NONVIOLENT TRANSFORMATION OF CONFLICT—AFRICA

STRATEGIC NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE: A TRAINING MANUAL

Christopher A. Miller

EDUCATION FOR PEACE AFRICA PROGRAMME

University for Peace

The mission of the University for Peace is to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings a spirit of understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples, and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations.

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Charter of the University for Peace,
Article 2, approved by the UN General Assembly
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Additional titles in this series:

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Mary E. King
Series Editor

Cover photo: Strained relations among the more than sixty ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire were exacerbated by the civil war that began in 1992. Interethnic relations within the nation are thus a key factor in seeking a representative and democratic government and building national unity and sustainability. In this photo, elders from the Yacouba and Burkinabe groups come together in a peace alliance organised with assistance from Search for Common Ground. The offerings for peace are a stark but welcomed alternative to the militancy that dominates most interethnic relations. Photo: Search for Common Ground.

CONTENTS

Foreword

The oil-rich Niger Delta has been a resource as well as a curse. It has generated substantial revenue for Nigeria for development, but such activity often has been accompanied by inefficiencies and lack of transparency. Worse still, the people of the delta are yet to benefit from this taunted development, as residents complain of environmental degradation, social and human rights abuses, economic mismanagement, and political repression. Such abuses and deprivation in the face of plenty have fueled sustained and often-violent local resistance resulting in the loss of life, destruction of oil production facilities, disruption of oil deliveries, and threats to global economies.

The University for Peace (UPEACE), established by a resolution of the UN General Assembly in 1980, seeks to promote social justice through strategic nonviolence. Pursuant to this approach, UPEACE has worked in partnership with the National Universities Commission, Abuja, and the University of Jos to strengthen the capacity of Nigerian institutions in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation, conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peace building. "Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict," a workshop held in the Niger Delta region 13–17 November 2005, represents an effort by this partnership to transform the delta from a theatre of political upheaval to a region in which young people fighting for social justice can embrace realistic alternatives to armed struggle by channeling their energies into becoming active agents of social change and nonviolent transformation. The workshop exposed youths to the philosophies, principles, and theories of strategic nonviolence and offered them opportunities to develop their own analyses, learn how to define goals, make assessments, prepare to strive towards their vision of the future, learn how to build constructive plans, and identify resources for nonviolent struggles.

Strategic Nonviolent Struggle: A Training Manual discusses strategies for embarking on the path of peace by applying nonviolent approaches to resolving issues and conflict. It presents an overview of nonviolent action, including accessible explanations of theories, methods, dynamics, and mechanisms. Case studies from Africa counter the myth that nonviolent action has not been used or has been unsuccessful among the continent's constituent nations and societies. Such studies help to awaken curiosity and shed light on important, but sometimes forgotten, popular struggles that have achieved justice, transformation, reconciliation, and human rights through the use of nonviolent struggle.

The contents of this publication will serve to crystallise thinking on nonviolent action in the minds of its readers, and it is hoped, lead to constructive dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. I wish to commend the worthy efforts of the University for Peace and everyone involved in the production of this booklet. I recommend it to all, especially to those who believe that conflict must be resolved through violent struggle.

Professor Placid C. Njoku
Resident Adviser to the Rector, University for Peace
Director, Quality Assurance, National Universities Commission, Abuja

Preface

This project—initiated by the Africa Programme of the University for Peace (UPEACE), an affiliate of the United Nations—resulted from consultative missions to thirteen countries. In meetings at more than fifty universities and five hundred non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the continent of Africa, specific requests were made by Africans to address the dearth of materials on strategic nonviolent struggle. Among innumerable enriching encounters, the team recalls one historian at the University of Natal at Durban who spoke with pride of what he called 'South Africa's strong indigenous tradition of nonviolent struggle—the tradition of Gandhi, Lithuli, and Biko'. He was referring to Mohandas K. Gandhi who had worked in South Africa for twenty-one years, the Zulu chief and Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Luthuli, and the anti-apartheid leader Steve Biko.

A further spark for this training manual came from a youth forum in March 2004 in Abuja, Nigeria, following a UPEACE curriculum development workshop jointly sponsored with Nigeria's National Universities Commission, specifically Professor Placid C. Njoku. During the forum, Nigerian youth leaders asked for help in learning how to seek justice with nonviolent political tools, 'because the only thing we hear about is violence'. Subsequently, a workshop was held for civil society leaders— many of them young—in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, in November 2005. This activity reinforced the need for such an instruction booklet.

This manual is thus a direct result of concrete requests by African academicians, civil society leaders, and youthful peace builders who asked that the UPEACE Africa Programme develop and circulate materials to share knowledge on nonviolent struggle and transformation of conflict. It is one in a series of publications related to the broad topic of nonviolent action and is meant to serve as a practical guide for directors of youth programmes, youth leaders, and civil society leaders

organising workshops on how to press for social justice without violence. I hope this small contribution can aid in meeting some of the needs of such determined and inspiring individuals and organisations. The other, related publications from the UPEACE Africa Programme are as follows:

Teaching Model: Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict
A twelve-module teaching curriculum with theoretical and historical background on the field of nonviolent struggle, notes for instructors, suggested readings, expected learning outcomes, and suggested class exercises.

'Bite Not One Another': Selected Accounts of Nonviolent Struggle in Africa
Accounts of nonviolent action from across sub-Saharan Africa covering nonviolent independence movements during the colonial era, contemporary struggles for human rights and social justice, and examination of the influential role of women as nonviolent activists.

Only Young Once: An Introduction to Nonviolent Struggle for Youths
A practical introduction to the dynamics of nonviolent struggle emphasising the need for strategy and the crucial role played by youths in such movements.

The purpose of this training manual is to serve as a tool for civil society leaders interested in running or facilitating seminars, workshops, and training programmes on the use and effectiveness of *nonviolent struggle*. It can be used as an enhancement with *Only Young Once*, the youth introduction. This manual may also be used by academicians and lecturers in institutions of higher learning, perhaps as a supplement for formal classroom and course usage with the *Teaching Model*.

Although nonviolent struggle has long been a form of individual and personal witness, this manual is concerned with its employment as a technique of *fighting* for social change. The concern here is not with interpersonal conflicts, which deserve a manual of their own, but instead with disputes and strife among groups at the local, communal, municipal, state, national, regional, and even international levels. The focus is not on addressing nonviolence in the normative sense, as a value, although the moral attributes of fighting for justice without doing harm to the target group, combined with its practicality, make this method highly desirable. Also not being considered are spiritual, faith-based, religious, intimate, and familial uses of the term 'nonviolence'. Ultimately, nonviolent struggle is *engagement* that utilises political tools instead of military weaponry. It is known by many names, including nonviolent direct action, nonviolent resistance, active nonviolence, militant nonviolence, and civic resistance.

Nonviolent struggle is thus offered as an alternative to violent forms of engagement, yet the technique can also be utilised effectively in conjunction with other forms of conflict resolution. Nonviolent struggle is often employed by those who are also pursuing negotiation, mediation, and various types of conflict transformation. Therefore, it can in some cases be necessary to use such approaches in tandem.

Throughout this manual, the terms *nonviolent struggle* and *nonviolent action* are used in their unhyphenated forms, which have a distinct history and connotation in modern English usage. Experts in the field believe that without hyphenation the words *nonviolence* and *nonviolent* are no longer merely in opposition to violence, but become affirmative in their own right.

Appreciation and thanks are extended to the many individuals who helped to make this project possible. I am especially grateful to two graduates from UPEACE who put their new master's degrees to immediate use in assisting with this undertaking: Nigerian journalist

1

The World of
Nonviolent Struggle,
Nonviolent Struggle
and the World

Grievances, disputes, and conflicts are inevitable. They occur all the time in every society, among and within families, civil society groups, governments, regional institutions, and international organisations. Some are highly visible. Others are not evident and may remain latent or dormant for some time. In any case, such situations are essentially disagreements or confrontations over goals, aspirations, objectives, or the ways to achieve certain ends.

When faced with such situations, individuals and groups ultimately have choices (see chart, p. 19). They can accept the events and circumstances, or they can act. Most of you reading and using this training manual have decided to act. For you, the question is How will you act? This manual outlines a unique form of action that can be utilised by groups aspiring to overcome social oppression, to ensure fair and equitable recourse to justice, to advance democratic ideals, and to change their societies constructively. The technique is strategic nonviolent struggle, and throughout this manual practical, feasible, and realistic ways to press for reform or transformation without relying on violence or brutality will be discussed. Nonviolent struggle is not a magic potion and is often counterintuitive. Therefore, it must be learned.

Some people, especially youths, may be vulnerable to the argument that violence is the sole way to address injustice, especially in the face of a violent opponent. 'What has been taken by violence must be returned by violence' is a common rallying cry for persons and groups demanding social change. In such an atmosphere, admonishing youths and young adults not to fight may be futile. People will not *not* fight. Forms of armed struggle have benefited from centuries of practice, attention, and examination. A realistic alternative to violent struggle usually has not been persuasively offered, and accessible information has often not been available on how to plan and conduct strategic nonviolent action.

In many societies, institutions have been established to address

different forms of grievances and conflicts. The rule of law and parliamentary processes, accountable governance, and organisations for meting out justice normally resolve most disagreements or disputes. A range of supplementary initiatives has been developed as well, such as arbitration, diplomacy, mediation, and negotiation. Yet, some societies and communities have failed to develop stable and equitable measures and vehicles for responsible resolution of conflicts. Discrimination, animosities, hatred, blame, and ignorance can all contribute to creating obstacles. Power imbalances can also impede constructive problem solving. In democracies, the majority may ignore the rights of minorities. Elsewhere, when a group feels strong enough to do as it pleases, it can lose incentive to cooperate with others. Continuation of conflict is sometimes viewed by certain elements as more favourable than resolution. Such situations are particularly relevant today in weak nation-states and during state failure or collapse. Rebel guerrilla groups that have managed to gain a foothold in a weak power structure, for instance, do not want a return to politics as usual; neither do the arms traders or corrupt government officials who stand to gain from turmoil and instability.

Where the legal and parliamentary channels to address disputes and grievances have broken down or are not working, conflict transformation can still be sought constructively. Nonviolent struggle is unique in that its proponents recognise the link between the means and the ends in conflict. Groups are still able to stand up for what they believe and want when conflict resolution is not possible. Seemingly unfavourable conditions need not prevent people from pursuing social justice. Indeed, nonviolent struggle is usually adopted precisely because legal or parliamentary methods of seeking redress have failed, resulting in severe strife or protracted conflicts.

When those faced with a conflict or dispute are concerned only about meeting certain needs, desires, or objectives, alleviating griev-

ances can be seen purely as an end-game. Immediate results take precedence, and indirect and long-term risks and benefits are usually dismissed. The means chosen to overcome hardships, however, have both short-term and long-term consequences. This connexion between the means and the ends is a fundamental component and advantage of implementing the technique of strategic nonviolent struggle.

When groups choose to employ guerrilla war or terrorism to alleviate a grievance or hardship, a path of destruction is left in their wake. People are harmed in the immediate sense, and violence begins to substitute for addressing grievances and more general political processes. Changes in the society or community may still occur, yet violence leaves long-term trauma that often requires psychological healing, reconciliation, and other peace-building techniques. Such efforts are necessary not only for individuals who have suffered at the hands of violence, but also for the larger society to restore trust, security, and the capacity to operate normally.

An opponent may possess superior material resources, skills, and knowledge in relation to different forms of violence. A decision to confront an adversary where it is strongest is not likely to result in success. It is often suicidal. This explains why target groups frequently try to goad nonviolent resisters towards violent actions—the opponent can not only justify a violent response but also dictate the rules of engagement, which ultimately favour its strengths.

The conditions under which nonviolent struggle has been employed throughout history are extensive, whether called by this or another name. The technique possesses no demographic boundaries. It has been used across the globe by men, women, children, the elderly, the unemployed, peasants, labourers, merchants, bureaucrats, consumers, producers, the poor, the middle class, and the wealthy. It has been used in seeking humanitarian goals, human rights, suffrage, labor and other reforms, and independence, as well as for national defence. It

has been employed under dictatorships, communism, authoritarianism, oligarchies, military occupations, and democracies. No political, economic, or cultural milieus have restricted the use of nonviolent struggle.

