

The Privilege Problematic in International Nonviolent Accompaniment's Early Decades

Peace Brigades International Confronts the Use of Racism

Peace Brigades International was one of the pioneers of international nonviolent protective accompaniment. In its first decades, however, it largely fielded un-uniformed teams made up of white citizens from influential European countries, the United States, Canada, and Australia. In doing so, it engaged and partly relied upon racist and classist constructions of internationality in order to protect local activists under threat of political violence. This study documents and analyzes how individual PBI members and the organization itself confronted this uncomfortable reality—what I am calling the privilege problematic—in its first fifteen years. Four representative schools of thought present within PBI are identified and analyzed by way of thick descriptions. The search for final resolution to the privilege problematic in international accompaniment work is quixotic since one can never operate completely outside the prevailing dynamics of race and privilege that still permeate the social and political systems within which accompaniment is applied. Thus the early struggles with privilege by a founding organization take on added historical and analytical significance.

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Peace Brigades International is a human rights and nonviolent peacekeeping organization founded in 1981 by Gandhians and Quakers long active in international peace efforts. Operating where political space is contested and democratic freedoms are compromised, PBI attempts to secure political space within which human rights and nonviolent struggle may be more safely exercised by local activists. Relying on foreign nationals, the organization has pioneered a model of nonviolent protective accompaniment in national conflicts.

Significant deployments of Peace Brigades International (PBI) teams have occurred in Nicaragua (1983), Guatemala (1983-99; 2003-present), El Salvador (1987-92), Sri Lanka (1989-1998), North America (1992-1999), Colombia (1994-present), Haiti (1992-2001), Mexico (1998-present), Indonesia (2000-10), and Nepal (2005-present). Considered collectively, this represents 108 years of team-based experience in ten different settings. It also likely makes PBI the organization with the most experience in doing international protective accompaniment work. ^[1]

International protective accompaniment rests on the idea that the presence of unarmed international escorts alongside local activists is a deterrent in certain situations since violence or freedom restrictions directed toward, or in the presence of, foreign nationals often results in higher political costs for the transgressors than the same actions directed at local citizens. The organization nurtures broad diplomatic relationships and maintains an Emergency Response Network (ERN) through email lists and social media networks to receive fast-breaking PBI information calling for immediate action. That action includes email, letters, faxes, tweets, and phone calls calling for the correction of the perceived injustice. When accompaniment fails to deter, it nonetheless allows PBI to publicize fast-breaking, and reliable eyewitness accounts of human rights transgressions, which may increase this nonviolent technique's deterrent power in future situations. ^[2]

Article Focus, Data, and Scope

George was a veteran of multiple PBI teams when I attended a talk he gave in the early 1990s about PBI's accompaniment work. Following his presentation he was asked, "OK. So I understand that you protected some of these people you accompanied. But if there is

violence all around, who is going to protect you?” George was wearing a short-sleeved shirt. Without missing a beat he raised the bare underbelly of his forearm to the group, and with his other hand he pinched a gathering of the pale skin there to highlight it and said simply, “My white skin.” Many others within PBI at the time would have cringed at the crass and public explanation offered by George, even while they would have also had a difficult time denying the truth of his statement. It is those tensions over what I am calling “the privilege problematic” that are the focus of this study. PBI’s exploitation of racism and privilege and its subsequent attempts to come to terms with that during its formative first fifteen years form the heart of this article.

The research is based in part upon a participant observation study of PBI, including attendance at international, national, and regional meetings of the organization from 1992-1998, and ongoing research in the PBI archives and elsewhere regarding its field operations starting in 1983. After undergoing PBI’s training program in 1992, I joined the PBI team in Sri Lanka, which I served on for three months in 1993, later returning for another one month stint in 1994. ^[3] Quotations from interviews include an endnote that references the interview. Quotations that contain no endnote come from my field notes and in these instances the names used are pseudonyms. This article is intended as a historical window into how Peace Brigades International dealt with the controversial issue of the role of white, northern and western privilege in its international accompaniment work during the first fifteen years of its existence. There are at least four reasons that justify this historical retrospective.

First, although PBI was only a decade old as an organization when I began my participant observation research, other organizations moving into the accompaniment field were already looking to PBI and learning from its practice. It was perceived as a leader in the field. PBI was nonetheless still solidifying its values and practices and still feeling its way into organizational maturity. Part of this maturation was its coming to terms with the use of privilege. Second, along with Witness for Peace, Peace Brigades pioneered the practice of international nonviolent accompaniment in situations of high political violence. Not only was the organization still in its adolescence but the nonviolent tactic of accompaniment that it was using—and that had come to define its organizational existence—was also a relative newcomer in the ancient field of nonviolent tactics. The use, indeed the reliance upon, new and unproven nonviolent tactics will necessitate some experimenting, some testing, some

probing of various approaches to find ones that not only work, but that do not violate organizational values. Indeed, that is exactly what PBI was engaged in, as this study will show. Third, in its first fifteen years of experimenting with this new tactic, PBI fielded teams that were nearly all-white and nearly all from politically and economically influential countries in the west, the north, and Australia and New Zealand. This study chronicles and analyzes how the organization defined and confronted this reality as it matured.

Fourth, in its first decade and a half of field work, teams from Peace Brigades worked primarily in Latin America and South Asia, and these largely white teams from the north and west did not wear uniforms. As George so boldly stated in the vignette above, the white skin of the un-uniformed observers from the “first world” was a significant factor in distinguishing them in the field from those whom they accompanied, and from the local citizenry. And when in diplomatic meetings and International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) sessions and meetings with local police and military, the first world citizenship of the observers was seen to be useful then, too. Yet these approaches were being interrogated within PBI during a period that was not only formative for the growing organization but for the young tactic of international accompaniment. It is that interrogation of a critically important issue during a particularly formative period that this article addresses. Taken collectively, these four contextual factors warrant this historical retrospective into how Peace Brigades confronted its reliance on white western privilege in its accompaniment work in its early years.

PBI and the Early Struggle to Diversify

When eleven seasoned activists and educators founded PBI in 1981, they had some things in common. Well over half were involved with Quaker peacemaking efforts and all but one was a believer in nonviolence.^[4] More importantly, all but two were from countries in the north and west. The lone exceptions were Jaime Diaz of Colombia, and Narayan Desai, a founder of Shanti Sena in India and of the World Peace Brigade, PBI’s predecessor organization. Thus early on in PBI’s history a pattern was set of disproportionate participation in PBI’s programs by citizens from countries in the north and west, a pattern that PBI eventually confronted in a variety of ways.

