

Part Two: Freedom Struggles, NV Insurrection

Nonviolent
Insurrection in
El Salvador

The Fall of Maximiliano
Hernández Martínez

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In the first week of May 1944 the people of El Salvador's capital city silently demanded the resignation of dictator Maximiliano Hernández Martínez by staying home from work. On May 9, a little more than two months after the inauguration of his fourth term, President Martínez stepped down.

His downfall set off a chain reaction in Central America. The events leading up to it were well covered in the Guatemalan press and in at least one antigovernment newspaper in Costa Rica.¹ Opponents of the other Central American dictators took heart.

The influence of the Salvadoran strike in Honduras may be conjectured from a handbill written in San Salvador and brought into Honduras in late May or early June 1944:

I have just felt and struggled in the prodigious Revolution that freed the people of El Salvador. . . .

This glorious and magnificent act of our Salvadoran brothers should serve as an example and encouragement to you, oppressed people of Honduras. . . .

Women of Honduras: imitate the woman of Cuscatlán who in this struggle has been the most heroic and self-denying. Students, professionals, workers, working people in general, let us prepare ourselves for the peaceful strike which is the only action that can overthrow the tyrant of tyrants, Tiburcio Carías Andino. . . .²

On June 23, university students, teachers, and lawyers in Guatemala City initiated another massive shutdown, consciously modeled on that of El Salvador, and on July 1 the president of Guatemala, Jorge Ubico, resigned.³

Meanwhile, in Nicaragua students planned their first demonstration against

President Anastasio Somoza García when news of student demonstrations in Guatemala and Honduras reached Managua, and the slogans on the signs they carried included

"The Students of Nicaragua are with the Democratic Students of Central America"
"We Shall Sustain Democracy in Central America, Cost What It May"
"The Students Persecuted by Ubico Call for Vengeance"
"The Students of Honduras Will Put Down Cárías."⁴

Cárías and Somoza survived the upsurge of protest, as attempts to organize strikes on the scale of those that shut down San Salvador and Guatemala City failed in Honduras and Nicaragua.⁵ Three years later, however, when pitched battles between antigovernment demonstrators and police erupted in Costa Rica, opposition leaders once again drew on the Salvadoran model in calling for a national strike to protest the actions of government forces.⁶

This wave of shutdowns in Central America exemplifies one of the most distinctive elements of a rich but neglected Latin American tradition of nonviolent political struggle. The existence of such a tradition may come as a surprise to many readers, but it has been visible throughout the region (in Brazil and Haiti, as well as the Spanish-speaking republics) at least since the early years of this century. Indeed, Spanish speakers have for years used the expression *brazos caídos* (literally, fallen arms) to specify *peaceful* direct action, as in *huelga* (strike) *de brazos caídos*.⁷

The *huelgas de brazos caídos* described above typify a characteristically Latin American model of political action best described as a *civic strike*.⁸ Latin Americans themselves universally call it a *general strike*, but it is something very different from what general strike means in the rest of the world, and indeed, different from other general strikes in Latin America.

The civic strike is not a working-class withdrawal of economic cooperation (i.e., labor) for class ends. Indeed, in Nicaragua in 1944 and Costa Rica in 1947, organized labor supported the governments, not the strikes, which consisted essentially in the closing of business establishments and professional offices.⁹ More typically, labor plays a supporting role in a collective suspension of normal activities—economic and otherwise—in which people of diverse social classes unite for a common political objective. In most past cases the principal participants have been students, professionals, shopkeepers, and white-collar workers, including government employees. Members of the upper classes have usually supported—and sometimes led—civic strikes.

Civic strikes may be acts of protest, as in the Costa Rican case cited above or, more recently, the shutdown of Managua following the assassination of newspaper publisher Joaquín Chamorro in 1978. Some civic strikes have functioned as support for military movements against established governments, as in Venezuela in 1958 and Cuba in 1959. In other cases, like those of El Salva-

dor, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua in 1944, the civic strike has been used or attempted for the purpose of bringing down a government by people who have no military force at their disposal.¹⁰

The movement that dislodged Martínez was a classic example of such a nonviolent insurrection. The present case study thus illuminates both a significant moment in the history of El Salvador and a wider phenomenon of continuing importance throughout Latin America.

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- from Johan Hallberg, Nonviolence
and Israel-Palestine (1984)

THE POLISH CASE

When the beginning of the trade union movement of Solidarność was made in Gdańsk in August 1980, and a document with twenty-one articles or demands constituting about the best explanation of what might be meant by democratic socialism (not social democracy, which is also an interesting proposition, but something else) was published, two pillars of Polish society were challenged.⁶ The first was, of course, the Polish Communist party, which certainly was not democratic but was rhetorically committed to socialism, only rather afraid of taking that idea seriously. And the second was the Polish Roman Catholic Church, which certainly was not socialist, and although rhetorically committed to democracy had some limitations also where that idea is concerned. Hence, Solidarność was a movement operating against odds in Polish society. It was finally brought down (in my view) by an unholy alliance of the Communist government, the Catholic Church, and the Pope—releasing the charismatic leader Wałęsa. But also, for all practical purposes, blocking any genuine move in society toward the realization of those twenty-one demands.

This story is, of course, rather well known. Starting as a working-class movement it very rapidly gained the support of intellectuals in Warsaw who had played a minor role in the beginning, but increasingly joined the bandwagon, to some extent in leading roles—abandoning the positions of observerism and cynicism to which Polish intellectuals are very often addicted. From there it spread to the countryside, involving Polish farmers and peasants, and became a national movement of unparalleled proportions. Through a series of demonstrations and actions of various kinds, including court cases, the movement was brought to a stop, at least so far, with the coming

into power, through a coup in December 1981, of a military government headed by General Jaruzelski.

In other words, the first phase of Solidarność was relatively short lived. But it continued underground in a spectacular defiance of Polish authorities, with an enormous amount of publications and actions, for all practical purposes bringing Poland into a state of anarchy, a kind of "withering away of the state," but not exactly in the way predicted and prescribed by marxist theory. One example may serve: a friend of mine, a journalist, was quenching his thirst in a bar in Warsaw during the heyday of Solidarność and trying to get a taxi back to the hotel. There was no taxi. But the barman was able to order a wagon from the fire brigade instead, a suitable arrangement when anarchy is law.

The stalemate continued. Solidarność was illegal, the government was illegitimate. Neither was able to impose its will on the other. So the time has come to draw at least some preliminary conclusions, and the way I shall do it is by asking three questions: (1) Was and is the action by Solidarność nonviolent? (2) Was and is the action by Solidarność Gandhian nonviolence? (3) Would it have been more effective more quickly if in addition to being nonviolent it had also been Gandhian?

My answer to the first one would be *yes*, to the second question *no*, and to the third question *maybe*.

Gandhi was a strange mixture of politician and saint. His ways of fighting nonviolently, what he called *satyagraha*, clinging to truth, were certainly inspired by his metaphysical beliefs in the unity-of-man. But at the same time there was in him much of the politician, simple, down-to-earth common sense of how you proceed in politics. More particularly, there were five rules that I have selected from the fifty-three rules I formulated in my effort to systematize Gandhi's ways of fighting in my book *Gandhi Today*.⁷ I would like to contrast them with what happened in the struggle in Poland.

First, there is the very basic idea of "keeping contact with the other side." There certainly were negotiations between Solidarność and the Communist party, and there seems to be no doubt whatsoever that there was deceit on the side of the latter. So, Solidarność broke the contact. The "dialogue," if that is the word, was discontinued. This was later used as one excuse by the Communist party when it claimed that Solidarność was an unreliable partner for political struggle. Soli-

darność, on its side, seems to feel that it was the legitimate representative of the Polish people, not the Communist party. The latter may have been true, but in that case a philosophical rather than a political truth.

