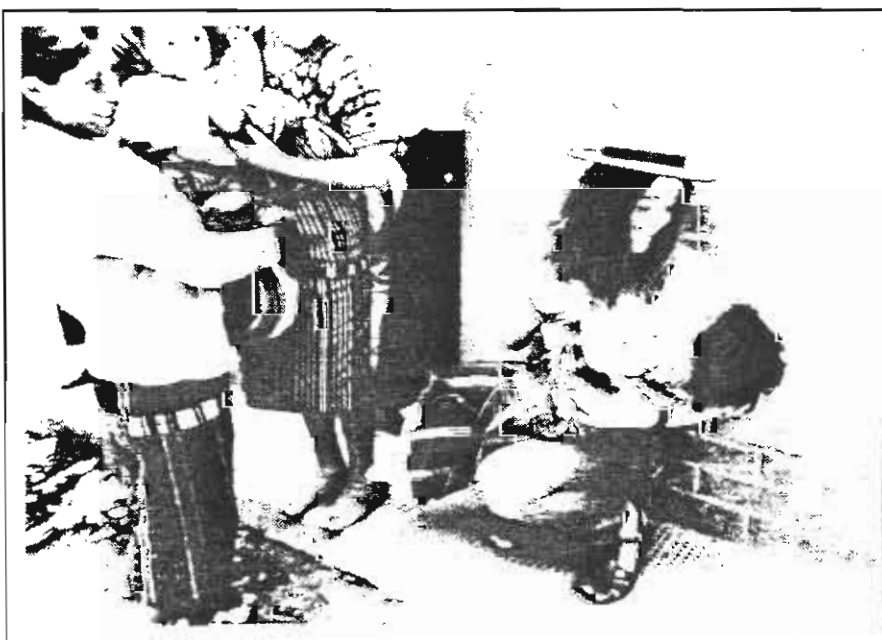
PBI is governed by a **General Assembly (GA)** which comes together at least once every three years with one named representative of each: project, peace team, country or regional group; in addition to the International Secretary, the Finance Coordinator, named advisors to the organization, and members of the Directorate. The **Directorate** is a body of up to 8 people appointed by the GA to carry out its policies and principles, supervise the organization, and make the decisions that need to be made between GA meetings. The Directorate includes representatives of four broad geographical areas, a representative of the projects, and the International Secretary. It chooses a coordinator from its members. Both the GA and the Directorate, like all PBI bodies, make decisions by consensus.

The **International Secretary** is the chief administrator of PBI appointed by the Directorate and

working out of the International Office (IO), which is currently located in the United States. S/he is responsible for the running of the IO and supervision of its staff, the main functions of which are to be a communication link between all parts of PBI and to give administrative support to the Directorate, the GA and others where needed. The **Finance Coordinator** chairs the **International Finance Committee** and oversees the financial affairs of PBI.

The **Project Exploratory Committee (PEC)** is appointed by the Directorate. It responds to and explores new projects for PBI and presents proposals for such projects to the Directorate for decision making. Various PBI bodies sometimes call on **Advisors** appointed by the General Assembly to give advice and assistance in the work of PBI where appropriate. Among them are people experienced in nonviolent conflict resolution, those whose reputation and standing could provide special protection to volunteers or who could negotiate with authorities on behalf of PBI, regional specialists and others whose skills and experiences are of particular value to PBI.

The PBI Directorate held two meetings in 1990: in April in Bradford, England and in October in Handel, The Netherlands. The Directorate has set policy for PBI projects, clarified PBI's mandate in ambiguous situations, and (along with PEC) dealt with new requests for PBI's work in Northern Ireland, Burma, Haiti, Columbia and other areas. PBI also welcomed its newest country group, PBI-Austria. ♦



*PBI volunteer Cristina Casado (Spain) holds a child from the village of Puyulil whose uncle - CERJ activist - was assassinated in May, 1990.*  
PBI Photo

# North American Observer Project Proposed

During the spring and summer of 1990, violence erupted at three territories of Mohawk Indians in Ontario and Quebec. At Akwesasne, which straddles the borders of Ontario, Quebec and New York State, the violence took place over the issue of gambling on the territory. A group of people representing Canadian Friends (Quakers), American Friends, and other organizations working on nonviolence took part in a project of witnessing at the blockades. The project was pulled together very quickly. Most of the observers had little or no training and coordination among the participating groups was a problem. Eventually the difficulties and the violence reached a level that caused most of the groups to withdraw from the project.

