

*“The hard and embarrassing truth is that I was as much concerned about being thrown out of the country in my first week of fieldwork as I was about the future of the team on the island.”*

## **SHARED RISKS AND RESEARCH DILEMMAS ON A PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL TEAM IN SRI LANKA**

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*Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a nongovernmental organization that provides nonviolent protective accompaniment in situations of severe political violence for local activists under threat. PBI team members function as unarmed bodyguards, attempting to deter violence by their presence or to document it and raise the costs to the transgressors if the deterrence fails. Blending ethnographic research of PBI with simultaneous service on a PBI team in Sri Lanka created a host of ethical quandaries and dilemmas. This article explains and analyzes some of these problems, including the use of politically sensitive research material, participation in team meetings and team decisions with life-threatening consequences for others, the acceptance of a salary from the organization under study, and embracing or refusing risks as a participant observer/team member who had more than one agenda.*

There are easier ways to get good field notes than serving as an unarmed, nonviolent bodyguard to threatened political and human rights activists in a country beset by a long-running ethnic conflict. But if ease and convenience were the dominant motivators for ethnographers, precious little interesting field research would ever get done. Many, perhaps even most, ethnographers prize above much else a research project's ability to engage them. Such was the case with me and this article, which is based on a participant observation study of the work of the Peace Brigades International (PBI) team in Sri Lanka in 1993 and 1994 (Coy 1997b).

Sri Lanka has been embroiled in violent ethnic conflict at least since 1983, marked by extremely high levels of political violence, disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and freedom restrictions. Current estimates of the death toll this violence has caused stand at between fifty thousand (Demusz 2000, 11) and sixty thousand people (Kelegama 1999, 85). PBI is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that has pioneered the development of the international nonviolent protective accompaniment tactic for protecting threatened human rights and political activists. Operating where political space is contested and democratic freedoms are severely compromised by high levels of political violence, PBI attempts to secure political space within which human

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rights and democratic struggle may be more safely exercised by local activists. The international protective accompaniment technique rests on the idea that the presence of trained, unarmed international escorts or "bodyguards" standing alongside local activists is a deterrent since violence or freedom restrictions directed toward foreign nationals and/or those they accompany often result in higher political costs for the transgressor. Relying on foreign nationals who volunteer their services for at least six months, PBI's observers are trained in nonviolence and are armed with cameras, cell phones, notebooks, and their foreign citizenship.

The protective services provided by PBI are quite varied and fluid, depending on both the nature of the threats faced and the needs of the local population. The most common services include the following: twenty-four-hour accompaniment or escort of individual activists in immediate danger from death threats or disappearance, public accompaniment of threatened individual activists when they appear in public or travel to more dangerous locales, an observer presence at the offices of a nongovernmental or grassroots organization facing harassment from a repressive government or from para-state organizations, and observers who accompany demonstrations, marches, or pickets at which police brutality or state violence directed against the demonstrators is likely.

PBI teams usually enter a region on the invitation of an organization engaged in nonviolent struggle for social and political change. Significant deployments of PBI teams have occurred in Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Columbia, Indonesia/East Timor, Mexico, and Sri Lanka. An international NGO with associative status at the United Nations, PBI adopts a stance of nonpartisanship in its work. Typical PBI clients include journalists, trade unionists, human rights workers, indigenous peoples, health workers, refugee communities, religious figures, opposition politicians, and various local organizations under threat as a result of their ethnicity, religious beliefs, political affiliation, or community organizing (Mahony and Eguren 1997; Mahony 2000; Coy 1993, 1997a, 1997b). The PBI team in Sri Lanka accompanied local human rights and political activists in both the dominant Sinhalese and the minority Tamil communities whose work had brought them under threat.

This participant observation study of a nonviolent peace team in Sri Lanka was undertaken with full participation. In other words, I became

a "regular" member of the team and provided accompaniment to threatened Sri Lankans and lived and worked in the PBI house and office as a team member. That full participation created a number of potentially problematic situations, revolving around political discretion, participation in team meetings and team decision making (including decisions with potentially life-threatening consequences), accepting a nominal salary from the organization under study, dissemination of politically sensitive research material, and embracing or refusing risks as a participant observer who had more than one agenda. This article explains these and other issues as I encountered them on the PBI team in Sri Lanka and provides analysis of my choices and their ethical dimensions.

### ENTRY AND THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF CONSENT

The codes of ethics of most of the major professional associations require genuinely informed consent from those being researched. Just what constitutes informed consent is not always easy to determine. As Gary Alan Fine (1993) so deftly put it, "the grail of informed consent is at the end of the twisted road of most ethical discussions" regarding field research (p. 274). A major part of the problem is that informed consent changes almost as frequently as the weather. Even researchers who conduct all of their fieldwork at only one site have to wrestle with the shifting interactional dynamics of consent. It is common for the researcher's understanding of what the research is about to change as the research develops. No less is true for her respondents. Moreover, respondents come and go, and the consent of new arrivals also must be negotiated. The result is that if consent is to remain genuinely informed over the course of the study, it usually needs to be renegotiated a number of times (Bogdan and Biklen 1982, 49-50), requiring a kind of vigilance by the researcher that is far from convenient.

When the research is conducted over a multiyear period in numerous sites with changing groups of people, this problem becomes especially vexing. I do not believe it can really be "solved" in any substantial fashion; one simply has to do the best possible given the circumstances. When I conducted participant observation research at PBI national and regional gatherings in New York and Washington States and at the

international general assembly in Ontario, Canada, I announced my dual role at the earliest unobtrusive opportunity. That was almost always at the initial round of introductions during the first few hours of each gathering. In some instances, I also obtained permission from the organizers in advance.

I do not consider these permissions and announcements to fulfill the requirements of informed consent. Even those who are made aware of a fieldworker's presence and general aims seldom understand that the research methodology requires making daily records of behavior and conversations (Fine 1993; Thorne 1980). Moreover, general, single announcements that one is conducting research do not always make an impression on each individual.<sup>1</sup> Some may forget, some may have been daydreaming, and still others may have heard it and thought they understood what it meant at the time, only later to feel deceived and used.<sup>2</sup>

Based on my early research at PBI regional, national, and international gatherings, I quickly realized that I could not understand PBI's international accompaniment without intimate knowledge of the work itself, so I applied to join the Sri Lanka team. Research while on a team provided a more realistic opportunity for meaningful consent in some instances and less so in others. For example, when filling out the application for the training for prospective team members, I described my research interests in writing. My application was also submitted to the Sri Lanka Project (SLP) coordinator's office in England and to the team in Sri Lanka, all of whom had to approve it.

