

Lesson Six — Class of Nonviolence

The Technique of Nonviolent Action

by Gene Sharp

A ruler's power is ultimately dependent on support from the people he would rule. His moral authority, economic resources, transport system, government bureaucracy, army, and police—to name but a few immediate sources of his power—rest finally upon the cooperation and assistance of other people. If there is general conformity, the ruler is powerful.

But people do not always do what their rulers would like them to do. The factory manager recognizes this when he finds his workers leaving their jobs and machines, so that the production line ceases operation; or when he finds the workers persisting in doing something on the job which he has forbidden them to do. In many areas of social and political life comparable situations are commonplace. A man who has been a ruler and thought his power sure may discover that his subjects no longer believe he has any moral right to give them orders, that his laws are disobeyed, that the country's economy is paralyzed, that his soldiers and police are lax in carrying out repression or openly mutiny, and even that his bureaucracy no longer takes orders. When this happens, the man who has been ruler becomes simply another man, and his political power dissolves, just as the factory manager's power does when the workers no longer cooperate and obey. The equipment of his army may remain intact, his soldiers uninjured and very much alive, his cities unscathed, the factories and transport systems in full operational capacity, and the government buildings and offices unchanged. Yet because the human assistance which had created and supported his political power has been withdrawn, the former ruler finds that his political power has disintegrated.

Nonviolent Action

The technique of nonviolent action, which is based on this approach to the control of political power and the waging of political struggles, has been the subject of many misconceptions: for the sake of clarity the two terms are defined in this section.

The term *technique* is used here to describe the overall means of conducting an action or struggle. One can therefore speak of the technique of guerrilla warfare, of conventional warfare, and of parliamentary democracy.

The term *nonviolent action* refers to those methods of protest, noncooperation, and intervention in which the actionists, without employing physical violence, refuse to do certain things which they are expected, or required, to do; or do certain things which they are not expected, or are forbidden, to do. In a particular case there can of course be a combination of acts of omission and acts of commission.

Nonviolent action is a generic term: it includes the large class of phenomena variously called nonviolent resistance, satyagraha, passive resistance, positive action, and nonviolent direct action. While it is not violent, it is action, and not inaction; passivity, submission, and cowardice must be surmounted if it is to be used. It is a means of conducting conflicts and waging struggles, and is not to be equated with (though it may be accompanied by) purely verbal dissent or solely psychological influence. It is not pacifism, and in fact has in the vast majority of cases been applied by nonpacifists. The motives for the adoption of nonviolent action may be religious or ethical or they may be based on considerations of expediency. Nonviolent action is not an escapist approach to the problem of violence, for it can be applied in struggles against opponents relying on violent sanctions. The fact that in a conflict one side is nonviolent does not imply that the other side will also refrain from violence. Certain forms of nonviolent action may be regarded as efforts to persuade by action, while others are more coercive.

Methods of Nonviolent Action

There is a very wide range of methods, or forms, of nonviolent action, and at least 197 have been identified. They fall into three classes - nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

Generally speaking, the methods of nonviolent protest are symbolic in their effect and produce an awareness of the existence of dissent. Under tyrannical regimes, however, where opposition is stifled, their impact can in some circumstances be very great. Methods of nonviolent protest include marches, pilgrimages, picketing, vigils, "haunting" officials, public meetings, issuing and distributing protest literature, renouncing honors, protest emigration, and humorous pranks.

The methods of nonviolent noncooperation, if sufficient numbers take part, are likely to present the opponent with difficulties in maintaining the normal efficiency and operation of the system; and in extreme cases the system itself may be threatened. Methods of nonviolent noncooperation include various types of social noncooperation (such as social boycotts); economic boycotts (such as consumers' boycott, traders' boycott, rent refusal, and international trade embargo); strikes (such as the general strike, strike by resignation, industry strike, go-slow, and economic shutdown); and political noncooperation (such as boycott of government employment, boycott of elections, administrative noncooperation, civil disobedience, and mutiny).

The methods of nonviolent intervention have some

features in common with the first two classes, but also challenge the opponent more directly; and, assuming that fearlessness and discipline are maintained, relatively small numbers may have a disproportionately large impact. Methods of nonviolent intervention include sit-ins, fasts, reverse strikes, nonviolent obstructions, nonviolent invasion, and parallel government.

The exact way in which methods from each of the three classes are combined varies considerably from one situation to another. Generally speaking, the risks to the actionists on the one hand, and to the system against which they take action on the other, are least in the case of nonviolent protest, and greatest in the case of nonviolent intervention. The methods of noncooperation tend to require the largest numbers, but not to demand a large degree of special training from all participants. The methods of nonviolent intervention are generally effective if the participants possess a high degree of internal discipline and are willing to accept severe repression; the tactics must also be selected and carried out with particular care and intelligence.

Several important factors need to be considered in the selection of the methods to be used in a given situation. These factors include the type of issue involved, the nature of the opponent, his aims and strength, the type of counteraction he is likely to use the depth of feeling both among the general population and among the likely actionists, the degree of repression the actionists are likely to be able to take, the general strategy of the overall campaign, and the amount of past experience and specific training the population and the actionists have had. Just as in military battle weapons are carefully selected, taking into account such factors as their range and effect, so also in nonviolent struggle the choice of specific methods is very important.

Mechanisms of Change

In nonviolent struggles there are, broadly speaking, three mechanisms by which change is brought about. Usually there is a combination of the three. They are conversion, accommodation, and nonviolent coercion.

George Lakey has described the conversion mechanism thus: "By conversion we mean that the opponent, as the result of the actions of the nonviolent person or group, comes around to a new point of view which embraces the ends of the nonviolent actor." This conversion can be influenced by reason or argument, but in nonviolent action it is also likely to be influenced by emotional and moral factors, which can in turn be stimulated by the suffering of the nonviolent actionists, who seek to achieve their goals without inflicting injury on other people.

Attempts at conversion, however, are not always successful, and may not even be made. Accommodation as a mechanism of nonviolent action falls in an intermediary position between conversion and nonviolent coercion, and elements of both of the other mechanisms are generally involved. In accommodation, the opponent, although not converted, decides to grant

the demands of the nonviolent actionists. In a situation where he still has a choice of action. The social situation within which he must operate has been altered enough to be nonviolent action to compel a change in his own response to the conflict; perhaps because he has begun to doubt the rightness of his position, perhaps because he does not think the matter worth the trouble caused by the struggle, and perhaps because he anticipates coerced defeat and wishes to accede gracefully or with minimum or losses.

Nonviolent coercion may take place in any of three circumstances. Defiance may become too widespread and massive for the ruler to be able to control it by repression; the social and political system may become paralyzed; or the extent of defiance or disobedience among the ruler's own soldiers and other agents may undermine his capacity to apply repression. Nonviolent coercion becomes possible when those applying nonviolent action succeed in withholding, directly or indirectly, the necessary sources of the ruler's political power. His power then disintegrates, and he is no longer able to control the situation, even though he still wishes to do so.

Just as in war danger from enemy fire does not always force front line soldiers to panic and flee, so in nonviolent action repression does not necessarily produce submission. True, repression may be effective, but it may fail to halt defiance, and in this case the opponent will be in difficulties. Repression against a nonviolent group which persists in face of it and maintains nonviolent discipline may have the following effects: it may alienate the general population from the opponent's regime, making them more likely to join the resistance; it may alienate the opponent's usual supporters and agents, and their initial uneasiness may grow into internal opposition and at times into noncooperation and disobedience; and it may rally general public opinion (domestic or international) to the support of the nonviolent actionists; though the effectiveness of this last factor varies greatly from one situation to another, it may produce various types of supporting actions. If repression thus produces larger numbers of nonviolent actionists, thereby increasing the defiance, and if it leads to internal dissent among the opponent's supporters, thereby reducing his capacity to deal with the defiance, it will clearly have rebounded against the opponent.

Naturally, with so many variables (including the nature of the contending groups, the issues involved, the context of the struggle, the means of repression, and the methods of nonviolent action used), in no two instances will nonviolent action "work" in exactly the same way. However, it is possible to indicate in very general terms the ways in which it does achieve results. It is, of course, sometimes defeated: no technique of action can guarantee its user short-term victory in every instance of its use. It is important to recognize, however, that failure in nonviolent action may be caused, not by an inherent weakness of the technique, but by weakness in the movement employing it, or in the strategy and tactics used.

Strategy is just as important in nonviolent action as it is in military action. While military strategic concepts and principles cannot be automatically carried over into the field of nonviolent struggle, since the dynamics and mechanisms of military and nonviolent action differ greatly, the basic importance of strategy and tactics is in no way diminished. The attempt to cope with strategic and tactical problems associated with civilian defense (national defense by prepared nonviolent resistance) therefore needs to be based on thorough consideration of the dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent struggle; and on consideration of the general principles of strategy and tactics appropriate to the technique—both those peculiar to it and those which may be carried over from the strategy of military and other types of conflict.