During the summer months, Mohawks set up blockades in two places in Quebec over the land rights issue. This led to armed confrontation with the *surete du Quebec* (Quebec provincial police) and eventually a prolonged stand-off with the Canadian military. There were a number of calls for nonviolent witnesses or observers during this period and a number of attempts to establish them.

In addition, there were massive numbers of people involved in blockades across Canada in connection with unsettled land rights issues, resource extraction, environmental issues, and militarization - all affecting native people. These problems have arisen against a background of a rising tide of racism and the Canadian government's tendency to refuse to negotiate in good faith, leaving the provinces to deal with the matter as a law and order issue.

As a direct result of

the conflicts in southern Ontario and Quebec, representatives of American Friends Service Committee, Canadian Friends Service Committee, PBI-USA and PBI-Canada met in Kingston, Ontario on September 30 to reflect on the experiences and look at future possibilities.

Participants at that meeting decided to begin a training program patterned on the six-day PBI model. It was further decided that the training would be held on three weekends with one weekend being devoted to native cultural and aboriginal justice issues. The first weekend of the training took place in December with a full registration of 18 participants and six trainers.

Approval in principle for the project to go ahead under PBI-Canada was given at the Directorate meeting in November. This may become a North American project as the issues apply on both sides of the US-Canada border, a border not recognized by native people. ❖



*PBI/USA accepts bust of Mons. Oscar Romero together with Building with the Voiceless in honor of both groups' work for the human rights of Salvadorans.* PBI Photo

*"PBI-USA, a part of PBI, works to establish justice and peace in the world through nonviolent action. To do this we send unarmed international peace teams, when invited, into areas of repression or conflict. By so doing, we challenge the belief that violent institutions and warfare must inevitably dominate human affairs. PBI demonstrates that as international volunteers, citizens can act boldly as peacemakers when their governments cannot. Through its activities, PBI learns about, develops and models forms of nonviolent action in the spirit of Gandhi's experiments with truth."*

-PBI/USA Mission Statement



## PBI in North America

### *PBI-USA Holds First National Conference*

At its first annual national gathering in August, PBI-USA was formally created as a country group within the structure of Peace Brigades International.

The structural bodies of PBI-USA will consist of five elements: National Assembly (yearly meeting), National Coordination Committee (NCC), regional coordinating bodies, committees and paid staff. The nomination process for the NCC was begun at the August meeting and the NCC was formed within a few weeks. The NCC will function as a combined steering committee and board of directors.

The meeting was largely a plenary one, with many discussions regarding the function, process and direction of PBI-USA. Committees were formed and reports taken from the peace teams and members working on issues relating to PBI work in the USA and Canada.



*U.S. volunteer Winnie Romeril studies the Quiché language with a member of the directorate of CERJ.*  
PBI Photo

### *Training And Emergency Response In North America*

PBI in North America was active and growing in 1990, training volunteers, coordinating an Emergency Response Network of 1,675 individuals and organizations, and raising money to support PBI's three teams.

Thirty-four people attended week-long PBI trainings

in New York, California, and Quebec in 1990. (About a third of these have since joined one of the teams, while others remain active with PBI in North America.)

The trainings explore aspects of PBI's work in the field, from crisis response to the daily routine. They examine the cultural differences the teams face, the dynamic of nonpartisanship, and the active role of nonviolence in struggles against injustice. The reality of the work comes to life through roleplays that enact situations volunteers might face. For example: a union activist and a PBI volunteer traveling from Guatemala to El Salvador fail to arrive... what can the teams do?