RESPONSES TO POLITICAL OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICE

```
                    Situation of political oppression
                              and injustice
                          /                    \
              Nonrecognition              Recognition
                                        /              \
                           Acceptance            Nonacceptance
                                      /              |               \
                             Exit          Everyday forms of     Political action
                                              resistance        /              \
                                                    Institutional       Noninstitutional
                                                        action                action
                                                                      /              \
                                                             Violent action      Nonviolent action
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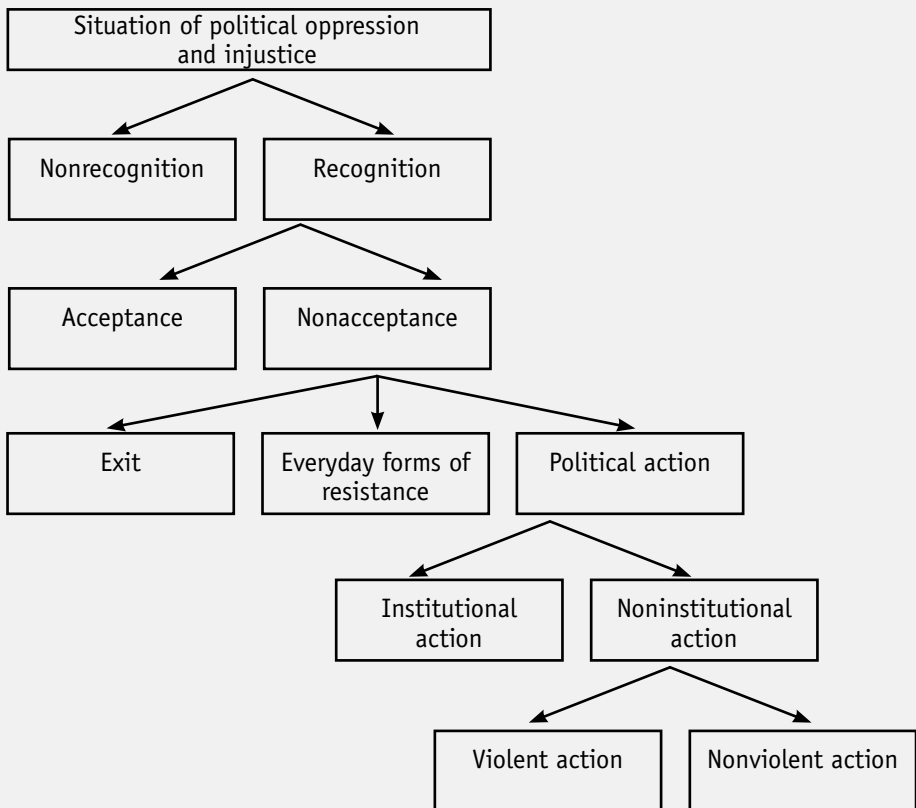
Source: Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 13.

Decades of changing tactics and strategies in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa had shifted almost exclusively by the 1980s towards nonviolent struggle. Extensive noncooperation, including consumer and student boycotts, contributed to undermining the power bases of the apartheid regime and to gaining tangible international support. The internal and external pressure on the apartheid government eventually proved to be too formidable.

Mourners march in a funeral procession during the 1985 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Langa Township in Uitenhage, South Africa. The day commemorates the anniversary of the 21 March 1960 Sharpeville massacre, in which 69 died and more than 300 were injured. Large assemblies were forbidden under apartheid; funeral processions thus assumed huge symbolic importance as a method of nonviolent action. Photo: UN Photos.

The People Power movement in the Philippines in 1986 led to the disintegration of the Ferdinand Marcos regime. The combination of an informed and active civil society and extensive noncooperation by civil servants, including military personnel, undermined the ability of the government to function and shifted legitimacy towards the democratic opposition.

Poland's Solidarity Union movement represents the most unlikely of success stories. Against a history of guerrilla resistance, with the presence of the overpowering strength and influence of the Soviet Union, a leadership and support structure emerged for a nonviolent movement, which fought with very limited resources. Launched initially to push for greater economic and political freedoms, the movement solidified the demands for trade unions and, with this success, was able to shift towards political goals of elections and the end of Soviet dominance.

After years of resisting but having only limited effect, nonviolent protagonists in Serbia, in the Balkans, developed a comprehensive, strategic plan, which combined their previous experience with study of the nonviolent technique. The international community later viewed the movement and its success strictly from the perspective of Slobodan Milosevic's forced resignation as president in 2000. Strategic nonviolent struggle in Serbia, however, included dismantling the support structures of the Milosevic regime, bringing the democratic opposition parties together in cooperation, encouraging the general population to vote, holding the regime accountable for potentially falsified election results, and finally, when the latter occurred, ensuring the departure of Milosevic.

The lessons learned in Serbia have been shared and implemented by those leading other nonviolent movements. For example, a similar model was adopted in the successful struggle in the former Soviet republic of Georgia in 2003, leading to the resignation of long-time president Eduard Shevardnadze in what is now referred to as the Rose

Revolution. Similarly, in 2004, Ukraine experienced the Orange Revolution, which saw the end of the authoritarian rule of President Leonid Kuchma. Also among the former Soviet republics, the Tulip Revolution of 2005 led to the dismissal of President Askar Aliev, who had ruled Kyrgyzstan since its independence in 1991. As of early 2006, large-scale and small-scale nonviolent struggles for social and political change were under way across the globe, from Iran and Venezuela to Belarus and Zimbabwe.

Despite the results and prominence of the above victories, nonviolent struggles are not always successful. Such movements in Burma in 1988 and China in 1989 led to massive crackdowns in both countries, which continue to experience political repression. A sophisticated movement in Kosovo, operating between approximately 1988 and 1998, created parallel institutions—one of the most advanced methods of nonviolent struggle—to oversee the provision of basic needs and services. It was completely eroded with the rise of the Kosovo Liberation Army, which precipitated changes in policy by the Yugoslav government and the international community. The first Palestinian *intifada*, or uprising, failed to secure a recognised homeland for the peoples under Israeli military occupation in the territories set aside for the Palestinian Arabs by the United Nations.

Historical examples show that nonviolent action is global in application and is not limited to any people, group, region, or worldview. Hidden or untold chronicles can prove revealing and insightful. As a political and social technique, nonviolent struggle offers a fundamental re-conception of power and strength. Knowledge of nonviolent action is growing, as it becomes evident that it can be effective in diverse conflicts. By attacking the power of an adversary—as opposed to the well-being, limbs, or lives of an opponent—nonviolent action operates on the principle that all political relationships require degrees of obedience, cooperation, and acquiescence. The sources of

such cooperation can be identified, and, once identified, they can be purposefully or strategically withdrawn. In other words, all systems rely on compliance and assistance, which can be withheld. When this happens, the relationship among the parties involved can be altered. This is a simple explanation of the pluralistic theory of power, in which political power is spread throughout a society, and the decisions and actions of groups affect its equilibrium. This conception lies in stark contrast to more dominant monolithic models of power, seen as rigid, pyramidal structures in which an individual or group sits atop a passive and ineffectual society.

Withdrawing cooperation and support from a target group or an opponent can take specific and pointed forms, usually referred to by the term *noncooperation*. Hundreds of nonviolent methods have been identified. Other psychological, social, economic, and political weapons include forms of protest and persuasion as well as nonviolent intervention. It is also true that novel and ingenious methods continue to be developed in many struggles.

Although an important topic, explaining how conflicts arise or why grievances emerge is beyond the scope of this manual. Instead, the implicit aim is to reveal the opportunities that tend to hide behind the negative connotations associated with or imposed upon how people deal with disputes and conflicts. How persons respond is a choice, and such decisions require informed consideration. Stories, narratives, coverage, and reportage of conventional war, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism abound. This manual presents an overview of a different form of engagement—strategic nonviolent struggle.

2
Understanding Your Environment

> [A]lthough conflicts have negative connotations . . . [many] constitute an essential creative element for changing societies and achieving the goals and aspirations of individuals and groups.
>
> Otite and Albert 1999: 17

Anyone considering using nonviolent struggle should have a thorough understanding of the situation and the context in which developments will unfold. As much as possible, the collecting of information and data should precede any campaign or activity, especially if large in scale. Although perfect information is impossible, creating an encyclopaedia about the situation helps in formulating plans, evaluating actions and reactions, making adjustments, and maintaining continuity among the various factors that influence decision making. This holds regardless of the composition and character of aggrieved and target groups, the issues at stake, and desired outcomes.

Learning as much as possible about your situation might seem beside the point, but decisions in the midst of struggle should be based on more than intuition or ethical positions, although such factors may come into play. The greatest challenge in an ongoing campaign is the collecting of accurate and timely information, which changes because of the dynamic nature of documentation and reporting on social events. One of your most useful tools may be a radio or a typewriter.

In military terminology, the process of gathering information about the struggle environment is referred to as the preparation of a strategic estimate. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Robert Helvey.) This notion is directly relevant for nonviolent struggle as well. A strategic estimate includes a range of factors geographic —climatic, social, economic, political, and cultural—that can be categorised into five areas:

- General grievance and possible solutions
- Objectives and issues at stake for the parties to the conflict
- Strengths and weaknesses of the opponent or target group
- Strengths and weaknesses of the nonviolent struggle group
- General environment of the conflict or struggle

What's the Problem?

Specific grievances or problems in a society are often expressed in vague and overarching ways: 'The problem is the government'. 'We need greater equality and economic opportunities'. 'Every time we try to do something, we are harassed, arrested, or worse'. 'The problem is capitalism'. 'The problem is corruption'. 'The problem is globalisation'. Such statements may contain threads of truth, but they say little to identify the real predicament that needs to be addressed or the best way to approach it.

Any number of grievances may exist in a society, and countless failures of governing bodies or institutions may occur. Before action is taken, however, the grievance should be unmistakably understood and clearly declared. This is true for several reasons. Clear articulation of the grievance could begin to address the problem. It gives others an opportunity to develop an opinion about the issue and potentially offers the target group a chance to alleviate any hardships that might exist. A solution cannot be offered unless the problem is known. Informing those who are responsible for either creating or resolving a grievance is an attempt to solve a problem efficiently. Perhaps the grievance can be alleviated simply by writing a letter or making a public announcement instead of organising a campaign of nonviolent action. Because the resources in any nonviolent struggle are the people themselves, one would want to preserve human resources as much as

Listeners in Burundi tune in to radio programmes sponsored and produced by Search for Common Ground. Community radio is a potent tool for educating communities that it is possible to fight for justice with effective and realistic alternatives to violent struggle, namely, nonviolent action. Photo: Search for Common Ground.

possible. Whether from the point of view of the opponent, neutral parties, or supporters, everyone should be made aware of the problem at hand. Clarifying particular grievances, hardships, and problems is the first step in attempting to find a solution.

From Grievances to Objectives

Visions of a time when a grievance has been overcome are important in creating hope and a realistic picture of a new, resolved situation. When wrongs are loosely conceptualised, visions for overcoming them will be equally vague. Visualisations are usually framed in terms of social justice, freedom, or human rights, and if they involve long-term,

broad aspirations and goals, it helps for as many persons as possible to share the vision.

During the final years of European colonial rule in Africa, disputes emerged pertaining to government policies and political leadership. Where nonviolent struggle played a significant role—as in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia—the general dissatisfaction with foreign rule translated directly into the objective of political independence. Even as the colonial era came to a formal end, Africa still experienced grievances and disputes on the national level. For instance, overwhelmingly nonviolent movements in Sierra Leone from 1997 to 1998, in Madagascar in 2001, and in Zimbabwe in recent years have sought and are seeking fair governance and free elections to choose new leaderships. Broad grievances with governments were transformed into specific objectives for replacing them. Grievances on the national level may be articulated in objectives other than dislodging a government. Nonviolent protagonists may seek responsive officials, changes in policy, or enforcement of existing legislation. For example, several peoples in the Nigerian oil-producing states have been struggling for more equitable distribution of oil revenues and cessation of environmental degradation. Peoples from Togo to Ethiopia to Mozambique have been seeking free and fair elections. Many disputes occur at the local and communal levels as well, yet clarifying grievances and translating them into objectives is equally necessary at the municipal and district level. This is true whether the issue concerns grazing areas, clean water supplies, or corruption.

To make visions of tomorrow become realities of today, grievances and goals must be translated into tangible terms. This is accomplished by formulating objectives, that is, steps along a process that lead to a goal. Objectives should be carefully chosen, defined, agreed, and understood well before any large-scale activities are undertaken. If you can solve your grievance with a petition or a representative del-

Members of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), a nonviolent civil society organisation, march peacefully in Mabutweni in Bulawayo in December 2005 to raise awareness of the pervasive problem of sexual violence against women, often an accompaniment to war. Marches and demonstrations are among the basic nonviolent action methods of protest and persuasion that send a message or communicate a problem, often through the use of familiar symbols. Photo: WOZA.

egation, it is much better to do it that way, because it allows you to conserve your energies. When you are not sure where you are going, the likelihood of wasting resources or being diverted from the main issue increases. Identifying objectives is, therefore, a crucial step, and several factors should be kept in mind during this process.

First, the more concrete the objective, the more easily tangible results can be identified. Such specificity helps to determine the effectiveness of actions and strategies; it keeps you abreast of whether you

are heading in the right direction. This holds true whether you are, for example, seeking a referendum, ensuring fair agricultural policies, or ousting a non-responsive school board.

Tips on objectives

- Objectives should be concrete and measurable
- Multiple objectives towards a common goal are better than only one objective
- Objectives should appeal to the widest possible audience, including opponents and those who have not taken a stand
- Achievement of objectives, even if small-scale, should be promoted
- Failure to achieve an objective should be evaluated to help determine future action

Second, many problems have more than one solution, and identifying multiple objectives for achieving the same result has several advantages. When only one objective is sought, several paths towards its achievement should be identified. A single path to success can be too easily blocked. Equally useful activities should continue when particular actions are impossible. In Central Europe, the Poles' ultimate goal in the Solidarity Union, which eventually had ten million participants, was to improve the lives of everyday people and regain control of their political system from the communist apparatus. Yet, none of their objectives specifically articulated this broad purpose. Instead, multiple campaigns and activities—creation of labour unions, practice of free speech in various forms despite its forbiddance—helped eventually to meet broader goals. Solidarity leaders realised that Soviet dominance and control could not be met head on. Although demanding complexity, continuous pressure and a series of activities directed towards several objectives work best.

Third, an effective way of pursuing multiple roads towards reaching a shared goal is by identifying numerous objectives that appeal to the widest possible audiences, and not solely to those who are already committed to participating in an activity, campaign, or movement. Neutral and indifferent parties, and even the opponent group, need to have options for participation. Widely shared objectives are more likely to increase active participation, which distributes and thereby reduces risks. Try to adopt objectives that are extremely difficult to refute logically. No one can deny the necessity of clean drinking water or food. Basic broad-spectrum objectives garner widespread support and wider attention than do narrow or parochial concerns.

Fourth, persons who participate in a given campaign or particular method of nonviolent action need to know when they are being successful or unsuccessful. In other words, efforts must be made to promote the accomplishment of objectives. Failure to do so (or works in progress) should be evaluated so that informed decisions can be made about continuing activities. This is crucial to the momentum, confidence, and morale of all parties to the conflict as well as in influencing the role of external parties. Framing the struggle in relation to benchmarks allows the depiction of the story as it unfolds to participants and observers. Such an approach can be addressed as part of a communications strategy.

What Is at Stake?

Institutional vehicles and established mechanisms often operate well in resolving disputes or conflicts. When such organisations and processes are functioning properly, the need for groups and individuals to adopt nonviolent action lessens. When breakdowns occur, however, groups may consider that they are obliged to act and deal with disputes. Such objectives tend to lead to reform. When the means of handling dis-

putes have not been well established or agreed upon, grievances tend to generate objectives that are more transformational. In such situations, groups may seek the formation of new organisations, processes, and practices. In other words, the struggle may be over establishing the 'rules of the game'.

The use of nonviolent struggle can be seen on a spectrum ranging from reformist to transformational to revolutionary. This becomes evident through an examination of diverse settings in which nonviolent struggle has been employed. Under European colonialism, Africans made numerous attempts at reform using nonviolent methods. The burning of passes and identity cards and the formation of labour unions throughout much of the continent, for example, were intended to secure individual rights and freedoms as well as political space to move towards increased self-governance. At first, such initiatives did not aim to expel European colonialists. As it became clear that such reformist objectives would not be sufficient to ensure fair and equitable vehicles to address disputes, however, many Africans shifted their objective towards more transformational and, in some cases, revolutionary ends. This was especially true, for example, in Ghana and South Africa.

Who's Standing Where? What Are They Providing?

Chapter 1 discussed the importance of the pluralistic theory of power, which acknowledges that power is diffused in many centres throughout a society. In this sense, power is fragile and can shift among various groupings. To develop strength, a group needs to gain the consent and cooperation of other groups within the society. If persons make groups strong, they can also make groups weak. What is it that individuals provide that makes a group powerful? The academician Gene Sharp identifies six elements, or sources, of power that people provide to empower groups:

- **Authority** is essentially a quality that signifies the voluntary acceptance of procedures, such as laws, orders, decrees, decisions, and judgements. This factor is also called legitimacy. It is something that is bestowed on the ruler when individuals and groups voluntarily obey. In some societies, a fine line exists between authority and legality. Regardless, those who possess authority are able to establish rules and have them followed with minimal resort to coercion because of their position, experience, expertise, and credibility.
- **Material resources** are the most easily identified and quantifiable source of power, but their importance is often the most overstated. Money, property, natural resources, transportation, communication, and various supplies all comprise material resources, and they are absolutely critical if success is expected. More material resources, however, do not necessarily translate into greater effectiveness or inevitable success. Material resources must be managed and used effectively and efficiently.
- **Human resources** refers to the sheer number of persons who support a nonviolent movement or an opponent. Numbers are important.
- **Skills and knowledge** are usually more important than the number supporting a nonviolent struggle. Nonviolent action requires an array of skills and knowledge, including technologies.
- **Intangible factors** are not as ephemeral as one might suppose. They can be identified as aspects that enhance or impede obedience, acquiescence, and submission. Such factors might include customs, religious beliefs, cultural norms, values, and traditions.
- **Sanctions** and the ability to enforce them are used both to punish and to deter acts of disobedience or noncooperation. Sanctions may assume various forms, including political and legal measures, economic pressure, and physical coercion.

No group is likely to possess all six sources of power in totality. Given the voluntary and dynamic nature of obedience, the availability of each of these sources tends to vary over time and in degree.

The sources of power are provided by or manifested through the institutions and organisations distributed across a society. Such 'pillars of support' allow a party or group to maintain and exert power. Although every society is unique, they have in common several pillars of support. The table below lists them and indicates the sources of power that they usually are capable of providing. Take some time to identify the pillars in your own community or society, and try to identify which sources of power they supply.

POWER ANALYSIS

| Pillars of Support / Sources of Power	Authority	Material resources	Human resources	Skills and knowledge	Intangible factors	Sanctions
Business community		•		•		•
Civil servants	•	•	•	•		•
Cultural and issue-oriented organisations	•		•		•	
News media	•	•		•		•
Military	•	•	•	•	•	•
NGOs	•		•	•		
Police	•	•	•	•	•	•
Political parties (including youth wings)	•	•	•	•	•	
Religious organisations	•		•		•	•
Student unions			•	•		•
Workers and labour organisations			•	•		•

How Do You Stack Up?

Having identified the various organisations and institutions throughout your valley, town, prefecture, district, county, or society, you should have a solid understanding of what types of support and sources of power they provide. The next task lies in analysing how such groups stand in relation to your purpose or cause, and how they relate to your opponent or target group. The circumstances and relationships between your group and the target group are likely to change over the course of a dispute or conflict. Therefore, how you stack up should be evaluated consistently.

The following graphs represent a general approach from which decisions and evaluations can be made according to an assessment of the situation. Provide estimates ranging between −10 and +10 for each source of power for your cause and for your target.

COMPARISONS OF POWER ANALYSIS