While there were no objections, the project coordinator emphasized that they expected me to use discretion in writing about sensitive dimensions of the work, especially if the security of the team or the safety of those they accompany could be negatively affected. These discretionary issues were to be worked out in a collaborative manner with the team as they arose. I will return to this point, with examples, later in this article.

I eventually served two stints with the PBI team in Sri Lanka, for three months during summer 1993 and for two weeks in August 1994. The summer 1993 team and the long-term team already in place in August 1994 approved my service on those respective teams as a participant observer. However, the August 1994 team was expanded with ten short-term members (including myself), all of whom were veterans of earlier teams. As I was one of the earliest arrivals during the expansion,

none of the short-termers who arrived after I did had any opportunity to agree to my presence as a researcher among them.

The most problematic dimension of consent to my researcher role involved the Sri Lankans whom PBI accompanied. If the truth be told, I think it fair to say that they simply had no meaningful choice in the matter. I explained my dual status to those clients that the team worked with regularly or that I happened to work with closely. I usually just said that I was working on a dissertation and a book and that it was a study of the work of PBI and what the team and those it works with think about accompaniment. Although I always asked whether it was OK with them that I gather material from my experience escorting them, the power dynamics were seldom conducive to refusals or even qualifications. Not surprisingly, I received neither. In fact, in only four instances on the summer 1993 team did I have sustained discussions with regular clients about my research and their potential contributions to it. For those individuals and organizations that the team worked with only occasionally, I tended to be even more vague about my research project. Finally, when serving as an international observer at a demonstration or rally with scores, hundreds, or even thousands of people, the notion of informed consent ceased to have any relevance given the numbers of people, and I simply did not tarry over it.

## INTERVIEWS AND DATA

I collected more than four hundred pages of field notes based on the social observations and informal interviewing that takes place during participant research. The PBI team house in Colombo doubles as the team office. Whether one is sitting in the upstairs office, at the dining-room table, or relaxing in the living room, one is usually alongside other team members who are engaged in the work of the organization. A significant amount of data is obtained without much effort simply by lurking. There is almost always someone nearby who is writing a report, taking a phone message, meeting with a client or a contact, taking notes on an article, and so on. Consequently, most team members have their own notebook or clipboard that is seldom out of their reach. Neither was mine. In fact, I decided very early on to take advantage of this and use only one notebook that would do double duty both for my teamwork and for my field notes. I wrote in it quite freely and frequently in the

presence of others for both purposes, and I believe therefore that my field-note taking had less of an effect on the research environment than is often the case.

Over the course of two years, I also conducted formal, taped interviews with fifty-nine people ranging in length from thirty to ninety minutes. I interviewed PBI members, Sri Lankans who received PBI accompaniment, diplomats, Sri Lankan government or police officials, NGO members, and others who were familiar with PBI's work. Both the team and I wanted my potential interviewees to see me as a researcher, not a team member; we wanted people to feel as free as possible to agree or refuse to be formally interviewed. Thus, to more clearly separate my researcher identity from my team member identity, my research plan called for not conducting formal interviews with PBI clients or collegial organizations until at least two weeks after I left the team. I made only one exception, and it warrants explanation because it also demonstrates the competing interests I sometimes faced between my research goals and the safety of my informants, many of whom were facing considerable dangers.

### INFORMANT RISKS AND POWER RELATIONS

During my first month with the summer 1993 team, its work was dominated by the accompaniment of Tharmalingam Selvakumar (Selva). Selva is a Tamil who was abducted, tortured, and detained for six days in January 1993 by the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP). He further claims that the EPDP attempted to extort one million rupees from his family in return for his release (about \$21,000 in U.S. dollars). He says that the EPDP turned him over to the police, who held him an additional twenty-two days without charges. Amnesty International adopted Selvakumar as a political prisoner and sent out urgent action appeals on his behalf; at the same time, Selvakumar's family also managed to pressure the government via a few high-ranking Tamil politicians. Eventually, he was released without charges after twenty-two days (Jabbar 1993).

The EPDP was a militant Tamil group with extremely close ties to the Premadasa regime, aiding the Sinhalese-dominated government in its war with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). During this period, the EPDP used a variety of intimidation tactics

against the civilian Tamil population, including kidnapping, extortion, occupation of homes, and, thanks to its support from the government, forced recruitment into its armed forces to help the government fight the LTTE in the north and east (Oberst 1994). Throughout 1992 and early 1993, armed groups of EPDP cadres operated openly in Colombo at the behest of the government. They implemented a form of social control of the minority ethnic population of Tamils, ostensibly looking for LTTE "suspects" who came to Colombo from the LTTE-controlled north. The EPDP frequently warned Tamils that "the ordinary police law prevails in Colombo only up to midnight and after that we hold sway."<sup>3</sup> Instances of kidnapping, extortion, and torture of these suspects by both the security forces and the EPDP were common in the Colombo Tamil community at this time (Amnesty International 1993).

Selvakumar was, like many young Tamil men of the period, caught up in the internecine battles and revenge politics of various Tamil political parties and liberation groups in the north. He became active with the EPDP but by late 1992 chose to disassociate himself from the EPDP, and it was then that he was kidnapped, tortured, and held illegally while the EPDP allegedly attempted to extort money from his family.

Selvakumar filed a fundamental human rights case in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka against individual police officials involved in his detention, the attorney general of Sri Lanka and Douglas Devananda, the EPDP leader whom he claims was driving the van in which he was abducted. On filing the suit, Selvakumar received death threats from the EPDP and bribery offers to drop the case from both the EPDP and police officials. He also says that the police official named in the suit threatened to bring charges against him, publicly alleging that he had links with the LTTE, unless he withdrew. R.K.W. Goonesekara, a leading human rights lawyer in the country and former principal of the Colombo Law College, took up Selva's case. In formal and informal interviews I conducted in the diplomatic community and with the staff of domestic and international NGOs, many indicated that they thought Selvakumar's case had significant ramifications for the overall human rights climate in the country.

One of the reasons for this assessment was that this was the first attempt to make clear in the Sri Lankan courts the close cooperation between the government, paramilitary groups, and political parties in violating the human rights of individual citizens. Goonesekara thought it was important as part of a larger legal effort to get the Supreme Court



to extend the boundaries of liability for the violation of fundamental freedoms beyond the government to include para-state organizations.