Second, one of Gandhi's rules was that "you shall stick to the goal once it is formulated." Do not expand your goal. If you do so during the struggle you make yourself unpredictable, and the other side has no way of knowing where this is going to end. The task is not only to win, but to arrive at a solution accepted by both parties, and that may take time. When the goal originally formulated has been obtained and accepted, then a next step may come in the campaign, for new and wider goals—but only then. Nonviolence, like traditional cures for diseases with herbs, takes time. The difficult task of constructing a new society cannot be carried out by doing violence to the society through armed conflict; nor, Gandhi would argue, through majority vote.

In the Polish case this rule was certainly not respected. What started out as a struggle for workers' rights, for the organization of the economy and democracy in factories and the working place in general, became a national movement of liberation, not only from the Communist party but also from the Soviet Union. I would certainly not argue that this was not justified, and is not still justified. My point is only that the impatience, highly understandable, of *Solidarność*, may have been counterproductive.

Third, "give a role to the other side." Make it clear to them that after the conflict is over they will still be on the scene, not killed, not imprisoned, not socially on the margin. This may be particularly important when the other side is a Communist party with its mystique of leading the struggle of the working class toward a new society. There has to be *some* role for a party having such a grandiose conception of itself.

When I was in Warsaw in September 1980, listening to Włodek at some gatherings, he conjured up visions for the audience of court cases that would be launched against the more corrupt representatives of the other side. No doubt he was justified in perceiving them this way. But it is not obvious that in so doing he was able to convince them that his real goal was to change the system, not simply to hit his enemies. Gandhi always insisted that the fight should be against the system, against the structure, not against real people. They should be won over, in a joint struggle to change the structure. "Fight the

antagonism, not the antagonist" was the formulation chosen by my friend and professor at the University of Oslo, Arne Naess, in his works on Gandhi.⁸ I think *Solidarność* failed to make this point crystal clear. They should have been much better in giving a constructive role to the other side, not only in Poland after the transformation, but also in the struggle to obtain that transformation.

Fourth, "a nonviolent struggle has to be constructive," not merely a display of demonstrations, strikes, or noncooperation and civil disobedience. The way of fighting has to be goal-revealing, a pedagogical exercise not only for the other side and for third parties, but also for those struggling, training themselves for life after the struggle. The goal of *Solidarność*, indeed, was not a society with eternal strikes and endless demonstrations, but at times it might have looked like that to the other side. There are intellectuals who are very good at practicing today the free word that they want to obtain tomorrow, with a spate of illegal books and papers all over Poland. But then it may also be argued that, from the point of view of the authorities on intellectual writing, a book is one more person taken away from the street and the concrete struggle, not doing mischief so long as he is collecting material for his footnotes. But it cannot be said that the workers were good at practicing what they wanted to obtain—on however small a scale—knowing how difficult it would have been to run democratically alternative factories under such circumstances.

Fifth, the politician in Gandhi showed up in his not being naive. Gandhi expected the other side to hit back, and to hit hard. The voluntary suffering of his own side would then be a means in the struggle, changing the hearts of the opponent. Of course *Solidarność* was not naive in the sense that it did not expect a military coup. But the preparation for the coup was a plan for the biggest demonstration in European history, rallying people together over the telephone the moment the coup had become an established fact. The authorities had the very simple countermeasure of paralyzing the telephone network, by pulling the plug. And *Solidarność* did not have a sufficiently efficient parallel communication system. The result was a very timid response, partly because of the machinery of violence provided, not only by the military but also by the horrible Polish security police (to a large extent recruited from orphans with loyalties to nobody but the state), and partly because *Solidarność* was outmaneuvered. Consequently, on 13 December 1981 the first phase was over. And the second phase lasted very long before some change took place.

Conclusion: Solidarność was and is a success in making it evident to the whole world, not only to the Poles, how illegitimate the present regime is from the point of view of the population, but not a success if the criterion is a real transformation of Polish society; and not just official recognition as a trade union and political party. Of course, one may object that this would have been impossible given the big neighbor to the east, the Soviet Union. I am not so absolutely convinced about this. Actually, it may also be argued that the five rules just mentioned might have made coexistence with the Soviet Union even under Brezhnev more, not less, easy. But that is certainly a contentious issue, and not one to be explored here.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Three cases, mixed conclusions. The cases certainly show that nonviolence is meaningful, important, and at least partly successful even under very harsh conditions. And they invite some important speculations. What if the populations had been better prepared? Imagine that in the Norwegian case not only the middle classes but also the lower and upper classes had been mobilized in a nonviolent, highly assertive liberating action—what could they have obtained? Difficult to say. Possibly more internal democracy and freedom. However, it is hard to imagine that they would have been able to get rid of the German military occupation. It was territorial rather than social, with a limited contact surface with Norwegian society.

And then the German case. What if not only those married to Jews but the whole German population had had sufficient empathy and not only with the Jews but with the victims of nazism in general? One should not rule out completely the possibility that nazism might have been stopped at a very early stage if millions had poured into the streets, gone on general strike, shown their utter contempt for this horrendous philosophy and practice.

And what about the Polish case? Imagine that Solidarność had kept contact, that it had stuck to the original goal, that it had given a role to the other side, that actions had been more constructive, more goal revealing, and that the whole population had been better prepared for counterattacks. Maybe we would have had a different Poland today? The answer is, as indicated above, *maybe*.

In short, as any social scientist would have said from the very beginning, there are cultural and structural factors affecting the out-

come, even the possibility of launching, a nonviolent action. We know something about these factors, but not enough. If we knew more and if the population were better trained and better educated, one might surmise that better results could have been obtained. It is not quite obvious, however; in that case the other side, the oppressive, violent side, might also have been better prepared. There is a dialectic in this relationship not to be overlooked.

But the basic conclusion remains that we are facing a possible revolution in our entire conceptualization of power. And I would like to add some remarks on this point in a macro-historical perspective.

Think back, for a moment, to feudal Europe, where cultural, economic, political, and military power were all in the hands of the Prince. Then came a process which so far has lasted about 300 years of wrestling this power monopoly away from the Prince, toward the people. In cultural power we got separation of state and church, or at least with the church more in the background, and an increasing tendency toward freedom of expression. In the realm of economic power we got free enterprise and the market system, although remonopolization came as big capital—private or state. In the field of political power we got democracy, although remonopolization took place in the form of the rule of experts and bureaucrats.

But what happened to the monopoly on military power? It is still in the hands of the successor to the Prince, the state, leaving very little space for the population, faced with the oppressive potential of the modern state. Moreover, this also spills over into foreign policy which by and large has remained the preserve of the state, as it was also in feudal days.

I think it is in this perspective we have to see the movement for nonviolence: as one great effort to continue the work of vesting more power in the people. And since that power is hardly ever given, the people have to take it themselves, paving the ground for a new social contract between leaders and followers, instead of an old social "contract" we know only too well: a relationship between oppressor and oppressed. The partially democratized countries of Western Europe and North America lie somewhere in between.

It is going to be a long struggle. The outcome is uncertain. But nothing less than this is the historical task of the peace movement in general, and the nonviolence movement in particular. And in that perspective there is much to learn from these three cases even though the outcome has proved to be ambiguous.

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Even the popular opinion that peasants neither supported, nor involved themselves in the uprising, for example, deserves more careful examination. Although probably not among the "June 4" students and workers, peasants demonstrated in Beijing at the time, complaining that the party that "wants our tax money, grain, and unborn children," has not come across with cash payments for goods and services.