Development of the Technique

Nonviolent action has a long history but because historians have often been more concerned with other matters, much information has undoubtedly been lost. Even today, this field is largely ignored, and there is no good history of the practice and development of the technique. But it clearly began early. For example, in 494 B.C. the plebeians of Rome, rather than murder the Consuls, withdrew from the city to the Sacred Mount where they remained for some days, thereby refusing to make their usual contribution to the life of the city, until an agreement was reached pledging significant improvements in their life and status.

A very significant pre-Gandhian expansion of the technique took place in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The technique received impetus from three groups during this period: first from trade unionists and other social radicals who sought a means of struggle—largely strikes, general strikes, and boycotts—against what they regarded as an unjust social system, and for an improvement in the condition of working men; second, from nationalists who found the technique useful in resisting a foreign enemy such as the Hungarian resistance against Austria between 1850 and 1867, and the Chinese boycotts of Japanese goods in the early 20th century; and third, on the level of ideas and personal example, from individuals, such as Leo Tolstoy in Russia and Henry David Thoreau in the U.S.A., who wanted to show how a better society might be created.

With Gandhi's experiments in the use of nonviolent action to control rulers, alter policies, and undermine political systems, the character of the technique was broadened and refinements were made in its practice. Many modifications were introduced: greater attention was given to strategy and tactics; the armory of methods was expanded; and a link was consciously forged between mass political action and the ethical principle of nonviolence. Gandhi, with his political colleagues and fellow Indians, demonstrated in a variety of conflicts in South Africa and India that nonviolent struggle could be politically effective on a large scale. He termed his refinement of the technique "satyagraha," meaning roughly insistence and reliance upon the force

of truth. "In politics, its use is based upon the immutable maxim, that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed."

From *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*

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By Gene Sharp

India – 1930-1931

For the 1930 campaign Gandhi formulated a program of political demands and a concrete plan for nonviolent rebellion, including civil disobedience. Pleas to the Viceroy produced no concessions.

Focusing initially on the Salt Act (which imposed a heavy tax and a government monopoly), Gandhi set out with disciples on a 26-day march to the sea to commit civil disobedience by making salt. This was the signal for mass nonviolent revolt throughout the country. As the movement progressed, there were mass meetings, huge parades, seditious speeches, a boycott of foreign cloth, and picketing of liquor shops and opium dens. Students left government schools. The national flag was hoisted. There were social boycotts of government employees, short strikes (hartals), and resignations by government employees and members of the Legislative Assembly and Councils. Government departments were boycotted, as were foreign insurance firms and the postal and telegraph services. Many refused to pay taxes. Some renounced titles. There were nonviolent raids and seizures of government-held salt, and so on.

The government arrested Gandhi early in the campaign. About 100,000 Indians (including 17,000 women) were imprisoned or held in detention camps. There were beatings, injuries, censorship, shootings, confiscation, intimidation, fines, banning of meetings and organizations, and other measures. Some persons were shot dead. During the year the normal functioning of government was severely affected, and great suffering was experienced by the resisters. A truce was finally agreed on, under terms settled by direct negotiations between Gandhi and the Viceroy.

Although the concessions were made to the nationalists, the actual terms favored the government more than the nationalists. In Gandhi's view it was more important, however, that the strength thus generated in the Indians meant that independence could not long be denied, and that by having to participate in direct negotiations with the nonviolent rebels, the government had recognized India as an equal with whose representatives she had to negotiate. This was so upsetting to Winston Churchill as it was reassuring to Gandhi.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was later to become Prime Minister of independent India, was no believer in an ethic of nonviolence or Gandhi's philosophy or religious explanations. However, like many other prominent and unknown Indians, he became a supporter of Gandhi's "grand strategy" for obtaining a British evacuation from India, and he spent years in prison in that struggle. Nehru wrote in his autobiography:

"We had accepted that method, the Congress had made that method its own, because of a belief in its

effectiveness. Gandhiji had placed it before the country not only as the right method but also as the most effective one for our purpose."

In spite of its negative name it was a dynamic method, the very opposite of a meek, submission to a tyrant's will. It was not a coward's refuge from action, but a brave man's defiance of evil and national subjection.

Struggle Against Nazis

Independent of the continuing Gandhian campaigns, significant nonviolent struggles under exceedingly difficult circumstances also emerged in Nazi-occupied Europe. Almost without exception these operated in the context of world war and always against a ruthless enemy. Sometimes the nonviolent forms of resistance were closely related to parallel violent resistance; occasionally they took place independently. Often the nonviolent elements in the resistance struggles were highly important, sometimes even overshadowing the violent elements in the resistance.

Nonviolent resistance in small or large instances took place in a number of countries but was especially important in the Netherlands, Norway, and probably to a lesser degree, Denmark. In no case does there appear to have been much if anything in the way of special knowledge of the technique, and certainly no advanced preparations or training. The cases generally emerged as spontaneous or improvised efforts to "do something" in a difficult situation. Exceptions were certain strikes in the Netherlands which the London-based government – in-exile requested in order to help Allied landings on the continent.

Norway, 1942

The Norwegian teacher's resistance is but one of these resistance campaigns. During the Nazi occupation, the Norwegian Fascist "minister-President," Vidkun Quisling, set out to establish the Corporative State on Mussolini's model, selecting teachers as the first "corporation." For this he created a new teacher's organization with compulsory membership and appointed as its leader the head of the Hird, the Norwegian S.A. (storm troopers.) A compulsory Fascist youth movement was also set up.

The underground called on the teachers to resist. Between 8,000 and 10,000 of the country's 12,000 teachers wrote letters to Quisling's Church and Education Department. All signed their names and addresses to the wording prescribed by the underground for the letter. Each teacher said he (or she) could neither assist in promoting fascist education of the children nor accept membership in the new teacher's organization.

The government threatened them with dismissal and closed all schools for a month. Teachers held classes in private homes. Despite censorship, news of the resistance spread. Tens of thousands of letters of protest from parents poured into the government office.

After the teachers defied the threats, about 1,000 male teachers were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Children gathered and sang at railroad stations as teachers were shipped through in cattle cars. In the camps, the Gestapo imposed an atmosphere of terror intended to induce capitulation. On starvation rations, the teachers were put through "torture gymnastics" in deep snow. When only a few gave in, "treatment" continued.

The schools reopened, but the teachers still at liberty told their pupils they repudiated membership in the new organization and spoke of a duty to conscience. Rumors were spread that if these teachers did not give in, some or all of those arrested would be killed. After difficult inner wrestling, the teachers who had not been arrested almost without exception stood firm.

Then, on cattle car trains and overcrowded steamers, the arrested teachers were shipped to a camp near Kirkenes, in the far north. Although Quisling's Church and Education Department stated that all was settled and that the activities of the new organization would cease, the teachers were kept at Kirkenes in miserable conditions, doing dangerous work.

However, their suffering strengthened morale on the home front and posed problems for Quisling's regime. As Quisling once raged at the teachers in a school near Oslo: "You teachers have destroyed everything for me!" Fearful of alienating Norwegians still further, Quisling finally ordered the teacher's release. Eight months after the arrests, the last teachers returned home to triumphal receptions.

Quisling's new organization for teachers never came into being, and the schools were never used for fascist propaganda. After Quisling encountered further difficulties in imposing the Corporative State, Hitler ordered him to abandon the plan entirely.

Berlin, 1943

It is widely believed that once the "Final Solution," the annihilation of Europe's Jews, was under way, no nonviolent action to save German Jews occurred and that none could have been effective. This belief is challenged by an act of nonviolent defiance by the non-Jewish wives of arrested Berlin Jews. This limited act of resistance occurred in the midst of the war, in the capital of the Third Reich, toward the end of the inhuman effort to make Germany free of Jews – all highly unfavorable conditions for successful opposition. The defiance not only took place, but was completely successful, even in 1943. The following account is by Heinz Ullstein, one of the men who had been arrested; his wife was one of the women who acted:

"The Gestapo was preparing for large-scale action. Columns of covered trucks were drawn up at the gates. Of factories and stood in front of private houses. All day long they rolled through the streets, escorted by armed SS men – heavy vehicles under whose covers could be discerned the outlines of closely packed humanity. On this day, every Jew living in Germany was arrested and for the time being lodged in mass camps. It was the beginning of the end.

"People lowered their eyes, some with indifference, others perhaps with a fleeting horror and shame. The day wore on, there was a war to be won, provinces were conquered. "History was made," we were on intimate terms with the millennium. And the public eye missed the flickering of a tiny torch which might have kindled the fire of general resistance to despotism. From the vast collecting centers to which the Jews of Berlin had been taken, the Gestapo sorted out those with 'Aryan kin' and concentrated them in a separate prison in the Rosenstrasse. No one knew what was to happen to them.