It is nonstate persons, such as Devananda, or para-state organizations, such as the EPDP, who really are the instigators of what we think of as state violations. What about the man who is at the back of it, who makes use of state apparatus to do some wrong to his political enemies? We had succeeded in some of these cases, and Selvakumar's case would have been another opportunity. (R.K.W. Goonesekara, personal interview, August 31, 1994)

The case was also significant because of the important role the EPDP was taking in the extensive roundups of Tamils in and around Colombo in 1993. Following the assassinations of opposition presidential candidate Lalith Athulathmudali in April and of President Premadasa in May (both by LTTE suicide bombers), hundreds of Tamils in Colombo, including long-standing residents and jobholders, were arrested. A "security apartheid" policy was emerging as the government attempted to curtail LTTE operations in and around Colombo (British Refugee Council 1993b, 1). Selvakumar thought his case significant because it "not only involves me, but a lot of young Tamil boys and businessmen who are taken by the EPDP under the cover of arresting LTTE suspects. Then they demand millions of rupees for their release."

The fear psychosis present in Colombo at this time is evidenced by the fact that although Selvakumar was abducted from a sports club on New Years Eve in view of fifty to one hundred witnesses, he convinced only two people to sign affidavits regarding the abduction. This fear psychosis is also a function of what Gamson (1988) called the "legitimizing frames" that regimes use to justify abuses and keep the citizenry in line. The Sri Lankan government invoked the frame of "national security" to legitimate and defend the abuses against the Tamil minority by the government and the EPDP. Selvakumar's highly public challenge to that frame was an element in a series of events that eventually caused the government to bring the EPDP forces in Colombo under greater control later that same year.

Because of the serious and repeated nature of the death threats facing Selva, he eventually fled Sri Lanka and gained asylum in Sweden about five weeks after I arrived on the island and joined the PBI team. Consequently, I proposed to the team an exception to my research plan of only interviewing people after I had left the team, and we agreed that I could

interview Selva before he departed. Since Selva knew about my research and was convinced that publicity would help increase his margin of safety, he was pleased to be interviewed. The interview occurred just days before he fled to Sweden.

At about the same time, the PBI Project Committee was asking the team to put more effort into the articles they wrote every month for PBI's *Project Bulletin*, the monthly organizational newsletter distributed internationally. Consequently, I proposed, and the team agreed, that parts of my interview with Selva be published in the *Bulletin*.<sup>4</sup> I transcribed the interview and edited it heavily for length and content with another team member. Selva's ongoing security and that of his family remaining behind in Sri Lanka were two of the many concerns we attended to in the editing. With Selva having already fled to Sweden, we gave the draft to his family and his closest associate in Sri Lanka to preview; they found nothing that would negatively affect his safety, and I thought the interview was ready for publication.

But the team was still providing accompaniment for Selva's family. One afternoon, I escorted Gowri, his sister, to a meeting with Suriya Wickremasinghe, one of the nation's premier human rights lawyers and the founding director of the civil rights movement. To preserve the organization's nonpartisanship, PBI members often sit outside the meeting room on individual escorts such as this. In this case, however, it proved fortuitous that I happened to be in the room and heard the discussion. When Gowri told Suriya of her brother's plans to do some writing and publishing about his case from Sweden, Suriya said she hoped he would check with his human rights lawyer in Sri Lanka before publishing anything as it could be used against him in his suit against the government and the EPDP.

As I listened to their discussion, the proverbial light bulb finally switched on. Suddenly, I became aware that I ought to be concerned not only about the negative implications that my interview with Selva could have on his safety but also about the deleterious effects it could have on his legal case. The latter issue had simply never occurred to me. Although Selva had assured me that the more I publicized his case the happier he was, he had apparently not considered all the legal ramifications, and, in any event, he was not a lawyer. After discussing this with the team, we decided we would have Selva's lawyer go over the interview in advance. From Sweden, Selva said this was not necessary as far as he was concerned but that we were welcome to do so.

Selva's lawyer insisted that I edit out some controversial points from the interview itself and from the introduction in which I included material on Selva's personal background. The latter contained information about Selva's situation that I and the PBI team had knowledge of for only two reasons: first, because of PBI's cooperative work with the Swedish embassy on Selva's asylum case, and second, because of the close working relationships that developed between PBI team members and the Selvakumar family. Peace Brigades provided Selva with around-the-clock, twenty-four-hour accompaniment when the threats he faced seemed most severe. As one of his escorts, I frequently ate meals with him at their family table and stayed overnight at his family home, sleeping on the floor between Selva and the door leading to the street, the direction from whence danger was thought most likely to come. In such intimate settings, a house visitor soon gains considerable information about their hosts or, in this case, from their clients. This more personal background material that I used to introduce the interview, along with some of the interview material itself, contained information that Selva's lawyer did not want the legal opposition to have and that he also thought would gravely harm Selva's case against both the government and the EPDP.<sup>5</sup>

Here is a clear example of the many dangers my research agenda presented to my informants. I nearly made a mistake that would have seriously harmed Selva's legal case, and I largely avoided doing so only by fortunate happenstance. Moreover, the episode reflects a fundamental problem for Western academics doing research in what Elise Boulding has called the "two thirds world." While my research may have some limited potential to "help" endangered informants by increasing their visibility or generally contributing to a greater awareness of human rights violations, it also comes with certain costs that those in a vulnerable position like Selva may not feel free to refuse or of which they may not always be fully aware.

Certainly, one of those costs is the loss of control over their story and the way it is presented to others. Knowledge, and its production, cannot be considered apart from the power relations in which it is embedded (Salazar 1991, 101). In this regard, Linda Alcoff (1991) claimed that when researchers and theorists speak *about* others, it is no less problematic than when they speak *for* others. Similarly, Patai (1991) argued that it is not possible to write about the oppressed without becoming one of the oppressors. The asymmetrical political and economic relations

between the north and the south are mirrored, perhaps even intensified, in my relations with Sri Lankan informants. Usually, they had asked PBI for protection either because they were threatened and in need of security or, while the threat may have largely passed, because the disabling fear that it engenders had not abated and international accompaniment seemed to lessen its power. In any event, they were in a vulnerable and low power position relative to this Western researcher who was also wearing the PBI hat of international observer/escort. My awareness of this delicate dynamic probably did little to change its fundamental nature. All I know for certain is that awareness did nurture carefulness and an attitude of humility on my part in interactions with Sri Lankan informants; how successful I was in carrying that through, or how useful such an attitude actually was, is impossible for me to determine.

