



Language

Nonviolent action has been primarily a means of protest or of popular resistance to unjust and repressive regimes. However, there have also been proposals to adopt unarmed resistance to a military occupation – plans to undermine occupying forces might themselves deter aggression. Proposals for nonviolent or ‘civilian’ defence go back to the 1920s and 1930s, but it became a subject for more thorough academic and political debate from the 1950s in the light of the new strategic situation posed by nuclear weapons. Commander Sir Stephen King Hall proposed a nonviolent defence policy for Britain in his book *Defence in the Nuclear Age*, London, Gollancz, 1958. Later studies drew on earlier historical campaigns, in particular the movement for Indian independence, but also on examples of resistance to Nazism (especially in occupied Norway and Denmark). Academic analyses of the potential for nonviolent forms of defence were commissioned by the Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish governments, and it was discussed by post-Soviet Baltic governments (which had achieved independence through unarmed resistance). Radical pacifists have also debated this approach using the concept of ‘social defence’.

This section includes books covering unarmed resistance to Nazi policies in German-occupied Europe in World War Two, because of its importance in debates about nonviolent defence. For a more detailed list of sources published before 1970 see , [Nonviolent Action: A Selected Bibliography](#) [1] London, Housmans, , 1970 .

Alternative Defence Commission, [Defence Without the Bomb](#) [2], London, Taylor and Francis, 1983

Chapter 7 ‘Strategies against occupation: 2. Defence by civil resistance’, pp. 208-48, analyses the implications and applicability of nonviolent defence and its applicability to Britain.

Boserup, Anders ; Mack, Andrew, [War Without Weapons: Nonviolence in National Defence.](#) [3], London, Frances Pinter, 1974, pp. 194

Originally commissioned by the Danish Department of Foreign Affairs, this examines the theory of nonviolent defence, strategic and organisational issues, historical examples and the possibility of combining nonviolent and military forms of defence.

Burrowes, Robert, [The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach](#) [4], Albany NY, State University of New York Press, 1996, pp. 367

Reinterprets Clausewitz’s classic work on war and discusses nature of power underlying nonviolent strategy, the concept of ‘human needs’ and the potential for social change.

Clark, Howard, [Nonviolent resistance and social defence](#) [5], In , [Articles of Peace: celebrating fifty years of Peace News](#) [6] Bridport, Dorset, Prism, , 1986, pp. 46-49

Traces peace movement debates on social defence, including critiques.

Galtung, Johan ; Ejlertsen, Christian, [On the strategy of nonmilitary defense](#) [7], ed. Ejlertsen, Christian, In *Peace, War and Defence: Essays in Peace Research*, Vol. 2, Copenhagen, pp. 378-426

Hoffman, Peter, [The History of the German Resistance, 1933-1945](#) [8], [1977], 3rd edn, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1996, pp. 872



Standard work covering all aspects of the internal German resistance, including various forms of nonviolent protest, though with a major focus on the 1944 Generals' Plot.

Hæstrup, Jørgen, [European Resistance Movements 1939-1945: A Complete History](#) [9], Westport CT, Meckler, 1981, pp. 568

Expert on the Danish resistance extends his scholarship to other resistance movements in Occupied Europe.

International Peace Research Association, ; Research Institute, International Peace, [Bulletin of Peace Proposals](#) [10], no.4, Vol. 9, Oslo and Boston MA, Universitetsforlaget, 1978

Issue devoted to reconsideration of nonviolent defence with contributions by leading exponents, including Sharp, Roberts and Galtung, and articles on its role in Sweden's Total Defence strategy, and on a Dutch government research project.

Johansen, Jorgen ; Martin, Brian, [Social Defence](#) [11], Sparsnäs, Sweden, Irene Publishing, 2019, pp. 174

Two authors with a longstanding interest in nonviolent alternatives to military force restate the case for social defence, given the damage caused by military systems, and summarize examples of popular resistance in the past to coups and invasions. They also consider the relevance of political changes and social movements since the end of the Cold War.

Keyes, Gene, [Strategic nonviolent defense: The construct of an option](#) [12], Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 4, issue 2 (June), 1981, pp. 125-151

Martin, Brian, [Social Defence. Social Change](#) [13], London, Freedom Press, 1993, pp. 157

Anarchist perspective on civilian (nonviolent) defence.

Paxton, George, [Nonviolent Resistance to the Nazis](#) [14], Bishops Castle UK, YouCaxton Publications, 2016, pp. 252

The author draws on existing literature to summarise a wide range of hidden, semi-open and overt nonviolent forms of resistance to Nazism inside Germany itself and in German-occupied Europe. Examples range from hiding and rescuing Jews (on an individual basis inside Germany and elsewhere, but also rescuing almost all the Jewish population in Denmark), graffiti, leaflet distribution, underground newspapers, boycotts, and the demonstration by non-Jewish wives of Jews against the deportation of their husbands. Not a scholarly treatise, but a source for important examples of courageous resistance (though their effectiveness is sometimes debatable). Paxton argues success would have been most likely if resistance tactics had been adopted at an early stage in the rise of Nazism.