As PBI moved into its second decade in the early 1990s, there was a lot of discourse within the organization about the desirability of diversifying the teams and the broader

organization. This was especially true for PBI-USA, which adopted affirmative action guidelines at its 1992 national gathering. Guideline goals included holding “internal workshops on un-doing racism,” having “people from diverse backgrounds involved in PBI-USA decisions,” and establishing “multi-racial, multi-cultural PBI teams and programs.” The US country group also wanted to have people of color in four of the ten seats on its national coordinating committee. It was even willing to leave some of those seats vacant rather than continuing to fill them with people from majority communities. Some indigenous people joined the national coordinating committee briefly in the early 1990s and a Sri Lankan-American served on the committee for a number of years in the early 1990s as well. But the organization’s early efforts to diversify its decision-making bodies met with little success.

Diversifying the teams was seen as especially important given the organization’s track record in the first decade. There were no Africans, African Americans, or Latino Americans serving on any PBI teams. PBI’s long-term teams in Guatemala and El Salvador drew team members almost exclusively from the majority communities of Europe and North America. Exceptions included a Brazilian, a Swedish citizen born in Argentina, a Colombian, and a Chilean. When PBI’s Central American Project (CAP) teams had Latina members, it had at times been the teams’ perceptions that they faced increased risks, even when it was clear they were foreigners .^[5] That explains in part why CAP’s coordinator said in 1993 that they would at that time likely discourage a U.S. citizen of Guatemalan or El Salvadoran descent from serving on a team in those countries. ^[6]

Marcella Rodriguez Diaz is a Colombian who was much involved in PBI’s Central American Projects. Her service on the PBI team in El Salvador was credited by many in PBI with opening new avenues of cooperation between PBI and Salvadoran groups.

Certainly Marcella established relationships with people in El Salvador that neither Europeans nor North Americans could really make. And that's very valuable. ... You know, you get greater credibility when someone can see that the local population has confidence in the organization .^[7]

But Rodriguez Diaz also appeared to face greater risks in El Salvador than her northern teammates. In fact, when she and a white Canadian team member (Karen Ridd) were arrested by Salvadoran police in 1989, Rodriguez Diaz experienced different treatment,

including beatings, torture, and being held longer than her Canadian colleague. ^[8] And it was not just Diaz. Thirty-seven Europeans and North Americans were detained along with Ridd and Diaz in El Salvador on this occasion. Three quarters were held fewer than 24 hours with virtually all released to their respective embassies. Not so for those from the global south. Of the seventeen South American and Central American foreigners detained, 60 percent were held longer than four days and then abruptly deported. ^[9] Apparently, due at least in part to Rodriguez Diaz being with Ridd who advocated strenuously on her behalf, she was actually the only Latin American freed the same day. Similarly, when Niren Hiro, an Indian citizen born and raised in Japan, joined the PBI Sri Lanka team, he experienced significantly different treatment from police and military officials, including instances of harassment, than did his colleagues of white Anglo-Saxon descent. ^[10] For example, while serving as an international observer at a February 21, 1994, “Freedom from Fear” demonstration and even while wearing the Sri Lanka Project’s newly-issued uniform of a bright yellow bib, he was pushed back from passing through a police line while his nearby PBI colleagues were not. ^[11]

The ethnic and national background of PBI’s Sri Lanka Project (SLP) team members into the mid-1990s tells much the same story as that described above for the Central American Project, except that the SLP attracted many more team members from the majority communities of Australia and New Zealand. The few exceptions included a Thai, a Japanese, the aforementioned Indian citizen raised in Japan, and for a one week project, a Sri Lankan-American.

Research across various social movements occurring in different places throughout the twentieth century demonstrates the crucial role played by preexisting networks of organizations, friendships, and social relationships for membership recruitment. ^[12] This is undoubtedly a factor in why PBI, like so many other social movement organizations rooted in majority communities, had limited success in meeting its diversification goals: PBI is embedded in a network of like organizations and is a collection of like individuals who often network with other like individuals.

Recruitment of people of color to serve on PBI teams faced the same set of hurdles that all of PBI’s recruitment efforts faced, but without the critical benefit of the preexisting networks. Team members paid their own travel expenses to and from training and

evaluation programs, programs for which prospective volunteers also had to pay to attend. If accepted for a team, volunteers paid their travel expenses to and from their placement. They were then provided with room and board, work-related expenses, limited health care, and in the early 1990s a personal stipend of fifty dollars (US) per month, plus very modest holiday and repatriation allowances.

For all of this, one was allowed to put oneself at some physical risk while working in a stressful, demanding job that required broad skills. And to top it off, volunteers lived together with other foreign nationals they had often never met in a house that doubled as the team office and meeting place, meaning that distinctions between work hours and “off hours” were difficult to maintain. Clearly, these were not financial, social, physical, or living conditions that were going to attract many. Serving on a PBI team is not a “job” in the traditional sense, which is reflected in the fact that team members are referred to within PBI as “volunteers.” The nature of the work conditions was not lost on the organization’s volunteers. One long time PBI member, a veteran of the teams in Guatemala, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, and Haiti, described the life of a team member this way:

PBI volunteers in Sri Lanka live almost monastically, far from friends and family in crowded houses with transient house mates of diverse backgrounds and values. Mostly they do risky, tedious, thankless work on irregular schedules in alien climates in strange cultures in war-torn countries . [13]

But there were also other hurdles in the attempt to diversify the teams. For minority communities still facing significant levels of discrimination at home, the state of human rights in far-off countries may not have been the topic of greatest concern. In addition, some people of color from the United States also take it as given that they would have unequal access to some of the supportive and protective mechanisms available to other team members. For example, one of the support mechanisms PBI relies on to protect its team members is the influence a team member’s embassy could bring to bear if that member is arrested, detained, or harassed in other ways. The intervention of embassy staff may go a long way to securing a timely release, provided they are, in fact, willing to intervene. [14] But not all Americans, including some minorities who were, in fact, interested in the work of PBI, were confident of that willingness.