### **PURSUING SHARED MEANING AND THE PROBLEMS OF TOTAL PARTICIPATION**

A long-held axiom in social science is that at least some detachment or distance is necessary during the conduct and analysis of social research. That distance can be emotional, cognitive, geographical, or personal (Hervik 1994, 92). More often than not, it will shift in and between all of these forms. At the same time, identification and involvement in the lives and work of those one is researching is also necessary and partly why detachment is needed, especially during ethnographic fieldwork. Identification with and immersion in the experiences of those being researched can open up windows through which the researcher may better describe and even understand the meanings of the social interactions being observed. These "shared meanings" are at the heart of qualitative studies (Bogdan and Biklen 1982, 38).

The pursuit of shared meaning was one motivation for my decision to become a member of a PBI team. While much sociological knowledge arises from simply observing social interactions, quite a lot of social meaning is bound up in the actual experience of doing. To give but two examples: by living in the team house and sharing a small bedroom with another team member whose one year term of service was over in two weeks, I may have gained a better understanding of what my informants said the rather frequent team member departures meant for them

psychologically and emotionally than if I had lived on my own elsewhere. Similarly, by actually providing unarmed nonviolent accompaniment in a range of contexts, I better understood the complex dynamics of the accompaniment experience and the relationships that must be negotiated between the PBI member and those they escort. I therefore may have been better able to understand and describe my informant's interpretations of their own experiences of accompaniment.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, by addressing in a reflexive manner my interactions with my informants—both as researcher and as fellow team member—yet other levels of analysis are created. The way I am using reflexivity here refers to the “conscious use of the self as a resource for making sense of others” (Hervik 1994, 92). In my view, the subjective experiences of the researcher as participant are not the starting point, nor are they the central issue. At the same time, they should not be simply bracketed and used as a touchstone that the researcher returns to only on occasion to validate or disprove emerging hunches or even hypotheses. The interactive, participatory experiences I have with my informants are one among many pieces of my data puzzle. When they are fitted together with all the other dimensions of the data, they contribute to particular interpretations of the meaning of events and shared interactions. When they do not fit together, they may contribute to an alternative picture useful for comparative interpretation purposes. Other researchers on the “same” PBI teams would undoubtedly generate different analyses, not least because their experiences, social standpoints, shared interactions, and, therefore, reflexive processes would be different from mine.

My participation as a regular member of the teams was not without methodological problems. Although the benefits of total participation are often noted in the literature, there is also a sizable piece of the methods literature that warns against the dangers of becoming overinvolved either behaviorally or emotionally.<sup>7</sup> Not least among these concerns is the recognition that the more the researcher participates, the more her presence influences and skews the flow of events. Studying a small group in a close living and work environment like a PBI team—where living quarters and office space are virtually indistinguishable—only magnifies these concerns. Similarly, Gans (1968) noted that the physical and emotional stresses and strains associated with the participant observer role are formidable. He claimed that going to meetings is the easiest task because one can sit back, observe, and take notes without participating and unduly influencing the direction of the meeting. Far

from giving me an opportunity to relax and passively observe as Gans claimed meetings allow participant observers to do, the PBI team meetings presented a parade of compromising dilemmas that I had to continually negotiate. My full participant role on the rather small summer 1993 team of four to five people meant that my engagement and participation in the meetings was not only needed but also required. I therefore developed tactics that I hoped would moderate both my involvement and my influence at team meetings.

For example, I frequently held back in discussions at team meetings and let others speak first so that they would not, at least initially, be primarily reacting to my ideas or opinions. Later, when I did contribute, I often moderated my views and attempted to take the rough edges off. In short, I tried to avoid presenting them in a forceful, assertive manner that would make me and my views the major dynamic in the team discussion. Most participant observers rely on clarifying questions in the informal conversations that are central to the method's data collection. I made it a habit also to do this in team meetings, and I even employed open-ended questioning techniques from my training and work as a mediator to elicit more ideas and feelings from team members. Maintaining this discipline was far from easy, and failure was not uncommon, partly because I personally cared about many of the issues being discussed and decided. As another way to moderate my impact on team meetings, I considered making a commitment (privately, to myself) never to block a team consensus; in other words, never to be the one team member who stopped a course of action or a team decision supported by everyone else. I decided, however, that such a stance was ultimately irresponsible given the often serious, even life-threatening consequences of some team decisions.<sup>8</sup>

There is also another side to this methodological coin, one that highlights the positive dimensions of researcher participation. Much social knowledge is assumed, implicit, or taken for granted. I believe that my presence on the teams, coupled with the ways I tried to structure my interactions in meetings and elsewhere, served to create a more reflexive team environment that helped individual members and the teams as a whole more fully explore important issues and negotiate their meanings. In fact, this was confirmed in informal exit conversations I had with some team members regarding my researcher role. I take this to be a positive contribution my research made to the organization and to the teams on which I served.

## THE DIALECTIC OF IMMERSION AND DETACHMENT

Participant observers should expect to experience a shifting tension between detachment and involvement; at certain points of the project, one will probably have to be nurtured at the expense of the other (Emerson 1981, 368; Kriesi 1992). It is perhaps better still to conceive of this as a creative tension, one that if managed skillfully can produce a synthesis leading to a "dialogue" (Burawoy 1991, 4) between the researcher and his informants and, in a reflexive manner, within the researcher himself.

While serving on the summer 1993 team, my attempts to hold immersion and detachment in creative tension were multifaceted, which is not to say they were always successful. On the temporally micro level, I tried to take some time each day to retire to my room and transcribe into my notebook computer field notes that were hastily written in longhand throughout the day. Alternatively, on days when I had found no time even to jot down central ideas and catchphrases, I composed the notes directly at the computer from memory. Since my bedroom windows opened up into the central courtyard of the house, I usually entered my field notes into the computer very early in the morning or late in the evening so as not to call too much daily attention to my field note production. Unfortunately, the PBI work was so demanding that there were days when I never got to my computer at all and the day's jottings were not fully written out until later in the week.

Ethnographers require regular periods of privacy to produce sound, useful data (Fine 1993, 285). It was serendipitous, therefore, that PBI team members are encouraged to take one day per week off. While many do not do so, I was quite religious about it. In fact, I often asked for extra time off to work on my research, and the team always agreed to these requests. I devoted a portion of my days off to working on my notes, usually writing analytic memos and expanding on hastily written observer's comments. I usually did this outside the house, in a hotel lobby, café, or at a library.