"At this point the wives stepped in. Already by the early hours of the next day they had discovered the whereabouts of their husbands and as by common consent, as if they had been summoned, a crowd of them appeared at the gate of the improvised detention center. In vain the security police tried to turn away the demonstrators, some 6,000 of them, and to disperse them. Again and again they massed together, advanced, called for their husbands, who despite strict instructions to the contrary, showed themselves at the windows, and demanded their release.

"For a few hours the routine of a working day interrupted the demonstration, but in the afternoon the square was again crammed with people, and the demanding, accusing cries of the women rose above the noise of the traffic like passionate avowals of a love strengthened by the bitterness of life.

"Gestapo headquarters was situated in the Burgstrasse, not far from the square where the demonstration was taking place. A few salvos from a machine gun could have wiped the women off the square, but the SS did not fire, not this time. Scared by an incident which had no equal in the history of the Third Reich, headquarters consented to negotiate. They spoke soothingly, gave assurances, and finally released the prisoners."

Latin American Civilian Insurrection

Latin America is more famous for its political violence than for nonviolent action. This may be an unbalanced view. There have apparently been a large number of instances in Latin America of general strikes and several cases of nonviolent civilian insurrections. For example, within a few weeks in 1944 two Central American dictators, in El Salvador and Guatemala, fell before massive civil resistance. These cases are especially important because of the rapidity with which the nonviolent action destroyed these entrenched

military dictatorships. Attention here is focused on the Guatemala case.

Guatemala, 1944

With the help of the secret police, General Jorge Ubico had ruled Guatemala since 1932. Ubico was extolled in some U.S. magazines as a “road-and-school dictator” the men who had faced his political police knew better. Time Magazine called him an admirer of Hitler’s 1934 blood purge, and quoted Ubico: “I am like Hitler, I execute first and give trial afterwards.”

During World War II many U.S. troops were in Guatemala, which had joined the Allies. The Americans there promoted ideas of democracy for which, they said, the war was being fought. These appealed especially to Guatemalan students and young professional men. Other changes were undermining Ubico’s position. Seizure of German-owned coffee *fincas* (plantations) in 1942 removed some of his supporters. Domestic issues were causing unrest, both among workers and within the business community. The dictator of nearby El Salvador, Martinez, had fallen a few weeks previously in the face of widespread nonviolent resistance. That proved to be a dangerous and contagious example. Action began in Guatemala, mildly — at first.

In late May 1944, 45 lawyers asked the removal of the judge who tried most political opponents of the regime brought before a civil court. Ubico asked for specific charges against the judge. Surprisingly, one newspaper was allowed to publish them.

On the day prior to the annual parade of teachers and schoolchildren in tribute to the dictator, 200 teachers petitioned Ubico for a wage increase. Those who drafted the petition were arrested and charged with conspiracy against the social institution of the supreme government. The teachers replied with a boycott of the parade; they were fired.

On June 20 a manifesto announced the formation of the Social Democrat party and called for opposition parties, social justice, lifting of the terror, and hemispheric solidarity. Students petitioned for university autonomy, rehiring of two discharged teachers, and release of two imprisoned law students. Unless the demands were granted within 24 hours, they threatened a student strike.

Ubico declared a state of emergency. He called the opposition “Nazi-Fascist.” Fearful, many student leaders sought asylum in the Mexican Embassy. However, young lawyers and professional men refused to submit to intimidation, and supported the students. On June 23rd the schoolteachers went on strike.

Ubico had once said that if 300 respected Guatemalans were to ask him to resign, he would do so. On June 24th two men delivered the *Memorial do los 311* to Ubico’s office. The 311 prominent signers risked their lives. The document explained the reasons for unrest, asked effective constitutional guarantees, and suspension of martial law. The same day, students marched past the

U.S. Embassy and emphasized reliance on nonviolent means. Officials seemed surprised at the form of this demonstration. A peaceful meeting that evening demanded Ubico’s resignation. Later that night, however, police beat and arrested hundreds at a neighborhood religious and social celebration. Some blamed “drunken bandits, previously coached by the police”; others pointed to clashes between persons shouting anti-Ubico slogans and the dictator’s strong-arm men.

The next day the foreign minister summoned to the National Palace the two men who had delivered the *Memorial do los 311* – Carbonell and Serrano. The ex-head of the secret police joined in the meeting. Simultaneously, a demonstration took place before the National palace; against it the government massed platoons of soldiers, cavalry, tanks, armored cars, machine guns, and police armed with guns and tear gas bombs. Carbonell and Serrano were asked to “calm the people.” Although all meetings had been banned, the men were permitted to meet with other “leaders” of the movement to seek a solution to the crisis.

That afternoon women dressed in deep mourning prayed for an end to the night’s brutalities at the Church of San Francisco in the center of Guatemala City. Afterward they formed an impressive silent procession; the cavalry charged and fired into the crowd. An unknown number were wounded and one, Maria Chincelli Recinos, a teacher, was killed. She became the first martyr: “The mask had been torn from the Napoleonic pose, revealing Ubico and his regime standing rudely on a basis of inhumanity and terror.”

Guatemala City responded with a silent paralysis. The opposition broke off talks with the government. Workers struck. Businessmen shut stores and offices. It was an economic shutdown. Everything closed. The streets were deserted.

After attempts at a new parley failed, at Ubico’s request the diplomatic corps arranged a meeting that afternoon between the opposition and the government. The delegates told Ubico to his face that during his rule “Guatemala has known nothing but oppression.” Ubico insisted: “As long as I am president, I will never permit a free press, nor free association, because the people of Guatemala are not ready for a democracy and need a strong hand.” The possibility of Ubico’s resigning and the question of succession were discussed. The delegates were to sample public opinion.

The opposition later reported to Ubico by letter the unanimous desire of the people that he resign. They again demanded the lifting of martial law, freedom of the press and association, and an end to attacks on the people. Petitions and messages from important people poured into the palace; they also asked Ubico to resign. The silent economic shutdown of Guatemala City continued. The dictator’s power was dissolving.

On July 1st Ubico withdrew in favor of a triumvirate of generals. Immediate and unaccustomed political

ferment followed. Labor and political organizations mushroomed, and exiles returned. General Ponce, one of the triumvirates, tried to install himself in Ubico's place. In October he faced another general strike and a student strike and was ousted by a *coup d'état*. Difficult times were still ahead.

"Energetic and cruel, Jorge Ubico could have put down an armed attack. He could have imposed his will on any group of disgruntled, military or civilian, and stood them up against a wall. But he was helpless against civil acts of repudiation, to which he responded with violence, until these slowly pushed him into the dead-end street where all dictatorships ultimately arrive: kill everybody who is not with you or get out."

The movement that brought Waterloo to Guatemala's Napoleon was, fittingly, a peaceful, civilian action; the discipline, serenity and resignation with which it was conducted made it a model of passive resistance.

Extensive use of nonviolence has occurred despite the absence of attention to the development of the technique itself. Its practice has been partly spontaneous, partly intuitive, partly vaguely patterned after some known case. It has usually been practiced under highly unfavorable conditions and with a lack of experienced participants or even experienced leaders. Almost always there were no advance preparations or training; little or no planning or prior consideration of strategy and tactics and of the range of methods. The people using it have usually had little real understanding of the nature of the technique which they sought to wield and were largely ignorant of its history. There were no studies of strategy and tactics for them to consult, or handbooks on how to organize the "troops," conduct the struggle, and maintain discipline. Under such conditions it is not surprising that there have been defeats or only partial victories, or that violence has sometimes erupted — which, as we shall see, helps to bring defeat. With such handicaps, it is amazing that the practice of the technique has been as widespread, successful, and orderly as it has.

Some men and women are now trying to learn more of the nature of this technique and to explore its potentialities. Some people are now asking how nonviolent action can be refined and applied in place of violence to meet complex and difficult problems. These intellectual efforts are a potentially significant new factor in the history of this technique. It remains to be seen what consequences this factor may have for the future development of nonviolent action.

Czechoslovakia, 1968

The Soviet leaders expected that the massive invasion of Czechoslovakia by more than half a million Warsaw Treaty Organization troops would overwhelm the much smaller Czechoslovak army within days, leaving the country in confusion and defeat. The invasion would also make possible a *coup d'état* to replace the reform-minded Dubcek regime with a conservative pro-Moscow one. With this in mind, the Soviet K.G.B. (state police) kidnapped the Communist Party's First Secretary,

Alexander Dubcek; the Prime Minister, Oldrich Cernik; the National Assembly President, Josef Smrkovsky; and the National Front Chairman, Frantisek Kriegel. The Soviet officials held under house arrest the President of the Republic, Ludvik Svoboda, who was a popular soldier-statesman in both Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. They hoped that he would give the mantle of legitimacy to the new conservative regime. The kidnapped leaders might have been killed once the coup had been successful, as happened in Hungary in 1957.