Janey Skinner is the former coordinator of PBI training in North America, and a veteran of

PBI teams in El Salvador and Colombia. Having been much involved in recruiting for the teams, she reported that some African Americans and Latino Americans told her they would not do international observer work because they believed if they needed assistance, “the U.S. embassy would do nothing for them and everyone knows it.” ^[15] Clearly, PBI had no control over whether embassy staff perform their duties in an unbiased, professional manner. But the fact that some prospective team members from minority communities believed that U.S. diplomats couldn’t be trusted to do so is further evidence of the magnitude and complexity of the issues that faced PBI-USA as it attempted to diversify.

All of this was exacerbated at the time by structural issues internal to PBI. Recruitment of volunteers took place almost entirely within the context of “country groups.” The thirteen country groups in the mid-1990s—all located in Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand—recruited, trained, evaluated, and accepted or rejected prospective volunteers. If there were no country groups in a region, which was often true for the whole of Africa, Asia, South America, and the Middle East, there were no local institutional mechanisms in place for inhabitants of those areas to join PBI teams.

All of the PBI country groups were preparing for PBI’s triennial General Assembly (GA) in the spring of 1992, the organization’s highest decision-making and policy-setting body. Writing to the GA on behalf of the PBI-USA National Coordinating Committee, Janey Skinner’s “thought paper” explored the function of race in international accompaniment and the need for PBI to also do “anti-racism work.” She highlighted the rising tide of racial and ethnic conflict in the world and the fact that PBI would likely be working more and more in conflicts of this sort. Skinner identified three interrelated areas that needed attention: 1) a better understanding of racism and its role in the countries where PBI works; 2) acknowledgment of racism in geopolitical power relations and in PBI’s accompaniment work; 3) a willingness within PBI to confront and unlearn its internal racism. ^[16]

A year later, the 1993 PBI-USA national gathering on Raft Island, Washington, included a workshop designed to help participants increase bias awareness and decrease and unlearn racism. In the comments each participant made at the gathering’s opening go-around, many stated they were glad PBI was taking steps to address both the function of racism in accompaniment work, and the role that racism played in keeping PBI-USA an overwhelmingly white organization. Len’s comment was typical.

I'm really pleased that PBI sees undoing racism as an important part of the ongoing internal education that we have to keep doing within the organization. This is a logical extension of the questions we began to ask at the last gathering about the homogeneity on our teams and how that relates to where they work and who they work with.

For many in PBI at this time, the organization's apparent reliance on the dynamics of race while doing accompaniment cut against the grain of some of their deeply held values. And for some who had been on the receiving end of prejudice and racism in other areas of their lives, organizational racism was a source of pain and frustration, as the following example demonstrates.

At one point during the unlearning racism workshop, Rich volunteered to go through an exercise in front of the rest of the group. He had served on PBI teams in different projects and had worked for other INGOs as well. A member of more than one "minority" group himself, the workshop topic struck close to home for him. Toward the end of the exercise, Rich was asked by the trainer if there was one thing he could ask Peace Brigades to do regarding unlearning racism, what would it be? The room was silent as he stood alone in the middle of the group for what seemed like a painfully long time. Finally the workshop leader moved over, stood next to him, and took his hand. Rich then began to cry softly. "I've said it so many times; they all know what I want," he replied. "I want PBI scarves or uniforms of some kind, so we don't have to rely on white skin."

In the spirited yet sensitive discussion that followed, the group seemed to come to some shared agreement that PBI had not yet, in fact, "confronted its reliance on race," despite the many unlearning racism discussions and workshops. Some were concerned that this oversight meant that the few team members who were people of color were unduly endangered and that the organization had a responsibility to examine this much more closely than it had. Others called for an even deeper discussion within PBI. They claimed that while the international accompaniment technique itself may not have racism at its core, they felt it nevertheless engaged the preferential dynamics of racism, and it flirted with colonialism. Since the organization was beginning to do more peace education work in the field as a complement to accompaniment work, they thought it doubly important to examine these issues.

One organizational site where this ongoing examination began to happen with regularity was the training session for prospective volunteers. Regular training included exercises and role plays designed to get participants to think about the role of social and political power and the dissimilar perceptions of power that different people have that can influence the performance of an individual team member as well as the work of the whole team. Many of PBI's volunteers during this period were people who had embraced alternative lifestyles; not a few were downwardly mobile by choice within their own societies. Yet these choices can, in turn, easily breed a tacit acceptance of other less obvious manifestations of the privileges that nevertheless accrue to members of majority communities, downwardly mobile or not. Contemporary racism in the west has obscured white privilege, hiding it from easy view. ^[17] Consequently, many PBI team members at this time perceived a change in their social status when they began working in the international accompaniment field, even though it may not have been as big of a change as the often invisible nature of privilege at home may have led them to think it was. PBI's then coordinator of training for North America, himself a member of a minority community, reflected on this:

Training participants have to start thinking about what it will mean to be perceived as a powerful person, particularly people who come out of like alternative lifestyles, who perceive themselves in their home countries as on the fringe, on the margin, powerless, or alternative. Then they go to a country where they are immediately perceived without questioning as being powerful, in some way wealthier, better dressed, better educated, more knowledgeable about the world perhaps, because of being closer to sources of information. And then that can lead to a kind of culture shock for them.

There are other people who aren't aware of that, and I think they have to be made aware of it, that the whole idea of the Peace Brigades is that you are perceived as being more valuable, and that we are going to play with this, we're going to share our power that's been given to us. It's sort of a bluff. If I'm more valuable than this person and I'm right next to him, is anything going to happen to him? And I dare you to. ^[18]

Despite such efforts by the organization to raise the level of awareness of these issues in their prospective team members, it was still not unusual for volunteers to be rather quickly taken aback at the degree to which the dynamics of privilege are engaged in the work. This

was especially true in the Sri Lanka Project. The following interview exchange with a member of the Sri Lanka team was not uncommon:

Interviewer: So when PBI was first described to you in terms of what it did and what its worth was, what did you think about it?

Schoenbein: It sounds interesting. I liked the idea that you don't go to a country and teach the people what to do. That you go there and you're just there to observe, and to assist the people in what they are doing.

Interviewer: Uh, huh.

Schoenbein: (long pause) Yeah, I liked to realize that it is not us doing things. Uhm, already when I arrived here I very soon realized it is not as noninterventionist as I thought, but it's a bit based on a racist idea. I didn't realize this before I came. And before I came I only saw the positive points (Schoenbein interview 1994).