My involvement in the work of the organization I was studying was more extensive than is the ethnographic norm. Early on, I realized that one of my challenges was to create and maintain the epistemological conditions of my research. If I became psychologically engulfed in the life and work of the team, I suspected I would severely restrict the

boundaries of what C. Wright Mills (1959) called the "sociological imagination." Consequently, I made it a point to mention my research needs and goals to the team as frequently as prudence seemed to suggest. For example, when the team divided up escort and accompaniment assignments for the week, I would ask their advice and input about which work assignments would most likely result in rich data for my study. It was a simple but useful verbal technique that helped me reestablish and maintain some cognitive distance; it reminded both me and those around me of my dual role and identity. In a paradoxical way, it may have worked against the development of overrapport while giving the team input into the data collection for my research project. Overall, I experienced a reversal of what frequently happens in qualitative studies. Instead of my having to continually fend off overtures for deeper involvement in the organization, team members sometimes took the initiative and inquired how a proposed team schedule would fit with my research needs, expressing a willingness to adjust it accordingly. Thus, they also helped remind me of my "research self."

On the macro-temporal level, I followed my three months of intense immersion by making a formal break from the Sri Lanka team, even though I was staying on the island for another month and continuing my research. That break was marked by my exit evaluation as a team member and by a going-away party for myself and two other team members who were also leaving. The party was organized by one of the local NGOs that PBI regularly accompanied. I then left for a two-week vacation in other parts of the island. That interlude was designed to give me some physical and emotional distance from the team before I returned to Colombo for two more weeks of interviewing.

As mentioned earlier, I also thought it would enhance the chances that those I had worked with would see me more as a researcher and less as a PBI team member when I interviewed them. I hoped that this would increase the likelihood of their being honest and open with me about their interpretations of PBI's work and the meaning of international accompaniment. South Asian cultures in general and Sri Lanka's in particular are marked by a generous dose of gracious hospitality; open and forthright criticism of outsiders is not readily delivered to them. Moreover, the asymmetry in the power relations between PBI and those who desire their services can combine with the historical legacy of colonialism and with current patterns of neocolonialism to mitigate against Sri Lankans offering critiques of Western NGOs directly to the NGO's



representatives. I do not think the two-week interlude was especially helpful in disassociating me from PBI in the eyes of my interviewees, and in any event it would not affect the other factors just mentioned. It was simply the best I could manage under the circumstances.

### TAKING MONEY

Much participant observation research is conducted in situations in which money does not change hands between the researcher and his informants. That was not true in my case. I paid PBI money, and they also paid me. In all instances, however, I followed a general principle: the financial arrangements were the same for me as they were for any other team member. Specifically, I paid PBI the standard fee to receive the training and paid my own transport to and from the training program and to and from Sri Lanka. Since I was a regular member of the team, I accepted the monthly stipend given all team members of 50 dollars. I also accepted the free room and board granted all team members in the team house and the modest meal allowance of up to 150 rupees/day for meals taken outside the house (about three U.S. dollars).

I suppose I could have refused the stipend or the meal money, but I could think of no compelling reason to do so, even while a number of very good reasons argued for me to do as other team members did. There is, of course, a long tradition of sociological research in which the researcher takes a job for pay to understand the social dynamics of the workplace under study (Kornblum 1974). Work on a PBI team can be intense, demanding, and life threatening. In such a context, team members rely on each other; they have to trust the commitment of each other to the work and to their fellow team members' good health and safety. Money, especially in the form of wages, often divides people into different classes and into in-groups and out-groups. I wished to avoid such divisions in my relations with the team; I wanted to be accepted as a team member who could be trusted to embrace the myriad demands of the work and who also happened to be doing research. If it were otherwise—with my research self-dominating the team's image of me—then my experiences and interpretations of the team and its work would be unduly compromised and influenced. I was also concerned that my presence could then become a negative drag on the team and its work, a research outcome I very much wanted to avoid.

## TAKING RISKS

Participant observation research in potentially violent situations and in which the informants and the researcher are both at risk is relatively uncommon. Even less common is the situation in which the physical risks borne by the researcher and the informants are more or less equal. With some notable exceptions, there is relatively little published on this important area of field research (Thorne 1975, 1988; Van Maanen 1988; Howell 1990; Williams et al. 1992; Nordstrom and Robben 1995). Van Maanen's (1988, 279-80) research experiences with urban police patrol officers led him to argue that field-workers in violent situations have an ethical obligation to embrace some of the same physical and legal risks as their informants and to intervene and aid them. Thorne's (1988) participant observation in the Vietnam-era draft resistance movement included her engaging in organizing efforts on behalf of the movement that entailed "low-risk" legal consequences for her. But when it came to "high-risk" activism such as providing AWOL soldiers with sanctuary, she demurred. She told herself at the time that the demands of continuing her fieldwork for her dissertation made it impossible for her to risk going to jail. In retrospect, she discovered that her holding back had more to do with being unsure about the political wisdom of the sanctuary tactic, and "above all, I was afraid of going to prison" (p. 232). Thorne now argues that fieldwork sets no intrinsic limits to the taking of risks brought about by participating in the actions of a movement (one can, after all, take notes in jail as well as in the draft resistance offices). The limits are set instead by the fact that the researcher has to maintain enough distance and safeguard enough time to collect data, analyze, compare, and theorize from the data.

Like many other rookie PBI team members, I made out my first will before leaving for the summer 1993 team. In the application process and in the training program, I reflected on the prospect of legal or illegal detention, serious harm, torture, and death, something any responsible social scientist should do who is indeed thinking of risking these things (Sluka 1995). But here I depart from Thorne's (1988) analysis and her earlier claim that there are no intrinsic limits to the taking of research risks. Obviously, death resulting from risks taken while doing research not only sets intrinsic limits but ultimate and final ones. The fact is, I do not think I would have taken these risks to complete a research project if I did not also support PBI's work and think it of some use in the larger

struggle for a more just and peaceful world. My partner Karin and I discussed these issues, and we were both pleased that I had found a research project that allowed me to put into practice some of our shared political beliefs regarding nonviolent action, human rights, and the injustices of international inequalities. Years earlier, I had done backup support work for close friends who served on PBI's Guatemala team, and for seven years I was a member of a Catholic worker community in St. Louis that regularly sent its members to serve with Witness for Peace and PBI. In studying the international accompaniment of PBI, I found a way to integrate the academic and activist dimensions of my identity.<sup>9</sup> I also hoped that that same integration might produce sociological knowledge that is useful for both the academy and the burgeoning international peace team movement.