But the country was not demoralized as a result of military defeat, for it was a different type of resistance which was waged. Nor did a puppet regime quickly replace the kidnapped leaders. The Czechoslovak officials sent emergency orders to all the armed forces to remain in their barracks. The Soviet leaders had expected that the situation would be so effectively under control within three days that the invading troops could then be withdrawn. This did not happen, and as a result there were serious logistical and morale problems among the invading troops. Owing to resistance at several strategic points a collaborationist government was prevented, at least for about eight months — until April, 1969 when the Husak regime came in.

Resistance began in early hours of the invasion. Employees of the government news agency (C/T.K.) refused orders to issue a release stating that certain Czechoslovak party and government officials had requested the invasion. Also, President Svoboda courageously refused to sign the document presented to him by the conservative clique. Finally, it was possible through the clandestine radio network to convene several official bodies, and these opposed the invasion.

The Extraordinary 14th Party Congress, the National Assembly, and what was left of the government ministers all issued statements by the Party Presidium before the arrival of the K.G.B. — that the invasion had begun without the knowledge of party governmental leadership; there had been no "request." Some of the bodies selected interim leaders who carried out certain emergency functions. The National Assembly went on to "demand the release from detention of our constitutional representatives — in order that they can carry out their constitutional functions entrusted to them by the Sovereign people of the country," and to "demand immediate withdrawal of the armies of the five states."

The clandestine radio network during the first week both created many forms of resistance and shaped others: it convened the Extraordinary 14th Party Congress, called one-hour general strikes, requested the rail workers to slow the transport of Russian tracking and jamming equipment, and discouraged collaboration within the C.S.S.R. State Police. There is no record of any collaboration among the uniformed Public Police; indeed, many of them worked actively with the resistance. The radio argued the futility of acts of violence and the wisdom of nonviolent resistance. It instructed students in the streets to clear out of potentially explosive situations and cautioned against rumors. The radio was the main means through which a

politically mature and effective resistance was shaped. Colin Chapman has observed that “each form of resistance, however effective it might have been alone, served to strengthen the other manifestations,” and through the radio different levels of resistance and different parts of the country were kept in steady communication. With many government agencies put out of operation by Russian occupation of their offices, the radio also took on certain emergency functions (such as obtaining manpower to bring in potato and hops harvest) and provided vital information. This ranged from assuring mothers that their children in summer camp were safe to reporting meager news of the Moscow negotiations.

Militarily totally successful, the Russians now faced a strong political struggle. In face of unified civilian resistance, the absence of a collaborationist government, and the increasing demoralization of their troops, the Soviet leaders agreed on Friday, the 23rd, that President Svoboda would fly to Moscow for negotiations. Svoboda refused to negotiate until Dubcek, Cernik, and Smrkovsky joined the discussions. In four days a compromise was worked out. This left most of the leaders in their positions but called for the party to exercise more fully in its “leading role,” and left the Russian troops in the country. The compromise seems also to have included the sacrifice of certain reform-minded leaders and reforms.

That first week the entire people had in a thousand ways courageously and cleverly fought an exhilarating battle for their freedom. The compromise, called the Moscow Protocol, created severely mixed feelings among the people. Observers abroad saw this as an unexpected success for the nation and its leaders; an occupied country is not supposed to have bargaining power. But most Czechs and Slovaks saw it as a defeat and for a week would not accept it. The leaders were apparently doubtful of the disciplined capacity of the populace for sustained resistance in the face of severe repression.

Despite the absence of prior planning or explicit training for civilian resistance, the Dubcek regime managed to remain in power until April 1969, about eight months longer than would have been possible with military resistance. The Russians subsequently gained important objectives, including the establishment of a conservative regime. The final outcome of the struggle and occupation remains undetermined at this writing. Nevertheless, this highly significant case requires careful research and analysis of its methods, problems, successes, and failures.

The Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion

by Gene Sharp

Nonviolent protest and persuasion is a class which includes a large number of methods which are mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion, extending beyond verbal expressions but stopping short of noncooperation or nonviolent intervention. Among these methods are parades, vigils, picketing, posters, teach-ins, mourning, and protest meetings.

Their use may simply show that the actionists are against something; for example, picketing may express opposition to a law which restricts dissemination of birth control information. The methods of this class may also be applied for something; for example, group lobbying may support a clean-air bill pending in the legislature or overseas aid. Nonviolent protest and persuasion also may express deep personal feelings or moral condemnation on a social or political issue; for example, a vigil on Hiroshima Day may express penance for the American atomic bombing of that Japanese city. The "something" with which the nonviolent protestors may be concerned may be a particular deed, a law, a policy, a general condition, or a whole regime or system.

The act may be intended primarily to influence the opponent—by arousing attention and publicity for the issue and thereby, it is hoped, support, which may convince him to accept the change; or by warning him of the depth or extent of feeling on the issue which is likely to lead to more severe action if a change is not made. Or the act may be intended primarily to communicate with the public, onlookers, or third parties, directly or through publicity, in order to arouse, attention and support for the desired change. Or the act may be intended primarily to influence the grievance group—the persons directly affected by the issue—to induce them to do something themselves, such as participate in a strike or an economic boycott.

What, then, are the specific methods of nonviolent action which may be classified as nonviolent protest and persuasion? This is a sampling.

Sit-ins

In a sit-in the interventionists occupy certain facilities by sitting on available chairs, stools, and occasionally on the floor for a limited or unlimited period, either in a single act or in a series of acts, with the objective of disrupting the normal pattern of activities. The purpose may be to establish a new pattern, such as opening particular facilities to previously excluded persons, or to make a protest which may not be directly connected with the facilities occupied. This method has often been used in the civil rights movement in the United States.

Student Strikes

Students and pupils of all types of schools, from elementary schools to universities, may as a means of protest or resistance temporarily refuse to attend classes. Or they may refuse to cooperate in a related way—by boycotting only some, not all, lectures, for example; or students may attend classes but refuse to pay attention, as was done at the University of Madrid in 1965 as part of the campaign for an independent student union. Possible variations are legion. It is more usual, however, for all classes to be boycotted. (Student strikes are also called school boycotts or class boycotts.)

The student strike has long been widely used in China, Latin America, and to a lesser degree Africa; in 1970, following the United States' invasion of Cambodia, it became a prominent part of university life in the United States. The student strike is not a modern invention, as the Chinese examples show. Student strikes in China have sometimes taken the form of refusal to take the examinations, sometimes in protest against the lack of impartiality by the examiners.

Sit-downs

The sit-down is an act of noncooperation in which the participants actually sit down on the street, road, ground, or floor and refuse to leave voluntarily, for either a limited or an indefinite period of time. The sit-down may be a spontaneous act, or a reaction decided on in advance, as a response to orders for a march or other demonstration to disperse. Or it may be combined with civil disobedience to some regulatory law as a serious type of symbolic resistance. The sit-down may also be used to halt ordinary traffic or tanks, or to prevent workers or officials from carrying out their work. In these cases it becomes a method of nonviolent intervention (either nonviolent interjection or nonviolent obstruction, which are described in the next chapter). In recent years the sit-down appears to have been more widely used than previously.

Toward the end of April 1960, during the Algerian War, over 500 demonstrators protested the internment of 6,000 North Africans in France, without trial or hearing, by marching to the Centre de Tri de Vincennes (one of the French reception centers for Arabs) and sitting down in front of it. New waves of demonstrators came when the first persons were arrested and driven away in vehicles.

Turning One's Back

Silent disapproval may be emphasized by turning one's back (whether standing or sitting) to the person or persons who are or represent the opponent. For example, when in his proclamation of a day of fasting

and prayer in 1771, Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts Bay had included a call for thanks for the "Continuance of our Privileges," the radicals took this as an open insult because of the implication of support for British policies. The proclamation was to be read in the churches, but, Philip Davidson writes, "Dr. Pemberton alone of the Boston pastors read the proclamation—and he did so simply because the Governor was a member of his congregation—and he did so with evident embarrassment, for many of the members turned their backs or left the building."

After the dramatic days of the June 16th-17th East German Rising, on June 18th, 1953, East Berlin strikers returned to their factories but refused to work. "They squatted in front of their lathes and benches and turned their backs on Party officials."