Authority

Nonviolent protagonists

-10   0   +10
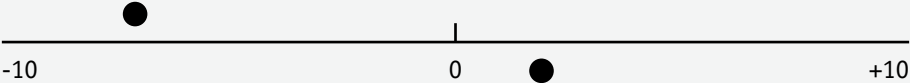
Opponents

Material Resources

Nonviolent protagonists

-10   0   +10
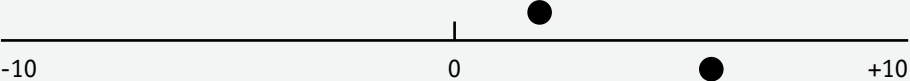
Opponents

Human Resources

Nonviolent protagonists

-10   ●   0   +10
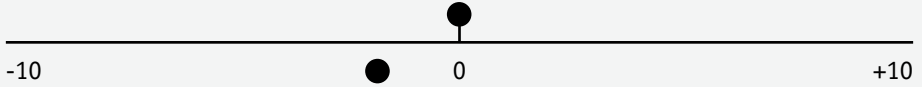
Opponents

Skills and Knowledge

Nonviolent protagonists

-10   0   ●   +10
                                                     ●

Opponents

Intangible Factors
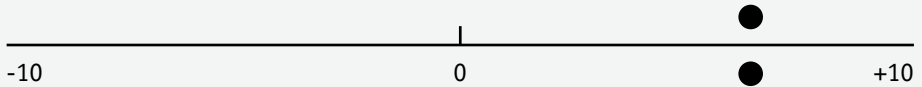
Nonviolent protagonists

       ●
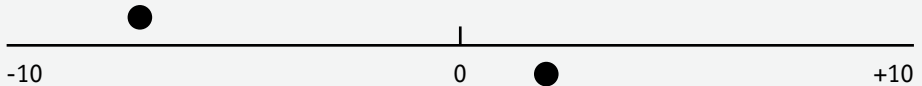-10   0   ●   +10

Opponents
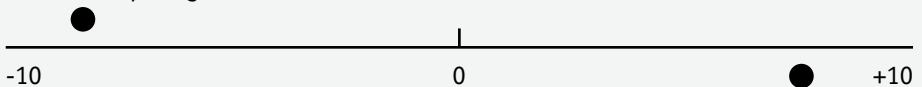

Sanctions

Nonviolent protagonists

       ●
-10   0   ●   +10

Opponents

The following chart is a hypothetical assessment by a group early in its quest, which is committed to nonviolent struggle in achieving civil liberties and gaining general recognition of human rights—a scenario common for many nonviolent struggles.

SAMPLE POWER ANALYSIS

Source of Power	Nonviolent movement	Opponent or target group
Authority	-5	+2
Material resources	+2	+5
Human resources	0	-2
Skills and knowledge	+5	+5
Intangible factors	-5	+2
Sanctions	-8	+8

Their human resources are small, but their supporters are quite committed. There is limited access to material resources, but skills and knowledge, as well as ingenuity, allow for certain activities and campaigns to be organised. All other factors are against them. They do not yet possess authority, and any intangible factors tend to push the general population towards greater obedience or conformity with the adversary. The opponent seems to hold the advantage in every instance. The adversary's material resources are much greater, as is its ability to recruit the support of individuals with needed skills and knowledge. Opponents, however, are often understaffed. Although a general dislike of the target group may be prevalent, it usually retains a degree of authority, and its ability to enforce sanctions is extensive.

This approach helps in constructing a picture of the general situation in which the dispute is taking place, and it may help you to begin analysing how you stack up against the target group. You may want to

further break down your analysis by identifying the sources of power supplied to your nonviolent group, as well as your opponent, through the pillars of supports in your community or society.

What Kind of Political Space Do You Have?

Political space directly affects what kinds of activities can be planned and undertaken. The closing of political space can limit the exchange of ideas among nonviolent protagonists, often shifting the emphasis from long-term goals and objectives to short-term and small-scale activities. When you do not have the capacity to look down the road, your response is usually to concentrate on your immediate surroundings and situation.

Opponents generally try to limit the amount of political space in one of two ways to keep nonviolent protagonists from pursuing long-range goals. Repression is often the first measure adopted. By discouraging or forbidding certain activities—for example, assembly, association, access to information, and speech—adversaries hope to isolate individuals and groups. Such measures can also be accompanied and reinforced by violent repression. Closing political space often represents an attempt to make acts of resistance appear ineffective, deviant, or hopeless. A second and more complex pattern is when an opponent tries to co-opt, control, or eliminate groups that show dissatisfaction with the adversary's policies, procedures, or stances.

In pursuing either of these two strategies—repression or control—an opponent is forced to create rules, ordinances, and practices and to rely on greater numbers of representatives and aides to carry out orders. Eventually enforcement becomes difficult, especially when nonviolent methods are being used by increasing numbers of people and by diverse strata in a society. In fact, the more an opponent represses or tries to control political space, the more it must rely on agents

to enact or enforce measures. Restricting political space can thus be costly to an opponent.

Individuals can learn what acts will be punished and what will be overlooked. In many situations, spontaneous, undirected, or even undisciplined nonviolent methods occur all the time, as when customers stop buying from a store with inflated prices. Although such acts usually result in limited success or progress towards broader goals, recognising the types of methods used in such cases helps one to grasp the concept of political space and to develop realistic strategies for achieving identified objectives.

Assessing Your Situation: Nothing Is Static

In addition to the considerations discussed throughout this section, nonviolent protagonists should gather, or know where to obtain, information on geography, climate, and more general political and economic processes in relation to their dispute. Readily accessible information is a vital asset in the midst of waging a struggle when time can be limited.

Collecting data, organising events, and recording themes and aspects of a situation in relation to a grievance can often be accomplished with relative ease. The ongoing monitoring of a situation, however, can be extremely complex. Players change, bringing into play different backgrounds and experiences. Perhaps teachers have just joined your effort. Parties to the conflict and external parties shift their positions over time. Your issue may finally catch the eye of international media. Resources rise and fall with their use and acquisition. Rainstorms can hamper the delivery of expected supplies. Communications can be interrupted. Your only printing press may collapse. Such possibilities can drastically affect a conflict situation. Nonviolent protagonists must keep abreast of all such developments.

3
Bringing Strategy into the Fold

In practical terms, elements of strategic planning are parts of everyday life. Individuals think about how they will take care of their families, go to work, pay for their needs, and enrich their lives. Admittedly, many may not approach such issues in a systematic fashion. Regardless, when problems occur and the issues at stake cannot be solved by ordinary processes, outcomes should not be left in the hands of chance and impulse. The quality of choices for handling a grievance matters. It also affects the outcome.

If individuals plan aspects of their lives every day, from religious ceremonies to recreational events, then why should organising to overcome a hardship be any different? Although burdens may be thrust upon one's shoulders, this fact should not discourage planning. Persons caught in a predicament must decide whether it is better to engage in struggle completely unprepared or to take time to ready themselves. Although creativity and improvisation can play significant roles in nonviolent struggles, happenstance should not be confused with an anything-goes approach. One must be ready to seize opportunities, yet specific tasks are needed to help remain focused. Guidelines also help prevent difficult situations from turning chaotic or disastrous. Forethought and planning are fundamental to directing purposeful and effective action. One of the most essential aspects of nonviolent strug-

In 1985, young people in the townships around the industrial city of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, concluded that armed struggle would not end apartheid. They decided instead that nonviolent struggle provided them better odds for success than did guerrilla strategies. The Port Elizabeth Youth Congress utilised a wide range of nonviolent methods, including boycotts of white-owned businesses, while also demanding withdrawal of troops and release of political prisoners. Consumer boycotts and rent boycotts were among the extensive methods of non-violent noncooperation used by South African grass-roots organisations to erode the state's power to govern by repression. Photo: UN Photos.

gle is the principle that it is best to solve a problem with the simplest means possible. When the resources are human beings, one does not want to squander their energies.

Those using nonviolent action, therefore, face a fundamental question: After deciding that they must fight, how do they do it? Many roads may lead to success, or failure for that matter, and the strategies and methods used directly affect the outcome. Yes, nonviolent action occurs on streets and plazas, in bureaucracies and office buildings, and across markets and universities, but the situations in which nonviolent

protagonists find themselves should never be unexpected.

The application of strategy to nonviolent struggle must be informed by the history, politics, ethics, traditions, and cultures of the groups implementing the technique. In other words, strategic planning cannot be done by outsiders or parties external to the dispute. This responsibility must fall solely on the shoulders of the individuals who have made the decision to fight with nonviolent methods.

Strategic Planning and Operational Planning

The use of strategy is most frequently thought of in connexion with warfare, but the concept permeates politics and fields such as business and communications as well. The word *strategy* in English derives from a Greek term for office or command of a general. Any military general has to figure out how to achieve a given purpose. Some generals even speak of the 'art of war'. In the end, strategy is essentially the application of means to attain desired ends. It refers broadly to the process and the plan to achieve objectives and goals as efficiently as possible, usually in the face of objection from or competition with others. Thus, strategy focuses on questions of how, when, and where, and it determines how the answers to such questions are interdependently derived.

Strategies for nonviolent action may take three broad forms: offensive, defensive, and deterrent. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Stephen King-Hall; Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack.) Offensive strategies mean seeking objectives actively through one's own initiative: for example, getting a traffic light installed despite opposition from city hall. Defensive strategies involve denying the accomplishment of the objectives of an opponent: for example, a prefect or district official wants to build a road through the

middle of a playground, but the community leaders join together to make this idea so untenable in the public view that it gets dropped. Deterrent strategies aim to persuade an adversary to dismiss certain objectives or actions in light of the perceived cost of such pursuit: for example, documentation of human rights abuses is implicitly deterrent in that the promotion of injustice or atrocities aims to make further violations too politically costly in the future. In each case, strategic development is a dynamic process that must be adjusted in real-time circumstances.

STRATEGIES OF NONVIOLENT ACTION

Offensive
Defensive
Deterrent

Although based on facts, strategic planning is primarily an abstract process in which political ideals are translated into steps for achieving concrete realities. Yet, the jump from the hope and ideal to pursuit of the reality must still be filtered through what is referred to as operational planning.

In relation to nonviolent struggles, the skill of operational planning has usually received more attention in theory than practice. Recent exceptions include the Serbian student group Otpor! (Resistance!) and to a lesser degree in the post-Soviet Republics of Georgia and Ukraine. From 1998 to 2000 in Serbia, in the Balkans, nonviolent protagonists followed a basic two-pronged strategy: to root out the authoritarian

president, Slobodan Milosevic, and to have new leadership democratically elected. These two broad goals incorporated numerous long-term and short-term objectives along the way, but all Otpor! campaigns and activities were directed towards delegitimising Milosevic and his regime, encouraging popular voting, and the uniting of the opposition parties.

Similarly in Georgia in 2003, the student group Kmara, or Enough, and a loosely knit coalition of democratically minded NGOs designed their strategies to force the resignation of the then-president, Eduard Shevardnadze, ensure free and fair parliamentary elections, and reduce corruption among government officials. Both Serbs and Georgians made conscious and deliberate efforts to pursue simultaneously positive and negative campaigns.

The result of a sound operational-planning process is likely a document that includes items listed in the box below. Operational planning documents should not suggest permanence, although drastic revisions are likely to be minimal.

Summary of an operational-planning document

- Clear statement of the purpose or policy
- Objectives
- Overview of the situation and issues at stake
- Summary of the technique(s) of action being employed
- Description of initial engagement (if not already under way)
- Description of steps, stages, activities, and campaigns
- Inventory of resources (possessed and needed)
- Estimated divisions of labour and responsibilities
- Assessment and evaluation methods
- Proposed conclusion, or termination, upon success

Operational planning is often designed according to one of three methodologies: sequential, cumulative, or inverse. Sequential operational planning suggests a linear progression of actions. Each activity proceeds as if along a straight line. Such activities or campaigns may be time-specific, or proceeding to the next activity may be based on the accomplishment of previous ones. Cumulative operational planning follows a more integrated design of activities that incorporates prerequisites as well as constraints. Instead of a linear progression, tasks are often mapped onto a circular flowchart with campaigns surrounding and feeding into an overall goal. This approach is often preferred by strategists within a movement, because it helps keep the methods and activities of various campaigns integrated towards a larger, broader direction and prevents internal contradictions. Evaluation of this process, however, is more complex than for sequential planning. Inverse planning begins with the conclusion, and plans are formulated working backwards with the final stages serving as the initial steps of action. Goals are listed and then implemented objective by objective, with the various tasks and activities identified for each one. Such methodologies are not mutually exclusive and are largely a matter of individual preference.

While operational plans are fairly rigid, strategic plans must account for the actions and capacities of the opponent as well as those of third parties that may be directly or indirectly involved in the dispute or conflict. This requires a coordinated effort of analysis and action, which is best accomplished through what are often called feedback loops, tools developed to provide information from on-the-ground situations. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Susan Allen Nan.)

Different types of feedback loops are often used in various circumstances. Corporations and businesses use surveys and market testing. Politicians and political parties utilise opinion polls. Governments

gather intelligence. Citizens turn to media sources. Groups consult advisers. The point is to develop reliable measures for determining how well or poorly activities are being implemented and what response actions elicit. This will help in formulating strategies, conducting campaigns, adjusting plans, and even engaging in particular actions.

From Policy to Tactics

The broad concepts discussed so far—the grievance and the general situation, the parties involved and where they stand, and how to move from grievances to a general vision for the future through identifying specific objectives—must be translated into more concrete terms through outlining plans and activities. Nonviolent engagement over a conflict or dispute may occur on several levels. On a military battleground, the term *grand strategy* is used to describe a general course of action. In the political arena, policy is comparable in relation to *nonviolent action*. In this respect, the discussion here has been about developing a vision of tomorrow. The next level is *strategy*, which refers to the process and the plans for achieving goals and objectives as efficiently as possible. Within any given strategy, *campaigns* are developed. The next level is *tactics*, limited and particular actions decided on short-time bases. Although many nonviolent protagonists operate effectively on the tactical level, it is crucial to appreciate the need for long-term strategic thinking. When tactical decisions and actions are taken without guidance from strategies and policies, the chances of wasting resources and energies increase. Creativity and ingenuity can be decisive in tactics, but tactical actions should not be chosen randomly. Instead, they should strive towards achieving more general campaigns or strategies.

The struggle of the student movement Otpor! was one of the most extensively planned and orchestrated of recent national nonviolent

struggles. Local campaigns were organised and conducted through 130 branches dispersed across the country. The slogan 'He is finished', for example, appeared on leaflets, posters, and commercials to promote a simple message: the end of the Milosevic regime. 'Resistance in the neighbourhood' was another catchphrase used to spread the ideas and image of Otpor! and to recruit volunteers. These sayings were *offensive* (as opposed to *defensive*) in the sense that they took the initiative in pursuing an objective. Yet, they were also *negative* in that they mobilised against an identified target. Encouraging people to vote for a candidate other than Milosevic was also offensive, but such aims were *positive* in that they sought certain results. The motto 'It is time' was widely displayed, essentially for get-out-the-vote initiatives. It appeared on T-shirts, graffiti, bumper stickers, and posters to promote voter registration, encourage people to vote, and seek unbiased election observers and monitors. Under each of the tactics, further logistical details needed to be kept in mind, such as timing, location, numbers of people (or specific persons), and translation requirements, among others. The first chart below suggests a mental map that can help in outlining and making decisions on policies, strategies, campaigns, and tactics. The second chart illustrates how Serbs took action.

THEORETICAL PLANNING MODEL

Grand strategy

Strategy 1   Strategy 2

Campaign   Campaign   Campaign   Campaign
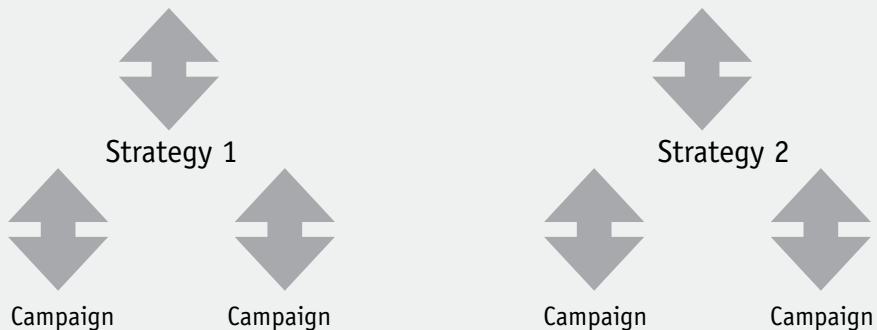
SERBIAN PLANNING MODEL (1998–2000)

Remove Milosevic from power and help install a new democratically elected government

Deligitimise
Milosevic

Encourage the
population to vote in presi-
dential elections

'He is finished'   'Resistance in the
neighbourhood'

'It is time'   'Shaming the
opposition'

Organising a Campaign: Positive and Negative

Campaigns are one of the most common features of nonviolent struggles. Nonviolent strategists and protagonists often need to organise and conduct both positive and negative campaigns. In basic terms, negative campaigns are against a practice, threat, proposal, law, interpretation of law, leader, policy, or issue. The majority of negative campaigns tends to focus on identifying a common enemy, but in relation to developing group solidarity, such efforts tend to produce only

temporary unity. Negative campaigns can be effective, however, when nonviolent protagonists are attempting to delegitimise an opponent, as with, for example, Gandhi's 'Quit India' campaign, which aimed to contribute to ending British colonialism in India. Legitimacy or authority is one of six sources of power, as delineated by Sharp, for an opponent as well as the nonviolent protagonists.

On their own, such campaigns can have destructive effects even when the objectives of the campaign are achieved. Negative campaigns can also affect the opinions of the opponent and neutral groups. Movements that frame themselves against someone or something can themselves be viewed as strictly negative, and they may lose support. Nonviolent protagonists do well to cast themselves in a positive light, because they are working with tools that have the potential to generate not only broad support among large numbers of the aggrieved, but also among some contingents of the adversary and previously indifferent groups. This was resoundingly the case in East Timor from 1995 to 1999. After waging generally unsuccessful guerrilla warfare for several decades against the Indonesian government, in which approximately 250,000 persons had been killed, the East Timorese guerrillas eventually opted for nonviolent resistance in pursuit of their political objective of securing an independent nation-state from Indonesia. They set about therefore to learn how to fight with nonviolent tools, much as you are now. Their change in technique and a positive campaign of self-governance caused a dramatic shift in international support for the nonviolent protagonists. The flow of sympathy and support for the nonviolent movement ultimately proved to be the crucial factor in securing the country's independence.

In everyday life, ideals must be accompanied by action. This was the conception of nonviolent struggle advanced by Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of the Ghanaian anti-colonial movement against the British in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In what he promoted as 'positive

action', Nkrumah recognised the importance of noncooperation with the British and saw that their political domination and discrimination was possible only through the assistance and passivity of Ghanaians. He also realised that if and when the British were expelled, others would need to be prepared to grasp the reins of government with the aim of improving the everyday lives of people. The end of colonialism would not automatically lead to a better Ghana; a positive vision and approach were needed in addition. It is well documented and Nkrumah himself acknowledged that his conception of positive action was greatly influenced by Mohandas K. Gandhi. Although Nkrumah did not share Gandhi's absolute creedal commitment to nonviolence as a way of life, the effectiveness of the approach would be historically indisputable for Ghana. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Kwame Nkrumah.)

Gandhi outlined how to develop what can essentially be understood as many positive campaigns. He figured out a way to begin living under new circumstances before the old injustice had been resolved. He called this approach the 'constructive programme'. As envisioned by Gandhi, a constructive programme aims to increase self-reliance and confidence, build a sense of community, and provide needed services through parallel institutions, also called alternative institutions. It is a way of meshing means and ends. Communities begin living their goals at the grass-roots level, by organising small self-reliant institutions and village industries before they are able to assume the reins of power. Such an approach begins to constitute self-rule.

Lack of government capacities and political wherewithal have led groups to organise parallel institutions throughout much of Africa. These alternative institutions, such as cooperatives and credit unions, address an array of issues and grievances. A common example is the innumerable community-based organisations operating across the continent whose goals range from development and education to peace

building and conflict resolution to security. Whether formal or informal, alternative institutions can be seen from the *esusu* (indigenous savings and credit associations) in Nigeria to the *gacaca* trials (a traditional mechanism for addressing disputes over land and other communal issues) in Rwanda.
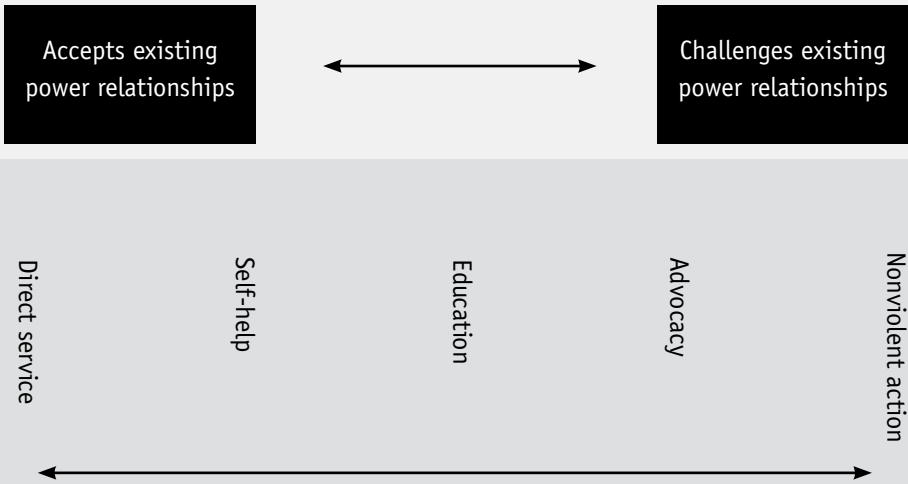
Further afield, parallel institutions played a significant role in the Polish Solidarity movement during the 1980s. Having no intention of overthrowing or taking over the state, the Poles also did not want to attack communist officials themselves. Their target was the governmental apparatus of control. They were ultimately concerned with achieving immediate changes in daily life, and they sought to press for reforms without producing destructive effects on the economy and society. Some observers later said that the Poles were a civil society in process. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Adam Michnik.)