While in the field, I took on the same risks to life and limb that international accompaniment duty presented to my PBI teammate informants. However, their risks increased relative to mine as soon as I left the field and took "my data" about them with me. Relative to my Sri Lankan informants, my risks were always vastly less than theirs, even while I was still in Sri Lanka. I became painfully aware of this discrepancy while doing field research with the August 1994 team.

One of my tasks was to draft a procedural memo outlining the steps for the evacuation of the PBI team in the event that the parliamentary elections the team was helping to monitor resulted in complete political and civil chaos. Thousands of cases of preelection violence, including more than a score of political murders, threatened to disrupt the elections and throw the country into even greater turmoil.<sup>10</sup> Some of the local election monitors the team was accompanying said that they would not participate without international accompaniment. In this way, the PBI team's presence apparently changed the personal political landscape of local activists enough to affect important, potentially life-threatening decisions that they were making. Yet, here I was, developing evacuation procedures and paving the way for the internationals to bail out just in case the going got really tough. At that moment, I knew too well the relatively safe dilemma of the privileged and the bitter shame of the hypocrite. But at that same moment, I also gained greater insight into the ways my fellow PBI team members and informants struggled with and attempted to make sense of that same dilemma in their own work.<sup>11</sup>

## REFUSING RISKS

Conducting field research in dangerous situations may sometimes force researchers to choose between meeting the research project's goals or ensuring their own safety or the safety of their informants (Sluka 1995, 285). But the relationship between these issues and concerns is always complex. What follows is an analysis of two occasions when my research goals clearly influenced the risks I was willing to take.

During the August 1994 election period, most of the fifteen-member team was split into groups of two or three to accompany local-monitoring groups in different parts of the island. I thought it would be good from a research point of view to experience the "effects" international observers had in especially violent situations; I therefore said that I wanted to go to the region that was already experiencing heavy levels of preelection violence and that was expected to see the most and the worst violence on and around election day itself. However, since other international observers were also covering that area, PBI was sending only one member there. I promptly did an about-face and refused that assignment because I felt that being on my own, isolated from other PBI members, would compromise still other research goals. Here was an instance in which some of my research interests (to witness political violence where international observers were present) coalesced with the needs and interests of both PBI and the local community (to have an international observer present where the worst political violence was likely to occur). But still other research goals of mine would not be met and so I volunteered for a different placement, leaving it to another PBI member who then reluctantly took the most dangerous assignment, separated from all of her colleagues. I felt badly about this choice for some time, as if I had betrayed the selfless service ethic of the organization and let my teammates down in the process.

The second incident had much more serious consequences for my informants. In June 1993, PBI was asked to accompany residents of the Vivekananda Hall Welfare Center refugee camp in Colombo who were resisting government attempts to resettle them in the war zone in the Northeast Province. Most of the camp residents were Tamil and Muslim refugees who had fled their homes due to the war with the LTTE.<sup>12</sup> There were two sources of pressure on the government to resettle Tamil refugees at this time, one internal, the others external.

First, the government wanted to move the internally displaced Tamil refugees out of Colombo for security reasons. The large and fluid Tamil refugee population in the capital city made security against LTTE terrorist attacks vastly more difficult. Second, the government was under increasing financial strains due to the war and its deleterious effects on the economy and tourism. More international aid and investments were needed, but Colombo had to demonstrate increased stability and progress in the war to secure it. To complicate matters further, India and several European countries with large Sri Lanka Tamil refugee populations (e.g., Switzerland, the Netherlands) were beginning repatriation programs in early 1993. Sri Lanka could hardly resist these refugee returns by saying that the situation in the north and east was still too unstable for resettlement, while also claiming that investment and aid opportunities were bright due to increased stability in the country. A decision was taken to move the internally displaced refugees back to the Northeast Province and cooperate with the various international repatriation schemes.

The trouble was, international human rights law got in the way. The right to *non-refoulement* is a fundamental principle of international law and the basis of refugee protections. Put simply, refugees may not be forced to return to areas where they would face continued danger. But since the LTTE—whose forced conscriptions and massive human rights violations in the area were the reasons for a good part of the original refugee problem—was still in control of large areas of the Northeast Province, the government could not legitimately resettle either the internal refugees or the external ones to the region. Another dimension to the problem was that there were few viable places available for resettlement in the region as housing stock was severely depleted by the war. Financial resettlement packages, designed to entice the internal refugees to return voluntarily, proved only partly successful.

Part of Colombo's solution was a massive military offensive in the Batticaloa district of the Northeast Province. Launched on June 10, 1993, the same day the Vivekananda camp residents were informed of their impending forced resettlement to the same area, and named "Sea Breeze," it included three thousand ground troops backed by the air force and navy. The government shortly claimed it had routed the LTTE from the region and declared Batticaloa district "normalized" and safe for resettlement. The hurried construction of resettlement camps commenced immediately. Nearly all of the 350 refugees residing at the

Vivekananda camp would have nothing of it. Many of the adults were single-parent mothers who had seen their husbands and sons killed in their home villages by either the LTTE or the government, or forcibly recruited into LTTE ranks. Operation Sea Breeze did little to convince them that the resettlement would be safe. About one hundred embarked on a hunger strike.

On June 15, two PBI members visited the Vivekananda camp at the request of the camp residents. The PBI members were inside the camp building without the required government permission when the Department of Social Services director arrived. He tried to coax the approximately one hundred refugees to end the hunger strike and cooperate in the move, scheduled for early morning on June 16. The refugees were not convinced and asked PBI to accompany their planned refusal. PBI agreed, and two team members arrived at the camp at 4:00 A.M. the next morning and waited outside on the street. A half-hour later, nine buses pulled up in front of the camp, escorted by a contingent of police and an army truck full of soldiers that parked across the street. The PBI members then positioned themselves between the buses and the army truck. Meanwhile, all the refugees refused to board the buses. Negotiations ensued between the refugees, the Department of Social Services, and the security personnel. The tense standoff eventually ended when the Social Services director ordered the buses to leave; the army and police soon followed.

Afraid the buses would return with even more security personnel, the refugees asked PBI observers to remain for the day, which they did. Later that day, the police returned, and one of them closely questioned Almut Wadle, a PBI member, in a manner she found "intimidating and threatening." On the other hand, the refugees thanked PBI and asked them to continue their visits and accompaniment. A spokesperson for the refugees told the *Island* newspaper, "If not for the volunteers from Peace Brigades International, who were there with us we would have been compelled to board the buses" (Akbar 1993). In fact, the government's failed attempt at resettlement received wide media coverage.