Vigils

A vigil is an appeal normally addressed not to one or a few persons, but to many people. Like picketing, a vigil consists of people remaining at a particular place as a means of expressing a point of view. It differs from picketing, however, in that it is frequently maintained over a longer period of time, sometimes around the clock, and is associated with a more solemn attitude, often of a pleading or religious character. It often involves late hours and loss of sleep.

"Haunting" Officials

As a means of reminding officials of the "immorality" of their behavior in repressing a nonviolent resistance movement and of the determination and fearlessness of the population, volunteers may sometimes follow and "haunt" officials everywhere they go, thus constantly reminding them of the population's determination. For example, as Joan Bondurant has reported, during the 1928 Bardoli campaign in India: "Volunteers followed officials everywhere, camping on roads outside official bungalows. When arrested, they were replaced by others until authorities tired of the process."

Protest Disrobings

One of the rarer old—but newly reactivated—forms of nonviolent protest is the public removal of clothes as a means of expressing one's religious disapproval or political protest. During the Quaker "invasion" of the intolerant Massachusetts Bay Colony in the seventeenth century, Lydia Wardel entered Newbury Church naked as a protest. Members of the Sons of Freedom sect of the Doukhobors in British Columbia, Canada, have been credited with "uncounted nude parades" and in some cases individual women have disrobed in front of their own burning homes, to which they set fire as a protest against alleged government interference or prosecution of their husbands for resistance activities, including demolitions. When Prime Minister John Diefenbaker was attending a political rally at Trail, British Columbia, on May 28, 1962, Doukhobor women whose husbands were awaiting trial for terrorist acts interrupted the

meeting, tearfully protesting "unfair treatment" of their group, and took off their clothing as part of their protest.

One of several cases of protest disrobing in the United States in recent years by young people in the antiwar and social protest movements took place at Grinnell College, in Grinnell, Iowa, on February 5, 1969. The Students staged a "nude-in" during a speech by a representative of Playboy magazine, in protest of the magazine's "sensationalism of sex."

From The Politics of Nonviolent Action

Albert Einstein on Pacifism

The United States has reached a point where she feels compelled to fortify islands, produce more atomic bombs, and hamper free scientific exchange; the army, demands huge budgets to stimulate research and guide it into specific channels; and youth is being indoctrinated with the spirit of nationalism. All this is done in preparation for the day when the specter may come to life. Unfortunately, these very policies are the most effective way of actually bringing the specter into being.

Developments have taken the same course everywhere. But our responsibility is particularly great, for circumstances have temporarily placed the United States in so powerful a position that our influence on current is of very great significance. In the face of so heavy a responsibility, the temptation to abuse one's power is great and potentially very dangerous.

You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war. The very prevention of war requires more faith, courage and resolution than are needed to prepare for war. We must all do our share, that we may be equal to the task of peace.

Two months later, on March 8th, 1955, Einstein discussed the Arab question in a letter to his Indian friend:

Of course, I regret the constant state of tension existing between Israel and the Arab states. Such tension could hardly have been avoided. In view of the nationalistic attitude of both sides, which has only been intensified by the war and its implications. Worst of all has been the policy of the new administration in the United States [the Eisenhower administration] which, due to its own imperialist and militaristic interests, seeks to win the sympathy of the Arab nations by sacrificing Israel. As a consequence the very existence of Israel has become seriously imperiled by the armament efforts of her enemies. This man Dulles is a real misfortune! While pretending to serve the cause of peace, he in fact threatens everybody, hoping thereby to achieve his imperialist aims without becoming involved in a "big" war. Such a policy is not only morally objectionable but will prove dangerous to the United States in the long run. How few people realize this! In a surprisingly brief time, they have come to accept this shortsighted militaristic point of view.

I must confess that the foreign policy of the United States since the end of hostilities often irresistibly reminds me of the foreign policy of Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II. I know that others have independently recognized this painful analogy.

It is characteristic of the military mentality to consider material factors, such as atomic bombs, strategic bases, arms of every description, raw material resources, and the like as important while, at the same time, regarding

man himself, his thoughts, and aspirations as quite inferior. In its theoretical approach the military mentality bears some resemblance to Marxism. In both, man is minimized as being merely "capacity" or "manpower." Under the impact of this kind of thinking, the goals which normally determine human aspirations simply disappear. To fill the gap, the military mentality makes the possession of "naked power" a goal in itself. This surely is one of the strangest delusions to which man can fall victim.

Today, the existence of the military mentality is more dangerous than ever; for the weapons which are available to aggressor nations have become much more powerful than weapons of defense. This fact will inevitably produce the kind of thinking which leads to preventive wars. Because of the general insecurity resulting from these developments, the civil rights of citizens are being sacrificed to the alleged cause of national interest. Political witch hunting and government interference in many forms, such as official control over teaching, research, and the press, appear inevitable and, consequently, do not encounter the kind of popular resistance that ought otherwise serve to protect the population. All traditional values are changing and anything which does not clearly serve the utopian goal of militarism is considered inferior.

In our own days the struggle is primarily waged for freedom of political conviction and discussion as well as for freedom of research and teaching. The fear of communism has led to policies that expose our country to ridicule by the rest of civilized mankind. How long shall we tolerate power-hungry politicians who try to generate a fear of communism in order to gain political advantage? Sometimes it seems that the people of today have lost their sense of humor to such a degree that the French saying "Ridicule kills," has lost its validity.

To A.J. Muste of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Einstein wrote on April 11th, 1951:

I agree wholeheartedly in all essential points with the opinions expressed in the article "The Paranoia Race." I wish to mention, however, that I do not consider it reasonable to compare a disease in the medical sense with the hatred and fear toward Russia which have been installed in the American people since the death of Roosevelt. It is, of course, incontestable that the arming of individual countries can lead only to war and destruction, not to security. Under present conditions, those countries which have a minimum of armament are most secure. The only reasonable policy the United States could pursue is to declare unconditionally that security in the world depends upon the establishment of a world government which would be open to all nations and would have the duty and power to solve all international conflicts and put an end to colonial

oppression.

A Hungarian survivor of the Dachau concentration camp, who had emigrated to Australia, asked in referring to the atomic bomb whether Einstein had discarded the old and noble traditions of his profession and had put his conscience and his faith in human ideals in cold storage; was Einstein working for the benefit of the people or had he plotted a revolt against their lives? Einstein took these insinuations seriously and replied on October 1st, 1952:

You are mistaken in regarding me as a kind of chieftain of those scientists who abuse science for military purposes. I have never worked in the field of applied science, let alone for the military.

I condemn the military mentality of our time just as you do. Indeed, I have been a pacifist all my life and regard Gandhi as the only truly great political figure of our age.

My name is linked to the atomic bomb in two different ways. Almost 50 years ago I discovered the equivalence of mass and energy, a relationship which served as the guiding principle in the work leading to the release of atomic energy. Secondly, I signed a letter to President Roosevelt stressing the need for work in the field of the atomic bomb. I felt this was necessary because of the dreadful danger that the Nazi regime might be the first to come into possession of the atomic bomb.

Thus, your letter, as you will no doubt realize, was based on incorrect assumptions.

On February 16th, 1931, the Yale Daily News published Einstein's answers to a long series of questions relating to the field of science. Only one of the questions touched upon politics. In his reply, Einstein once again emphasized the view that science in itself could have no direct influence in building the international organization that was necessary if world chaos were to be avoided; man's determination alone could solve that problem.

On February 16th, 1931, Einstein addressed several hundred students at the California Institute of Technology:

I could sing a hymn of praise about the progress made in the field of applied science; and, no doubt, you yourselves will promote further progress during your lifetime. I could speak in such terms since this is the century of applied science, and America is its fatherland. But I do not want to use such language. Why does applied science, which is so magnificent, saves work, and makes life easier, bring us so little happiness? The simple answer is that we have not yet learned to make proper use of it.

In times of war, applied science has given men the means to poison and mutilate one another. In times of peace, science has made our lives hurried and uncertain. Instead of liberating us from much of the monotonous work that has to be done, it has enslaved men to machines; men who work long, wearisome hours

mostly without joy in their labor and with the continual fear of losing their pitiful income.

You may feel that this old man before you is singing an ugly song. I do it, however, for the purpose of making some suggestions to you. If you want your life's work to be useful to mankind, it is not enough that you understand applied science as such. Concern for man himself must always constitute the chief objective of all technological effort, concern for the big, unsolved problems of how to organize human work and the distribution of commodities in such a manner as to assure that the results of our scientific may be a blessing to mankind, and not a curse.

Never forget this when you are pondering over your diagrams and equations!

There is enough money, enough work, and enough food, provided we organize our resources according to our necessities rather than be slaves to rigid economic theories or traditions. Above all, we must not permit our minds and our activities to be diverted from constructive work by preparations for another war. I agree with the great American Benjamin Franklin, who said that there never was a good war or a bad peace.