One reason team members were taken aback by the realization of their white privilege in their work was that white privilege was overt and not easily ignored or denied in a country like Sri Lanka with a colonial history. The following comment came from Yolanda, who had served on the Sri Lanka team three years previously, and who then returned for a short period in 1994.

All that really sustains me is at home. White power here is not real power, in fact, it is not reality at all. I am not used to it, to having this kind of power. If I liked it, I could probably get used to it, even gorge myself on it (laughing). But I don't like it, and I don't want to learn to like it. If you come here and you don't know who you are, it could destroy you.

The difficulty many team members had in dealing with these issues was further evidenced by Yolanda's conflicted feelings. She said that when she arrived on the team the first time, she had no clear idea that race was a factor in the work. She suggested that this was an embarrassing admission of ignorance on her part regarding both Sri Lanka and the work of PBI, but it was true none the less. One could also conclude that Yolanda's statement likely demonstrated a blindness to the functions of white privilege in her home setting, Great Britain. Yolanda later admitted she felt safer in the work of the team because of the dynamics of race and privilege than she would have without it, and that "in some ways I am

now glad for it. Because I am not really willing to die for others anymore.”

In the beginning, the founders of PBI drew on the model of the Shanti Sena of India. ^[19] They were largely North American Quakers and an Indian committed to a Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence where the ends and means are inseparable and where, according to Gandhi, “I would say ‘means are after all everything.’ As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end.” ^[20] It is not surprising, then, that many in PBI in its first decades thought about the dynamics of race and the construction of influential internationality in accompaniment work as a means/ends issue. They could absolve PBI of responsibility for engaging racism by making a set of distinctions that posited racism in others, for example in the Sri Lankan police and military. Consider this stance:

PBI in general, I think, tries not to exploit the position we're in. If that weren't the case, I would have immense trouble handling it. I think it's where the racism is coming from. PBI is not using racism; the racism is the racism of the people we're dealing with. Well, and that's only my perception as well, it's not a tool that we're using, it's something that happens to enhance what we do. So it's something, it's not something we intentionally use or something that we try and increase in any way. In fact, if anything we try to go the other way, we try and break down barriers between us and Sri Lankan people, which I think we do very effectively with a lot of our escort work. ^[21]

Coming to Terms with Privilege

The issues surrounding how the internationality of PBI volunteers is constructed intersects with the values and beliefs of the volunteers themselves. It is useful, therefore, to order their various responses to the privilege problematic into a meaningful typology of four broad views representing the range of perspectives expressed within PBI in its first fifteen years. The four perspectives are: strategic; process/prophetic; spiritual/moral, and rejectionist. ^[22]

Strategic

This was by far the most common perspective, and also the most complex. Because of both its complexity and its popularity within PBI, I will analyze it at greater length than the

others. Also, within this school of thought, it is useful to identify three layers of understanding that some PBI members brought to these issues.

First, these members thought the technique of international protective accompaniment was a creative strategy, building on existing nonviolent theory. More specifically, they believed that exploiting the racial and social privilege of PBI members was an innovative use and extension of the classic nonviolent principle of political jiu-jitsu.

Richard Gregg introduced the concept of “moral jiu-jitsu” as early as 1935 after studying with Gandhi in India. His concept builds upon the functions of balance, counter resistance, and surprise delineated in the science of physical jiu-jitsu but transfers them to the moral and political realm. ^[23] He supplements these principles with psychological analysis of the destabilizing and ultimately disarming effects that nonviolent resistance can have on the mind and spirit of the violent oppressor. Much later, nonviolent theorist Gene Sharp also analyzed the jiu-jitsu dynamic in nonviolent action, emphasizing its political dimensions. Meeting violent repression with nonviolent defiance can cause the violence of the oppressors to rebound against and weaken their own position, undercutting their power and the support they enjoy from other parties, even while strengthening the nonviolent resisters. ^[24] Similarly, many in PBI thought that engaging and exploiting racism and classism by using white nonviolent escorts from first-world countries to protect local activists functions in much the same way. One long time PBI member put it this way:

What the escorting work is trying to do is to use existing power relationships in a kind of jiu-jitsu. To say, all right, if they are going to be racist and treat their own populations worse, if they are going to be racist and cave in to the north/south power relationships, then we are going to use that and turn it back on them in order to basically ally ourselves with those people who are trying to change the structures. ... But there gets to be a fine line between that, and collaborating with the racism in the power relationships. And just saying, ‘Oh well, it’s only us who can come and protect those people there’. ^[25]

In the above passage it is possible to detect a whisper of satisfaction, pleasure almost, in turning back on itself what is thought of as a fundamentally unjust system and using it instead for the benefit of those normally oppressed by it. But in the following quote, taken from an article published by a former member of the Sri Lanka team, the whisper becomes a

shout:

Yet it's precisely pale skin and its privilege which give P.B.I. volunteers from Europe, Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and Japan visibility and thus the power to protect those we escort. We use the system against itself. Together with those we accompany, we invoke an international realm where this racist remnant of colonialism is means to greater good. How deliciously criminal I feel, transgressing [emphasis in original]. ^[26]

A second subset within this strategic approach to dealing with privilege acknowledged that it was not only the dynamics of racism that PBI utilized in its work. These members also recognized that PBI readily took advantage of the disparate economic and political power held by western and northern countries that is traditionally exercised at the expense of the east and south. PBI relied on this economic and political power, "the exploitative power of our own governments," but attempted to turn it against "the local bullies, the local racists to protect vulnerable allies in the struggle for justice." ^[27] Like the approach to white privilege, this strategic thinking within PBI takes a utilitarian approach to rationalize the organization's use of structural inequalities that are embedded in foreign aid and international economic arrangements.

The third and most complex approach within this strategic school assumed that the dynamic of political jiu-jitsu was a useful and accurate description of what PBI was trying to do with privilege. But for these members it was still an incomplete description because it missed what they saw as the social revolutionary character of international accompaniment.

One of the defining aspects of racism and classism is that it orders groups, individuals, and their social relations in a hierarchical manner. Some PBI members problematized this arrangement and thought that the relationship between PBI as a provider of accompaniment and local groups as recipients of accompaniment can actually serve to subvert racism and classism by reordering traditional relations. One former PBI team member who was then director of training for PBI-USA, explored this dynamic in a multi-layered fashion in an interview:

As a white person in the U.S. and as a trainer, I find a great deal of value in training white people to be observers, instead of being the star of the show. I find that our very difficulty in accepting nonpartisanship or even

nonintervention is a healthy challenge to the racism and arrogance we soak up through our culture, whether we choose to or not. Respecting other peoples' right to be the protagonists of their own struggle is a good antidote to living inside a superpower. Nonetheless, I would be happier to be doing that in the context of a truly international organization. ^[28]

In the following interview passage, the ways that accompaniment was thought by some in PBI to actually subvert status quo relations between the north/west and the south/east is made even more explicit, this time with illustrations from the field.