For PBI, however, the situation quickly became complicated by their earlier, unauthorized entry into the camp. After the failed closure attempt, the government-controlled newspaper complained that the refugees had been "coerced by sinister forces" and that in the past few days "four foreign women and one man were seen entering the camp" (de Silva 1993). The government also became active on the diplomatic

front by pressuring and warning the various embassies of the team members. Within a few days, all the PBI members who had been at the camp, along with others who were not, were called in to their embassies. Diplomatic staff made it clear that the Sri Lanka government was upset with PBI, especially since the organization had no authorization to enter the camp. PBI's actions were termed illegal and a violation of Sri Lanka's internal affairs. The British High Commission told PBI that "high level government officials" said that "PBI's status on the island is in jeopardy," along with the status of the individual team members.

Two weeks later, and shortly after I had joined the team, the refugees were told by the government that they would be resettled the next morning. This time, it was clear that the government officials had learned well the advantages of giving the refugees little warning and even less time to organize. Nevertheless, the refugees promptly called PBI and asked for accompaniment in the morning. But in a late-night, time-pressured team decision about whether to send observers for the 4:00 A.M. arrival of the buses the next day, I joined the team's consensus decision that it was too risky for PBI to send observers.

There were a number of arguments advanced for refusing the request; most centered on fear of being expelled and then "being no good to anybody here." Arguments that PBI's credibility would be seriously or permanently damaged by refusing were considered but eventually rejected. A German volunteer could only say she had a "deep intuitive sense" that the team should refuse because of what might happen, but she could not articulate it more clearly. A British volunteer had a "personal dilemma." He was engaged to be married to a Sri Lankan woman and did not want to jeopardize their ability to reside together in Sri Lanka after his one-year term of service with PBI ended in a few weeks. And then, there were my own concerns (unvoiced, but considerable) about being thrown off the island in only the first week of my research. Put simply, we international observers stayed put and refused to observe.

I convinced myself at the time that I had successfully separated out the risks to the team's status from the risks to my field research, which was then only in its infancy. I decided shortly thereafter, and I still believe, that in fact I had merely succeeded in deluding myself. The hard and embarrassing truth is that I was as much concerned about being thrown out of the country in my first week of fieldwork as I was about the future of the team on the island or the very real needs of the

refugees for international accompaniment. I failed both the team and the refugees, as I also concluded that the entire team failed the refugees.

From these and related incidents with PBI, I have learned that field research is best likened to a series of moral dilemmas. Some I negotiated better than others, and the negative effects on my informants were not overly significant. Others, like this one, I stumbled over, snaring both my own conscience and the human rights of my Sri Lankan informants on the sharp horns of the moral dilemma. While there were consequences for each of us, mine paled miserably in comparison to those faced by the refugees.

The next morning, the police, army, and EPDP cadres cordoned off the streets and residential area around the camp. Forty families from the eastern district refused to board the buses. With no international observers present, the police "violently" forced the refugees on the buses, injuring two seriously enough for them to be hospitalized, according to Viji Murugaiyah, a staff member of Suriya Women's Development Center and the only NGO representative present at the time (V. Murugaiyah interview, August 31, 1994). Police threw their belongings on the buses; when some refugees boarded the buses to retrieve their possessions, they were not allowed to disembark. Others were assaulted, had water hoses turned on their belongings, and were physically forced on to the buses (V. Murugaiyah interview, August 31, 1994) (Abeysekera 1993). The refugees were transported to an unfinished camp in Navalady, in the area recently "cleared" by Operation Sea Breeze. In practice, however, resettlement camps such as Navalady often become buffer zones between the rapidly shifting frontlines of the government and LTTE cadres engaged in a guerrilla-style war (British Refugee Council 1993a).

Viji Murugaiyah had been performing humanitarian work in the Vivekananda camp for years and had been almost a permanent fixture there through the entire resettlement crisis. Consequently, her reflections on the PBI team's decision are especially revealing.

The refugees were asking me, "Where is the PBI? Are they coming?" I said that they are coming because I thought they were. At that time, I didn't know about the embassies and the government. The people told me earlier that if PBI comes they won't be afraid because they know that the government can't make them go in front of the observers. I don't know. If PBI was there on the 30th, I think it turns out different. But you can never



prove one way or another, no? (V. Murugaiyah interview, August 31, 1994)

In this instance, the resolve of the PBI team was revealed as shallow, and the credibility of the organization's threats to document and publicize human rights transgressions was likely compromised. Given Viji Murugaiyah's comments above, the Vivekananda refugees themselves were clearly disappointed and felt let down by PBI. The decisions and mistakes of the team of which I was a member were especially costly given the larger context. The Vivekananda refugee camp was the first of three camps in Colombo that the government wanted to close that same month. But the successful early resistance and consequent crisis at Vivekananda had forced the government to push back the other closures. In July, disgruntled refugees at the other Colombo camps who were facing unwanted resettlement reported that they were specifically warned by Social Services Department staff that "Vivekananda-style protests and publicity will be of no avail" (Muthukrishna and Gomez 1993). The refugees from these other camps did not contact PBI to accompany either their resistance or their cooperation on transfer days to ensure respectful treatment. They knew about PBI's usefulness in the successful early stages of the Vivekananda resistance, but they no doubt also heard about the PBI team's unreliability in the later stages. Perhaps this affected not only the refugees' decision about asking for accompaniment, but also the degree of resistance they were willing to embark on. Instead of increasing political space and the range of choices available to the refugees, this PBI team likely served an opposite function. And my own inability to disentangle my research needs from my clear responsibilities to PBI's clients was no small contributor to that fateful and tragic outcome.

## RECIPROCITY IN RESEARCH

Ethnographers given intimate access to an organization incur responsibilities to that organization in turn. When the research occurs amid unusual levels of danger and violence for all involved, those responsibilities surely increase. In what follows, I will mention just a few of the ways that I tried to give back to the organization and the people involved in my research. While these initiatives were peculiar to my

own situation, the general principles they embody are transferable to other research contexts.