Developing and pursuing a constructive programme can accomplish several purposes, including

- bringing about concrete positive changes in the everyday lives of people
- empowering individuals to act and to realise their power potential
- encouraging persons to support activities that a nonviolent movement might some day undertake
- altering the power relationship among groups in a society, and
- providing a nonviolent movement a positive, practical face for the benefit of all persons

A range of organisations can address such issues and objectives, and each can vary in its approach to accepting, challenging, or altering existing power relations in a society or a community, as the following chart illustrates.

OBJECTIVES OF ORGANISATIONS

| Accepts existing power relationships | ←→ | Challenges existing power relationships |

Direct service | Self-help | Education | Advocacy | Nonviolent action

Source: Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max, *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists,* 3rd edn (Santa Ana, California, Seven Locks Press, 2001), 11.

Goals and Themes: Pragmatism or Principles

Thus far, nonviolent struggle has been discussed strictly in political and pragmatic terms. *Nonviolent action* is commonly confused with or incorrectly substituted for *nonviolence*. Although the two terms are not mutually exclusive, the fundamental differences between them should be noted.

Nonviolence is a belief in and practice of abstaining from violent acts. In some interpretations, this means abstention from mental damage, verbal assaults, and physical harm to others, one's self, and the environment. Sometimes a belief in nonviolence derives from religion, ethics, or principles. It is often normative in use; that is, it can refer to a deeply held value.

Practitioners of nonviolence may take part in nonviolent struggles or even lead nonviolent movements. Faith-based or moral beliefs are not required. Nonviolent action as considered here is not necessarily synonymous with philosophies of principled nonviolence, nor is it the same as pacifism. In some struggles, such as the 1960s U.S. civil rights movement and the East German pastors' movement of the 1980s, the role and impact of beliefs in and practice of nonviolence were central to large numbers of participants. In both of these struggles, although divided by decades, the methods of nonviolent action were extensively utilised to secure political freedoms and civil liberties. In East Germany, the Protestant churches provided autonomy. Clergy had maximum freedom from the interference of state intervention. East German churches were the location from which eventually emerged massive demonstrations against state controls and the secret police. Mass meetings in black churches in the U.S. South provided the place for community training in nonviolent action. In both instances, faith motivated many, yet not all, activists to pursue this technique of action. Such powerful and penetrating moral commitments, however, are not prerequisites for engaging in nonviolent struggle. Persons who base their actions on faith or values can work side by side with individuals whose commitment is purely pragmatic; behaviour defines a nonviolent movement, not the convictions of its participants.

I admit at once that there is 'a doubtful proportion of full believers' in my 'theory of non-violence.' But it should not be forgotten that I have also said that for my movement I do not at all need believers in the theory of non-violence, full or imperfect. It is enough if people carry out the rules of non-violent action.

Gandhi 1957: 138

Although wholesale renunciation of violence across any society is improbable, criticisms have nonetheless surfaced regarding the use

of the technique of nonviolent action simply as a tactic, strategy, or policy. The experiences and writings of Gandhi are thus highly relevant and insightful, for he wrestled with this question extensively. In his opinion, when people feel they must act or offer resistance, it is always better that they rely on nonviolent methods, because the means that are used directly affect the ends or results. In this sense, Gandhi proposed nonviolent action as a 'political expedient' to be used in the Indian independence struggle. He realised that it was unlikely that an entire population could adopt religious or spiritual views similar to his own, and more important, there was not enough time to wait for the conversion of 700,000 villages, even if it were possible. Gandhi never expected that all Indians would live by the personal standards that he set for himself, but he always maintained a keen eye for how nonviolent action fit into political reality. His writings show that he wanted nonviolence as a policy, not necessarily as an absolute creed affecting all spheres of life.

4

The Everyday Stuff of Nonviolent Action

Regarding the British 'good conscience' and the view that the British 'handed' Ghana her independence, Dr. Botchway laughed: 'People who say that just don't know their history. The struggle started before Nkrumah and went on until 1957. It's a hell of a thing to say that the colonists were tired and just wanted to give up. They shot people dead. No, it was not a case of a tired empire giving in. There was a bit of a weariness, yes, but it didn't stop them from fighting, first with repression and—when that didn't work—trying to steer people away from Nkrumah and nonviolence so that they could make their peace with a more reformist and conciliatory crowd. By the time the British realized that Nkrumah could not be defeated, it was too late to make a deal with the so-called moderates'.

Sutherland and Meyer 2000:32

Despite all the resources available to nonviolent protagonists these days, the best place to start gathering information and preparing is usually right under one's nose. African oral accounts often include stories of nonviolent action that reach deep into history and draw upon distinctly African cultural practices. Such methods and strategies are referred to as endogenous means—in other words, means that are engendered, produced, grown, or found within, with the additional element that they may be affected by contacts with surrounding or other influences.

Many methods and strategies of nonviolent struggle are natural, intuitive, and acceptable in a given society, and they provide an excellent launching point. Although novelty and even shock can at times be appropriate and effective, it is usually not wise to start with surprise. Strikes, processions, vigils, symbolic clothing, occupation of particular sites, and even hunger strikes have become fairly permanent tools in the repertoires of civic resistance throughout Africa. Yet, although disrobing as a form of protest—recently used by groups of women in

Nigeria to voice their displeasure with the policies of international oil companies operating in the country—may generate attention, it may not make clear the grievances that need to be solved or attract the kind of widespread sympathy and consideration that would produce concrete results. Among some of the peoples of West Africa, disrobing, for example, carries historical and traditional symbolism that is not shared by other cultures across the continent and the rest of the world.

'The Mother Hunger Strike' in Kenya was organised by women to protest their children being held as political prisoners in 1992. Photo: Amnesty International.

Any group hoping to overcome a grievance or to achieve particular goals must take into consideration the traditions and practices of its own culture. Although comparing principles and methods found in struggles elsewhere and abroad can be useful, any external theories and practices must always be combined sensitively and appropriately with the cultural and political aspects of communal, regional, and national experiences.

Nonetheless, in nearly every struggle the goals and objectives developed require some type of change on behalf of people—in their behaviours, actions, opinions, or attitudes. So, while you begin with what you already know, you will likely need to put a new face on familiar acts or to interpret new behaviour through traditional lenses. For example, in South Africa during the later phases of the

anti-apartheid movement, the government forbade gatherings of large groups throughout the country. The aim was to limit public meetings where people might discuss and organise activities as well as to make activists who disapproved of the government feel isolated. Yet, certain gatherings continued. South Africans regularly met for funerals. In an unprecedented development, funerals and public mourning evolved into nonviolent political marches. The government found itself in the difficult position of discussing restrictions on funerals. A related development occurred in Burma, where nonviolent pro-democracy protagonists have been struggling against a military junta since 1988. Activists in Burma adopted as their logo a widespread and recognisable symbol—a peaked peasant farmer's straw hat—for the main opposition political party, the National League for Democracy (NLD). Farmer hats are worn by many who work in rice fields and are also popular among those who seek shade from the sun. The extremely repressive Burmese regime was stuck. The association between peasant hats and the NLD grew, but how could a government forbid everyone in the country from wearing them?

The use of funerals as political marches in South Africa and the symbolism of farmer hats in Burma are just two small examples of how ordinary activities can be used as effective and potent nonviolent methods. The chances are that you will be able to identify and utilise similar practical elements in your own situation using tools and skills that you already possess. It is also necessary to recognise the resources and knowledge that you do not have and to figure out how you can acquire them.

Groups, Structures, and Resources

Organisations can be viewed from three general perspectives: leadership, operational corps (the most committed and active of nonviolent protagonists), and the general population. For the nonviolent protagonists, the most critical feature is the degree of autonomy each possesses relative to the opponent. Another important issue at all three levels is openness versus secrecy. Any group considering the use of nonviolent struggle has first to identify its grievance, an exercise that should allow the responsible party an opportunity to alleviate or fix the problem. Therefore, the grievance almost immediately becomes a public issue. When traditional institutional answers prove inadequate or are unavailable, pursuing nonviolent struggle relies on persons, sometimes in large numbers, to achieve particular goals or objectives. The entire process is thus public. When political space is limited or conditions harsh, being transparent and open with one's actions may seem unwise, but secrets are today nearly impossible to keep. In general, you need people to know what you are planning and doing, including the target group or opponent.

Leaders and Leadership

When thinking about leadership of nonviolent struggles, Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. come immediately to mind. They are well known for their charisma and exceptional leadership skills, but each is unique. Gandhi was one of the first persons of colour successfully to challenge the human rights violations of colonialism. He experimented with building justice, human rights, and democracy in a manner that would leave no bitterness. King did not seek a leadership role beyond the Christian ministry and had to be coaxed into becoming the leader of the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, that would

eventually, as it became a mass movement, change the United States in bringing down the legalised colour barrier. Both Gandhi and King held themselves to extremely high standards of spiritual and religious conduct and attitude, strengthening their ability to reach millions.

Gandhi and King came from comparatively modest backgrounds but eventually emerged as forceful leaders. It may be hard to identify the leaders of other significant and historic nonviolent struggles. Who stood at the helm of successful nonviolent movements to give women the ballot across Europe, North America, New Zealand, and Japan? Who were the leaders of the People Power movement in the Philippines in 1986 that brought down the regime of Ferdinand Marcos? Who led the successful independence drives in the Baltic states in 1991 that resulted in few casualties despite Soviet opposition? Who led the Rose Revolution in the former Soviet republic of Georgia in 2003?

Any leader must possess the ability to transmit knowledge, inspire, and motivate action. Such influence can be accomplished through various means, including acting as a role model or serving as an example. This helps to explain one phenomenon of the efforts of Serbs to remove the authoritarian Slobodan Milosevic from power: Every individual in Otpor! acted as a transmitter of knowledge, in large part because of the systematic skills training all members had received for a period of more than two years. At the time, when one asked a member of Otpor! to identify the leader of the organisation, the answer would be 'I am!'

Key leadership skills

Provide direction	Develop new ideas
Motivate action	Transmit knowledge
Establish trust	Set an example
Give others credit	Accept responsibility

Although the gift of charisma can be a useful trait, its effectiveness may not last. If a charismatic leader happens to be arrested, deported, or killed, the fate of a group or movement can fade with the person's absence. In fact, a complex network of leaders is needed to create a cohesiveness aimed at achieving a common goal. These leaders need not be the face of the struggle; often such individuals do not even see themselves as leaders. It is usually the case that with nonviolent struggles there appear to be no leaders. Nonetheless, someone with the capacity of, for example, South African leader Nelson Mandela to stir popular imagination, including that of the opponent, can substantially contribute to a nonviolent movement's sources of power, particularly human resources and skills and knowledge. The role of charismatic leaders should not be understated. Such figures can lend tremendous authority to nonviolent protagonists, and the world would likely benefit from more such persons. Yet, they are not obligatory in a nonviolent struggle.

Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, member of the Kenyan parliament, and minister of government, addresses a group of women. Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya in 1977. It has since planted more than 30 million trees across the country to prevent soil erosion. The government of President Daniel Arap Moi imprisoned Maathai several times and violently attacked her for pressing for multiparty elections and an end to political corruption and tribal politics. In 1989, Maathai and her associates saved Nairobi's Uhuru Park by nonviolent action to stop the construction of a 60-storey complex by Moi's business associates. Photo: UN Photos.

The Organisational Corps

Organisations and institutions are the conduits or channels through which a nonviolent struggle is conducted; the organisational corps forms the crux of protagonists. They may also act as the link between the leaders and the general population. Generally, groups in this arena consist of dedicated activists willing to commit extensive amounts of time and energy towards gathering and mobilising resources. They serve four key functions:

- Monitoring and, when necessary, boosting morale among the population
- Enabling communications
- Gathering information and intelligence
- Running specialised (usually high-risk) confrontations or operations

In varying degrees, the operational corps may also launch initiatives, help to maintain nonviolent discipline, and provide training and educational programmes. Therefore, they may assume such specific roles as spokespersons, liaisons, facilitators, educators, marshals, peacekeepers, and administrators.

Even among those who share ideals and are committed to nonviolent struggle on practical or ethical bases, disagreements are inevitable. Differences can arise over minor tactical decisions or major strategic planning. Personal preferences or organisational competition can escalate to the point of a quarrel. Although opponents often attempt to instigate divisions among nonviolent protagonists, splits occur naturally as well. Whatever the cause, they can be decisive in undermining the strength of a nonviolent movement:

Coming from different backgrounds and with different experiences, activists have diverse ideas about what needs to be changed and how to go about it. Immersed in a competitive culture and lacking the skills to work with others from diverse backgrounds, activists create a multiplicity of small groups. These groups sometimes duplicate each other's efforts, compete with other groups for limited funds and supporters, or even work at cross-purposes. Some activists believe they are the sole 'vanguard of the revolution,' and believe they must crush competing ideologies. Frustration at meager results—exacerbated by activists' internalized emotional wounds—leads some activists to bludgeon others for their real or imagined mistakes.

Schutt 2001: 52

The General Population

The broadest layer of organisational strength resides in the general population. The potential of nonviolent resistance is greatest at this level, but how can a diverse and amorphous population organise itself? The most effective models have proven to be based on small groups as well as community organisations, which can vary widely in form and purpose—from sports groups and teachers unions to affinity groups and cell formations. Nonviolent struggle presents numerous opportunities for the general population to participate. The fact that virtually every person in a population can participate is unique and one of the most important attributes of the technique. As the group of nonviolent protagonists grows in size and strength, an opponent is forced to make more and more decisions about how to respond.

Returning to the Serbian example, Otpor! provides a compelling example of the interplay among the three levels of leadership, organisational corps, and the general population. Formed in October 1998, Otpor! began as a group of six leaders of student protests in 1996. By 2000, its membership had swelled to more than 70,000, and it was widely acknowledged to be the primary force promoting change

through nonviolent methods in Serbia. The decentralised nature of its activities led some commentators to suggest that its leadership was intentionally kept secret, but, in fact, leaders and members of the operational corps were spread throughout the organisation and dispersed across the country. A core of initial leaders had launched the group, but the structure of Otpor! evolved into a political chimera that would eventually be able to undermine the Milosevic regime.

The mere existence or proliferation of NGOs is not the answer for a successful nonviolent movement. Ultimately, the extensiveness of *organised action* is the key. Increasing one's human resources can bring greater attention, influence, and perhaps credibility to your grievance, cause, or the issues at stake. Increased numbers, however, mean increased responsibility and management. First things first, however: From where are the new recruits, members, volunteers, or supporters going to come? Again, go back to what you know best.

Relationships that link individuals and groups with a common purpose are usually referred to as networks. People from every society are involved in various networks, or webs, simultaneously. Networks are usually voluntary and built upon mutual trust. They may be informal, but they may also be carefully structured. It has been shown in many struggles that when individuals are connected to multiple networks devoted to similar goals, they are more likely to become and remain committed to involvement. Therefore, while some networks are ready-made, it can be crucial to develop consciously networks that criss-cross various memberships. Networks allow the strength of one organisation to compensate for the weaknesses of another, as no entity can be equally capable in all areas. Families and clans are networks in a sense, but networks also exist at work, school, and houses of worship and through friendships. In addition, people may belong to professional organisations, sports teams, women's groups, youth forums, leisure clubs, and interest groups, all of which are examples of

ready-made networks. The lists of formal and informal affiliations can be extensive.

Networks not only are a source of human resources but also can contribute in nonviolent struggles by helping to pool material resources, skills, and knowledge. It is not usually a matter of simply recruiting any and all people, but of soliciting specific persons who possess particular prestige, attributes, information, and access. If you decide that you need participation or support from people beyond your own group's networks, you must devise structured recruitment strategies. The table below provides some ideas for accomplishing this task.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Organised events Plan and conduct events specifically to recruit supporters and volunteers or to spread knowledge of the goals and objectives of your organisation in the hope of gaining publicity and eventual support	**Canvassing** Go door-to-door in neighbourhoods, apartment complexes, or dormitories to inform people about your organisation and goals and to ask directly for support or assistance
Tabling Set up tables or booths at events, functions, or seminars and be ready to provide passers-by with information on your efforts through literature, hand-outs, and conversation	**Direct mail** Write and mail letters soliciting specific forms of assistance and resources
Telephone trees Call people listed in telephone books and office and university directories to ask them for their support or announce an action	**E-mail** Send e-mail messages informing people about your efforts and requesting their assistance and support

Finding and Managing Money and Other Resources

Material resources are crucial to any campaign and extend beyond money. They include property, natural resources, transportation, communications, equipment, and supplies of various kinds. When groups begin outlining what they need, they quickly realise how overrated money can be among the material resources. Learning how to acquire material resources of all kinds is essential for any nonviolent mobilisation, large or small.

When nonviolent protagonists are competing over control, production, or distribution of resources, such confrontations can overwhelm the original issues that ignited the dispute in the first place. Such situations run the risk of escalating, creating entirely new grievances. Some conflicts are strictly over resources themselves, as with grazing land or natural resources such as fossil fuels or minerals.

Determining what kinds of resources and how much is needed should be done in light of objectives. After determining what you need and what you already have, plans must be made to obtain what is lacking. Depending on your particular struggle, you may need food and water, clothing, access to energy sources, medical supplies, communications, news sources, contacts among the adversary, or even access to prestige. Whether you need equipment, funds, skills, or intangible resources, decisions must be made regarding who should be approached and what avenue should be taken to acquire them.

Factors related to material resources

- Protection of sources
- (Re)producibility through alternative means
- Reliability of distribution

First, turn to the people you know. Make direct appeals to your family, friends, and neighbours. Remember that the people closest to you may have many factors to consider in deciding whether to provide certain kinds of assistance. Be sensitive to their opinions and personal circumstances. Where direct support involves risk, consider whether donations can be made anonymously. Do not be so quick as to accept only money. Donations of used bicycles, carts, or even cars could be useful. In-kind contributions can go a long way; for example, a photocopy shop may charge for only the paper and absorb the other costs, or the print shop may produce your work for free after hours. The time and skills of certain individuals can be indispensable. Beyond your immediate circles, approach local businesses, community-based organisations, universities, radio stations, and religious bodies. Department stores and manufacturers may be willing to donate clothes. Community groups may help with organising, carpooling, and skills. Universities might provide sites for events, activities, and teach-ins. Religious organisations may provide space for meetings. Cooperating with such groups must be within your capacities. You are trying to acquire the resources you need to alleviate or overcome your grievance, and you cannot spread your limited resources too thin. Also, you want the respect and involvement of community members and constituents, not merely their tangible resources.