An initial and important point in evaluating the uprising is to regard it as part of a process, both violent and nonviolent, in a century-long effort rightly described by Jonathan Spence as "the search for modern China" (Spence, 1982, 1990).⁴ Without reviewing all the cultural elements that influenced the democratic uprising, three conditions seem to me essential in judging it from a nonviolent perspective: (1) that the uprising is best seen as one in a series of efforts--not unique, but certainly special--for fundamental social change, from the late 19th century to the present; (2) that it effectively addressed cultural power, as well as military, political, or economic power, to use Johan Galtung's useful identification of the various forces that must be addressed in "making peace" (Galtung, 1991); and (3) that it was a truly national movement, with rather different configurations in major cities and regions beyond the capital city.

Although China has a tradition of student protest, even of organized dissent, it has no tradition of nonviolence, in the sense that that some imperial cultures and countries do--from Quakers in Pennsylvania to Adin Ballou, Martin Luther King, and Catholic Workers in the U.S.; from Tolstoy and the Christian anarchists to the recent nonviolent response to the coup in Russia; from Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave to campaigns for land reform in India. The absence of a tradition of nonviolence, in the philosophic as opposed to strategic sense, was reflected not only in the students' lack of knowledge about concept and praxis--including how to conduct a fast--but also in the way the government responded to them. That on-going conversation between the state and nonviolent activists over conscientious objection to military service and war taxes, which began centuries ago in England and the U.S. seems, at least, to have few parallels in China.

There, as among some of the warring tribes in Europe, the victor in struggles for power or with dissenters often simply annihilates the opponent. In an ancient rivalry between Beijing (northern capital) and Nanjing (southern capital), in several dynasties, for example, northern conquerors leveled the "defeated" city. In the 1920s, Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang, after agreeing to an alliance, murdered the Communists, who retaliated in kind once they came to power in 1949.

Transitions--even within institutions--or sharing of power between one regime and the next is seldom orderly in modern Chinese history, from the perspective of most Westerners, at least. And the compromise that one hoped for (which the students allowed for and Zhao Ziyang, the relatively liberal and reformist party secretary, apparently argued for) seems never to have occurred to Deng Xiaoping and "the Gang of Old," who ordered the repression, and Li Peng, the premier, who carried it out. In crushing the rebellion, Deng reverted to tactics that he had used against the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1957, against those who called for democratic reform in 1979, and against Hu Yaobang and student demonstrations in 1986-87.

After the latter "democracy" campaign, the party bragged about the wisdom of suppressing "bourgeois liberalization," a reference to student pro-democracy demonstrations the previous fall--much as it did later, in "re-writing" (or attempting to rewrite) the history of the 1989 uprising.

A government publication giving the party line in 1987, for example, said that "facts" showed its policies toward "bourgeois liberalization" were "correct, in keeping the struggle strictly inside the Communist Party, of carrying it out mainly in the political and ideological spheres, of directing the efforts at solving problems of political principle and orientation, of not turning it into a political movement and not linking the struggle to economic reforms or extending it to involve the countryside, and of conducting only positive education in enterprises, government offices and army units" (*Beijing Review*, June 1987: 4).

Having escaped harsh criticism by the international community in 1987, Deng Xiaoping perhaps did not expect it two years later, particularly from countries such as France and Australia. In 1989, remorseless attempts to re-write the history of the uprising, which began even before June 4 on television, failed miserably, not only among the international community, but also among a surprisingly large percentage of the Chinese people. In a representative incident after June 4, reported by Liu Binyan--a famous journalist, now in exile--a movie audience, viewing scenes of the Kuomintang police using water cannons against demonstrating students in the 1930s, shouted out, "They were not nearly as bad as the People's Liberation Army!"

One of the many "victories" of the uprising, in fact, was the united front with which workers, merchants, journalists, and intellectuals, resisted the extensive efforts at political propaganda and re-education by the party ever since. Persistent reports about laborers resisting the government continue, as in the case of Han Dongfang; "an ordinary railroad worker who never went to college," he was imprisoned after heading a workers' federation during the 1989 uprising, was infected with tuberculosis, then was released, to risk prison again by encouraging an independent workers' movement for reform.⁵ After a time in the U.S., he has returned to Hong Kong, continuing his efforts, while awaiting the change of administration there.

Deng's reasons for putting down the uprising (though not for murdering participants) are understandable, if not convincing. Terrible chaos, if even a small percentage of the population decided to rebel, is likely, perhaps inevitable in China. (10% of the population means 120,000,000 people or half the population of the U.S.) In addition, harsh measures for punishing wrong-doers is generally tolerated by the populace. Public executions occur still in some areas; and Amnesty International is still not allowed to investigate prison conditions throughout the country.

Having said this, I must also add that not a single Chinese I spoke with in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Harbin before and after June 4--or subsequently--expected the government to murder the demonstrators; the people I interviewed included Chinese citizens who were sympathetic to the party until 1985, if increasingly cynical about its policies after 1987.

When they joined the movement, students, faculty, and party members who signed wall posters or gave speeches on campuses and in the cities understood, nonetheless, that they would probably be disciplined in some way for the protests. Political retaliation by the party has been common during political shifts since 1949 and indeed throughout China's history. Yet the intensity and immediacy of the repression shocked everyone. I will long remember, for example, the deep depression that overcame one of my closest friends--a congenital optimist--the morning after Li Peng's speech on May 21, which called for "resolute and powerful measures to curb turmoil." Although he continued to support the movement openly, he anticipated something

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approaching the "powerful measures" launched on the early morning of June 4, "to put an end to such chaos," as Li Peng put it.⁶ Similarly, the only time I have seen a Chinese man cry in public was the morning of June 4, as an American literature scholar from a major university in Shanghai, tears running down his cheeks, told me about his worries for his son in Beijing and for his country.

In the meantime, students throughout the country had initiated a remarkably effective challenge to the government and, by mid-May, had elicited an incredible response from thousands of potentially unsympathetic by-standers. Arriving in Shanghai on May 16, the same day as Gorbachev--the first Soviet head of state to meet with a Chinese head of state in thirty years--I was stunned to find so many townspeople among the students participating in and otherwise supporting the demonstrators throughout the city. Some merchants and particularly workers, as I observed teaching in China in 1984-5 and again in 1987, can be rather contemptuous of the "elite," that is the 1-2% of the population educated beyond high school.

Surely, I thought, observing or joining the crowds in Shanghai and Nanjing in late May, something very unusual has occurred: student organizers have succeeded in getting merchants and workers not only to sympathize with their protest, but actually to join them. How did that happen? In answering that question, I shall focus on events in regions of the country outside Beijing, especially capitals of two provinces that are among the richest in agriculture and industry: Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on the Yangtze River, 200 miles west of Shanghai; and Harbin, Heilongjiang province, 700 hundred miles northeast of Beijing.

The day after my arrival in China, 100,000 protesters poured into Nanjing's Gu Lou Square (China's Times Square or at least its Chicago Loop), and taxi cab drivers, including the driver I had counted on to take me from the railroad station to my residence, formed a protective cordon between the demonstrators and the city traffic. More surprisingly, people standing on the sidewalks in that city of 3.5 million applauded students who walked daily from the gates of the many colleges and universities to Gu Lou, for rallies and speeches; and side-walk cafe owners gave food and drink to the students, who eventually initiated a hunger strike, similar to the earlier one in Beijing. In communicating their message--criticizing corruption, nepotism, and political censorship, the students devised a variety of methods, some traditional, some new. The traditional ones were the handsomely-lettered signs identifying the universities and organizations; other signs repeated statements used in the historic May 4, 1919, movement, which provoked a renaissance in literature, and led to the birth of the Communist party. The fact that the seventieth anniversary of that event fell during the 1989 campaign obviously gave resonance to the students' nationalistic slogans. This time, as in 1919, responding to the Versailles treaty, students throughout the country called government officials to judgment, while pledging themselves to nonviolence.