After leaving the summer 1993 PBI team and completing my interviews, the team and I met to go over my "analytic hunches" and initial findings. At this meeting, I emphasized problem areas for which I thought I could offer recommendations for organizational improvement. For example, the Sri Lanka team often provided international observers for trade union and fair labor demonstrations in the "free trade zone" (FTZ) at Katunyake. My interview with the officer in charge of the police station adjacent to the FTZ revealed that he and his police staff had some serious misunderstandings regarding the identity and purpose of PBI and its mandate in Sri Lanka. It seemed clear that at least some of the potential deterrent effect of the team's presence in the FTZ was probably being compromised as a result of these faulty understandings. Extrapolating from this and from my observations of the team's work in other areas of Sri Lanka, I recommended that the team (1) schedule informational meetings with police and governmental officials with oversight responsibilities in both the geographic areas and the issues areas where the team frequently worked, (2) schedule these meetings regularly and independently of specific events that PBI may be observing, and (3) redouble team onsite efforts to dialogue with police and military officials in charge of security for specific demonstrations, rallies, and so on. After discussion and adaptations, the team adopted these recommendations, and I assisted in identifying likely contacts to implement the first recommendation. In addition, I presented aspects of my research findings on consensus decision making on the teams to the 1995 National Gathering of PBI/USA, again making recommendations for improvement. A committee was formed to explore and respond to the issues the discussion of my research raised.

I was one of two trainers for a one week Sri Lanka Project training for new team members at which I based some training exercises on my research and presented some of my findings. In response to requests from PBI, I have also provided resources and reading materials to be used at trainings. I continue to give talks on PBI's work and distribute PBI literature to community forums at which I speak and to classes that I teach. PBI is a small and relatively little known organization, always in need of money. Consequently, in 1996 I wrote a lengthy nomination of PBI, based on my research, for the Pfeiffer Peace Prize of the

Fellowship of Reconciliation. PBI won the \$3,000 award and the recognition that comes with it the following year.

There are two less direct but perhaps no less important ways my research project has made contributions to my informants. Many of my Sri Lankan informants and interviewees told me they were thankful for my research and its attention to human rights problems in Sri Lanka. Some said that my research interest in their situation encouraged them in their own work, as they felt international attention to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and human rights violations might help them. In some instances, I think they expected much more of me and whatever I am able to publish than is realistic. Finally, it is not uncommon for political and social activists who are the subjects of research to feel that the research provides legitimation and visibility to their often underappreciated endeavors (Esseveld and Eyerman 1992, 229-30). Focusing my research on the Sri Lanka Project of PBI seemed to have boosted the confidence of some members of the SLP and its team. The SLP had been considered by some within the organization as the "poor cousin" to the higher visibility Guatemala team or even the El Salvador team of the Central American Project. This contributed to what I came to see as a disempowering and inferior self-image with which many in the SLP struggled. Perhaps my research focus on the SLP helped some members know that their work was of interest to others, valuable enough to be worthy of critical study.

## CONCLUSION

The experiences and dilemmas recounted here are but a few of the occasions when I strove to reconcile the academic rigor required of ethnography with the political and practical realities of providing international protective accompaniment during Sri Lanka's civil war in the mid-1990s. International nonviolent accompaniment provides participants with panoply of difficult dilemmas revolving around the "proper" role of a nonpartisan international accompanier who is attempting to open up safer political space for local activists. Many of these ethical dilemmas must be decided on in the spur of the moment with little time for reflection, despite the far-reaching consequences of some of the decisions for people other than the decision makers themselves.

Experienced ethnographers will recognize the preceding description of international accompaniment as being equally accurate for the practice of much ethnography. Thus, when ethnography and accompaniment are combined, the potential for mistakes or failures of various sorts are increased, and occasionally realized, as occurred here. That fact ought not to deter others from engaging in similar research projects in the now-burgeoning field of nonviolent accompaniment and intervention. Organizations such as PBI, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Project Accompaniment, Witness for Peace, and many others are developing new and creative forms of nonviolent intervention, answering a palpable need in our war-weary and violent world.<sup>13</sup> Ethnographic researchers can aid in that effort, helping to chart the meaning and even the effectiveness of various projects and the tactics they employ. In the end, wrestling reflexively with ethical dilemmas is a prerequisite not only for effective international observers, but also for responsible ethnographers. It may be the surest way to move both enterprises forward simultaneously.

## NOTES

1. Faulty impressions can also be easily conveyed in such shorthanded explanations of a research project. At one regional gathering, I did not even have much control over the content of my introduction to the group. A beginning exercise at the gathering was to break off into pairs to spend a few moments getting to know your partner in order to introduce her or him to the larger group. Consequently, when we reconvened, I (and my research project!) was introduced to the gathering by my new acquaintance.

2. For a particularly moving example of this, and an analytically useful reflexive approach to the problem, see Ellis (1995, 81-84).

3. See *Harbouring armed gangs* (1993).

4. The interview appeared in the September 1993 issue; see *Peace Brigades International (PBI)* (1993).

5. For a full accounting of the Selvakumar accompaniment case, see Coy (1997a).

6. It must also be said that my descriptions and interpretations always remain second-order interpretations, what Geertz (1988) called "our constructions of other people's construction of what they and their compatriots are up to" (p. 42).

7. Herbert Gans (1968) broke down the possible role configurations into a three-part typology: total participant, researcher/participant, and total researcher. He gave a useful analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of each. Because of the variety of my research sites and formats, I used each of these role combinations at different points in the study.

8. For a fuller analysis of the use of consensus decision making by the PBI team in time-pressured and life-threatening situations, see Coy (forthcoming). Most of the

articles in this volume of *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* are also devoted to decision-making processes in social movement organizations.

9. For more on the issue of bridging the academic life with activism, see Coy and Woehrlé (1996) and Divinski et al. (1994).

10. For a discussion of the various functions of accompaniment in this election-monitoring campaign, see Coy (1995).

11. The deterrence of international accompaniment often engages and even relies on the privileged positions enjoyed by the team members, most of whom have been white Anglos from the powerful countries of North America and Western Europe. Team members struggle with the use of this privilege, rejecting it or coming to terms with it in various ways. For an extended analysis of how PBI members think about the dynamics of privilege in their work and a typology of the various schools of thought in the organization, see Coy (2000).

12. The war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has created an immense refugee problem for Colombo. More than one hundred thousand Tamil and Muslim refugees have fled their homes for India. An additional three hundred thousand have gone to Western countries, and more than five hundred thousand are currently displaced in Sri Lanka itself, out of a total population of only seventeen million. The numbers of internal refugees have at times been as high as one million (Demusz, 2000, 11).

13. Growth in the number and variety of nonviolent intervention initiatives has begun to spawn a critical literature about them, including Weber (1993), Schirch (1995), Rigby (1995), Mahony and Eguren (1997), Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber (2000), Burrowes (2000), and Coy (1993, 1997a, 1997b, forthcoming). For an excellent collection of articles on various projects, many written by participants, see the contributions to the Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber (2000) volume.

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