Second, many kinds of events can be organised for direct fund-raising, giving you opportunities to spread the word on the goals and plans of your organisation. Look at the various types of skills and services your supporters can provide and make available at no cost or at minimal charge. If you have persons who can cook or bake, consider setting up vending carts that sell sweets or snacks. If you have physicians among your supporters, consider organising medical consultations for free or a nominal fee. You can conduct plays, perform dances, or sing songs for donations. You may not even need to seek

out skilled talent among your supporters, because benefit concerts can bring artists, sometimes even celebrities, whom people will buy tickets to see. Raffles and auctions also raise money and provide opportunties to share knowledge.

Third, the writing of grant proposals is a formal means of directly appealing for funds from private donors, philanthropic foundations, banks, governments, and international organisations. Successful writing of grant applications depends on planning at stages discussed earlier in this manual. You must have a clear idea of your objectives, be able to state who will benefit from their achievement, configure a timeline of your activities, and offer a transparent budget for your activities and other sources of funding. Having a certified or chartered accountant among your volunteers can be a huge asset in writing grant proposals, especially if he or she allows himself or herself to be listed. One of the most difficult aspects of seeking grants is finding the right potential donor; this requires research into who would support the activities you have in mind. Once you are able to identify appropriate sources, contact them for more information about their guidelines and procedures. Donor requirements may include meeting deadlines, eligibility, and evaluation criteria. Most important will be how you approach a funder. This is usually done through submission of a proposal or an exploratory letter. Most donors have specific rules to be followed, but in general most proposals submitted to them require the following:

- a statement of needs, goals, and objectives
- a description of how the funds will be used
- a timeline
- a budget
- a means of evaluating whether the planned activities have been undertaken successfully, and
- details about capacities or backgrounds of the key individuals involved

Among the various forms of personal appeals, fund-raising events, and possible grants, nonviolent protagonists have a diversity of opportunities to acquire the resources they need to succeed.

Active and Passive Support

Within the general population, there are inevitably groups that oppose the nonviolent protagonists, that are neutral, and that support the struggle. Among those who support a particular nonviolent struggle, the support offered may assume various forms. Individuals and groups may directly participate in specific aspects of the struggle, for example, printing and distributing leaflets, organising and conducting news conferences, or refusing to pay taxes. Other kinds of support may take less direct forms, including financial contributions, in-kind services and materials, or consultations and advice. Both direct and indirect types of support are necessary for nonviolent action to be effective, and leaders and members of the operational corps must continuously find new avenues through which people can support a nonviolent struggle.

Some groups neither support nor oppose the nonviolent protagonists. Such neutrality may help or hurt a movement, depending on the conflict. For example, the neutral position of Buddhist monks in contemporary Tibet presents an enormous disadvantage for the Tibetan nonviolent struggle against Chinese domination. Buddhism is widely practiced among Tibetans, and many young Tibetans receive monastic training to become monks and nuns. Of these, a large percentage remain in religious service throughout their lives. Tibetan Buddhism presents a ready-made network through which nonviolent activities could be organised, given its wide support and legitimacy throughout Tibetan society. Conversely, the neutrality of human rights watchdog organisations is necessary for them to remain credible. The effect of any given

group remaining neutral depends on particular circumstances.

Nonviolent struggle is unique in that virtually anyone can participate in some manner—the young or elderly, wealthy or poor, civil servant or agricultural labourer, and men or women. In many cases, some social divisions (among cultures, races, religions, classes, ideologies, and interest groups) cannot be overcome before conducting a nonviolent campaign, and a clever opponent is likely to exploit the cleavages in a society. Yet, such divisions and breaches do not need to be eliminated for unity of purpose to evolve.

Why Won't They Participate?

When conducting or organising a nonviolent campaign, remember that a community or society in conflict is not neatly divided into two polarised camps. A simplistic distinction cannot be made between those who participate in and support nonviolent campaigns and those who are against the nonviolent group. The chart below helps in analysing different perspectives in relation to a nonviolent group and an opponent.

SUPPORT CONTINUUM

Active support for nonviolent movement	Passive support for nonviolent movement	Neutral	Passive support for opponent	Active support for opponent

The individuals and organisations that fall into each of the above categories are not static. Rather, they fluctuate in accordance with certain circumstances and developments. Although active support for a nonviolent group or an opponent may be the public face of a side,

the active protagonists are usually not decisive in the struggle. More often it is the passive support or neutrality of groups and how such groups shift over time that is the key to the struggle's success or failure. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Katrina Shields.)

Through the exercise outlined earlier on understanding the pillars of support, nonviolent protagonists should have a fairly solid understanding of where groups in their society or community fall on the support continuum. Take a few minutes to jot down again the organisations to see whether and how they back your group or your opponent. Ultimately, nonviolent protagonists must concern themselves with changing the orientation of groups from passive supporters to active ones, turning neutral parties towards active or passive support, pushing passive opponents towards passive support or at least towards neutrality, and ideally provoking active opponents to move towards passivity. The groups that you listed for your situation typically have identifiable reasons that explain their positions on the support continuum. The two most common and closely related issues are obedience and interest.

Obedience is necessary in everyday life for order, security, and trust. Nonetheless, to a certain extent, all people are guilty of blind obedience, which can be detrimental to others or even to themselves. The most common reason people obey is habit. From childhood, they are taught to obey their parents. In school, they learn to follow teachers' instructions. Throughout life, they comply with rules, laws, bosses, traffic lights, and posted instructions. When obedience becomes the norm, and healthy questioning of blind obedience becomes unacceptable, it is easy to understand why people do not engage in activities that are not part of their daily lives and that are perceived as disruptions. Although habits can be hard to break, obedience at times becomes so engrained that it develops into moral obligation. More than performing certain acts or following particular laws or rules by routine,

some feel that their conformity is necessary and positive.

Obedience can also stem from identification with an individual or opponent group. For example, a political platform, mutual experience, or a person's charisma can generate and sustain deference. Attraction to what the target group or opponent does or stands for can be a powerful factor in sustaining support. Its attributes can even be exaggerated to monumental or supra-human levels.

The reasons that human beings obey are not always affected by sources external to them; some are purely internal. For example, low self-confidence in one's abilities and own opinions can contribute to following others. Those who do not trust themselves and their abilities are likely to obey others with little question. In some cases, individuals may be indifferent about their own obedience. Following certain rules or laws may be inconsequential in their everyday lives, and they may not realise that their submission or cooperation plays into the hands of an opponent. They may also be unaware of their part in a larger dispute that is under way.

Some obey because of their assessment of the situation. They ask, What will happen if the nonviolent group succeeds? Will they suffer as a consequence? Reservations may be justified, because possible anarchy or crisis afterwards may *appear* to be a worse alternative. Others may be naturally conservative in their personal choices. Disrupting normal patterns may modify a situation, but change is not always positive. Unpredictability leaves some persons with feelings of anxiety or discomfort.

Others obey strictly as a result of practical interest. Many people or groups benefit from cooperating with an opponent. They are provided incentives or rewards, such as money, loans, land, licenses, tax breaks, and educational opportunities. Direct incentives are influential factors in self-interest, but more sophisticated interests also exist. For example, in Nigeria, where the oil industry is such a major component of

the economy, many secondary industries rely heavily on oil companies performing well. Greater productivity in the oil industry benefits, for example, the transportation sector and small businesses where workers buy lunch. It would not be in the best interest of such business owners to support anything that might reduce oil revenue and distribution. Such arguments are usually made in relation to economics, but they also carry over into social and political decisions as well.

Probably the most commonly identified reason that people obey an opponent is fear of sanctions or repercussions. What will happen to me, my family, or friends if I disobey? Will I be beaten, arrested, lose my job, or perhaps even killed? The more brutal the opponent, the more justified are such concerns. In many cases, however, it is not the actual punishment but the fear of punishment that induces obedience and cooperation.

Born in 1941 in what is today Rivers State, Nigeria, the author and environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa began to dedicate himself in 1990 to the severe community problems in the oil-producing regions of the Niger Delta. In his Ogoni homeland, he launched a strictly nonviolent movement for social, political, and ecological justice. This meant confronting transnational oil companies and the Nigerian federal government. In 1995, he was hanged, alongside eight other nonviolent activists. Photo: Greenpeace/Lanbon.

Individuals and groups that actively support a nonviolent movement or an opponent are usually easily identifiable, and for the most part, their positions do not change over the course of a conflict. For example, those who have a psychological identification with an

opponent are unlikely to alter their perspectives and will continue to be obedient in even the worst of situations.

Not every group in a society can be expected to support a nonviolent struggle. In fact, the support of every group is not necessary. The efforts of nonviolent protagonists to shift the position of any group, however, require targeted campaigns that consistently bear in mind the supply of sources of power through specific pillars of support. Obedience in itself is not negative, and a certain degree of obedience is needed for nonviolent protagonists to succeed. Obedience in all forms, however, is essentially voluntary and can be purposefully withdrawn. Strategists and activists should remember the following:

- Habits can be broken. They must be recognised and can be deliberately replaced with new behaviours and routines.
- Moral obligations towards some greater good can be framed in various ways. Individuals have opinions on numerous issues, and the pressure to support a nonviolent movement can tap into concerns that are equally or more compelling than inclinations to support an opponent.
- Opponents project various images of themselves to appeal to people and gain support. Often the attempt to be everything to everyone creates contradictions that can be exploited. The identification that supporters have with an opponent is sometimes based on false premises, which can ultimately delegitimise an adversary.
- Countering the attribution of supra-human characteristics to an opponent may require only simple appeals to the nature of human beings. People are not deities.
- People must become aware of the part they play in wider disputes and conflicts. Although their indifference may seem sensible in the short term, their failure to act is likely to have long-term repercussions that affect them directly.

- Educating individuals and groups about a given dispute helps them to make informed decisions about how they can and should act. Low self-confidence in one's abilities must be overcome through direct contact and empowerment.
- When an alternative does not exist or people fear what might happen in the wake of a nonviolent struggle, a vision of what the renewed society will look like must be promoted to combat this perspective. Nonviolent protagonists must develop a plausible scenario of the future to alleviate fears related to unpredictability and chaos.
- Self-interest can shift to favour a nonviolent movement, particularly when a vision of tomorrow and credible plans of how to get there are developed.

What Is a Critical Mass?

In many successful nonviolent struggles, commentators and onlookers tend to explain the results in terms of inevitability. This has been the case even when the opponents have been quite powerful, entrenched in their positions, and extremely brutal in their repression of nonviolent protagonists. Such views emerged in the aftermath of the struggles against Chilean president Augusto Pinochet during the 1980s and the shah of Iran in the late 1970s. According to popular explanations, opponents that once seemed insurmountable fixtures quickly turned into historical relics who never stood a chance against predominantly nonviolent campaigns.

Such cases of inevitability are best understood in relation to what is called a critical mass. For many years, theorists and activists have concerned themselves with trying to understand and explain why the majority of people do not participate in social action and mobilisation,

but critical mass advocates have turned previous theories of social movements and participation on their heads. Deriving from physics, critical mass theory explains how a few isolated atoms are able to attract enough additional atoms for the process of fission, radioactivity, and a chain reaction to occur. In recent decades, social scientists have used critical mass theory to explain social developments. Their efforts have generated insights into how small groups engaged in political action evolve to become larger or more powerful than their opponents, what key components lead to such a chain reaction, and what the consequences are of such developments.

During a dispute or struggle, sharp, defining moments may occur when the tide turns in favour of the nonviolent protagonists. The rapidity of such shifts can be surprising. This is conflict transformation in its truest sense. Yet, during such periods, there is not only opportunity, but also volatility. Nonviolent protagonists can deliberately and strategically attempt to create conditions in which a critical mass develops, but several factors should be kept in mind. The most crucial elements are the sources of power provided by initial active supporters, the number of active supporters, and who benefits if and when the objectives are achieved.

When a group begins to mobilise itself to overcome a hardship, its members may themselves possess enough resources to achieve success. For example, if a group gathers in support of building a bridge in a small town and supporters include regional politicians and a local construction company, the chances of succeeding are fairly good. In fact, the group may likely not need to organise for nonviolent action. The core supporters may already possess enough sources of power to achieve their objective. Politicians may have legitimacy or authority, materials resources, and access to sanctions (if necessary), and the construction company can contribute skills, knowledge, and material resources.

If the group does not possess the required sources of power, then it must go beyond its most ardent supporters to seek partnerships, assistance, or cooperation from those who do. If the construction company does not initially support the building of the bridge, the group needs to develop a strategy to acquire the necessary skills and material resources. It may try to persuade the local company to support the initiative, or it may go elsewhere to entice another company. In either case, once such support is secured, the task likely is easily accomplished.

Attempting to build a bridge is a particular kind of objective. Once the bridge is built, basically anyone can use it. This contrasts with other kinds of objectives that, if achieved, may benefit only a select group or particular individuals. Also, getting a bridge built requires a fairly fixed and measurable amount of resources, and once a certain target is met, the objective can be secured. In other words, building half a bridge does not benefit anyone, and acquiring more resources than necessary does not result in 'more bridge'.

Such all-or-nothing situations usually do not require support from as many people and groups as, say, trying to lower the crime rate or reduce corruption in a neighbourhood or village. Crime or corruption can always be reduced, and, if achieved, more and more persons benefit. Such goals often necessitate mobilising for nonviolent struggle.

In such cases, the initial group is unlikely to possess the required resources to achieve its objectives, and efforts need to be made to secure the support and participation of greater numbers of people. The key becomes human resources, and here is where the critical mass is difficult to achieve. One has an initial core of leaders and committed individuals, usually with limited resources. Although such activists may be determined to achieve their goals, their support and participation involves risk in that their efforts may prove fruitless or the activities in which they are engaged are considered threatening by their

opponent. Outside of this core group, there is not much incentive for others to lend support or assistance because the risks appear too great in relation to the potential benefits. Such arguments have been well established in economic terms and are framed in terms of utility as in the graphs below. (For more information, see under 'Books' in the Appendix: Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver.)
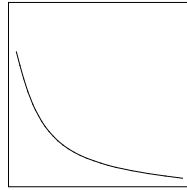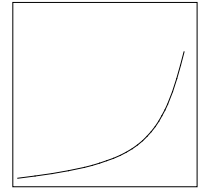
UTILITY FUNCTIONS
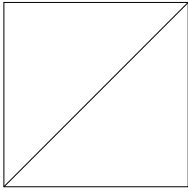
Simple linear
function
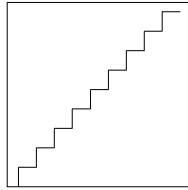
Discontinuous step
function

Diminishing
marginal returns

Increasing
marginal returns

Some nonviolent activists naïvely assume that the more efforts and resources put toward an objective, the greater the chances of achieving it. This reflects the simple linear function. Such cases are rare and almost never apply to such situations as reducing crime or corruption. In most situations, for example, the building of a bridge, success can be seen in stages or as discontinuous steps. A bulk of measurable resources is secured for a particular goal, which can then be achieved. Regarding the building of a bridge, diminishing marginal utility also makes sense. When the resources required are fixed, additional support or resources does not provide any additional benefit. More material or human resources do not produce 'more bridge'.

In most cases of nonviolent struggle, increasing marginal returns need to be considered. The initial efforts of groups and individuals are not likely to produce many benefits in a struggle, say, to reduce

corruption. Often, there is limited resources and high risk (financial, psychological, or even physical). At some point, continued, targeted efforts may generate greater benefits and, as specific forms of support increase, the general potential of benefiting increases. The potential risk of participating decreases, partly because of shared responsibility. People also have a tendency to want to be on the winning side in a dispute. Overall, the efforts and activities of nonviolent protagonists snowball or create a chain reaction. These kinds of situations are most easily produced through negative campaigns that attack the legitimacy of an opponent. Again, this can produce dangerous situations, and it is important to balance the negative energy with positive campaigns.

No Single Method

Nonviolent struggle includes a range of known methods, for example, demonstrations, marches, strikes, and sit-ins. In most struggles, however, the vast repertoire of methods available remains largely unknown. As a result, the technique of nonviolent action may be discarded after limited and narrow use, usually because relying on one or two particular methods can dissipate momentum, induce boredom, and lead to predictability.

Beginning with what you know is usually the best starting point for groups, but expanding the methods used can translate into practical advantages. Not all methods are feasible, acceptable, or suitable, and this becomes clear in comparing similar methods in different contexts. For example, funerals were adapted into political marches by South Africans. This was a natural development given the restrictive conditions and bans on public gatherings imposed by the apartheid regime. When such restrictions are not in effect, however, transforming funerals into political events may not have the desired effect or may be frowned upon. Also, certain methods are easier for some people to use than for

others. For example, individuals engaging in hunger strikes, a potent and disruptive action, must possess personal commitment to the cause at hand, be in good health, and not require extensive care or treatment. Ultimately, nonviolent methods must be evaluated according to effectiveness, legitimacy, and appropriateness.

Methods should be employed, bearing in mind three things. First, persons need to know how to conduct the method. This might require basic information, education, training, or logistics, such as timing. Second, the successful use of a method in one situation does not mean that it will always be successful. Circumstances matter. Nonviolent protagonists gain experience by repeatedly performing specific methods, but opponents can also develop effective countermaneouvers. Predictability is not usually an asset. Third, creativity and ingenuity help maintain momentum, initiative, and interest. The adoption of new methods should be done with an eye towards encouraging wider participation, but also keeping in mind the need for preparation and training and the potential risks of utilising new, particularly unfamiliar, methods. Individual methods—even the most powerful, attractive, or familiar—should not be confused or substituted for the technique of nonviolent struggle in general. The extensive repertoire of tools available to nonviolent protagonists should be explored in-depth.