Roberts, Adam, [Civilian Resistance as a National Defence](#) [15], [1967], 2nd edn, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, pp. 367

[Previously The Strategy of Civilian Defence]

Discusses campaigns of national unarmed resistance to military occupation (e.g. the Ruhr in 1923) and to both Nazi and Communist regimes. Basil Liddell Hart (pp. 228-46) compares guerrilla and nonviolent resistance to occupation. The 1969 edition analyses Czechoslovak resistance to Soviet occupation.

Schmid, Alex P., [Social Defence and Soviet Military Power: An Inquiry into the Relevance of an Alternative Defence Concept](#) [16], Leiden, Centre for the Study of Social Conflict, State University of Leiden, 1965, pp. 469



A generally sceptical assessment of social defence as an alternative to military preparations against a putative Soviet attack. Concludes that it could supplement but not replace nuclear deterrence or military defence. Useful discussion of 10 conditions favourable to (or crucial for) success of social defence.

Sharp, Gene, [Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System](#) [17], Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 166

Examines theoretical case for relying on the power of society to deter and defend, rather than weaponry, cites examples of Ruhr 1923 and Czechoslovakia 1968-69 as examples of improvised civilian defence, and explores strategy and possibility of 'transarmament'. Sharp's 72-page *Self-reliant Defense Without Bankruptcy or War*, 1992, written for Soviet successor states (especially the Baltic states) can be downloaded from <http://aeinstein.org> [18].

Stoltzfus, Nathan, [Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany](#) [19], [1996], Piscataway NJ, Rutgers University Press, 2001, pp. 418

In February 1943, Nazis rounded up 2,000 Jews married to Aryans and held them in Rosenstrasse, Berlin, pending deportation to Auschwitz. This sparked an initially successful campaign of public protest for their release. (A summary account appears in Thalhammer; O'Loughlin; Glazer; Glazer; McFarland; Shepela; Stoltzfus, [Courageous Resistance: The Power of Ordinary People](#) [20] (A. 1.c. Small Scale, Hidden, Indirect and 'Everyday' Resistance [21]))

Sémelin, Jacques, [Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939-43](#) [22], [1989 in French], Westport CT, Praeger, 1993, pp. 198

Examines the main traits of Nazi occupation of Europe, the complexities of non-cooperation, and the role of social cohesion and public opinion in mounting effective opposition. Chapter on civilian resistance to genocide considers why the Final Solution was hampered, or even prevented, in certain countries.

Translations: [German](#) [23] | [French](#) [24]

See also:

Michael Randle, [Civil Resistance](#) [25], (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [26]), chapters 5 and 6 and Appendix listing sources on civilian defence

Bart de Ligt, [The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution](#) [27], (A. 1.a.i. Classic Works on Theory of Nonviolent Action [28]), chap. 12

Philip Windsor; Adam Roberts, [Czechoslovakia 1968: Reform, Repression and Resistance](#) [29], (C. I.1.d. Czechoslovakia 1968-69 [30])

Gordon Skilling, [Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution](#) [31], (C. I.1.d. Czechoslovakia 1968-69 [30])

Zdeněk Mlynář, [Night Frost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism](#) [32], (C. I.1.d. Czechoslovakia 1968-69 [30])

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[defense-gandhian-approach](#) [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1986/nonviolent-resistance-and-social-defence> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1986/articles-peace-celebrating-fifty-years-peace-news> [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1976/strategy-nonmilitary-defense> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1996/history-german-resistance-1933-1945> [9] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1981/european-resistance-movements-1939-1945-complete-history> [10] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1978/bulletin-peace-proposals> [11] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2019/social-defence> [12] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1981/strategic-nonviolent-defense-construct-option> [13] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1993/social-defence-social-change> [14] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2016/nonviolent-resistance-nazis> [15] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1969/civilian-resistance-national-defence> [16] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1965/social-defence-and-soviet-military-power-inquiry-relevance-alternative-defence> [17] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/civilian-based-defense-post-military-weapons-system> [18] <http://aeinstein.org> [19] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2001/resistance-heart-intermarriage-and-rosenstrasse-protest-nazi-germany> [20] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2007/courageous-resistance-power-ordinary-people> [21] <https://civilresistance.info/section/introduction-nonviolent-action/1-theory-methods-and-examples/1c-small-scale-hidden-indirect> [22] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1993/unarmed-against-hitler-civilian-resistance-europe-1939-43> [23] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1995/ohne-waffen-gegen-hitler-eine-studie-zum-zivilen-widerstand-europa> [24] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1998/sans-armes-face-hitler-la-resistance-civile-en-europe-1939-1945> [25] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1994/civil-resistance> [26] <https://civilresistance.info/taxonomy/term/7> [27] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1972/conquest-violence-essay-war-and-revolution> [28] <https://civilresistance.info/taxonomy/term/4> [29] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1969/czechoslovakia-1968-reform-repression-and-resistance> [30] <https://civilresistance.info/taxonomy/term/54> [31] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1976/czechoslovakias-interrupted-revolution> [32] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1980/night-frost-prague-end-humane-socialism>