

# The Two Hands of Nonviolence

## Barbara Deming:

In her book *Revolution and Equilibrium*, Deming's metaphor of the two hands underscores the creative tension that fuels both interpersonal transformation and social change:

With one hand we say to one who is angry, or to an oppressor, or to an unjust system, "Stop what you are doing. I refuse to honor the role you are choosing to play. I refuse to obey you. I refuse to cooperate with your demands. I refuse to build the walls and the bombs. I refuse to pay for the guns. With this hand I will even interfere with the wrong you are doing. I want to disrupt the easy pattern of your life." But then the advocate of nonviolence raises the other hand. It is raised outstretched – maybe with love and sympathy, maybe not – but always outstretched... With this hand we say, "I won't let go of you or cast you out of the human race. I have faith that you can make a better choice than you are making now, and I'll be here when you are ready. Like it or not, we are part of one another."