I am not only a pacifist but a militant pacifist. I am willing to fight for peace. Nothing will end war unless the peoples themselves refuse to go to war.

Every great cause is first championed by an aggressive minority. Is it not better for a man to die for a cause in which he believes, such as peace, than to suffer for a cause in which he does not believe, such as war? Every war merely enlarges the chain of vicious circles which impedes the progress of mankind. A handful of conscientious objectors can dramatize the protest against war.

The masses are never militaristic until their minds are poisoned by propaganda. I agree with you that we must teach them to resist propaganda. We must begin to inoculate our children against militarism by educating them in the spirit of pacifism. The trouble with Europe is that her people have been educated on a wrong psychology. Our schoolbooks glorify war and conceal its horrors then indoctrinate children with hatred. I would teach peace rather than war, love rather than hate. The textbooks should be rewritten. Instead of perpetuating ancient rancors and prejudices, we should infuse a new spirit into our educational system. Education should begin in the cradle. Mothers throughout the world have the responsibility of sowing the seeds of peace into the souls of their children.

It may not be possible in one generation to eradicate the combative instinct. It is not even desirable to eradicate it entirely. Men should continue to fight, but they should fight for things worthwhile, not for imaginary geographical lines, racial prejudices, and private greed draped in the colors of patriotism. Their arms should be weapons of the spirit, not shrapnel and tanks.

Think of what a world we could build if the power unleashed in war were applied to constructive tasks! One tenth of the energy that the various belligerent spent in the World War, a fraction of the money they exploded in hand grenades and poison gas, would suffice to raise the standard of living in every country and avert the economic catastrophe of worldwide unemployment.

We must be prepared to make the same heroic sacrifices for the cause of peace that we make ungrudgingly for the cause of war. There is no task that is more important or closer to my heart.

Nothing that I can do or say will change the structure of the universe. But maybe, by raising my voice, I can help the greatest of all causes—goodwill among men and peace on earth.

A climactic point in Einstein's career as a militant pacifist came on December 14th, 1930, when he spoke at a meeting in New York's Ritz Carlton Hotel, under the auspices of the New History Society. The speech was delivered extemporaneously, and when the interpreter originally designated proved unequal to the task. Mrs. Rosika Schwimmer volunteered to translate Einstein's remarks into English:

When those who are bound together by pacifist ideals hold a meeting they are usually consorting only with their own kind. They are like sheep huddled together while wolves wait outside. I believe that pacifist speakers face this difficulty: they ordinarily reach only their own group, people who are pacifists any how and hardly need to be convinced. The sheep's voice does not reach beyond this circle and is, therefore ineffectual. That is the real weakness of the pacifist movement.

Genuine pacifists, those whose heads are not in the clouds but who think in realistic terms, must fearlessly endeavor to act in a manner which is of practical value to the cause rather than remain content merely to espouse the ideals of pacifism. Deeds, not words, are needed; mere words get pacifists nowhere. They must initiate action and begin with what can be achieved now.

As to what our next step should be, I should like you to realize that under the present military system every man is compelled to commit the crime of killing for his country. The aim of all pacifists must be to convince others of the immorality of war and rid the world of the shameful slavery of military service. I wish to suggest two ways to achieve that aim.

The first has already been put into practice: uncompromising war resistance and refusal to do military service under any circumstances. In countries where conscription exists, the true pacifist must refuse military duty. Already, a considerable number of pacifists in many countries have refused and are refusing, at great personal sacrifice, to serve a military term in peacetime. By doing so, it becomes manifest that they will not fight in the event of war.

In countries where compulsory service does not exist, true pacifists must publicly declare in time of peace that they will not take up arms under any circumstances. This, too, is an effective method of war resistance. I earnestly urge you to try to convince people all over the world of the justice of this position. The timid may say, "What is the use? We shall be sent to prison." To them I would reply: Even if only two percent of those assigned to perform military service should announce their refusal to fight, as well as urge means other than war of settling international disputes, governments would be powerless, they would not dare send such a large number of people to jail.

A second line of action for war resisters, which I suggest, is a policy which would not involve personal involvement with the law. That is, to try to establish through international legislation the right to refuse military service in peacetime. Those who are unwilling to accept such a position might prefer to advocate legislation which would permit them, in place of military service, to do some strenuous or even dangerous work, in the interest of their own country or of mankind as a whole. They would thereby prove that their war resistance is unselfish and merely a logical consequence of the belief that international differences can be sealed in ways other than fighting; it would further prove that their opposition to war could not be attributed to cowardice or the desire for personal comfort or unwillingness to accept work of a dangerous nature; we shall have advanced far on the road to a more peaceful world.

I further suggest that pacifists of all countries start raising funds to support those who would want to refuse military service but who cannot actually do so for lack of financial means. I, therefore, advocate the establishment of an international organization and an international pacifist fund to support the active war resisters of our day.

In conclusion, may I say that the serious pacifists who want to accomplish peace must have the courage to initiate and to carry on these aims; only then will the world be obliged to take notice. Pacifists will then be heard by people who are not already pacifists; and once they are listened to, their message is bound to be effective. If they are too restrained, their voices will continue to reach only those in their own circle. They will remain sheep, pacifist sheep.

I am very glad that you have given me this opportunity to make a few remarks about the problem of pacifism. The developments of the last few years have once more indicated that we are hardly justified in assuming that the struggle against armaments and the spirit of militarism can be safely left in the hands of governments. Even the creation of pacifist organizations with large memberships will not bring us much closer to our goal.

I am convinced that the only way to be effective is through the revolutionary method of refusing military service. We need organizations in different countries to

give material and moral support to all those who have the courage to resist war. This is the only way to make pacifism a vital issue and to inaugurate a vigorous campaign that will attract men of strong character. It is a fight not sanctioned by law, but one which must be fought if people are to have the right to resist the demands of governments that they perform criminal actions."

Many who consider themselves good pacifists will not want to participate in such a radical form of pacifism; they will claim that patriotism prevents them from adopting such a policy. But, in an emergency, such people cannot be counted on anyhow, as we learned so well during the World War.

On May 28th, 1940, the Columbia Broadcasting System originated a special broadcast on atomic energy. The broadcast, called "Operation Crossroads," emanated from the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.:

Newscaster Robert Trout:

There are many people who—while they hope and pray that war can be averted—{are] pessimistic about the chance of avoiding war. They say it's just "human nature, " and that while mankind may possibly, change some old habits of thinking in .a million years, there's certainly no chance of changing them in the next five. What about that "you can't change human nature" argument, Dr. Albert Einstein?

Einstein (speaking from Princeton):

When you speak of "human nature," what do you mean?

Trout (from Washington):

Why, I suppose the hates and fears and prejudices that make far wars.

Einstein:

Then I would say that it is precisely because we cannot change human nature in a million years that we must do what we have to do very quickly, in order to prevent the terrible destruction of an atomic war. This "human nature" which likes wars is like a river. It is impossible in geological time to change the nature of the river. But when it continually overflows its banks and destroys our lives and homes, do we sit down and say, "It is too bad. We can't change the river. We can do nothing about it. "

Trout:

No, Dr. Einstein. We get together and build a dam which will keep the river in check.

Einstein:

Exactly. And what do we use to build the dam?

Trout:

We use reason, I suppose, our ability to think.

Einstein:

That is correct. And this ability to think is also a part of

human nature. It is intelligence, which is the ability to learn from experience, to plan ahead. It includes the capacity to give up immediate, temporary benefits for permanent ones. This part of human nature recognizes that a man's security and happiness depend on a well-functioning society; that a well-functioning society depends on the existence and observance of laws; and that men must submit to these laws in order to have peace. It is this reasoning faculty which is responsible for all of man's progress in art, science, agriculture, industry, and government.

Trout:

And you believe, Dr. Einstein, that this thinking man can solve our great problem for us?

Einstein:

I believe nothing else can. Just as we use our reason to build a dam to hold a river in check, we must now build institutions to restrain the fears and suspicions and greed which move peoples and their rulers. Such institutions, as have been described by Mr. Stassen and Mr. Douglas, must be based on law and justice. The, must have authority over atomic bombs and other weapons, and they must have the power to enforce this authority. To do this is difficult, yes; but we must remember that if the animal part of human nature is our foe, the thinking part is our friend. We do not have to wait a million years to use our ability to reason. It does not depend on time. We are using it every day of our lives.

On March 21st, 1952, Einstein responded to a troubled pacifist who, like others, asked for clarification of apparent inconsistencies in Einstein's various statements on pacifism and suggested that he make a public pronouncement about his actual pacifist position. Einstein wrote:

I am indeed a pacifist, but not a pacifist at any price. My views are virtually identical with those of Gandhi. But I would, individually and collectively resist violently any attempt to kill me or to take away from me, or my people, the basic means of subsistence.

