THE ISRAELI REFUSNIK MOVEMENT (CONT. FROM P. 11)

The first goal of the peace force would be to prevent any outbreak of violence in the region. Secondly, if violence did break out, the peace force would use nonviolent methods to bring the situation under control in order to start a process of conflict transformation and find a peaceful solution to the disagreement. The third goal would be to create a situation in Israel and Palestine in which war and violent conflicts would be outlawed.

In this context, the growing number of refusniks, who currently withhold their support and cooperation from the army, would eventually lead to the collapse of the military establishment. Until the collapse of the military establishment, the refusniks should aim to institute the alternative organization with themselves as the core group of members. Additionally, the peace force lines would be open to any volunteer, man or woman, Israeli or Palestinian. The organization’s mission statement would include resolving conflicts nonviolently, promoting peaceful solutions to disputes, acting to guarantee common security for all human beings, and intervening in the midst of violence as a nonviolent third party (Nonviolent Third Party Intervention is used today by the Peace Force, and Peace Brigades International). The peace force members must believe, accept and be trained in the discipline of nonviolence in order to present an alternative model of conflict resolution to the violent approach of the military. In addition, the members would have distinctive and recognizable uniforms, so that in a time of conflict the peace force would be able to act freely without being hurt by either side of the disagreement. The peace force should also establish local cells, which would operate in every community and assist them in acquiring the ability and techniques to solve problems on their own. The local cells could also work as mediators in disputes, educators for peace, or organizers of peace rallies. By adopting these roles as the organization’s social practices, the peace force would also serve as a peace keeping and peace building institute in Israel and Palestine. This peace force model, which provides peace making, keeping, and building services, can be and should be implemented in other areas of conflict around the world. Doing so would allow different communities to resolve their conflicts in a nonviolent and peaceful manner.

Resources
Refusers Solidarity Network:  http://www.refusersolidarity.net/
Shministim:  http://www.shministim.org/indexenglish.html
Nonviolence Peace Force:  http://www.nvpf.org

WOMEN’S CENTURY OF PEACE (CONT. FROM P. 8)

way to make sure they do not do something bad out of their helpless ignorance. I was quite shocked to learn that the word siya-sar had such a degrading connotation. I had used it myself without knowing what it meant because I have heard others use it in everyday language. I am told by some that the word is not really derogatory but a sort of “endearment” term that is supposed to be mindful of women’s role in society. The role of women in society should never be degraded to such terminology and most would agree. It is difficult to erase such terms from society’s mind when women are constantly undermined in their status as human beings.

Despite all this, progress is being made. Women business entrepreneurs and educators are returning to Afghanistan from the all over the world to rebuild and reconstruct society by employing other women and empowering them to be self-sufficient and rely less on handouts. Women’s clinics are being built which, of course, are in need of women’s help. Schools are being built and expanded to accommodate space for girls. Programs such as these are stepping-stones to a better future for women. I believe that women have to be empowered before true peace is acquired in Afghanistan and other places.

Everyone should take a lesson from the women of Rwanda after the genocide of 1994 and see how they have rebuilt a country after an atrocity that was compared to the Jewish Holocaust. Women’s representation in the government in Rwanda is unmatched compared to any other country. Their efforts have started many programs that educate and empower women in a society that 10 years ago had no rights, including a vital economic right, the right to property. Women are educated in numbers that are unprecedented for that country.

I have great hopes for the future. We must not forget the plight of women in Afghanistan and around the world. It has been too long in earthly terms for half of the population of the world to be uninvolved in bringing about peace and justice in the world. I am an optimist and I think that there will be significant changes in women’s role in the future and I would like to dedicate this century to women and call it “Women’s Century.”

COULD NONVIOLENCE “SUCCEED” IN IRAQ (FROM P. 23)

The spirituality of nonviolence—that all humans are interconnected and that their lives are of equal worth—is a powerful force for peace. Marla Ruzicka, upon leaving her work in post-Sept. 11th Afghanistan, wrote, “My heart broke and I made a commitment to ensure that no more innocent Afghans had to suffer.” What if all Americans made that kind of commitment?

Besides the organizations above, check out www.globalexchange.org/countries/mideast/iraq/links for more info on Iraq.