Similarly, wall posters, which had been used so effectively in the 1979 "Democracy Wall" movement, covered the bulletin boards at the university gates, many signed by faculty, with names added day by day. As Dru Gladney has said, the symbols employed by the students "called upon the revolutionary history of China from the May 4 movement of 1919 to the Cultural Revolution, by drawing upon texts that were immediately obvious to their audience" (Gladney, 1992: 99).⁷ While some used quotations from Martin Luther King ("I have a dream" and "We

shall overcome"), Lord Acton ("Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely"), or Henry David Thoreau (pleas for civil disobedience), most of them relied--wisely--on Chinese writers, including Chairman Mao, but particularly those associated with resistance to injustice, such as Lu Xun (1881-1936), the country's most famous short story writer, as well as a poet and essayist and Bei Dao (b. 1950). The students' nationalism was reflected as well, according to Andrew J. Nathan, in statements emphasizing the value of the state above their own lives: a tradition that goes back to Qu Yuan, "who had lived in the fourth century B.C., and who committed suicide to show his loyalty to the ruler who failed to heed his advice." That precedent may have influenced their choice of tactics, also, more than "the examples of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, or Corazon Aquino, so often mentioned in the Western media."

Bei Dao, a well-known contemporary author living in exile in England, was represented by quotations from his poem "The Answer" or "The Response." In that verse, a rebel speaks defiantly, in a final gesture of independence, before the court:

*Before sentencing, I will speak my piece,
announcing to the world, I accuse!
Although you trod a thousand resisters under foot,
I shall be the one thousand and first . . .
And if a continent is to rise up
Let humanity choose a new path.
Glittering stars, like a good omen, decorate the sky,
resembling 5000-year old Chinese characters,
And the gazing eyes of the young.*

The argument and tone of the poem, characteristically Chinese, echo important cultural themes, particularly the confidence of a people who regard themselves as the center of the world (Guongguo--"the middle kingdom") and the highly romantic impulse at the heart of their "democracy" cry.

Each morning, wakened by the romantic strains of the "Internationale" over the campus loud speaker, I could not help wishing that students would choose the more pragmatic approach of the American colonists, with their slogan, "No taxation without representation," rather than the more abstract, emotionally charged slogan of the French revolutionists, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

In a similar way, the powerful symbolism of the "goddess of democracy" in Tiananmen Square may have antagonized those whom the students were trying to get to identify with them and to win over to their position. Although it obviously evoked strong sentiment from students, who posed for pictures in front of the statue, and from an international television audience, the "goddess," with its obvious similarities to the State of Liberty, may have further distanced the students from their elders and dissipated the nationalistic spirit that informed their movement. As a nonviolent strategy, in other words, choosing the "goddess of democracy" as a key image may have been counter-productive in the long run. One wonders what might have happened if the artists had sculpted instead a statue of Lu Xun, a hero to party as well as to non-party

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members, though apparently "too much deified by the party," according to one young scholar, to serve as an appropriate symbol for students. Lu Xun's witty, yet powerful aphorisms on social justice are nonetheless part of the iconography of the country's agonizing accommodation to the 20th century; and officials might think twice about ordering bull-dozers in to crush a statue of him, as they did with the goddess of democracy, no matter the "rebellious" uses employed in remembering Lu Xun's legacy. As the weeks went by, foreign observers and some Chinese criticized the demonstrators for not being specific about their goals and strategies--and with good reason. At that time and since, nonetheless, it is important to emphasize how much and how quickly the students learned about conducting a nonviolent campaign during the "China Spring" and over the previous ten years. One must wonder, also, how many of their critics have been as faithful or as effective, in addressing basic political issues and campaigning for justice in less threatening circumstances; and are we still expecting young people, rather than experienced, sophisticated people like ourselves, to provide the leadership for social change?

My point here is that, within a certain sphere of influence, young students were remarkably effective in moving their fellow citizens to resistance and along the rocky, sometimes circular path to freedom of the press and democratic reform. In thinking about similar struggles in the West, one must remember how long and multi-faceted that journey has been in the Western imperial democracies, from John Milton's essays to the publication of the Pentagon Papers. Chinese students chose nonviolence for practical reasons, as they said, in order to deal effectively with political and economic contradictions in Chinese society. Although they often moved from point to point without a carefully outlined plan for "victory," they achieved, consciously or unconsciously, more than anyone might have expected. Along the way, they gave new meaning and significance to old symbols, in language and image, and set a new standard for judging the government and upholding the common good.

Some of this was accomplished by liberating the press, that is, by drawing journalists, writers, and television personalities into the movement who had been cautiously, if understandably, silent before. "The media enjoyed a short, limited freedom of speech," as one teacher said, "which was unprecedented, encouraging." The footage and newspaper accounts are replete with pictures of staff members from *China Daily*, the principal English-speaking newspaper, and *People's Daily*, the party organ, marching under banners proclaiming their support. Journalists in Nanjing and other provincial capitals were similarly active and partisan. Television commentators openly supported the movement, in daily newscasts in late May.

After June 4, when television announcers had to read official bulletins that pointedly conflicted with previous reports, they indicated their displeasure through their expression or tone of voice. Not surprisingly, they soon disappeared from view, to be replaced by printed announcements, as the repression accelerated.

One reason for the response of professional journalists was the students' sophistication in communicating their message and in maintaining contact with their contemporaries throughout the country. Students at national universities--including the teachers colleges, in Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, and elsewhere--form, after all, a kind of network; many come from similar backgrounds or graduate from the same college-preparatory high schools. Students with contemporaries at universities in Beijing were in constant communication by phone; by late May,

on several university campuses, loud-speakers provided daily bulletins from Tiananmen Square, and broadcast news from the BBC and recordings of movement speakers, to which cheering crowds responded. Similar contacts were maintained with supporters in Hong Kong and beyond, by FAX machine. Some observers said that army troops sent into Beijing relied on these reports, which may have accounted for their reluctance to obey orders to shoot or to arrest their contemporaries occupying Tiananmen Square.

Even more surprising, for anyone familiar with Chinese society, was the students' success in winning support from workers, something that cannot be stressed enough in evaluating the campaign. Dismissing the uprising as "elitist," in fact, had led many to ignore the full political and cultural implications of this development, as I suggested earlier.

University students in China are an elite, to be sure, and the behavior of some of student leader, since their coming to the U.S., betray their impulse to ignore what a populist might regard as basic democratic values. A students' elite status, however, is an advantage as well as a disadvantage, and many made full use of the first and overcame the second. As creatures of advantage, they seized the opportunity to convince others of their seriousness by their very presence, their sacrifices during the hunger strike, and their standing up to the army. "In traditional Chinese hierarchy, it is the body of the scholar-official who, under the Emperor, ranks the highest in value. By extension, students occupy a special place of value" (Gladney, 1992). In risking themselves, out of a sense of patriotism, they eventually won workers, merchants, and others, to the campaign. No wonder that unexpected allies took similar, often even greater risks. In the end, workers were the principal victims in the massacre in Beijing and later through execution and imprisonment.

The attitude and deportment of students in Nanjing and Harbin that I witnessed were anything but elitist. In Nanjing, for example, students remained persistent and disciplined in communicating their message to the broader populace, fanning out through the city to explain themselves and going daily into factories with leaflets about their campaign. As in Beijing, "they cast themselves not as dissidents but as loyal followers, appealing to the authorities to live up to the values they themselves had articulated" (Nathan, 1990). The appearance of banners by various workers' organizations and unions, a turning point in the events at Gu Lou Square, was cheered by faculty and students directly involved in the movement. Following Li Peng's speech on May 21, condemning the students, the posters and signs, with growing militancy, openly satirized and attacked him, and a leading party member and various workers spoke to a large public audience in support of the students.