I think one of the characteristics about PBI is that we're there in a support role; we don't go to organize anything. ... And that requires a certain humility. You know, one of the things about racism is that the white people are in the center and everything revolves around them. In accompaniment, that's not the way it works. The escort is the shadow, you're somebody's shadow ... We are not participating and telling people what their program should be, or even necessarily how they should respond to security concerns. Physically and psychologically that can really come home to you if you're escorting someone, and they basically say, "Well, I want you to get lost for two hours," or, "You're not going to be in this meeting, you're going to sit outside." And you think, "What? Sit outside?" You are not a participant in that sense. ^[29]

In the multiple PBI trainings I attended and in some public presentations by former team members I attended, some members presented the subversion of traditional power relations as an attractive, added advantage of the technique of international accompaniment. "Not only does it save lives," said one former team member, "but it helps change the way the world is arranged." The trainers emphasized the "serving" dimension of the escort's role with examples drawn from the work of the teams. Many of the examples actually have quite a lot to do with issues of nonpartisanship.

In the interview just quoted, for example, John Lindsay-Poland notes the restrictive nature of PBI's mandate, which says that PBI is nonpartisan and does not take part in the work or activities of the groups it accompanies. ^[30] If it were otherwise and team members actually attended and took part in meetings and projects as participants, the edge might be taken off of the role reversal that was problematic for some team members. This was especially true

for those who were uncritically habituated to privilege, intervention, and the traditional helping roles so long associated with relations between the west and the east.

But the stricture of nonpartisanship as PBI practiced it in its early decades cut both ways. That is, it also served to restrict the degree to which international accompaniment could overturn traditional power relations. ^[31] In fact, some within PBI argued that nonpartisanship was itself an imperial luxury enjoyed only by westerners, and that it often perpetuated traditional colonialist roles. Sometimes the PBI escort would be the only one present not contributing to the task at hand. For example, before a large rally in one of Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zones, a PBI team member (Nancy) went to the home of one of the organizers to provide an international presence where other activists were gathering for a pre-demonstration meeting and meal. When the food arrived, Nancy accepted the offer to eat with them and sat down at the long tables. And since everyone else was folding flyers and leaflets for the demonstration while also eating, she joined in. When the team processed this event later during a meeting, Nancy spoke of being intensely uncomfortable, sharing so much with local activists, including a meal, but refusing to take part in the work. "I know it probably violated nonpartisanship, and that it would have been very dangerous for PBI's credibility if the police had arrived at that moment. But I didn't want to offend them. It just seemed so stereotypically Western for me to refuse to join in on the work."

Finally, some PBI members acknowledged that there were limits to how thoroughly power relations may be reordered given the fact that it remained PBI's decision whether or not to take a case and what levels of accompaniment to provide when. These were often trying decisions for all involved. ^[32] The team I served on made a decision to cut back its visits to someone the team had been working with because the team thought the dangers were now greatly reduced. Terri's comments following a meeting where the team was commiserating were typical of others I often heard in similar situations:

One of the really difficult things for me about this work is having to judge what other people need or don't need. Sri Lankans know more than I will ever know about Sri Lanka, not to mention their own lives! It makes me laugh, only it is not really funny. I mean I find it really frustrating as I realize we have to make these decisions, there are only so many of us here after all. But what if we are wrong? We really shouldn't be in this position. It is terrible, but we can't avoid

it.

Process/Prophetic

Some Peace Brigades team members acknowledged that racism and the unequal distribution of the world's wealth were two important factors that made international accompaniment strategically useful as it had, up to then, usually been practiced. But they didn't like it, and they didn't want PBI to continue to rely upon it. Instead, they wanted to revamp accompaniment through creative applications that would reconstruct and emphasize its international dimension. Indeed, they were internationalists who believed that accompaniment must be applied in ways that rely simply on the foreign citizenship of the observers, de-emphasizing the racial, ethnic, and specific national citizenship of the observers.

I am calling this a "process/prophetic" view because its supporters suggested that the technique of international protective accompaniment is part of a larger, longer process in two senses. First, they claimed that the technique itself was still young and being developed. This was the process part. They also argued that accompaniment should be developed in a manner that would make it part of a longer effort to destabilize and dismantle racism and classism, creating the conditions for a new social order. This was the prophetic dimension.

When a Sri Lankan Tamil-American joined the PBI team in Sri Lanka in 1994, there was a lot of organizational soul searching about the need to open up the way PBI was using international accompaniment. Lee, a white American member of the team, welcomed the challenge facing the organization:

We have to do our work differently than we have been doing it, especially if we want to really be an international organization. Up to now I guess we just did what we could, relying on what was handy, like our skin color and our western backgrounds. I think PBI's methods should develop and evolve so that we are more international. I don't want us reinforcing these "isms," but working against them. It is hard, though. It is always easier to just keep doing things like you always did them.

The Tamil-American mentioned above was accepted for the team in November 1993. At the same training an Indian passport-holder, born and raised in Japan, was also accepted. Some

within the SLP soon raised questions about the degree of risk and effectiveness these two prospective team members brought relative to other team members. The project committee chairperson's reflection on team members' objections is an example of the "process/prophetic" approach evident in the organization at the time. Here he problematizes the role of race and privilege as part of the larger issues of social and political injustice that PBI's programs were thought to address.

Governments allow their citizens or certain communities within their borders (Inuits, Mayas, Tamils, the poor in Colombia) to be threatened and killed. Yet they are unwilling to allow citizens of other countries to be threatened and killed because that will ruin their image, aid will be cut off, tourists will be discouraged. We are always aware that a government which allows the killing or harassment of some citizens may also threaten foreigners ... If levels of risk are different for different racial groups, that is a valid reason for not allowing some people to be on a team who would be at risk of life or ineffectiveness. If risk is greater for some than for others, but not [life] threatening, if some get less respect than others because of their nationality or color, then that is part of the issue we are working on isn't it?[emphasis added] ^[33]

In discussions on the Sri Lanka team in August 1994 regarding the temporary services of this same Tamil American, some team members argued that the risks to this individual member would be much higher, and might also increase the risks of the Sri Lankans she accompanied, especially in specific regions of the country. Others argued that the organization really didn't have enough experience with ethnically diverse teams to evaluate the risk differential properly, and that, in any event, PBI could not wait for others to change but had to change itself and be a prophetic agent of social change. The following comment came from Rich, a white American veteran who has served on a number of PBI teams.