I was, therefore, of the conviction that it was justified and necessary to fight Hitler. For his was such an extreme attempt to destroy people.

Furthermore, I am of the conviction that realization of the goal of pacifism is possible only through supranational organization. To stand unconditionally for this cause is, in my opinion, the criterion of true pacifism.

Letters urging him to clarify his change of views followed him to England and even America. Professor C.C. Heringa of the University of Amsterdam was another pacifist who could not believe the published reports. On September 11, 1933, Einstein wrote him from Cromer, England:

I assure you that my present attitude toward military

service was arrived at with the greatest reluctance and after a difficult inner struggle. The root of all evil lies in the fact that there is no powerful international police force, nor is there a really effective international court of arbitration whose judgments could be enforced. All the same, antimilitarists were justified in refusing military service as long as the majority of the nations of Europe were intent upon peace. This no longer holds true. I am convinced that developments in Germany tend toward belligerent acts similar to those in France after the Revolution. Should this trend meet with success, you may be sure that the last remnants of personal freedom on the continent of Europe will be destroyed.

While it is quite true that the deterioration of conditions in Germany is partially attributable to the policies of neighboring countries, there seems little purpose at this juncture in blaming them for these policies. The plain fact is that the gospel of force and repression, currently prevailing in Germany, poses grave threats to the continent of Europe and the independence of its inhabitants. This threat cannot be combated by moral means; it can be met only by organized might. To prevent the greater evil, it is necessary that the lesser evil—the hated military—be accepted for the time being. Should German armed might prevail, life will not be worth living anywhere in Europe.

I believe, nonetheless, that even now it is not too late to avert war by preventing German rearmament through diplomatic pressure. But such pressure will require absolute military superiority on the part of Germany's neighbors. To destroy such superiority or to prevent its achievement is tantamount to betraying the cause of European freedom.

You cannot compare French militarism to German militarism. The French people, even those at the top, have remained preponderantly pacifist in outlook and are maintaining an army merely for the defense of their country. This is even more true of the Belgian people.

To summarize: In the present circumstances, realistic pacifists should no longer advocate the destruction of military power; rather, they should strive for its internationalization. Only when such internationalization has been achieved will it be possible to work toward the reduction of military power to the dimensions of an international police force. We do not cause the danger to disappear by merely closing our eyes to it.

Letter to Ernesto Cardenal: Guns Don't Work

by Daniel Berrigan

Editor's note: Ernesto Cardenal had helped establish a Christian community on Solentiname Island in Nicaragua. Some members joined the armed resistance to Somoza, and Cardenal issued a declaration of his support for them and the Sandinista Front.

Dear Brother Ernesto Cardenal,

Your account of events in your community of Solentiname has been widely distributed in the United States, especially by the religious press. One translation appended a word: "It is important for us in this country to be able to listen and not to judge this."

Indeed. But at least we can talk together. Please consider what follows, then, as a continuing reflection on matters you have had the courage to open up, and indeed, to act on.

May I also summon a memory or two, as you do so poignantly in your statement? You visited my brother Philip and myself in jail in February of 1977, when we were locked up after a demonstration at the Pentagon. I hope you could read in our faces all your visit meant; a visit from a fellow priest, a poet, a good communitarian, a struggling friend, whose fame was great but whose human warmth was his best gift. Thank you once more for coming to us.

Then there was our first meeting a few years previous, when you brought the art of Solentiname to New York for an exhibition. I had the joy of greeting you, this poet, the intense quiet Latino, known in the southern countries for his sandals and flowing hair and beard, his kinky myopic eyes; known here for his poetry, his courage.

The shadow of Thomas Merton's death lay heavy on us. I think we were seeking consolation in one another's eyes. And we found it.

I am not going to start with the customary disclaimers about your statement. Such are not only superfluous, they verge on the insulting. What Latino. What Yankee doesn't know by now the deadly mutual interests which in Washington prop up the Nicaraguan military government of the Somozas? And who would regard you—an exile, a priest who must now anoint your forehead with the ashes of your dream—regard your convictions, your choices, with anything but the utmost respect? All this is implicit in friendship itself. I would like to do you a better courtesy, that of taking you seriously: your words, and the actions which by now, I presume, you have taken.

Let me say too that the questions you raise are among

the most crucial that Christians can spell out today. Indeed, in your own country, your life raises them. But you thrust them also at us, and rightly so. They are far more than a matter of domestic importance.

There is, first of all, no parallel in America to the violence you describe—whether of the Somozas or the Sandinistas.

What indeed are a few guns, or even a few hundred guns, in the hands of guerrillas in comparison with the doomsday cache of nuclear horrors lurking in our mountains and bunkers? What reasonable comparison can be made between the sorties of your Frente Sandinista, and the lunar devastation of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia? On your part, a few deaths, much love, exalted goals. On the part of America—but words fail me.

These things I grant with all my heart. What then nags at me, when I ponder your words? I have some inkling of what you face, what your companions face, the students and workers and peasants of your country. I know that the Somozas, given the leash, could swallow all of you tomorrow. I know that on the same day, the U.S. military could swallow the Somozas who had swallowed you—the mouse within the dog within the python—and hardly feel sated. On the world scale where the stakes are piled high—oil, uranium, *laissez-faire* larcenies, predatory markets, ripoffs, and stand-offs; in a world where the superpowers warily circle one another like urban thugs, nuclear firebombs in hand; in such a world, you or your followers, or even your persecutors, count for very little.

You and the Frente, and the Somozas, could disappear tomorrow. Only a minor breeze would stir the papers on the desk of some sub-secretary of the State Department. A lie or two at a presidential conference would be your obituary, the Nicaraguan folder transferred to a dead file. The empire, in sum, can take your life, and take your death, and take your theology, and the destruction of your community, and your resistance, all in stride.

I say this in no spirit of cynicism. Merely to suggest that in a way I find both strange and exhilarating, your situation lies quite near the realities of the gospel. It ought not, after all, depress us beyond measure, if the empire finds you and me expendable. That is quite normal and constant in the history of such entities. What is of import finally is whether we are able to salvage something in the open season on humans.

I do not mean salvage our lives; I mean our humanity. Our service to one another, of compassion—our very

sanity.

I hope I am inching toward the contents of your letter. You discuss quite freely and approvingly the violence of a violated people, yourselves. You align yourself with that violence, regretfully but firmly, irrevocably.

I am sobered and saddened by this. I think of the consequences of your choice, within Nicaragua and far beyond. I sense how the web of violence spins another thread, draws you in, and so many others for whom your example is primary, who do not think for themselves, judging that a priest and poet will lead them in the true way.

I think how fatally easy it is, in a world demented and enchanted with the myth of shortcuts and definitive solutions, when nonviolence appears increasingly naive, old hat, freakish—how easy it is to cross over, to seize the gun. How easy to conclude: the deck is stacked, first: card to last, in favor of the Big Sharks; the outcome of the game, of life itself, is settled before the cards are dealt. Why then isn't taking a few lives (of dubious value at best, torturers, lackeys, police) preferable to the taking of many lives of great value, students, the poor, the victimized and defenseless, the conscientious, those easily identifiable as gospel brothers and sisters? There is, after all, a long tradition of legitimate self-defense.

It may be true, as you say, that "Gandhi would agree with us." Or it may not be true. It may be true, as you imply, that Merton would agree with you. It may be true that Christ would agree with you. I do not believe he would, but I am willing to concede your argument, for the sake of argument.

You may be correct in reporting that "those young Christians fought without hate—and especially without hate for the guards they shortly killed (though this must be cold comfort to the dead). Your vision may one day be verified of a Nicaragua free of "campesino guards killing other campesinos." The utopia you ache for may one day be realized in Nicaragua: "an abundance of schools, child care centers, hospitals, and clinics for everyone—and most importantly, love between everyone." This may all be true: the guns may bring on the kingdom.

But I do not believe it.

One religious paper here published your words under the following headline: "When they take up arms for love of the kingdom of God." How sublime, I thought, how ironic. We have had "just" wars of the Right, a long history of blood, the blood of colonials and natives and slaves and workers and peasants. But we are through with all that. Now we are enlightened. We are to have "just" wars of the Left!

So the young men of Solentiname resolved to take up arms. They did it for one reason: "on account of their love for the kingdom of God." Now here we certainly speak within a tradition! In every crusade that ever marched across Christendom, murder—the most

secular of undertakings, the most worldly, the one that enlists and rewards us along with the other enlistees of Caesar—this undertaking is invariably baptized in religious ideology: the kingdom of God.