In Harbin, similarly, where I attended an international conference of scholars and translators before, during, and after June 4, the student-led campaign was equally effective, with an extensive network of cooperation among local campuses and through on-going communication with others in Beijing. When three students from the Harbin technical university died at Tiananmen Square, students and local citizens poured out into the streets in mourning, many carrying memorial wreaths in the demonstrations. Later, students set up cordons throughout the city, when it appeared that the army might move in from the outskirts. Having to make our way through the cordons on our way to the train on June 6, I was again impressed by the skill and persistent dedication to nonviolence among student leaders.

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During the 1500-mile train-ride from Harbin south to Nanjing, university students on their way home continued their effort to acquaint everybody with reach with their movement, all along the way. Many who joined the train after the stop at Tianjin/Beijing moved through the passenger train with tape recording of speeches at Tiananmen Square and personal stories about their own involvement. Later, when our express train halted in Jinan for twelve hours, because of violence further down the line, my colleagues and I jumped to a local, a real "slow train through Arkansas," where more students talked animatedly with peasants and others selling produce on the train and at station stops along the route.

By the time we reached Nanjing, arriving on the north side of the Yangtze River, the provincial government, with encouragement from university officials, had already developed a number of strategies to avert violence. It apparently kept the People's Liberation Army at bay. Although rumors abounded that military divisions were in revolt or would take over the major cities, Nanjing remained relatively quiet--I saw only one small truck of soldiers along the main thoroughfare, for example. And the universities and colleges moved quickly to dismiss the students, to keep them from being rounded up, once the party moved to crush the uprising. Faculty and administrators sent buses out to retrieve students on "a long march" underway from Nanjing to Beijing, for example. Nonviolent resistance to the national government, nonetheless, did not end with the massacre in Beijing or, about the same time, in Chengdu.

Another major achievement of the movement became apparent later in the summer, in fact, as the party attempted to pursue its repressive policy of rounding up demonstrators and punishing others who merely supported them. Hundreds of workers were executed and many students were imprisoned, of course. And since the uprising, first year students at major universities have had to endure a month to a year of military training. But passive resistance to or noncooperation with the government's repressive measures during and after the uprising contrasted dramatically with public response to similar measures since 1949, when neighbors informed on neighbors and families members were divided against one another.

A common response to inquiries in factories or organizations about activists during the days of "reflection" following June 4 was that "no one here was involved," as if the huge crowds had simply disappeared from the face of the earth. Asked to report "rebels" to the police, people phoned in reports on themselves or listed hundreds of others, from ordinary workers to cadres, thereby blocking phone calls from "real" informers. A good deal of black humor went around; some people, for example, made fun of the incident by saying how "nice" the government in not using jet-fighters against the students. Also, important leaders of the uprising, including Chai Ling, the skilled, rather romantic "Commander-in-Chief of Tiananmen Square," and her husband, managed to escape the country with support from party members or state employees.

But what about the consequences of the uprising over the past four years? What are the signs of success or failure? In the U.S., perhaps too much attention has been focused on the splintering, dissident groups and their leaders in exile. Not surprisingly, as with other young people (actors or rock stars) suddenly thrust into an international lime-light, student leaders often fail to live up to the high expectations that they themselves or others place upon them. And perhaps too much of the popular commentary has focused upon on self-defined leaders in Tiananmen Square, rather than on a community-at-work throughout the country. As in past

history, attempts to conduct a campaign of resistance outside the country is fraught with difficulty, though some historians point to the positive example of Sun Yat-sen and the earlier democratic revolution.

From the perspective of nonviolence, the more important questions have to do with on-going plans and strategies and the ability of the movement to build on what the 1989 uprising accomplished inside China. Information on resistance there remains rather scant, however, because of the political risks involved in giving testimony; it is also difficult to evaluate, given the dramatic changes taking place in China at this time--the rapid economic growth and recent power struggles within the party. The absence of any viable, "lawful" alternative to the dominant party makes political organization difficult and dramatic changes or reforms unlikely, at least until the death of Deng Xiaoping. After that, various economic factors may keep China on the road to reform, although basic "democratic" initiatives will probably have to arise from the grass roots.

Materially, life for many Chinese is better since 1979, with increasing access to commodities and comforts that citizens of industrial nations take for granted. Meanwhile, changes associated with private enterprise--as opposed to state-directed programs--accelerate. The party espouses "Chinese learning as the essence, Western learning for utility" (zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong), by which it means "no political or social change, to accompany the economic change." Whether party leaders believe it or not, they continue to assert that the political consequences of a free market in China will be different from those of a free market in other countries.⁸ No other "free market" nation, however, has escaped the cultural fall out of capitalism, has it? Is doing capitalism "the Chinese way" likely to produce radically different results? Following the pattern of the imperial West, for example, China continues to finance "peacetime" projects at home by increasing weapons sales abroad; and reports of greater corruption in government, as well as a return to gambling, prostitution, and drugs increase.

As for citizens of other industrial, imperial nations on this fragile planet, life in urban China is increasingly hectic, even threatening, for many who earlier lived in relative security. At the same time, interest in the philosophy and strategies of nonviolence has increased, also, as peace researchers explore the history of previous dissent and think about the future. And further "experiments with truth" may offer the principal hope for defending themselves against and building alternatives to "globalization from above."

Notes

1. In referring to the events of Spring 1989 as a "democratic uprising," rather than the "pro-democracy movement" (or the Chinese designation "6/4"), I am aware of the inadequacy of both designations. Some of the leaders and participants obviously behaved more like Ming dynasty emperors than Jeffersonian democrats. The primary impulse of the campaign was, nonetheless, toward an extension of the franchise and against government corruption, nepotism, and censorship; it built on earlier resistance to top-down management and advocated participation and accountability.

2. Although the uprising obviously began at Tiananmen Square, it quickly spread throughout the country, as a direct result of student ingenuity in communicating their message, but even years later, popular histories of the uprising, including the informative film documentary, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* by Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton (1996), give the impression that the movement was limited to Beijing; in actuality, it informed--one might say "shook"--the whole country. A selected bibliography would include the following useful books. Andrew J. Nathan (1986; 1990) provides political background. See also Hicks (1990). An on-going record of information has been provided by Ruth Cremerius, Doris Fischer, and Peter Schier, (1991). Henry Rosemont, Jr. (1990) gives an excellent brief account and evaluation of Tiananmen Square; see also, Four (1989) and these review/essays by journalists and scholars, in the *New York Review of Books*: Orville Schell (June 29, 1989); Fang Lizhi, Simon Leys, Roderick MacFarquhar (July 20, 1989); John K. Fairbanks (September 28, 1989), Merle Goldman (November 9, 1989); Jonathan Mirsky, "The Empire Strikes Back" (February 1, 1990). Relevant documents appear in *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

3. General accounts of changing economic conditions appear in Orville Schell (1989), and Butterfield (1990), which adds a chapter on the uprising, to his 1982 edition.

4. Jonathan D. Spence (1990), as well as his invaluable cultural history (1982).

5. Liu Binyan's "Conclusion" (1989), gives many examples of on-going resistance to government policy. Nicholas D. Kristof (1992), tells the story of Han Dongfang.