It is not enough for the Sri Lanka Project or PBI to deal with racism internally and then turn around and say, "Ok, we have to rely on Americans and on whites and on westerners, and we will have to wait until Sri Lankans decide to deal with their racism." PBI has to take positive steps on our own, no matter what they do. Like having Indians, like having Tamil Americans on the team, and like using uniforms.

Significantly, this process/prophetic view was also given voice by Sri Lankans who had received accompaniment and then served as informal local advisors. Lucien Rajakarunanayake, a journalist and founding member of Sri Lanka's Free Media Movement, argued for a process-based approach, one designed to change the way internationality is constructed over time.

I'm not too sure the same response would come if the person were the same skin color as myself. It's a rather nasty criticism of my own society, but I must admit it ... I mean the ideal thing is for a person from India to come and observe here. All right? The culture is known. The culture is common. But I am not too sure the same reaction would come to them ... I think the yellow bib is a good idea. I mean whoever wears it has a stamp of being an international observer. It is a time process where we will go on to say that whatever skin color or whatever nationality, he has to be respected. It is not easy though. Our cultures are such that it will take awhile. ^[34]

Spiritual /Moral

PBI was and is formally a secular organization. Comparatively few of the members at that time were active in formal religious associations. But it would be a mistake to conclude from this that spirituality was not important for some members. At national and regional gatherings it was not uncommon for small ad hoc gatherings to meet early in the morning for shared prayer or meditation, or to conclude the day in like manner. Thus, some within PBI cast their interpretation of the function of privilege with what I am calling a spiritual/moral view. While those who took this approach often acknowledged that racial and national privileges were at play in international observation as PBI had traditionally employed it, they were still reluctant to name such privilege the dominant or most important dynamic. That place of honor was reserved for the disarming capabilities they believed nonviolent action could bring into play, and for what they often called "the spiritual power of nonviolence," or, "the moral power of nonviolence."

An important strain of nonviolent theory holds that the open and obvious willingness of the nonviolent actionist to absorb violence and suffering without responding in kind can erode violent antagonists' morale and their will to continue to inflict violence. ^[35] A good deal of nonviolent theory presumes a situation of significant conflict between two parties, often one

violent and one nonviolent. If third parties are also involved, it has too frequently been assumed that they are not literally on site and not physically involved in the conflict. Some within PBI wanted the organization to more often tap into what they called the moral power of nonviolence and rely on the power of privilege less. They argued that nonviolent action history shows there is a moral power available to nonviolent practitioners that can not be achieved by other mechanisms, and, significantly, that is also available to third party interveners, such as PBI team members.

The following example is from an interview with Devi Prasad. Prasad is an Indian and Gandhian, long active in PBI's committee structure, who also served for many years as the Secretary General of War Resisters International. Although he begins by implying that the dynamic of white skin privilege is a significant factor in international accompaniment, he eventually concludes that it is actually the moral power of nonviolence that is ultimately dominant. Put simply, Prasad argues that nonviolent power is stronger than the power of race or class privilege.

Let me say that if I personally escorted a Sinhalese, there are 95% chances that I will be shot. Not because I am escorting him, but because its very likely that those who are fond of shooting the human rights people, they will think that I am also dispensable, because of the racial and international repercussions. If a white is shot, then the government also will be terrified of seeing in the headlines that a white man has been shot because he was escorting. This is one big part of it. And we have to recognize it ...

Now suppose if in the escort of these people, if a white British member of the Sri Lanka team had on a military uniform, and had a pistol and was escorting, it is very likely he will be shot. Even if he's white ... But as soon as the opponent notices that here is not even a stick, his gun will drop down. So this simple dynamic is that a new element is added to the situation, a new element which the opponent does not expect. Opponent always expects that the other person will also have a weapon ... So one of the other dynamics of that is that the escort is a harmless person, and the opponent begins to ask: "Why is he escorting him?" Maybe because he has sympathy, because there must be some reason.

So there is a mechanism working there which probably increases doubt in the minds of those who want to kill. The introduction of the new element is very important in nonviolence, and nonviolence is in certain situations mainly a mechanism to add a new dimension to the situation. And the new dimension is an armed person facing an un-armed person. That's a very important thing ... it is a moral deterrence. How can I shoot a man who has no gun, no weapons? And this, in the majority of situations, keeps alive in the human heart. This is the moral aspect. ^[36]

Others in the organization argued plainly that PBI is short changing itself and those it works with if it does not adopt a more complex and inclusive view of power. The following passage states this view clearly:

I also think that if we see our power as only coming from our embassies behind us (or that perception, at least), instead of also from the powerful witness of concerned individuals and the spiritual force of nonviolence and truth, then we aren't acknowledging our full potential. And no embassy can give or deny the second kind of power I refer to. ^[37]

Rejectionist

The fourth and final school of thought present within PBI at this time was put forward by team members who were often close to the end of their terms of service, or committee members who were openly critical of the organization's methods. ^[38] Some, like the U.S. volunteer quoted in the following example, were not completely rejectionist, but upset at the position they felt international accompaniment work in Sri Lanka put them in.

There's us as representatives of the outside world, the external. That's what influenced that photograph on Election Day of the UNP [United National Party] and PA [People's Alliance] people coming together. A guy came up to me and said, "I want you to take a picture to show the world that we can live together." Like, we're proving ourselves to you. Fuck proving it to us, prove it to yourself. So maybe that is more cynical. [Laughs] ... I know I don't like it. ^[39]

For others the cynicism or frustration was mixed with strong ideological conflicts over the entire human rights promotion enterprise, of which PBI's international accompaniment was

only one tactic. One British volunteer who I served with left the Sri Lanka team adamant that PBI's approach was misguided, unfair, and reproduced colonial patterns.