The methods of nonviolent struggle fall into three broad categories: protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

Protest and Persuasion: Actions to Send a Message

The most common methods of nonviolent action are those of protest and persuasion. Public speeches and declarations, leaflets and posters, and vigils and marches can convey the stance of a group or groups on a particular issue. Such methods can highlight disagreement or support, or they can expose the actions or position of an opponent.

The 5Cs, a Kenyan theatre group, performs 'Dying To Be Free', a play encouraging debate on abuses of power and police brutality, with sponsorship from Amnesty International Netherlands' Special Project for Africa. Performances of drama, music, singing, dance, and skits are among the widespread nonviolent action methods that help to send a message. Photo: Amnesty International.

Methods of protest and persuasion are explanatory as well as symbolic. Sometimes their effectiveness depends upon gaining attention. Demonstrations in the Philippines in 1986 were not as significant in forcing President Ferdinand Marcos to step down as they were in attracting international awareness and support for the processes that preceded his departure. These demonstrations also precipitated the police and military forces—organisations responsible for enforcing sanctions—to choose between defending the masses or the regime. In other words, demonstrations, or any other method of protest and persuasion, do not singularly achieve an objective. They must be used in combination with clear communication of the grievance and other methods that attack or undermine the pillars of support of an oppo-

Scopes of symbolic methods

• *On-person symbols:* clothes, buttons, colours, hats

• *Documents:* petitions, open letters, reportage

• *Lights:* candles, signs

• *Pictures:* portraits, photographs, cartoons

• *Paint:* graffiti, murals, masks

• *Sounds:* bells, music, banging pots and pans, songs

• *Acts:* planting trees, donating books

• *Gestures:* facial expressions, hand gestures

• *Destruction of one's own property:* identity cards, invitations

nent. Alone, they may only highlight perspectives on particular issues. Although these methods are usually the first to be used in a nonviolent struggle, various actions from this class are also normally conducted throughout the course of a nonviolent conflict. The table above identifies the general scope of symbolic methods of protest and persuasion.

The demonstration is one of the most common methods in this category and has been used in Africa from Botswana to Togo and Sierra Leone to Ethiopia. News media often fuel popular excitement that helps turn demonstrations into trenchant acts during a conflict or dispute. When the Marcos regime finally crumbled in the Philippines in February

1986, for example, international media broadcast the massive protests at that time. Many people across the globe assumed that the regime fell in seventy-six hours as a result of these popular acts of disapproval. Yet, the demonstrations were only one of the many nonviolent methods used during the previous months, some of which rested on training programmes conducted for many years by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Despite this method's popularity and familiarity, those who advocate for demonstrations sometimes do not know what purpose they serve or how to conduct them effectively. A demonstration is first and foremost a symbolic act that brings together a group of people, sometimes a large group, in public to voice a united opinion on a particular issue, grievance, or target. As an organised public event, a demonstration can also act as a means to educate people about a particular topic, to recruit volunteers, or garner support. It can signal the start of a complex campaign or form the final push towards a goal. Demonstrations that attract large numbers of people display the strength of the nonviolent protagonists. The following table lists some basic elements that should be considered in planning and holding a demonstration.

Checklist for planning and holding a demonstration

- *Best method*: Decide whether a demonstration is the most appropriate method to use, and determine how it supports or reinforces your larger plans of action
- *Grievance*: Identify clearly the issue for which you are demonstrating and offer a solution
- *Division of labour*: Assign individuals to specific tasks, including research, documentation, logistics, contacting news media, slogan development, and such positions as spokespersons and song leaders

- *Marshals*: Designated marshals should set the pace of demonstrators, keep marchers on route, prevent clumps or stalling, and diffuse violent or provocative outbreaks
- *Legal rights*: Determine in advance whether demonstrations are allowed and if permits are required; stand by in case of arrests; prepare police officials in advance
- *Legal or extra-legal*: Decide whether the demonstration will follow laws and ordinances, and if not, evaluate what risks might be involved
- *Logistics*: Decide the time, duration, date, and place, and consider the symbolism of certain locations, anniversaries, or routes
- *Contacts*: Marshals must have immediate access to telephone numbers for police, news media, hospitals, and key fellow nonviolent protagonists
- *Violence*: Avoid and discourage violence at all costs by appointing marshals to settle peacefully any disputes within the crowd and to make representations to police
- *Pacing*: Decide whether to include local musicians or drummers to help keep the pace, boost morale, and distract demonstrators from any loud noises made by contingents of the opponent
- *Promotion*: Inform the population of your intended action and target particular audiences to participate
- *Materials*: Decide what people should bring— for example, identification, posters, banners, specific clothing, music, and torches
- *Weather*: Prepare for expected conditions (rain or heat)
- *Activities*: Plan for supportive activities that you want to conduct during the demonstration—speakers, presentations, skits, and performances
- *Education and training*: Share the information on preparation with those who will or might be participating
- *First aid*: Designate first aid staff and medically trained individuals

to be on hand in case of emergencies, such as heat exhaustion, scrapes, or more serious incidents

- *Prohibited items*: Do not bring and discourage people from bringing weapons, alcohol, drugs, and contraband; empower marshals to ask anyone using drugs or alcohol to go home
- *Repercussions*: Prepare for any possible responses from your opponent, such as the use of tear gas, water cannons, or bad publicity on the part of your cause or group
- *Documentation*: Assign individuals to record (in writing and photography) the happenings of the day for ongoing reports to news media sources and for documentation for later evaluation
- *Analysis*: Examine your use of the demonstration and share and promote its successes or try to learn from your mistakes

Methods of protest and persuasion are the most common forms of nonviolent action throughout Africa and across the world. Such methods can vary in symbolism and intensity. In October 2004, for example, the renowned Nigerian author Chinwe Achebe was about to receive a national honour from his home government. Prior to its issuance, however, he rejected the award, protesting in his words the 'dangerous state of affairs in Nigeria'. This renunciation had tremendous ramifications given the stature of the honour and the intended recipient.

Noncooperation: Actions to Suspend Cooperation and Assistance

Methods of noncooperation include a powerful class of actions that can directly target the pillars of support or sources of power of an opponent. Noncooperation involves conscious and deliberate non-engagement in activities, partial or total, that can impede the objectives or interests of a particular person, group, institution, bureaucracy, or state system. At its core, such methods are based on the fact that all

political relationships rely on cooperation, whether through consent, acquiescence, or duress. Individuals and groups may refuse to provide such cooperation and thereby withdraw their support. A large category of methods in the repertoire of nonviolent direct action, noncooperation may assume social, economic, and political forms.

The most common forms of noncooperation are the boycott and strike, yet these methods can be adopted in numerous forms. Boycotts can be conducted by consumers, producers, managers, funders, and governments. Strikes also can be utilised by different industries and implemented to fit timeframes. Yet, noncooperation need not be relegated solely to economic matters. Social forms stand to be effective as well under certain circumstances. The suspension of social and sports activities, for instance, has proved an important component of major international conflicts around the globe—between the Soviet Union and the United States, India and Pakistan, and North Korea and South Korea. In addition, political noncooperation can be equally powerful. For example, the boycotting of elections has proven decisive in contests from Nigeria to Zimbabwe, and recently in the presidential election in Sri Lanka. Such methods also include simple reluctance to perform particular acts, stalling, or severance of diplomatic relations. The following table lists the primary aspects involved in planning and conducting an economic boycott.

Checklist for planning and conducting an economic boycott

- *Best method*: Decide whether a boycott is the most appropriate method for you and how it supports or reinforces your larger plans of action
- *Grievance*: Identify clearly why you are boycotting a particular product, company, or producer

- *Persuasion*: Visit the retailer or producer with the aim of convincing them to alleviate the core issue of your grievance; ask them to correct the injustice, and indicate your intention to start a boycott if they remain unmoved
- *Participants*: Decide who will conduct the boycott—consumers, workers, or indirect recipients
- *Issue logistics*: Make sure that the target of your boycott can be foregone or substituted
- *Technical logistics*: Decide the dates and set a specific duration for the boycott; do not leave the dates open
- *Education*: Publicise and promote your issue and plans as widely as possible to inform potential supporters, give your opponent the chance to change, and appeal to any neutral groups
- *Cooperation*: Find partners with whom to conduct the boycott, as this method usually relies on great numbers of people for success
- *Non-participants*: Decide how you will address those who purposefully or unknowingly do not support your boycott or who feel that they cannot be involved
- *Accompanying methods*: Plan additional methods to complement your boycott, such as picketing, posters, rallies, or sit-ins
- *Repercussions*: Prepare for possible responses from your opponent, such as bad publicity, harassment, imprisonment, or worse
- *Conclusion*: Decide when your boycott should end and whether you can or should declare a victory (perhaps you want the target of the boycott to save face and join your larger mobilisation)
- *Documentation*: Assign people to record the effects of the boycott, to share with news media sources and to use for evaluation
- *Analysis*: Examine your use of the boycott and promote successes or try to learn from your mistakes

Nonviolent Intervention: Methods of Disruption

Methods of nonviolent intervention are forceful acts that either disrupt established patterns of behaviour or create new ones. The practice of such methods, however, although potent, involves much more risk than most other methods. Individuals who conduct nonviolent intervention place themselves under the public scrutiny of opponents and others, which can lead to direct confrontations. These individuals may also incur greater suffering personally. Therefore, the use of methods of nonviolent intervention requires extensive preparation and training for what are likely to be intense circumstances and developments.

Such methods are typically conducted by highly trained and disciplined members of the nonviolent group. Thus, preparation is crucial. Not only must activists be well versed on how to conduct the method in question, but they should also understand the likely responses of the opponent. Also, given that such methods are usually conducted by small numbers of people, issues related to publicity and promotion deserve special attention in relation to nonviolent intervention.

Given the potential strength and capacity to attract attention, methods of nonviolent intervention are sometimes conducted out of desperation, as an example from Liberia illustrates. The political demise of President Charles Taylor in 2003 brought several warring factions and international mediators together to discuss future arrangements for power sharing and governance. With discussions lagging and carnage ongoing in the capital, Monrovia, women fed up with the lack of progress barricaded the representatives inside the conference hall and refused to release them until they reached a settlement and restored some semblance of security. In a political climate typified by marauding rebel and vigilante groups, the women, dressed in white T-shirts and wailing the names of murdered family members, were a welcomed tactical change in Liberia.

Civil rights activists conducting a sit-in at a lunch counter in the southern U.S. city of Jackson, Mississippi, in 1963 are harassed by hostile onlookers. Sit-ins are among the methods of nonviolent intervention meant to disrupt established behaviour or policies. The 1960s sit-ins were critical to the eventual passage of the 1962 Civil Rights Act, which outlawed aspects of racial segregation. Photo: Jackson Daily News.

One of the more powerful methods of nonviolent intervention—alternative institutions—is widespread throughout Africa. Whether involving markets, education, health, or security, parallel organisations are a forceful form of nonviolent intervention that detracts from the control, products, or services of an opponent. In addition to these economic and political forms of intervention, physical acts are more commonly considered under this class. Sit-ins and teach-ins are popular methods of nonviolent intervention, but the table below outlines a lesser-known example and some considerations to be kept in mind while trying to overload an administrative system.

Checklist for overloading an administrative system

- *Best method*: Decide whether this method is the most appropriate one for you; determine whether it fits the larger strategy for your mobilisation or if it is a single endeavour of limited scope
- *Grievance*: Identify clearly the issue and why you plan to overload a particular bureaucratic system
- *Target*: Select a particular organisation, bureau, or department.
- *Activity*: Choose the particular form you will use to overload the system—telephone, fax, e-mail, walk-ins, letters, and so on
- *Participants*: Decide who and how many people will be needed to implement the method
- *Cooperation*: Find partners with whom you can overload the system
- *Logistics*: Choose a time, date, and duration for using the method
- *Education*: Publicise and promote your issue and plans as widely as possible, if appropriate
- *Inform the target*: Make individuals who work at the target organisation or are responsible for its management and operation aware of your planned activity
- *Repercussions*: Prepare for possible responses from your opponent
- *Documentation*: Assign people to record the effects of the method to share with news media sources and to use for evaluation
- *Analysis*: Examine your attempt to overload the administrative system and promote successes or try to learn from your mistakes

Innovation and Appropriateness

Nonviolent struggle can involve risks, and with peril comes responsibility. Situations or opportunities arise that inevitably lead to ethical,

moral, or human relations issues that deserve serious consideration. Although the most basic tools of nonviolent action are persuasive measures, persons and groups may turn to extra-legal and extra-parliamentary methods when the customary, legal, or constitutional frameworks have failed, are dysfunctional or corrupt, or are not meting out justice, or when no other means of seeking redress is available.

The use of some methods can generate debate in certain situations. For example, 'stay-at-homes' in Nigeria create controversy, because families often depend on daily earnings to survive. The poverty level affects the spirit of the people and their attitude towards staying at home without earning a livelihood for provisions.

Despite harsh conditions of poverty, landless women in Kenya have displayed tremendous resilience in their use of noncooperation methods. Residing in the town of Maragua, one such group of women has refused government orders to produce coffee and is instead growing and selling bananas. In the area of Musea, women are appropriating resources for rice production in their personal gardens to avoid dependence on unfair providers. The desperate economic situations in which these women have found themselves force them to take perhaps questionable, but in their perspective necessary, actions.

Other issues may arise in the midst of a nonviolent struggle, particularly when risks are involved. For instance, children may be able to participate in a march or a vigil, but where an overbearing security or police presence is expected, the organisers must examine whether potentially putting youths in harm's way is warranted. If people previously engaged in guerrilla warfare, rebel militias, or other questionable acts of violent resistance want to transform themselves and adopt nonviolent methods, how can their involvement be incorporated without compromising the image of the nonviolent protagonists? What can be done if extremist elements decide to join your demonstration? How do you deal with those who will not participate when their active support

Children sit atop a peace wall in Burundi. Photo: Search for Common Ground.

is crucial, such as during an economic boycott?

No simple, ready-made answers exist for such questions. Overall, strategic nonviolent struggle involves careful analysis and clever artistry. Although external assistance, advice, and consultation can be useful, ultimately, planning and conducting nonviolent struggle must be done by individuals and groups directly involved in the dispute or experiencing the hardship. No effortless, magical solutions exist.

Getting Out the Word

Once you have a solid grasp of your grievance and how you would like it to be overcome or alleviated, you must translate and share this message with the populace. During the course of a campaign, the message will vary. At different times you will want to educate people about your grievance and suggested solutions, recruit more supporters or volunteers, or inform others about your successes. The message should vary depending on whom you are addressing. The intended audience determines the language, tone, and delivery of your message. You must also decide who will be the messenger. At other stages you will need to determine whether your message is being received and interpreted as intended. These points collectively comprise your communications strategies.

News media and public relations efforts include contact with supporters, opponents, neutral parties, and external parties. Developing and relaying a message may seem simple, but it requires considerable thought. Try to recall a few issues and how you became aware of them. When did you learn about them? How did the messages influence your opinion? Numerous means exist for communicating with groups, but you have to formulate strategies that work in your particular situation.

To Whom Are You Talking? How Are You Communicating?

Successful communications are based on understanding the persons you are trying to reach and the sources upon which they rely to access information. Most of the time, people have multiple issues on their minds, and your particular grievance is generally not likely to be a high priority for them. Therefore, in trying to spread your message, you are usually not in competition with your opponent, but with the various

preoccupations and interests of passive supporters and neutral parties. The amount of time you have to convey a message is likely to be limited. If you are planning on giving a speech, you might have twenty minutes or half an hour (during which people will not pay attention the whole time), and for a news conference you have perhaps ten minutes; an encounter on the street might last thirty seconds. Because you cannot appeal to everyone at once, keep particular target groups in mind when delivering a message. You might want to direct your messages towards local politicians, legislators, or councillors. Perhaps students or youths should be your audience. In any case, you must identify the persons you are trying to reach.

The message itself is important, and some basic elements will help make it effective: speak directly to the concerns of your audience and show them that they have a choice and that supporting your cause has benefits. Remember that good messages are 'clever' (CCLVR):

Concise: You may need to get your point across quickly in many situations, so be prepared to do so.

Credible: Inconsistencies between what you say and what you do will turn people away from or against you and your cause.

Language: Explain in simple terms to your target audiences that they have a choice and that supporting your cause is constructive.

Visible: Spread your message extensively through various means and get yourself noticed.

Repeat: Repetition is key to getting people to look beyond their everyday worries and to consider active involvement.

Exploring Different Media: From Leaflets to the Internet

Some of the symbolic methods of protest and persuasion may be used to spread your message, but other measures can also be utilised. The medium you use should be based on your target audience and the idea you want to advance. One of the essential components of your communications strategy is the marketing of your group, the grievance, or the proposed solution. Corporations and organisations adopt slogans and logos for a simple reason—they are the quickest and easiest way to get recognised. Catchphrases, emblems, signs, and insignia can be easily reproduced with minimal effort, cost, or risk.

Even as the political space in Zimbabwe continues to shrink, groups dedicated to fighting for democracy through nonviolent struggle have not stopped spreading the word about their efforts and ideals. When putting up posters became too dangerous, or impossible, members of some groups dipped their hands in red paint and made handprints on cows. As the cows walked through markets, cities, and towns, they were turned into ready-made billboards that displayed a widespread presence of nonviolent resistance. Zvakwana/Sokwanele, or Enough Is Enough, a grassroots movement in Zimbabwe, has been committed to using nonviolent action to achieve a free and fair representative democracy. The oppresive political environment created by the regime of President Robert Mugabe has forced the organisation to be creative in promoting its messages and activities.

News Coverage

Attracting the attention of news media can spread your message through organised events. This requires turning your grievance into an issue, and there are infinite ways of doing this. First, focus on visual elements. This suggestion seems obvious in regard to television, but it

MEDIA FOR MESSAGES

Print materials	Displays	Audio	Handouts	Visual	Electronic
Books Journals Newsletters Newspapers	Artwork Banners Graffiti Posters Stickers	Cassettes CDs Music Radio	Brochures Buttons Pins Flyers Leaflets	Costumes DVDs Television Theatre Videos	E-mail Text mes- sages Websites

also factors into newspaper coverage as well. One good photograph can tell your story effectively. Second, get your logistics in order. Choose the time, day, and location to hold an event that is likely to attract invited guests and onlookers. Third, compile a list of news media in your area, including newspapers, television (networks and local), radio, alternative news outlets, and wire services. Fourth, write a press release—a one-page summary on your event, the issue, and why it is important. Fifth, distribute your press release to those on your news media list and actively follow-up with specific contacts. Merely distributing a news release is insufficient. Reporters and journalists are assigned to cover events by their editors, and you will need to telephone each newsroom or editor to ask the name of the reporter assigned to the story. Sixth, practice for interviews. No matter the question, find ways of turning attention back to your issue and give the answer that you want to provide. You are not obligated to answer every question; seize the opportunity and 'stay on message'. Seventh, decide on your spokespersons and holds a news conference. This is your chance to spread your message and engage directly with the news corps.