The Emergency Response Network (ERN) was activated seven times in 1990, generating hundreds of telexes and letters. The ERN is the key protection we offer in countries where PBI works; international pressure can actually prevent or reduce human rights abuses. The majority of alerts were activated for the Council of

Ethnic Communities (CERJ) in Guatemala, whose membership suffered repeated attacks, but still managed to expand its activities.

1990 brought several staff changes, as well. Liam Mahony, member of the National Coordinating Committee for PBI-USA and formerly on staff, welcomed Georgianna Logan and Mary MacArthur to the Cambridge office. Janey Skinner joined John Lindsay-Poland in San Francisco. The Cambridge office coordinates the ERN

and does fundraising and development for the USA, while the San Francisco office is in charge of training, production of the monthly bulletin and grantwriting. The Albany office closed, after Karen Beetle and Carolyn Mow both moved on to other work. In Toronto, Alaine Hawkins will be replaced by Louise Palmer (of the Guatemala team) as Central American Project Coordinator, but continues in a staff position for PBI-Canada.

## PBI-Canada in 1990

PBI-Canada made significant progress in developing itself as a country group during 1990. Reincorporated in 1989, PBI-Canada received status as a charitable institution from the federal government during 1990.

The board of PBI-Canada is currently drawn from the Perth, Ottawa, and Montreal area. The next task facing the country group is to include a wider base of support from active members of the PBI Emergency Response Network and others across the country.

The number of people in Canada who are aware of the work of PBI increased significantly during 1990. This was chiefly due to the high profile of Karen Ridd, a PBI volunteer from Winnipeg, who was arrested in El Salvador during the 1989 offensive. Karen refused to be released by the Salvadoran military until her co-worker from Columbia was also released. The act caught country-wide attention and resulted in an eight-month speaking tour during which Karen crossed the country several

times.

An articulate, warm and strong speaker, Karen used the attention her action had gained to bring the message of nonviolence to the Canadian public and raise awareness about the situation in El Salvador. She focussed on the courage of the people of El Salvador in their daily nonviolent struggle for peace and justice, and related her experiences in Central America to the broader issues of world peace and nonviolent struggle.

The challenge for PBI-Canada is to draw into its work the many Canadians who are excited by PBI's form of active nonviolence. One of the possibilities that now exists is to apply the experience gained in Central America to the North American context, for instance in conflict situations arising from the drive for aboriginal justice. ♦

## PBI-Europe in 1990

The year 1990 was a very important one for the development of PBI-Europe bringing a new overall structure, a new country group, new people, and new political and financial support.

With the addition of PBI-Austria in April, there are 10 country groups presently active in Europe: Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and The Netherlands. At the March 1990 European Assembly--one of two meetings annually of PBI country groups in Europe--the different countries decided to form a PBI-Europe coordinating body with the goal of increasing efficiency and credibility in the daily work of a largely volunteer movement. It was further decided that the structure of PBI-Europe would be democratic and decentralized, in keeping with the philosophy of PBI and the structure of the organization as a whole.

Three general European Coordinators, chosen by the Assembly, are responsible for facilitating communication between the European country groups, communicating for Europe with other PBI bodies such as the International Office or the Directorate, and organizing bi-annual meetings of all the country groups. The Assembly also elected two European project coordinators, a financial coordinator, a coordinator for trainings, and one for the European Emergency Response Network. The

European Delegates Meeting in the fall added a publicity coordinator.

PBI-Europe's growing knowledge of the countries in which we have peace teams has strengthened its credibility with political leaders, non-governmental organizations and the general public. In some European countries, PBI has become the non-partisan organization that is approached for information on Guatemala and El Salvador.

This increased credibility allowed PBI-Europe to raise strong support for the teams in 1990, following the late 1989 attack on the Guatemalan team and the November 1989 departure of the El Salvador team.