I have a few problems within this. The first is the very link up of human rights with aid. I feel that it's unjust that countries who have are putting conditions on the development of countries who have not. I believe that PBI, by working within that framework, is condoning that action. And I believe they should be questioning it quite strongly. I believe that whole link-up has connotations of neo-colonialism, which is very emotional in this part of the world when you look at the history of it. I believe that ... [pause] ... the linkage, the human rights approach that aid-donating countries are using is coming from a western concept of human rights, and that they may not be acknowledging regional differences in approaches to human rights questions. Well, they are not. And that PBI is accepting this as being legitimate ... And then when you get down to the nitty gritty, it's the use of almost this sort of racial exclusiveness in the terms of the volunteers, that we're all white, or so far have been, and are from major aid-donating countries. ... I feel like PBI maybe should not be working in third world or developing countries. ^[40]

Finally, the rejectionist approach was also articulated by Raj Ramanathapillai, a Sri Lankan Tamil then living in Canada, who resigned from the Sri Lanka Project Committee, at least partly over the project's refusal to allow Sri Lankans to serve on the team. Acknowledging the concern that Sri Lankan team members may be under increased risks, he argued that it was not up to the Project Committee to decide who should be allowed to take risks on behalf of human rights promotion. "When a person decides to work for Peace Brigades, whether of Sri Lankan origin or another species, she or he has decided to take risks of their own choice." He further suggested that as long as the project disallowed participation of locals it would seriously sacrifice relevance and usefulness, since "Sri Lankans ... will seldom simply request a strange foreigner to assist or accompany them." ^[41]

Concluding Remarks

This historical review and analysis demonstrates the many different ways that PBI as a young yet trend-setting accompaniment organization struggled with its apparent reliance on

racism, classism, and privilege in its international accompaniment work. The use of privilege was constructed, reconstructed and problematized by early and influential leaders, team members, project committee members, training coordinators, and informal local advisors in the organization's first fifteen years.

Mary Link, who served as the International Secretary of Peace Brigades International in its early years, once remarked to me about privilege that "We use it, but we try not to abuse it." The four schools of thought at work in the organization's early years and identified here demonstrate that PBI's use of privilege can be likened to a festering sore on the organizational body—ignored at some moments, picked open at other moments, covered over the next, only to bleed and demand attention again later. The responses to the privilege problem, ranging from a strategic accommodation and rationalization on one extreme to an outright rejection of PBI's approach on the other, reveal an adolescent organization in turmoil, struggling to find its identity, testing itself and refining its values as it matured organizationally and refined its programs and principles.

As this study shows, how to use privilege without abusing it, and how to temporarily leverage its benefits for those normally victimized by it while trying to blunt its many ongoing deficits for those same people, was the preoccupation of many within PBI. Like fellow researchers Ivan Boothe and Lee Smithey, I would also suggest that what I am calling the privilege problematic has bedeviled not only PBI in the past, but all international accompaniment organizations in the present and likely far into the future. ^[42] In fact, part of the significance of PBI's struggles with the privilege problematic is because subsequent organizations that moved into the field of international accompaniment looked not only to PBI's successes, but to its struggles and mistakes, including those analyzed here.

Organizations like Nonviolent Peaceforce intentionally mined PBI's experience for lessons as they built their own organization. For example, PBI's early experience is one of the reasons Nonviolent Peaceforce made strong and somewhat successful efforts from its beginning to field diverse, multi-racial, more truly international and always uniformed teams. ^[43] It is also why subsequent PBI projects and teams have been issued uniforms and why the make-up of PBI's Indonesia Project and team was structured differently—relying more on people from the region than on white North Americans and Europeans. ^[44]

The search for straightforward answers or a lasting resolution to the privilege problematic in international accompaniment work will be quixotic insofar as one can never operate

completely outside the prevailing dynamics of race and privilege that still permeate the social and political systems within which accompaniment is applied. Viable answers or acceptable resolutions likely lie in ongoing self and organizational interrogations like those profiled here and even more so in joint struggles with local activists over the privilege problematic.

1. 1. It actually represents more than 108 years of team-based experiences in the field insofar as many projects have multiple teams in the field in various parts of a country at any one time.
2. 2. Patrick G. Coy, "Cooperative Accompaniment by Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," in *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State*, edited by Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield and Ron Pagnucco (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 81-100; Liam Mahony and Luis E. Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1997).
3. 3. Patrick G. Coy, "Shared Risks and Research Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30, no. 5 (2001).
4. 4. The one exception was Henry Wisemann, the then director of the National Peace Academy in Washington, D.C. He was skeptical both of nonviolence and of "peaceniks." But by the time the founding conference was completed, he had played a pivotal role in convincing others there of the need for this new organization. Daniel Clark, interview by Patrick G. Coy, August 28, 1992, at Raft Island, WA .
5. 5. Janey Skinner, "Thought Paper on Anti-Racism Work, and the Function of Race in Observer Work" (Paper prepared for Peace Brigades International General Assembly, Camp Neekaunis, Georgian Bay, Ontario, Canada, May 4, 1992).
6. 6. Robert Siedle-Khan, "Memo: Discussion on Policy Limiting Participation on Team," 1993.
7. 7. John Lindsay-Poland , interview by Patrick G. Coy, May 19, 1992, at Nyack, NY.
8. 8. Karen Ridd, "Supporting Non-violence in a Violent Land," *Peace*, April/May (1990): 16-17.
9. 9. Reported in Donna Howard and Corey Levine, "Best Practices in Field

Relationships," *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study*, edited by Christine Schweitzer, Hamburg/St.Paul, (2001), 219,
<http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/nonviolent-peaceforce-feasibility-study> .