6. See "Appendix 2: Chronology (April 15-July 15, 1989," in Cheng (1990: 201-08).

7. Professor Gladney argued also that *The Yellow River Elegy*, a popular film that is critical of the establishment and widely circulated the previous summer and fall, prepared the way for the 1989 uprising. Although communist hard-liners had tried to suppress the film, Zhao Ziyang ordered it aired a second time, according to Harrison Salisbury; it ends with a statement that "The characteristics of democracy should be transparency, popular will, and scientism."

8. *China Reconstructs*, May 1987 (p. 5), a government publication, put it this way: "The great majority of Chinese support this position--to carry on, but critically, our own historical tradition, while fully responding to the spirit of the times, and to accept good things from the rest of the world to enhance and enliven, but not replace, our own culture."

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6 involve both violent and nonviolent action, it is nevertheless necessary to make conceptual distinctions between different types of resistance in order to more clearly understand the role of strategy and tactics in the dynamics of contention.

What is nonviolent action? As the name implies, nonviolent action is nonviolent—it does not involve physical violence or the threat of physical violence against human beings—and it is active—it involves activity in the collective pursuit of social or political objectives. More specifically, nonviolent action involves an active process of bringing political, economic, social, emotional, or moral pressure to bear in the wielding of power in contentious interactions between collective actors (McCarthy 1990, 1997; Sharp 1973, 1990, 1999). Nonviolent action is noninstitutional, that is, it operates outside the bounds of institutionalized political channels, and it is indeterminate, that is, the procedures for determining the outcome of the conflict are not specified in advance (Bond 1994). Nonviolent action occurs through (1) acts of omission, whereby people refuse to perform acts expected by norms, custom, law, or decree; (2) acts of commission, whereby people perform acts that they do not usually perform, are not expected by norms or customs to perform, or are forbidden by law, regulation, or decree to perform; or (3) a combination of acts of omission and commission (Sharp 1973). Rather than being viewed as half of a rigid violent-nonviolent dichotomy, nonviolent action may be better understood as a set of methods with special features that are different from those of both violent resistance and institutional politics (McCarthy 1990).

Misconceptions about Nonviolent Action

The social scientific analysis of nonviolent action has been inhibited by the numerous misconceptions that people have about what nonviolent action is, how it works, when it is used, and by whom it is implemented.⁷ A major factor contributing to these misconceptions is that the history of nonviolent action has been marginalized or misinterpreted, while the history of violence has been emphasized, if not glorified. Although there is abundant historical material on violent struggles, there is far less material on nonviolent struggles (see Burrowes 1996; Sharp 1973; Wink 1992, chapter 13). Nineteen of the most common misconceptions are discussed below.⁸

1. Nonviolent action is not inaction (although it may involve the refusal to carry out an action that is expected, that is, an act of omission), it is not submissiveness, it is not the avoidance of conflict, and it is not passive resistance. In fact, nonviolent action is a direct means for prosecuting conflicts

Kurt Schock, selection from
Unarmed Insurrections: People Power in
Nondemocracies, p 6-23

7 with opponents and is an explicit rejection of inaction, submission, and passivity (Sharp 1973).

The term *passive resistance* is a misnomer when used to describe nonviolent action. There is nothing passive or evasive about nonviolent resistance, as it is an active and overt means for prosecuting conflicts with opponents. Although Mohandas Gandhi at first used the term *passive resistance*, he subsequently rejected the term due to its inaccurate connotations. Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr. rejected the term *passive resistance* and used words such as *aggressive*, *militant*, *confrontational*, and *coercive* to describe his campaigns of nonviolent action. Likewise, social scientists would benefit from abandoning the term *passive resistance* and using the more accurate and precise term *nonviolent action*. This is not a mere semantic distinction, but rather is crucial to the understanding of nonviolent resistance.

2. Not everything that is not violent is considered nonviolent action. *Nonviolent action* refers to specific actions that involve risk and invoke nonviolent pressure or nonviolent coercion in contentious interactions between opposing groups.

3. Nonviolent action is not limited to state-sanctioned political activities. Nonviolent action may be legal or illegal. Civil disobedience, that is, the open and deliberate violation of the law for a collective social or political purpose, is a fundamental type of nonviolent action.

4. Nonviolent action is not composed of regular or institutionalized techniques of political action such as litigation, letter writing, lobbying, voting, or the passage of laws.⁹ Although institutional methods of political action often accompany nonviolent struggles, nonviolent action occurs outside the bounds of institutional politics. Contrary to what is the case for those engaging in regular and institutionalized political activity, there is always an element of risk involved for those implementing nonviolent action, since it presents a direct challenge to authorities. Thus nonviolent action is context-specific. Displaying anti-regime posters in democracies would be considered a low-risk and regular form of political action, whereas the same activity in nondemocracies would be considered irregular, would involve a substantial amount of risk, and would therefore be considered a method of nonviolent action. Similarly, strikes that occur within the bounds of institutionalized labor relations in democracies would not be considered nonviolent action, since they are not noninstitutional or indeterminate. However, a wildcat strike in a democracy and most strikes in nondemocracies would be instances of nonviolent action given their noninstitutionalized, indeterminate, and high-risk features.

5. Nonviolent action is not a form of negotiation or compromise.

6 Negotiation and compromise may or may not accompany conflicts prosecuted through nonviolent action, just as they may or may not accompany conflicts prosecuted through violent action. In other words, nonviolent action is a means for prosecuting a conflict and should be distinguished from means of conflict resolution (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 5).

6. Nonviolent action does not depend on moral authority, the "mobilization of shame," or the conversion of the views of the opponent in order to promote political change. While conversion of the opponent's views sometimes occurs, more often than not nonviolent action promotes political change through nonviolent coercion, that is, it forces the opponent to make changes by undermining the opponent's power.¹⁰ Of course moral pressure may be mobilized, but in the absence of political and economic pressure it is unlikely to produce change.

7. Those who implement nonviolent action do not assume that the state will not react with violence. Violence is to be expected from governments, especially nondemocratic governments. The violent reaction of governments is not an indication of the failure of nonviolent action. In fact, governments respond with violence precisely because nonviolent action presents a serious threat to their power. To dismiss the use of nonviolent action because people are killed is no more logical than dismissing armed resistance for the same reasons (Zunes 1999a, 130). Nonviolent struggle does not mean the absence of violence.

8. That said, suffering is not an essential part of nonviolent resistance. The view that suffering is central to nonviolent resistance is based on the misguided assumption that nonviolent action is passive resistance and that nonviolent action is intended to produce change through the conversion of the oppressor's views (Martin 1997). While those implementing challenges that incorporate nonviolent action should expect a violent response by the government, they should also prepare to mute the impact of the opponent's violence. That is, they should, in the words of Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, "get out of harm's way, take the sting out of the agents of violence, disable the weapons, prepare people for the worst effects of violence, and reduce the strategic importance of what may be lost to violence" (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 38). Nonviolent resistance is much more sophisticated than the widespread (mis)conception that it is characterized by activists meekly accepting physical attacks by the agents of their oppressors in the hope that their suffering will convert the opponents or make publics sympathetic to their cause.

9. Nonviolent action is not a method of contention that is used only as a last resort, when the means of violence are unavailable. Although non-

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violent action may be used when no weapons are available, it may also be used instead of violent methods.

10. Nonviolent action is not a method of the "middle class" or a "bourgeois" approach to political contention. Nonviolent action can be and has been implemented by groups from any and all classes and castes, from slaves to members of the upper class (McCarthy and Kruegler 1993). For obvious reasons, though, it is used by the less powerful, that is, those without regular access to power holders, more frequently than by the powerful.