You should consider how people feel about the sources from which they usually receive information. Sometimes the only show in town is preferred over nothing, but you may want to think about alternatives outside of mainstream media. Think also about the possibility of starting your own newsletter or radio programme or printing your own leaflets or books.

Framing and Re-framing

Eventually your communications strategies will grow in sophistication as you learn how your message is being received. Various tools at your disposal can gauge reactions and opinions, as the following examples show. Keeping generally abreast about stories that the news media are covering gives you an idea of what is being considered newsworthy. In many places, polling is also conducted on fairly consistent bases, and the results may be publicly available, helping to guide your presentations and planning.

Tangible results can occur. Your organisation might see an increase

Writing and using a press release

- The headline and first paragraph must grab attention. Focus the majority of your efforts on these two components.
- Include the date, time, and location of your planned event and when you want the information to be released.
- Include the names of two spokespersons and information on how to contact them
- The release should be one page, upbeat, and pungent.
- Mail the release to your media list ten days before your event and follow up three days later.

in recruitment or contributions, or your opponent might see a lessening in its support. If, for example, you are conducting an extended method, such as a boycott, consumers may be refusing to buy from the business, store, or provider against which you are protesting. A prestigious supporter of your opponent whom you had targeted may shift position. These are sure signs that your messages are being received and interpreted in the ways intended. The results of your efforts may not always be so positive. Although no attention is probably worse than negative attention, bad press is a reality that many groups must face. In some cases, nonviolent protagonists may be insulted or ridiculed, and they need to decide how or if they should respond. Although negative coverage of your group can seem disastrous, it is not necessarily so. Isolated stories or articles about minor events are not usually remembered for very long except within small communities. Also, although an organisation might suffer, the larger grievance might begin to attract attention and consideration.

You are basically telling a story, and you want people to walk away with a clear conclusion—an opinion on an issue, a change in perspective, or a request for action. If the audience is not reaching the conclusion you had hoped, you may need to adjust your storytelling approach. Although your basic points or issues may remain the same throughout the course of your struggle, most likely your communications strategy will need to be framed and re-framed many times.

Isn't This 'Nonviolent' Action?

In nearly all cases, nonviolent action is employed by only one side in a dispute or conflict. In other words, an opponent may not object to using violent reprisals. When nonviolent campaigners employ disciplined nonviolent methods in the face of punishments, however, an asymmetrical conflict situation is created. While the strict discipline of

the nonviolent protagonists may be tested, in certain situations, harsh or violent reprisals against nonviolent protagonists can help the non-violent group. Although a violent response is not necessarily evidence of progress, it should not be viewed as a setback or defeat. Those espousing and employing nonviolent action can and should consider retaliatory reactions to be an indication that they are posing a genuine challenge to the existing power relationships that have led to their quandary, grievance, or inequity. Certain measures can be taken to soften the blows. It may be possible to delegitimise those who respond to nonviolent action with violent suppression. For those concerned about the anticipated casualties that may occur, it is safe to say that a pledge to nonviolent struggle will lessen the number of those ulti-mately injured and killed.

As movements become diverse and attract broader participation, the difficulty of maintaining a commitment to nonviolent struggle can be challenging. You may find advocates for violent action among your supporters. Spies and agents may infiltrate a movement to urge its members to become violent, providing justification for an opponent to respond with violent actions. Therefore, discipline is a central, es-sential ingredient for a successful nonviolent struggle.

Maintaining Discipline

Ensuring nonviolent discipline can be enhanced by the formulation of 'codes of conduct' for targeted organisations within a society or the general population. Writing guidelines cannot guarantee that all participants' actions will remain nonviolent, but the establishment of do's and don'ts can be extremely helpful. They provide markers and guideposts. Guidelines assist with constructing a campaign or struggle and, at a minimum, can help in assuring that no one in the nonviolent group inadvertently aids the opponent.

The following guidelines were distributed as a leaflet by a seven-teen-year-old Dane who sought to influence his fellow citizens after Nazi troops invaded and militarily occupied Denmark in 1940. Young Arne Sejr noticed that his fellow Danes were friendly with the German soldiers, and this upset him. He went home and drafted 'commandments' for noncooperation with German repression. He then stuffed them in the mailboxes of prominent citizens in his town. The commandments were subsequently copied and passed manually to persons all over the country.

Ten Commandments for Danes

1. You must not go to work in Germany and Norway.
2. You shall do a bad job for the Germans.
3. You shall work slowly for the Germans.
4. You shall destroy important machines and tools.
5. You shall destroy everything which may be of benefit to the Germans.
6. You shall delay all transport.
7. You shall boycott German and Italian films and papers.
8. You must not shop at Nazis' stores.
9. You shall treat traitors for what they are worth.
10. You shall protect anyone chased by the Germans.

Join the struggle for the freedom of Denmark!

No set of guidelines fits every struggle. For example, the commandments above are not applicable in every situation, because the opponent of the Danes were Nazi troops in a situation of military occupation. Some guidelines would not be politically or culturally acceptable

for all peoples. Any such instructions must be generated from within the community that intends to partake in nonviolent action. If the do's and don'ts are developed by many centres within a society, following thorough discussion among all the stakeholders, even within different communities and sectors, it adds to the sense of ownership and empowerment. The process of developing codes of conduct can be extremely important to the cohesion of the group.

The intention to adhere to nonviolent methods should be promoted as much as possible, including to the opponent. Letting the target group know that no harm is intended to their lives or limbs can be important in moving towards success. It has the effect of reducing the fears of those in control of the opponent's pillars of support, particularly those with the power to enforce sanctions, such as the military and police. Such efforts will also allay concerns of neutral or external parties that might fear a rebellious or violent movement in their neighbourhood or region. Not only is eliminating the threat of violence reassuring to those who will encounter the nonviolent protagonists, but also the very act of sharing admonishments and pledges to nonviolent discipline increases the chances of gaining sympathisers.

In the midst of conflict, those advocating strictly nonviolent means will not be able to maintain control of the actions of all individuals and groups. Well-intentioned groups or breakaway factions may employ violent actions 'to help' the nonviolent resistance, but the leaders of the nonviolent struggle must do everything they can to separate themselves from such activities.

Nonviolent protagonists must make every effort to ensure discipline, especially among their most active members. This can be difficult during direct confrontations with opponents, in light of unforeseen disruptions, or because of the effects of drugs or alcohol on bystanders. Such risks can be reduced with adequate planning and some insurance provided by training and appointing marshals and peacekeepers for

certain actions who are selected, taught, and stationed to defuse disputes or mollify outbreaks within crowds.

Provocation

Opponents may deliberately attempt to undermine the discipline of the nonviolent struggle. *Agents provocateurs* are persons who aim to discredit nonviolent movements, to destroy them from within, and collect information on participants and strategies. They are sent into the nonviolent group for the precise purpose of provocative action. They may provide false information, create a crisis, or issue disinformation (misconstrued information intended to deceive). They may also try to disrupt the interaction of key individuals or organisations with nonviolent resisters. The best way to guard against agents provocateurs and spies is to discuss the likelihood of such agents proactively, create awareness of their possible presence, and keep your communications and decision-making processes open and non-secretive, with information shared publicly.

Several steps can be taken to maintain nonviolent discipline when faced with provocations. First, get out of harm's way. If an opponent continuously cracks down on the use of particular methods, consider using alternative methods if the losses incurred are significant. Prepare participants for the effects of violent reactions and reprisals by making them generally aware of the possibility, providing first aid training, and making relief or trauma services available. Target the organisations and individuals—stormtroopers, police, and security services—responsible for administering an opponent's means of violence. Choose carefully and designate particular individuals to make contact. The police and security officers can become confused about where their true loyalties lie, may respond to fraternisation, and may be morally repulsed or socially repelled when ordered to use violence against unarmed and

disciplined nonviolent protagonists. In Serbia in 2000, for example, a plan to befriend police forces during the latter phases of the nonviolent campaigns helped to protect demonstrators from a crackdown. Other recommendations include preparing advance warning systems, attracting news media attention (reporters with cameras can be a deterrent), posting international observers, inviting celebrity performers to participate, and aiming your publications and communications to target those who control the opponent's pillars of support. Create a feeling of ubiquity—in other words, appear to be everywhere.

Arrests, Injuries, or Worse

Many practitioners believe that conducting nonviolent action will place them on a moral high ground. Yet, the righteousness of one's cause or the decency of one's purpose and deeds does not guarantee success or safety. Nonviolent protagonists have been harassed, arrested, and injured as well as killed for standing up for what they believe. When groups are persuaded that passivity can no longer be tolerated and that action is necessary, they must not force or coerce individuals into participating on their behalf. The voluntary nature of participation in nonviolent struggles means that potential adherents need to be made acutely aware of the potential risks. No one should lie or make empty promises of safety. Once participants are aware of the dangers, those committed are likely to stay so, and the solidarity among them increased.

Aside from awareness, the most important factor related to probable risks is preparedness. For example, know what you should expect and what to do if you are arrested. Make yourself familiar with how the process of arrest works and what rights and entitlements can be sought. In training workshops, evaluate the processes in detail. Invite lawyers familiar with the jail and police systems to describe what can

be expected. Omit no details. The more you know, the less fearful is the prospect of being arrested for your cause. Prepare lists in advance of contact persons for anyone likely to be in the path of arrests. Because no individual should be operating alone, have ranks of others ready to support those arrested through a monitoring presence at police stations, as witnesses, or by taking notes at other facilities. The conspicuous presence of cameras and mobile telephones among the witnesses and monitors can help create the feeling that the police or security forces are under scrutiny and that light will be thrown on any cruel or brutal practices. Such matters should be exhaustively addressed beforehand, and participants who will be engaging in activities that may result in arrest should be specifically briefed and trained in advance.

The same applies for injuries. Trained medics should be available if violent reprisals are expected or large numbers of people will be gathering. Medical and other supplies, such as water, should be made available. Participants may need to undergo certain types of training to avoid injuries or be given instructions on how to deal with tear gas. Try to think of all possible outcomes and address them prior to conducting specific activities.

Nonviolent protagonists should also be aware of and prepare for the potential psychological side effects that might accompany disputes and conflicts. Some issues may need to be addressed futuristically and on a broad scale (the formation of national or regional tribunals or truth and reconciliation commissions) or at a more immediate and communal level (violence or rape counseling).

Cases of arrests or casualties should always be documented. For obvious humanitarian reasons, families need to be notified, and assistance may be vital. When possible, evidence will need to be gathered to prove the wrongful imprisonment or injurious behaviour of an opponent or particular group. Forms of documentation can also serve as remembrances or tributes. Photographs can provide powerful images

of a brutal opponent. If people are likely to be attacked, make sure they wear light colours so that the results of an attack appear clearly on television and in photos. The overbearing nature or brutality of an opponent can and should be exploited as one of its weaknesses. This might be the moment when the cruel despot reveals his or her true nature. Documentation of harsh reprisals may be a step towards delegitimising an opponent and potentially undermining its support. Such sectors as the business community may be disgusted and offer leverage in mobilising material resources or even international support.

Political Jiu-Jitsu

The use of violence by an opponent might backfire and work to the advantage of the nonviolent protagonists. When ruthless retaliations are publicised, the nonviolent protagonists sometimes gain support from previously neutral groups or the ranks of those that had sided with the opponent. This process is referred to as *political jiu-jitsu*, named for the ancient Japanese martial art in which the purpose is to throw one's opponent off balance. Such situations can propel the nonviolent group further, reinforce determination, and increase its discipline, conviction, and solidarity. Political jiu-jitsu is rare and does not occur in every case in which an opponent attacks nonviolent protagonists. So, aside from the obvious danger involved, deliberately provoking a violent response from an opponent is not necessarily a wise strategy.

The most notable instances of political jiu-jitsu in Africa occurred during the mobilisations against colonialism, for example, in Ghana after the imprisonment of Kwame Nkrumah and in South Africa after the Sharpeville massacre. More recently, the process played a major role in changing opinions towards the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) after its coup d'état in Sierra Leone in 1997. The junta's crackdown on students, particularly the National Union of Sierra Leone

Students, galvanised the local news media and the international community to support a transition to a democratically elected government. Although the general population had suffered greatly at the hands of the AFRC, the nonviolent resistance of students, teachers, the media, and other groups assured that their suffering would not be in vain.

Strategic Engagement

Although the decision to conduct nonviolent action may be reached unilaterally, the actual engagement ultimately involves at least two parties. In any nonviolent struggle, numerous factors fall outside the control or determination of the protagonists. Yet, some knowledge of the likely actions and reactions of an opponent is essential to developing an informed strategy, which requires at least a general understanding of the target group or adversary. The precise strategy and objectives of the opponent usually can never be known completely, but close scrutiny of rhetoric, orders, and actions offers insight. Lines of communication should be kept open.

Particular attention should be paid to the opponent's pillars of support responsible for enforcing sanctions, such as the police and military. Incidentally, such forces tend to be among the strongest supporters of target groups or undemocratic opponents. Although obedience within security organisations is often presumed to be unquestionable and monolithic, individuals within them may disregard orders, deliberately implement directives poorly, or switch loyalties. Undermining such pillars can sometimes create clear paths towards objectives, especially when such action occurs unbeknownst to the central power of an opponent and at critical times.

Nonviolent struggle typically involves confrontations of some sort. Although the political and social climate plays a role, preparation is critical for nonviolent protagonists. Moments when opponents must

In 1958, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first prime minister, met with Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN secretary-general. Nkrumah had been instrumental in leading collective nonviolent action in the struggle for independence and free elections in Ghana. Photo: UN Photos.

make decisions about how to react to a host of disciplined nonviolent protagonists or how to respond to a careful campaign on a disputed issue may portend significant imminent change. The reaction of an opponent to a given confrontation cannot be predetermined, but several likely options may be identified. Contingency plans can be developed for several generic scenarios, and even the worst or most extreme responses, for example, a violent crackdown, may sometimes be turned to the advantage of the nonviolent group.

5
Heading towards Success

How a dispute or struggle concludes is as important as how it was initiated. It is important to remember that the technique of nonviolent action is not a panacea for all the social ills of a society or nation-state and that evaluating success or failure can be difficult for several reasons.

First, the 'we tried it, and it failed' mentality remains prevalent in nonviolent struggle. When referring to 'it', individuals often mean particular methods, such as demonstrations or a general strike, not the technique of nonviolent resistance as a realistic alternative to armed struggle. After one or two methods fail, leaders presume that a 'stronger' technique of action is required. Ironically, the failures and disappointments of conventional warfare or guerrilla tactics do not elicit the same type of response. Failures on the battlefield are instead attributed to poor strategies. For some reason, letdowns involving nonviolent struggle lead people to question, often hastily, the viability of the technique itself.

Second, some groups believe that the use of nonviolent methods places them on a moral high ground relative to their target group and that regardless of other factors, their application will bear fruit: The will of the opponent will be altered either through seeing the error of its ways or by sudden recognition of the validity of the position of the nonviolent protagonists. The ultimate hope may be to get an opponent to the negotiating table, where a compromise can be formulated. This

type of approach has two flaws. The first is that staking out the moral high ground is not sufficient to ensure complete or even limited victory, particularly when an opponent has fundamental disagreements over the issues at stake and subscribes to a different view of your claims of moral virtue. Negotiation is but one aspect of any dispute. The second is that aside from working out the arrangements for a settlement or compromise, enforcement must be assured. In most cases, dialogue will never occur unless protagonists can display some semblance of political power. One of the most effective ways that a minority or marginalised group can bring itself to the place where an adversary is forced to contend with its grievances is through nonviolent action. Nonviolent struggle can serve as a viable means not only of bringing an opponent to the point of discussing a grievance, but also of pressing for accountability.

Third, some groups pursuing nonviolent struggle believe their stance will be recognised and favoured by parties external to the dispute or conflict, usually international actors, who will then intervene on their behalf. Although external parties can play decisive roles in conflicts, their participation cannot always be anticipated. More important, it can be difficult if not impossible to guide or control. Generally, third parties opt to become involved in a conflict in line with their own best interests and on their own terms. The resulting situation can be equally or more dismaying to nonviolent protagonists than that created by the original grievance or hardship.

Groups that employ nonviolent struggle often focus on immediate or intermediate goals and objectives, but the use of the nonviolent technique for seeking social justice can have long-term effects on societies and communities. In other words, a direct connexion exists between the means and ends regarding how people engage in a dispute or conflict—one of the most overlooked attributes of nonviolent struggle. Not only can nonviolent resistance be used to overcome hardships and

alleviate grievances, it can also help lay the groundwork for a more just and safe environment and society after the conflict. Substituting nonviolent means for other, more destructive forms of engagement shifts the emphasis and conceptualisation of power from the physical to the political and social. Once tapped, this kind of power can have transformative effects, because it re-frames the nature of the dispute and alters the power configurations that had allowed injustice to fester.

Human rights activists declare a 'Torture Free Zone' around the offices of the Kenyan Human Rights Commission to launch Amnesty International's worldwide campaign against torture in 2000. Photo: Amnesty International.

How Nonviolent Action Works

One of the most critical elements in understanding nonviolent struggle is the processes by which the technique may succeed. Nonviolent action may aim to convert or coerce or both, or it may seek to politically neutralise or paralyse an opponent. The objectives of any dispute differ in accordance with various factors. Understanding how nonviolent struggle can succeed enhances the ability of the nonviolent action group to set realistic goals. This level of planning and consideration should not be ignored or underestimated.

Planning should be designed and implemented in pursuit of one or some combination of the mechanisms of change:

Conversion: An opponent accepts the justification of the objectives of the nonviolent protagonists and in turn concedes, based upon altered perspectives. The opponents accept a new point of view and the goals of the nonviolent protagonists, with some involvement of their emotions and belief systems. Conversion, in which the hearts and minds of the target group may be touched, is the most rare of the four mechanisms of change.

Accommodation: Parties strike a mutual compromise over objectives that can take place through a variety of processes, for example, through formal negotiations, legal recourse, arbitration, or various forms of diplomacy. Accommodation is the most common mechanism and is often achieved when parties hope to avoid an escalation of the conflict. The opponent yields on demands, but without changing its position on the underlying issues. Often accommodation quiets internal dissent, preserves decorum, averts a worse predicament, or simply cuts losses. Instead of transforming the adversary (as in conversion), it alters the circumstances.

Nonviolent coercion: An opponent is compelled to concede as a result of the threatened or actual methods of the nonviolent protagonists. Although nonviolent coercion is a by-product of nonviolent methods, real force may be exerted, as when a boycott hurts the bank account of an unfair merchant. Goals are achieved against the will of the adversary. In rare instances, the target group may split because of internal divisions. Even the opponent's ability to use repression against the nonviolent protagonists may be circumscribed, because internal disruption becomes too pervasive or its apparatus is paralysed.

Disintegration: An opponent is simply unable to respond because of extensive noncooperation and defiance to the point that its decision making or capacity to implement decisions crumbles. This mechanism is exceedingly rare.

Most nonviolent protagonists subconsciously aim for their dispute to be resolved through some form of accommodation, often with the hope that the grievance will finally be addressed through negotiation. As many situations have proven, however, simply getting an opponent to the table is insufficient. Those struggling for human rights, economic development, and environmental protection in Nigeria's Niger Delta, for example, have become painfully aware of this fact. The international oil conglomerate Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) and the local communities of the nine-state Niger Delta region signed numerous memoranda of understanding. While the local populations placed faith in the contract and the good word of the opponent, they forgot what brought CNL to draft and sign the agreements in most instances—the strength of concerted nonviolent action:

'Let's negotiate'. Often, what your opponents most want is get you to stop organizing in the community and to start spending hours sitting around a table with

them. Of course, they say, you can't add new people as the negotiations progress because new people wouldn't know the background. Of course you don't want to talk to the press or anyone else because that would be a breach of confidence. Of course you have to stop doing actions and public events because that creates a bad atmosphere for the negotiations. The campaign comes to a stop. Meanwhile, weeks go by. You lose momentum. Your opponents hire negotiators to sit and talk with you while you must burn up the time of your leaders and organizers. The members who are not 'at the table' feel left out and are sure that some awful sellout is developing when they hear you referring to your opponents by their first names. Allies begin to draw back.

Bobo, Kendall, and Max 2001: 19

Various forms of negotiation or mediation may be conducted in accordance with any of the above mechanisms. It should be noted, however, that the negotiations utilised in pursuit of nonviolent coercion, for example, vary significantly from those used to pursue conversion. While accommodation focuses exclusively on a mutually agreed compromised settlement, negotiations need not be conducted for a nonviolent struggle to succeed.

When Objectives Are Met, Goals May Remain

Most groups that engage in strategic nonviolent action expect to achieve their objectives, but evaluating success or failure is not always straightforward. The conclusion of a given nonviolent struggle or campaign should not suggest that the issues at stake have been fundamentally addressed by all parties involved, even when specific objectives are met and agreements concluded. The end of a struggle is often not the end of a dispute or conflict, and latent consequences may result.

In cases in which specific objectives have been achieved, sustaining the success requires new strategies and often the development of inno-

vative roles for groups that engaged in the initial nonviolent struggle. The scope of vision for nonviolent action must include conflict transformation, which focuses on the relationships among the parties in a given conflict. In this light, nonviolent struggle is still in its infancy.

Although one of the most sophisticated and successful cases, strategic nonviolent struggle in Serbia left many social and political problems unresolved. In the wake of several civil wars and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombings, the war-torn country had major dimensions of reconciliation left to address. Among them were debates over domestic and international jurisdiction regarding criminal investigations into war crimes. While the coalition that came to power stood on shaky ground, the nationalist party that former president Slobodan Milosevic headed threatened to seize power in parliamentary elections. Yet, nonviolent struggle was utilised in Serbia to accomplish two objectives—to rid the country of Milosevic and to secure a new democratically elected representative leadership. In both senses, these campaigns proved to be successful. Similar assessments hold for other nonviolent struggles as well. In Burma in 1988, a nonviolent pro-democracy movement ousted three successive military governments only to be crushed by a junta, which continues to rule the country. Corruption and insecurity persist, despite the 'coloured revolutions' in the post-Soviet republics of Georgia (Rose Revolution), Ukraine (Orange Revolution), and Kyrgystan (Tulip Revoution), all of which succeeded in ousting former presidents and ruling parties. Problems remain in Lebanon after the Cedar Revolution, which ended Syria's long-standing de facto occupation. The same can be said in regard to the struggles against colonialism in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia, where nonviolent action played formidable and crucial roles. Poverty remains in each of these countries, where economic justice and development have proven elusive, and issues related to security and crime remain primary concerns of citizens and governments.

In the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which predominantly utilised nonviolent methods, the role of organisations that had participated in the struggle became contentious and proved to be one of the most important factors shaping the type of regime that emerged. Numerous groups participated in the revolution, and their roles were as widely varied as their political leanings. Although as many groups played significant roles as there were nonviolent proponents, the vast network of mullahs (Islamic religious leaders), their students, followers, and admirers undertook the most comprehensive activities. The departure of the shah in 1979 brought two simultaneous developments: it created a vacuum in political leadership, and the exuberance associated with the shah's departure led numerous groups that had participated in the struggle to cede control fairly willingly to one faction among the Islamists. These diverse groupings soon melted into what quickly became a new Iran that suffered from many of the same forms of oppression as did the old Iran under the Shah, though with a new face. The personnel changed, but little else did. It seems that everything that had been learned over the preceding months had been forgotten, and the euphoria lasted only long enough to shun these groups into accepting what evolved into an equally or perhaps even worse situation.

The failure to consolidate victories has contributed to discrediting nonviolent action. In other words, wider conflicts do not necessarily subside once narrow, specific campaign objectives are met. Victories can be stolen—by coups d'état, for example (assuming that concrete objectives have been identified in the first place).

The Best Kept Secret: How You Operate Affects Your Results

In rejecting suppositions that good ends can justify bad means, Mohandas Gandhi scorned any concept of a distinction between means and ends. Gandhi's thoughtful and explicit rejection of the customary view that one's method can be separated from the results achieved is not simply a line of reasoning that good purposes do not justify ethically tarnished or violent means. He believed that if one wanted a certain state of affairs, the process should exemplify the ends, and the steps to achieve it should put the goal into practice. The means and the ends could stretch over time, but they cannot be severed from each other. Trial and error may be indispensable in finding an appropriate path in Gandhi's eyes, but actions from the first step should be consistent with the goal.

One of the most poorly understood aspects of nonviolent struggle is its ability to serve as a predictor for democratic institutions. Although guerrilla groups or militias may sometimes achieve particular objectives, they usually prove to be incapable of ensuring just and equitable practices on a sustained basis. The nature of their organisations and the means or methods they employ do not mesh with or reflect their articulated purposes. Although nonviolent struggle may aim to create new institutions (for example, a constitution or election commission), or to overthrow a leader or faction, nonviolent protagonists do not usually aim to seize, take over, replace, or assume completely the responsibilities of a nation-state. They tend to be more concerned with the everyday life of average citizens, and the technique of nonviolent action itself relies on the participation of such people throughout the society.

Among the most compelling properties of nonviolent strategic action is its ability to lay the groundwork for transformation and reconciliation. Conversely, the employment of violent military or armed struggle

weakens such prospects. These outcomes reflect the connexion between the means and ends that is crucial if lasting bitterness is to be avoided and cycles of violence broken. Just as it is important at the start of a struggle to reach out to the opponent or persuade one's antagonist, reconciliation is essential at its end. This means preparation and planning in which each step reflects the type of community envisioned.

What exactly is 'reconciliation'? It is a process that attempts to transform intense or lingering malevolence among parties previously engaged in a conflict or dispute into feelings of acceptance and forgiveness for past harmful acts. Reconciliation may involve recourse to justice, particularly when one party has suffered egregiously at the hands of the other party. It is often considered essential to creating conditions for durable resolutions and stability. Also, if conducted sensitively, reconciliation offers the tremendous capacity for healing by the injured party as well as for the perpetrators of harmful acts.

Transformation and reconciliation are achieved through separating the *antagonism* from the *antagonist*. Parties facing nonviolent protagonists are more likely to tune their attention to the grievances involved, because they do not have to worry about violent confrontations and bodily harm or loss of life. Nonviolent action thus allows for more focus on the issues at stake, instead of the means of pursuing them, such as when guerrilla tactics or acts of terrorism are employed. Furthermore, the likelihood of physical injury or even death places one's opponent in a defensive posture and creates a cycle of revenge.

6
Conclusion

Greater understanding of nonviolent struggle is vital, particularly in Africa, where hardships, disputes, and conflicts are widespread but realistic and effective means for doing anything about them seem to be limited. Options other than violence do exist, and such alternatives have been used successfully in the past and can similarly be used in the present and future.

Nonviolent struggle represents an option for those who feel left out and left behind. It can work for those who feel that they are powerless against tyranny, oppression, or even extreme organised violence. In addition to achieving short-term or more immediate successes, non-violent action improves the odds of stable, equitable, and more demo-cratic long-term outcomes. It has the potential to resolve grievances without fomenting a quest for vengeance and, therefore, often aids in ending the cycle of retribution that is so commonly set in motion after violent conflicts. Where brutal strife has been prevalent, non-violent struggle can act as a form of conflict transformation. Even in the midst of conflicts that have turned to violent struggle, there are often instances of people and groups who are unhappy or dissatisfied with actions that rely on bloodshed. Leading activists for nonviolent action and conflict transformation in conflict-ridden areas have often struggled to have their voices heard.

Nonviolent struggle is not always successful, and criticism is inevi-table. When ordinary people take matters into their own hands, others will feel threatened. Nonviolent action, whether a failure or success, will not satisfy all sectors and groups of a society. One of the aims of any nonviolent struggle must be to implement processes capable of addressing serious complaints and grievances or resolving conflicts in the future. Those unhappy or dissatisfied with the results of a struggle seek vehicles and political space to voice their grievances, opinions, and suggestions. Nonviolent struggle always offers them recourse. In this respect, the transformational role of nonviolent struggle creates

mutually acceptable forms of conflict resolution, augmented through establishment of the rule of law, institutionalised mechanisms, or myriad endogenous techniques. New measures may arise from nonviolent engagement. The formation of the International Criminal Court, truth and reconciliation commissions, and various tribunals are well-known initiatives. Another is the ongoing use of the 'talking tree', a traditional technique of conflict resolution, in several West African nation-states. Post-apartheid South Africa has developed one of the most advanced documents in the world guaranteeing human rights and the rights of women.

What should organised groups do once the objectives of their non-violent struggle have been successfully achieved? For some the transition has been natural. Most groups have established a focus before launching their nonviolent struggle, and when they achieve success, they can return to their previous endeavours. For example, human rights organisations that monitored and documented shortcomings and abuses are likely still to be needed. For other groups that have focused nearly all of their energies and capacities on a dispute, or groups that were formed for specific purposes, such as strike committees, the transition may require more ingenuity. The transition may, however, flow naturally from one activity to another. Take for example Solidarity in Poland. With its ten million members and diverse representation of Polish society, the organisation was essentially a trade union that evolved into a political party. The Serbian group Otpor! has had a more difficult time finding a role in the post-Milosevic era. Established specifically as the bulwark for strategic nonviolent struggle, Otpor! has attempted to redefine itself as an environmental and political watchdog organisation.

Not even the most successful nonviolent campaign can be a panacea for the many problems and ills that plague a community or society. When a nonviolent campaign is successful in bringing an opposi-

tion party to power, securing independence, or ending an occupation, the struggle often serves as an emblematic marker from which future events are evaluated. Yet, the majority of struggles will aim for limited objectives related to specific grievances and issues. Nonetheless, non-violent resistance operates through the joint participation of various organisations and institutions throughout a society, allowing political power potential to force shifts among the power relations of society. Once tapped, diffused or pluralistic societal power becomes an asset that can be exploited in the future, time and time again.

Appendix

Learning More: Training Programmes and Other Resources

It is today much easier for people to learn about nonviolent struggle than it was in the past; relevant ideas, knowledge, and skills are currently spreading faster and more widely than ever. Transmission of knowledge is taking place through training programmes and workshops, case studies and other forms of research, and films and materials on the World Wide Web.

Tracing the history of nonviolent struggle is difficult. Many stories of the past remain untold, so no one has a solid grasp of how such ideas have spread. Although often cited as one of the most influential practitioners and greatest advocates of nonviolent struggle, Gandhi himself referred to this technique as being 'as ancient as the hills'. Given his prominence in India and internationally, much has been learned about his ideas and experiments as nonviolent struggles have spread across the globe.

The efforts of Gandhi and Indian indentured servants in South Africa to secure rights and justice greatly influenced the burgeoning movement for majority rule in the country that lasted for much of the twentieth century. As early as the 1920s, black Americans saw that after Gandhi left South Africa, he developed a strategy of resistance to oppression that might be applicable in the United States, where laws, legal systems, and courts of law enshrined discrimination and inequality. As the historian Sudarshan Kapur notes, a steady stream of African American newspaper editors, professors, college presidents, and civic leaders (among them Howard Thurman, Benjamin Mays, Channing Tobias, James Farmer, and James Lawson) travelled to India before Martin Luther King, Jr. became a prominent civil rights leader. Visiting the sites of the various Indian campaigns, they sat with participants, in some cases met with Gandhi, and learned the theories and methods of nonviolent action. The knowledge they absorbed would later spread around the world.

In the 1990s, the Serbs in their struggle against Slobodan Milosevic

learned lessons from the Czech and Slovak movement that came to be known as the Velvet Revolution. Towards the end of the decade, Serb students began studying the academic writings of American scholar Gene Sharp. Some participated in skills-training workshops led by retired U.S. military officer, Col. Robert Helvey. During 2002 and 2003, Serbs passed on their knowledge and skills to activists in Georgia, the former Soviet republic, in preparation for the Georgians' eventual Rose Revolution. Events transpired similarly elsewhere, including in Ukraine, resulting in the 2004 Orange Revolution, and the 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan and the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon. Today, Belarusians, Kazaks, Iranians, Venezuelans, and Zimbabweans are studying what their Serbian and Georgian counterparts learned and studied. These examples represent the flow of one stream of ideas on nonviolent struggle. Such cross-cultural learning will probably grow in the future.

International resources for training and information on nonviolent struggle

- **Albert Einstein Institution (AEI):** www.aeinstein.org

- **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC):** www.afsc.org

- **Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS):** www.canvasopedia.org

- **Freedom House:** www.freedomhouse.org

- **International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC):** www.nonviolent-conflict.org

- **International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR):** www.ifor.org

- **Nonviolence International:** www.nonviolenceinternational.net

- **Peace Brigades International:** www.peacebrigades.org

- **Transcend:** www.transcend.org

- **Training for Change:** http://trainingforchange.org

- **War Resisters League (WRL):** www.warresisters.org

Skills training for nonviolent struggle is in great demand, and several non-governmental organisations have undertaken efforts to meet these needs. Based in Amsterdam, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) has branches throughout the world, including in different parts of Africa. It conducts training programmes in 'active nonviolence' and also sponsors the Women Peacemakers Program. The European-based organisation Transcend offers courses, seminars, and workshops on peace building and elements of nonviolent action. At the international level, the War Resisters League and the American Friends Service Committee sponsor workshops and produce training materials for organisers and activists. The Serbian group Otpor! has branched out to form the Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies, which conducts training seminars, provides consultations, and compiles resources on its Website. Focusing on generating and disseminating knowledge of nonviolent struggle, the Albert Einstein Institution in Boston, Massachusetts, has produced extensive publications in numerous languages that can be freely downloaded or re-

ceived. Additional materials are available from the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict in Washington, D.C. Training for Change, a nonprofit peace group founded by Quakers, produces publications and runs training workshops.

Some local initiatives have formed to train and educate about nonviolent struggle in Africa. Unfortunately, the availability and promotion of such resources are limited. The following is a short selection of organisations in this arena:

African resources for training and information on nonviolent struggle

• **Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE):** www.cecore.org

• **Mano River Union Civil Society:** www.marwopnet.org

• **West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP):** www.wanep.org

• **Zvakwana:** www.zvakwana.org

Training programmes, workshops, and seminars are not the only means of transmitting knowledge about nonviolent struggle. Books, journals, and films can also be effective methods for sharing information and ideas about what nonviolent struggle is and how it works. The following are helpful resources.

Books

Ackerman, Peter, and Christopher Kruegler. 1994. *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.

Bobo, Kim, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max. 2001. *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*, 3rd edn. Santa Ana, California: Seven Locks Press.

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Lakey, George. 1987. *Powerful Peacemaking: Strategy for a Living Revolution*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

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Shields, Katrina. 1994. *In the Tiger's Mouth: An Empowerment Guide for Social Action*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Sutherland, Bill, and Matt Meyer. 2000. *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Journals

African Journal of Conflict Trends
Conflict Trends
Published by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Durban, www.accord.org.za/web.nsf.

Journal of Peacebuilding and Development
Published by the South North Centre for Peacebuilding and Development, Harare, www.journalpeacedevlorg.

Mobilization
Published by San Diego State University, www.mobilization.sdsu.edu.

Peace and Conflict Monitor
Published by the University for Peace, www.upeace.org.

Social Movement Studies
Published by Routledge, www.tandf.co.uk.

Theory and Society
Published by Elsevier, www.springerlink.com.

Films

A Force More Powerful
2000. York Zimmerman, Inc.
Contact: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, United States.

Bringing Down a Dictator
2002. York Zimmerman, Inc.
Contact: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, United States.

Nonviolence for the Brave: Gender Sensitive Active Nonviolence Training
2003. IFOR, Women Peacemakers Program.
Contact: office@ifor.org.

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