10. 10. Niren Hiro, personal letter to author, 1994.
11. 11. Gabriela Schoenbein, interview by Patrick G. Coy, August 25, 1994, Columbo, Sri Lanka.
12. 12. Florence Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and the Structure/agency Gap: a Specification of the Impact of Networks on Participation in Social Movements," *Mobilization* 6, no. 2 (2001): 173-192.
13. 13. Ed Kinane, "Evaluation of PBI Structure." Memo dated April 20, 1992, distributed for the PBI General Assembly, Camp Neekaunis, Georgian Bay, Ontario, Canada, June 10-17, 1992. For an insightful analysis of recruitment and mobilization issues for accompaniment organizations beyond PBI, see Matthew Eddy, "Freedom Summer Abroad: Biographical Pathways and Cosmopolitanism among International Human Rights Workers," in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol. 31., edited by Patrick G. Coy (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2011), 209-258.
14. 14. Patrick G. Coy, "Protective Accompaniment: How Peace Brigades International Secures Political Space and Human Rights Nonviolently," in *Nonviolence: Social and Psychological Issues*, edited by V. K. Kool. (Latham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 235-245.
15. 15. Skinner, "Thought Paper on Anti-Racism Work," 2 .
16. 16. Skinner, "Thought Paper on Anti-Racism Work," 2 .
17. 17. Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," in *Race, Class and Gender in the US: An Integrated Study*, edited by Sheila S. Rothenberg (New York: Worth Publishers, 2004), 192; Tim J. Wise, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* (New York: Soft Skull, 2005), 156.
18. 18. Robert Siedle-Khan, interview by Patrick G. Coy, November 17, 1992, at Syracuse, NY.
19. 19. Thomas Weber, *Gandhi's Peace Army: The Shanti Sena and Unarmed Peacekeeping* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).
20. 20. Mahatma Gandhi and Krishna Kripalani, *All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections* (New York: Continuum, 1980), 74.
21. 21. Helen Stevenson, interview by Patrick G. Coy, September 10, 1993, at Columbo,

Sril Lanka.

22. 22. These should be seen as fluid categories, and I don't mean to suggest that the PBI members I quote in this section subscribe to only one of the views. Some do, most don't. The privilege problematic was a thorny one for PBI members, and they often articulate different positions or explanations at different times, and sometimes in the same interview.
23. 23. Richard Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 41-59; see also Joseph Kip Kosek, "Richard Gregg, Mohandas Gandhi, and the Strategy of Nonviolence," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005), 1318-1348.
24. 24. Gene Sharp, *The Dynamics of Non-Violent Action, The Politics of Non-Violent Action, Part Three* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973), 657-697. See also Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (Boston: Extending Horizons Books-Porter Sargent Publishers, 2005), 405-409.
25. 25. Lindsay-Poland, interview.
26. 26. Marilyn Krysl, "Deeper Darkness," *Manoa* 7, no. 1 (1995): 175.
27. 27. Janey Skinner, "Thought Paper on Anti-Racism Work, and the Function of Race in Observer Work" (paper prepared for Peace Brigades International General Assembly, Camp Neekaunis, Georgian Bay, Ontario, Canada, May 4, 1992), 3.
28. 28. Janey Skinner, interview by Patrick G. Coy, June 14, 1992, at Camp Neekaunis, Ontario, Canada.
29. 29. Lindsay-Poland, interview.
30. 30. For a more detailed discussion of PBI's approach to nonpartisanship, including comparing it to that of other leading international accompaniment organizations, see Patrick G. Coy, "Nonpartisanship, Interventionism and Legality in Accompaniment: Comparative Analyses of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the International Solidarity Movement," *The International Journal of Human Rights* (2012).
31. 31. For a broader overview of the intersection between international accompaniment and both transnational and local empowerment, see Ivan Boothe and Lee Smithey's insightful analysis in Ivan Boothe and Lee A. Smithey, "Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent Intervention," *Peace and Change* 32, no. 1 (2007): 39-61. See also Veronique Duoduet, "Sources, functions and dilemmas of external assistance to

nonviolent resistance movements,” forthcoming. Also see Coy, Protective Accompaniment: How Peace Brigades International Secures Political Space and Human Rights Nonviolently.

32. 32. Patrick G. Coy, "Negotiating Danger and Safety under the Gun: Consensus Decision-Making on Peace Brigades International Teams," in *Consensus Decision-Making, Northern Ireland, and Indigenous Movements*, Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change, vol. 24, edited by Patrick G. Coy (Oxford, UK: Elsevier Science/JAI Press, 2003). 85-122.
33. 33. Bob Siedle-Khan, "Memo: Discussion on Policy Limiting Participation on Team" (1993), 3.
34. 34. Lucien Rajakarunanayake, interview by Patrick G. Coy, August 30, 1994, at Columbo, Sri Lanka.
35. 35. William Robert Miller, *Nonviolence: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 155-175; Sharp, *The Dynamics of Non-Violent Action*, The Politics of Non-Violent Action, Part Three, 707-733; Thomas Weber, "The Marchers Simply Walked Forward Until Struck Down," *Peace & Change* 18, no. 3 (1993): 267; Joseph Kip Kosek, "Richard Gregg, Mohandas Gandhi, and the Strategy of Nonviolence," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005):1318-1348.
36. 36. Devi Prasad, interview by Patrick G. Coy, June 11, 1992, at Camp Neekaunis, Georgian Bay, Ontario, Canada.
37. 37. Skinner, 1992.
38. 38. I suspect there were many more such people, but because of the nature of my participant observation research model I naturally did not come into contact with them. They are not, after all, likely to show up at the regional, national, or international gatherings of the organization after resigning a committee post, or leaving a team in disagreement with its methods.
39. 39. Michael Valliant, interview by Patrick G. Coy, August 23, 1994, at Columbo, Sri Lanka.
40. 40. Simon Harris, interview by Patrick G. Coy, July 20 and August 10, 1993 at Dehiwala, Sri Lanka.
41. 41. Ramanathapillai, R. (1994). "Letter of Resignation to Sri Lanka Project," February 28.
42. 42. Ivan Boothe and Lee A. Smithey, "Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent

Intervention," *Peace and Change* 32, no. 1 (2007): 39-61. For an insightful account of the perceptions, scripts and uses of whiteness and race in the context of PBI's accompaniment in Colombia, see Sara Koopman, "'Mona, mona, mona!' Whiteness, Tropicality, and International Accompaniment in Colombia," *Latin America Studies Group Working Paper Series*, January 12, 2012, <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/10695>.

43. 43. See "Frequently Asked Questions," Nonviolent Peaceforce, at <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/faq>. Also see "Conclusions that Nonviolent Peaceforce Drew about Large Scale Nonviolent Intervention Teams," Site web de Ressources pour la Paix, at <http://www.irenees.net/fr/fiches/analyse/fiche-analyse-727.html>. Even the logo of the Nonviolent Peaceforce reflects this commitment to diversity among the team members: "The Nonviolent Peaceforce International LOGO shows birds of different colors, symbolizing the diversity of nationality, spirituality, language and ability which exists among our members." See "More about NP," Nonviolent Peaceforce, at <http://www.npsand.org/info.html>.
44. 44. Winnie Romeril, interview by Patrick G. Coy, October 12, 2008, at Prattsburgh, NY.