11. The use of nonviolent action is not limited to the pursuit of "moderate" or "reformist" goals. It may also be implemented in the pursuit of "radical" goals. Anders Corr, for example, has documented the extensive use of nonviolent action in land and housing struggles across the developed and underdeveloped worlds (Corr 1999). Challenges to private property relations can hardly be considered reformist, moderate, or bourgeois. Similarly, the feminist movement has radically challenged patriarchal gender relations—almost entirely through methods that do not involve violence. Challenges can be militant, radical, and nonviolent.

12. While nonviolent action by its very nature requires patience, it is not inherently slow in producing political change compared to violent action (Shepard 2002). Armed insurgencies that served as models for a generation of revolutionaries took decades to succeed: the communists in China were engaged in armed combat for over twenty years before they assumed power in 1949, and the Vietnamese were engaged in armed combat against French, Japanese, and American imperialists for over three decades before they achieved national liberation. Similarly, numerous campaigns of terror, such as those waged by the Euskadi Ta Akatasuna (ETA, Basque Homeland and Freedom) in Spain, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka have operated for decades without meeting their objectives.¹¹ By contrast, leaders of the nonviolent Solidarity movement in Poland took office about a decade after its emergence, and it took a mere thirty months following the assassination of Benigno Aquino in August 1983 for the "people power" movement in the Philippines to topple Ferdinand Marcos—something the Filipino communists had been trying to do through armed methods since 1969.

13. The occurrence of nonviolent action is not structurally determined. While there are empirical relationships in geographically and temporally bound places and time periods between the political context and the use of a given strategy for responding to grievances,¹² the methods used to challenge unjust or oppressive political relations are not determined by the political

context. Processes of learning, diffusion, and social change may result in the implementation of nonviolent action in contexts or situations historically characterized by violent contention. Conflicts involving land, separatism, or autonomy, for example, are generally assumed to be—and have historically been—violent. However, nonviolent strategies are increasingly being used in such conflicts. Certainly the context of the conflict and the issues at stake influence the strategies of resistance, but not in a deterministic manner.

14. The effectiveness of nonviolent action is not a function of the ideology of the oppressors. It is often claimed that nonviolent action can succeed only in democracies or only when it is used against "benign" or "universalist" oppressors. The beliefs of the oppressors may influence the dynamics of contention, but they are not the sole determinants of the outcomes of struggles prosecuted through methods of nonviolent action.

15. Similarly, the effectiveness of nonviolent action is not a function of the repressiveness of the oppressors. In fact, campaigns of nonviolent action have been effective in brutally repressive contexts, and ineffective in open democratic polities. Repression, of course, constrains the ability of challengers to organize, communicate, mobilize, and engage in collective action, and magnifies the risk of participation in collective action. Nevertheless, repression is only one of many factors that influence the trajectories of struggles relying on nonviolent action. It is not the sole determinant of their trajectories or outcomes.

16. The mass mobilization of people into campaigns of nonviolent action in nondemocracies does not depend on coercion. While some campaigns of nonviolent action in nondemocracies have involved coercion to promote mass mobilization, coercion is not a necessary feature of mass mobilization in nondemocracies. Coercion is not inherent to campaigns of noncooperation, but rather is something that varies, depending on contextual factors such as the consensus within the community, the extent to which there is knowledge about the campaign throughout the community, and the type of noncooperation implemented. With regard to consumer boycotts in South Africa, for example, when the political loyalties of a community were sharply divided or when the campaigns were not adequately publicized, coercion was more likely to be used to enforce the consumer boycotts. However, when there was solidarity within the community and people were well aware that a consumer boycott was to be implemented and how long it was supposed to last, coercion was less likely to occur. Moreover, the use of coercion to promote participation in mass campaigns in South Africa varied across the types of noncooperation that were implemented. Although consumer boycotts sometimes involved coercion in order to pro-

mote mass mobilization, mass participation in rent boycotts were less likely to involve coercive mobilization (Seekings 2000, 179).

17. Participation in campaigns of nonviolent action does not require that activists hold any sort of ideological, religious, or metaphysical beliefs. Contrary to popular and scholarly assumptions, those who engage in nonviolent action are rarely pacifists. Those who engage in nonviolent action hold a variety of different beliefs, one of which may be pacifism, but pacifism is not prevalent among those engaged in nonviolent action. As George Lakey notes, "Most pacifists do not practice nonviolent resistance, and most people who do practice nonviolent resistance are not pacifists" (Lakey 1973, 57).

18. Similarly, those who implement nonviolent action do not have to be aware that they are implementing a particular class of methods. An American theologian, Walter Wink, interviewed participants in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa in 1986. He writes, "What we found most surprising is that a great many of the people simply do not know how to name their actual experiences with nonviolence" (Wink 1987, 4). When asked about methods of nonviolent action, a common response was "We tried that [nonviolent action] for fifty years and it didn't work. Sharpeville in 1960 proved to us that violence is the only way left" (Wink 1987, 4). Yet when Wink pressed them to identify the methods that were most effective in challenging the state over the past two years,

they produced a remarkably long list of nonviolent actions: labor strikes, slow-downs, sit-downs, stoppages, and stay-aways; bus boycotts, consumer boycotts, and school boycotts; funeral demonstrations; noncooperation with government appointed functionaries; non-payment of rent; violation of government bans on peaceful meetings; defiance of segregation orders on beaches and restaurants, theaters, and hotels; and the shunning of black police and soldiers. This amounts to what is probably the largest grassroots eruption of diverse nonviolent strategies in a single struggle in human history! Yet these students, and many others we interviewed, both black and white, failed to identify these tactics as nonviolent and even bridled at the word. (Wink 1987, 4)

The point is that those who implement methods of nonviolent action may not recognize them as "methods of nonviolent action," and they certainly do not have to adhere to a theory of nonviolence or a moral code to successfully implement them. Furthermore, whether or not "nonviolence" is identified by name as a method of struggle by activists, social scientists should be able to operationalize nonviolent action and differentiate between

nonviolent and violent action. Certainly social scientists should be capable of distinguishing between violent rhetoric and nonviolent action.

19. Campaigns of nonviolent action do not need a charismatic leader in order to succeed. Popular conceptions of nonviolent action often invoke images of Mohandas Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. inspiring mass campaigns of nonviolent struggle. Yet in many successful campaigns of nonviolent action the leader or leaders lacked charismatic attributes, and some struggles have even lacked identifiable leaders (Sharp 1999, 570).

Different Standards

Related to the misconceptions about nonviolent action are the different logics used to compare the effectiveness of violent and nonviolent action and the extreme standards that are often invoked to judge the effectiveness of nonviolent action. Take, for example, the failure of the United States government to impose its will on Vietnam through the use of violence during the Vietnam War. The military defeat of the United States did not lead to a fundamental questioning of the efficacy of the strategy of military violence. That is, people did not conclude that military violence as a strategy was fundamentally flawed. Instead, characteristics of that particular military campaign were identified to explain its failure, such as that the military did not have clear goals, it was unprepared for asymmetric battles, it failed to identify the Vietnamese center of gravity, the war was losing support at home, and so on. Perhaps more to the point, a single failed guerrilla insurgency is not taken as "proof" that engaging in armed guerrilla struggles is a futile strategy for promoting political change.

On the other hand, when a particular campaign of nonviolent action fails to produce change, rather than identifying the characteristics of that particular campaign that contributed to its failure, the entire strategy of nonviolent action is often questioned. A logic that assumes that a particular failed occurrence of nonviolent struggle proves its futility as a strategy (a logic not applied to violent struggles) is fundamentally flawed.