The power of such language we know too well. Religious battle cries induct hearts and minds as no secular slogans can. Religious ideology raises its flag in every nation, even as it denies the final authority of every nation. It offers to transcendent longings a task that is simple and forthright: kill. It offers a slogan that is as immediately tactile and hot as a fired gun: kill for the kingdom. And perhaps most important of all, it offers a way out: out of anger, out of frustration, out of poverty, out of political stagnation, out of the harsh and dreadful necessity of love. God wills it! The kingdom requires it!

Blood and iron, nukes and rifles. The leftists kill the rightists, the rightists kill the leftists, both, given time and occasion, kill the children, the aged, the ill, the suspects. Given time and occasion, both torture prisoners. Always, you understand inadvertently, regretfully. Both sides, moreover, have excellent intentions, and call on God to witness them. And some god or other does witness them, if we can take the word of whatever bewitched church.

And of course nothing changes. Nothing changes in Beirut, in Belfast, or in Galilee, as I have seen. Except that the living die. And that old, revered distinction between combatant and noncombatant, which was supposed to protect the innocent and helpless, goes down the nearest drain, along with the indistinguishable blood of any and all.

Alas, I have never seen anyone morally improved by killing; neither the one who aimed the bullet, nor the one who received it in his or her flesh.

Of course we have choices, of course we must decide. When all is said, we find that the gospel makes sense, that it strikes against our motives and actions or it does not. Can that word make sense at all today, can it be something more than utopian or extravagant? The gospel is after all a document out of a simpler age, a different culture. It may even be our duty to construct for ourselves another ethic, based on our own impasse or insights or ego. And go from there, with whatever assurance we can muster, amid the encircling gloom.

Or on the other hand, we can bow our heads before a few truths, crude, exigent, obscure as they are. The outcome of obedience we cannot know, the outcome of disobedience we can deceive ourselves about, indefinitely and sweetly. Thou shalt not kill. Love one another as I have loved you. If your enemy strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other. Practically everyone in the world, citizens and believers alike, consign such words to the images on church walls, or the embroideries in front parlors.

We really are stuck. Christians are stuck with this Christ, the impossible, unteachable, irreformable loser. Revolutionaries must correct him, act him aright. That

absurd form, shivering under the crosswinds of power, must be made acceptable, relevant. So a gun is painted into his empty hands. Now he is human! Now he is like us.

Does it all have a familiar ring? In the old empires, the ragged rabbi must be cleaned up, invested in Byzantine robes of state, raised in glittering splendor to the dome of heaven. Correction! correction! we cry to those ignorant gospel scribes, Matthew and the rest. He was not like that, he was not helpless, he was not gentle, he was under no one's heel, no one pushed him around! He would have taken up a gun if one had been at hand, he would have taken up arms, "solely for one reason; on account of his love for the kingdom of God." Did he not have fantasies like ours, in hours out of the public glare, when he too itched for the quick solution, his eyes narrowed like gun sights?

How tricky it all gets! We look around at our culture: an uneasy mix of gunmen, gun makers, gun hucksters, gun researchers, gun runners, guards with guns, property owners with guns. A culture in which the guns put out contracts on the people, the guns own the people, the guns buy and sell the people, the guns practice targets on the people, the guns kill the people. The guns are our second nature, and the first nature is all but obliterated; it is gunned down.

And who will raise it up, that corpse with the neat hole in its temple, ourselves? It is impossible, it is against nature.

Christ asks the literally impossible. And then, our radical helplessness confessed, he confers what was impossible.

Dear brother Ernesto, when I was underground in 1970 with J. Edgar Hoover's hounds on my tail, I had long hours to think of these things. At that time I wrote: "The death of a single human is too heavy a price to pay for the vindication of any principle, however sacred." I should add that at the time, many among the anti-war Left were playing around with bombings, in disarray and despair.

I am grateful that I wrote those words. I find no reason eight years later to amend or deny them. Indeed, in this bloody century, religion has little to offer, little that is not contaminated or broken or in bad faith. But one thing we have: our refusal to take up bombs or guns, aimed at the flesh of brothers and sisters, whom we persist in defining as such, refusing the enmities pushed at us by war-making state or war-blessing church.

This is a long loneliness, and a thankless one. One says "no" when every ache of the heart would say "yes." We, too, long for a community on the land, heartening liturgies, our own turf, the arts, a place where sane ecology can heal us. And the big boot comes down. It destroys everything we have built. And we recoil. Perhaps in shock, perhaps in a change of heart, we begin to savor on our tongues a language that is current all around us: phrases like "legitimate violence," "limited retaliation," "killing for love of the kingdom." And the phrases makes sense—we have crossed over. We are

now an army, like the pope's army, or Luther's, or the crusaders, or the Muslims. We have disappeared into this world, into bloody, secular history. We cannot adroitly handle both gospel and gun; so we drop the gospel, as impediment in any case.

And our weapons?

They are contaminated in what they do, and condemned in what they cannot do. There is blood on them, as on our hands. And like our hands, they cannot heal injustice or succor the homeless.

How can they signal the advent of the kingdom of God? How can we, who hold them? We announce only another bloody victory for the emperor of necessity, whose name in the Bible is Death.

Shall we have dominion?

Brother, I think of you so often. And pray with you. And hope against hope.

From: To Dwell in Peace

Building Confidence at Prairie Creek

by Colman McCarthy

Castle Rod, Minn.- Boxes of soapwort, lavender, and daffodil bulbs sit near the front door of the Prairie Creek Community School. In a day or two, the 103 kindergarten through fifth-grade children will be planting the flowers in front of the one-story schoolhouse that rests on five acres of rural grassland 50 miles south of Minneapolis.

The planting is bringing together students and teachers in another cooperative effort of learning-by-doing that is earning the Prairie Creek Community School a national reputation for innovative and effective education.

This is my second visit here, the first being last spring to observe the students' self-run conflict-resolution program. Few schools have one and fewer still in early grades. What Prairie Creek children learn in their conflict-resolution sessions are the same skills they acquire in planting flowers: how to use shovels.

Linda Crawford, the school's director, explains: "Our purpose is not to do away with all quarrels among the children. I have no illusions that we will ever accomplish that, and I certainly don't want to accomplish it through repression. Our job seems to be to continue to provide them creative way to get out of the holes they dig for themselves. The best present I know to give a kid is a good shovel."

The luster at Prairie Creek has a second shine, one that is winning attention as more and more national reports are issued on the problems of American education and commissions are appointed to find solutions. One of those solutions is here. It goes back to 1982, when a group of local parents, many of them faculty members at Carleton and Saint Olaf colleges in nearby Northfield, decided their children deserved more than conventional, standardized education. They founded and funded their own school.

At Prairie Creek, neither the intelligence nor creativity of the young is insulted with tests, grades, report cards, or do-it-or-else homework assignments. Schools that rely on those artificialities are teaching inmates not learners. At Prairie Creek, it's been different. Respect for children's variances in intellectual and spiritual development, plus the availability of a small abandoned public school building back off a dirt road amid some cornfields, moved the families to experiment with learning. Twenty children came and two teachers taught them. The inflow has been heavy since.

This isn't another elite private school where monied parents think they can buy the best in education and then turn their minds elsewhere, like making more money. The wealth at Prairie Creek is in the richness of the parents' involvement in the school. The other

morning, a father of a kindergartener was volunteering in the library, sorting and cataloging books. He is a professor and coach at Saint Olaf. Other parents come into the school regularly. Some are here to teach and some to putter around, but all of them, obviously, come because they love their children and because, too, the tuition of \$3,200 is an investment they wish to protect.

In my two visits to Prairie Creek, nothing struck me more than the students' affection for Linda Crawford. Children are uninhibited in speaking with her, perhaps because they have sensed she is not another adult control freak. Her philosophy of power-sharing was visible, the other morning at the student council meeting when 12 students—5-year-olds to 10-year-olds—gathered in a room next to her office to decide how the school's sports equipment should be loaned out at recess. It was a decision she could have made herself in 10 seconds, but she let the children devise a strategy. They learned a lesson or two about organizing as well as understanding that the equipment is theirs to care for and not someone else's problem.

Crawford said after the meeting: "All educators want to think they know how to teach every child who walks in. But every person is ultimately mysterious, and if the awareness of that mystery doesn't accompany all that you're doing pedagogically, then there's a thinness to it. It's just a veneer."

Parents of Prairie Creek students have told me that their children leave the school at the end of fifth grade with stirred minds grounded in self-confidence. They believe they can do anything, because for the past six years they have. Most go on to the public middle school and high school in Northfield, where conventional methods—tests, grades, and the rest—prevail. The Prairie Creek kids, however startled they may be to confront another style of education, survive and most flourish.

On leaving Prairie Creek, they take their shovels with them.

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*These readings are from **The Class of Nonviolence**, developed by Colman McCarthy of the Center for Teaching Peace, 4501 Van Ness Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20016 202/537-1372*

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