

The past decade has brought about the creation of worldwide markets for information technologies, media, and finance—all encompassed in the term *globalization*. Approximately \$1.5 trillion is traded on foreign-exchange markets daily. With the expansion of financial markets, globalization daunts local economies, renders insolvent provincial industries, produces medieval working conditions in sweatshops, and exacerbates social problems such as trafficking in children for prostitution or as soldiers. Rapid cultural diffusion spreads MTV, misogynistic lyrics, and pornographic literature more effectively than in the past, debasing the distinctive and unique in different cultures. Warfare, too, has been "globalized," as demonstrated by the 1999 NATO hostilities over Kosovo. Globalization conjures up the nineteenth-century Opium Wars, in which the

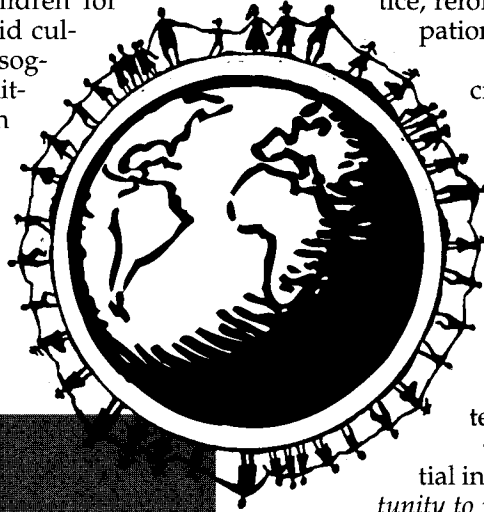
ten or translated materials, and cassettes and video will become even more cheaply reproducible. Electronic transmission increases exponentially the ability to disseminate writings, whether within a house of worship, a political, economic, or social system, or around the world. As access to the Internet and electronic mail continues to widen, knowledge can more accurately spread on how to use nonviolent sanctions to press for rights, justice, reform, the lifting of military occupations, or citizenship.

Communications are also crucial within nonviolent campaigns, and not solely for morale. They are linked to the necessity for explaining grievances clearly. One cannot expect a target group to change unless one's desired alterations are made crystal-clear. Knowledge-based technologies can enhance the spread of complex concepts requiring interpretation and instruction.

Gandhi's powerful and influential insight that *conflict offers an opportunity to rearrange the pieces that produced the initial dispute* lends itself to debate in the present moment. Militant nonviolence expresses in action the realization that the means of struggle has an effect on the nature of the outcome. By the choice of action rather than inaction, and nonviolent rather than violent means of contention, nonviolent struggle balances political responsibility and ethics with the ultimate in pragmatism. Proponents of armed struggle, however, will always deny the validity of nonviolent resistance, and official repression against nonviolent movements is becoming more harsh and sophisticated in various parts of the world. Study, training, planning, discipline, and the development of nonviolent strategy are therefore paramount. Nonviolent struggle may require just as much strategic calculation as military strategy; indeed, its moves and countermoves may demand more astute calibration. Globalizing information technologies transit the world swiftly without regard to borders, and can make lucid the principles of nonviolent strategic action, with its profound understanding of power.

Despite legitimate fears about some of the outcomes of globalization, the study and preparation that are necessary for nonviolent struggle can actually be improved by globalization. ■

*Mary King holds a joint faculty appointment at the American University Center for Global Peace, in Washington, D.C., and the Institute of Caribbean and International Studies of St. George's University in Grenada, West Indies. Her latest book is Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action, published in 1999 by UNESCO, in Paris. In 1988, she won a Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Book Award for her book Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement (William Morrow, 1987).*



## Globalization: A Powerful Opportunity for Nonviolent Struggle

by Mary King

British and other Western countries forced open ports in China, imposing upon the Chinese the purchase of opium against their wishes.

Yet another form of globalization has also been at work throughout the twentieth century. Often through word of mouth, pulsing westward from India, knowledge and information about nonviolent resistance has spread. The major nonviolent struggles during the last decade (or more) against military regimes, oppressive bureaucracies, military occupations, and dictatorships—which have changed world maps—were strengthened by globalizing technologies. Fax machines and cheap reproduction technologies helped to make such upheavals effective, despite the coercion of imperial administrations, repressive systems of police control, and massacring armies. In the Czech and Slovak Velvet Revolution, illegal printing presses, posters, manifestoes, underground publishing houses, and journals appeared from nowhere. Cassette tapes and videotapes spread the speeches of Aung San Suu Kyi throughout Burma.

In the next decade, computers and desktop publishing will aid the distribution of locally writ-