Amongst the people who expressed their support were national deputies and ministers as well as European deputies. In 1990, PBI national groups managed to raise - for the first time in Europe - more money than budgeted, also a reflection of increased credibility.

Although the European structure of PBI still faces some organizational problems because of its volunteer nature, PBI is on its way in Europe. We are beginning to experience the rewards of nearly ten years of work, thanks to the willingness of hundreds of former team members who continue the struggle for peace after their return from the teams.



## Highlights of a Few European Country Groups

### AUSTRIA

Since April 1990 PBI-Austria has been sharing an office in Graz with other peace groups. The office showed a PBI video and slide shows, published a newsletter every six weeks, and wrote articles about PBI for other publications. Members also worked on establishing high-level contacts and organized an evening with Guatemalan leader Rigoberta Menchu, who had been escorted by PBI on an earlier visit to Guatemala.

### GERMANY

PBI-Germany began work in 1990 on getting legal status which they feel will encourage more people to join them and help in fundraising efforts. The group was very active in recruiting volunteers, three of which served on the teams in 1990. Members also put energy into moving the office to a new location in Neuwied.

### GREAT BRITAIN

At the start of 1990, PBI had only a handful of supporters in Great Britain. Only three British volunteers had ever taken part in any PBI projects, and establishing a PBI branch was still no more than a dream. A nationwide speaking tour brought the message of PBI first-hand to 270 people in 17 different cities and towns, and of the eight people who attended PBI/Britain's first introductory training session, four became PBI volunteers during 1990.

### ITALY

As of the end of 1990, local PBI groups had been formed in five cities in Italy. Their activities centered around conducting public meetings; organizing training events; and developing contacts with government, trade unions and churches. The country group as a whole has a structure that includes an Annual Assembly, a management committee that meets quarterly, working groups for the projects, ERN, and PBI training camps. Special events in 1990 included public meetings with Amnesty International, tours by volunteers from Sri Lanka and Guatemala, and a reflection weekend for PBI members in November.

### SWEDEN

The work of PBI-Sweden has been to distribute information, seek volunteers and raise funds. Members organized a number of workshops, some on nonviolence and others as an orientation for people interested in attending a European volunteer training. In the fall, two returned volunteers gave a tour in which they spoke to 27 different Swedish groups, including schools, universities, unions, peace groups, conservation groups and a youth church group.

## Volunteer Training in Europe

Four volunteer trainings were held in Europe in 1990, two for the Central American Project (CAP) and two for the Sri Lanka Project (SLP).

Participants in a CAP training are expected as prerequisites to be familiar with PBI, with nonviolence and with the history and political situation in the country were they expect to serve. In the training, volunteers prepare for life in the team, how to cope with difficulties that arise, and how to make decisions by consensus. They come to know themselves and their reactions better, especially in situations of stress and fear, and how to work together in a group. Through roleplays, theater performances and brainstorming sessions, the work of the teams is made concrete and understandable. The exercises emphasize safety issues and the discretion required of team members.

The issue of stress and fear is dealt with in a particularly dramatic way. Half of the volunteers dress as military and enact a middle-of-the-night arrest of the other volunteers, without either group having prior knowledge of the event. The darkness and suddenness of the action make this roleplay particularly vivid, as participants are torn from their beds, lined up, searched and separated by gender. In the discussion following the exercise, volunteers from both groups discuss the intense emotions that come up and learn about how to help themselves and others in extreme situations.

Other exercises include a theater play that each team must present to the larger group that deals with how to publicly represent PBI (an interview with journalists, a visit to an immigration office or union); a 2-4 page article which the team must write as a group, providing experience in group process and consensus decision-making; and a roleplay enacting passage through customs where visas and passports are checked and luggage searched, continuing through the week with spot checks of identification and visa documents.

Volunteers also participate in a roleplay that addresses cultural differences and discuss the differences that exist between North and Central American and European cultures, and language differences between Spain and Central America. Throughout the training, the atmosphere of a Central American country is simulated in language, dress and through the enactment of real-life situations that team members may face. ♦

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