Along these lines, some tend to dismiss the power of nonviolent action by invoking some extreme case to "prove" its futility. For example, critics maintain that campaigns of nonviolent action undertaken by Jews in Nazi Germany would not have succeeded. This may be correct, but it is also unlikely that violent resistance by Jews would have succeeded in Nazi Germany. Or, for example, critics of nonviolent action maintain that it would not have worked against Stalin in the Soviet Union. This, too, may be correct. Nevertheless, these are extreme cases, and in reality most contexts are not so extreme. Using extreme cases to dismiss an entire strategy

of resistance is illogical. Let me emphasize that I do not raise these issues to idealize nonviolent action; instead I raise them so that we can more clearly understand the limits and potential of nonviolent action.

Responding to Grievances

Nonviolent action is one of many possible responses to situations of oppression or injustice. Figure 1 identifies a number of hypothetical responses to such situations. These responses are differentiated for conceptual purposes to facilitate clearer insights into the dynamics of political contention. We need to keep in mind that struggles do not fit into neat categories and often transgress categories.

Before action can be taken to transform an oppressive or unjust situation, people must recognize, name, and construe the situation as unacceptable

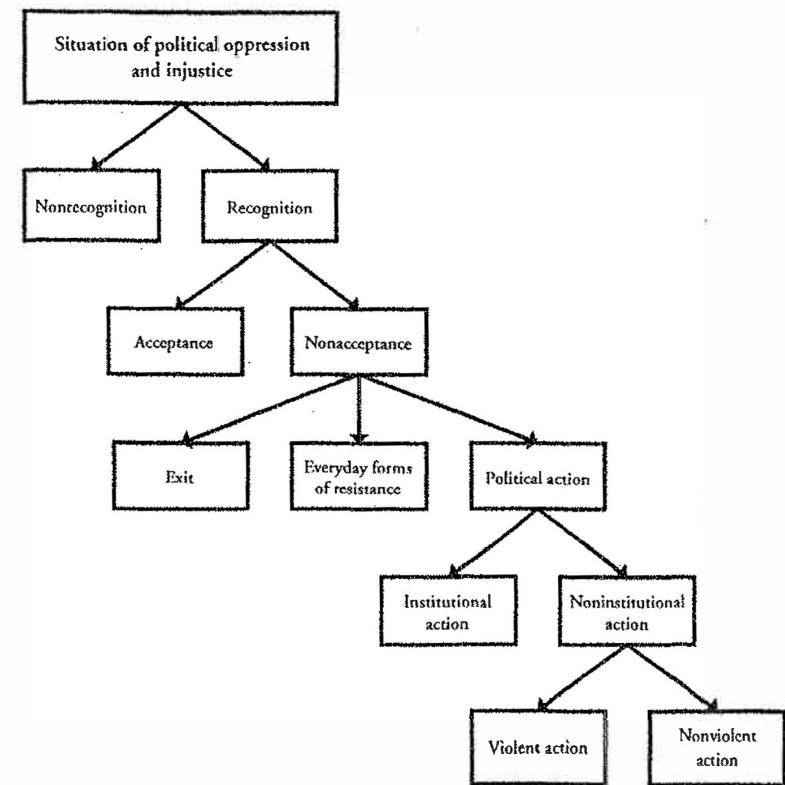


Figure 1. Possible responses to political oppression and injustice.

through cultural processes, and they must overcome obstacles such as fear, ideological hegemony, apathy, fatalism, and grudging acceptance. This typically involves processes of identity formation, solidarity, consciousness raising, and the construction of counterhegemonic cultural frames.¹³ Once the oppressive or unjust situation is recognized and viewed as unacceptable, it may be acted upon in a variety of ways. One response is for members of the aggrieved group to *exit* the situation. Situations of oppression, injustice, political exclusion, and economic exploitation have fueled emigration from less-developed countries to more-developed ones, where politics are often more inclusive and economic exploitation is often more tolerable. After the Second World War notable exits occurred in Europe across the "iron curtain." Each year during the 1950s and into the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of East Germans left their country to settle in the West, leading to the construction of the Berlin Wall by the East German government in 1961 to stop the flow of emigration from East Berlin to West Berlin. This effectively eliminated the exit response until 1989, when the official emigration policy in East Germany was relaxed. In addition to emigration encouraged by the official relaxation of policies, illegal emigration increased in 1989 as well. The West German diplomatic missions in East Berlin, Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw were closed after being inundated with thousands of East German citizens attempting to exit their country. East German exits intensified during the summer of 1989, when Hungary began dismantling the iron curtain by opening its border with Austria. Subsequently, thousands of East Germans fled to the West through Hungary each day (Bleiker 1993, 10–13; Hirschman 1993).¹⁴

A second response by members of an aggrieved group is to engage in *everyday forms of resistance*. These are covert, low-profile actions against the powerful by subordinate groups in local contexts (Dirks 1994; J. C. Scott 1985, 1989, 1990; Scott and Kerkvleit 1986; Thaxton 1997). Everyday forms of resistance are typically implemented when the less powerful have no institutionalized recourse and fear the consequences of engaging in overt noninstitutional political action. Historically, this form of resistance emerged in opposition to the rule of landlords in agrarian societies and has continued into the modern era in opposition to processes of state making and capitalist intrusion. Examples of everyday forms of resistance include underreporting or concealment of harvests, tax evasion, evading military conscription, character assassination of authority figures, the spreading of rumors, and feigned ignorance of government policies. These acts tend to be local and isolated from similar acts in other locales, but occasionally local struggles may connect with one another, resulting in more overt political movements.

Third, members of aggrieved groups may engage in *political action*, which, in addition to solidarity and framing, also involves surpassing some minimum threshold of organization and mobilization in order to be sustained.¹⁵ Political action may occur within or outside institutional political channels. *Institutional political action*, the study of which comprises a substantive domain of political science, includes acts such as voting, holding referenda, circulating petitions, lobbying, and engaging in litigation.¹⁶ However, even in the most democratic countries, disparities exist between groups with regard to political access and resources, resulting in biased political systems. G. William Domhoff, for example, has illustrated how the American polity, one of the most open in the world, is dominated by a power elite (Domhoff 2002).¹⁷ When people want perceived grievances to be redressed, but cannot satisfactorily do so through institutionalized political action, they may turn to methods of *noninstitutional political action*.

While the outcome of institutional political action is determinate, that is, prescribed by some procedure, practice, or norm, noninstitutional political action is indeterminate, that is, it is not prescribed by any such existing rules or regulations, and its outcome is a function of contentious interactions between opposing forces (Bond 1994). The power of noninstitutional politics inheres in its indeterminateness and disruptiveness. When noninstitutional political action loses its uncertainty and disruptiveness and becomes institutionalized, as in highly choreographed and regulated protest demonstrations at the Mall in Washington, DC, its effectiveness in promoting political change decreases. Two types of noninstitutional politics are violent and nonviolent action.

Violent political action involves the use of physical force or the threat of physical force against human beings in pursuit of political objectives. Violent action includes techniques such as imprisonment, kidnapping, assault, rape, torture, arson, murder, assassination, bombing, air strikes, and armed attacks. *Coercion* refers to intimidation backed up by the threat of force. Of course throughout history states rather than challengers have incorporated violence in an overwhelming proportion (Rummel 1994; Tilly 1985, 1992). In this study I refer to the state's use of violence or coercion as a form of repression, and an aggrieved group's use of violence to challenge the state as violent political action.¹⁸

Nonviolent political action is another way for responding to situations perceived to be oppressive, unjust, exclusionary, or exploitive. Like violent action, it occurs outside of institutional political channels and is indeterminate; however, it does not involve the use of violent force or the threat of violent force against human beings. In *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*

Gene Sharp identifies 198 methods of nonviolent action that have been used throughout history. Since its publication in 1973, numerous additional methods have been implemented and identified. The number of methods of nonviolent action is unlimited, since the development and application of novel methods is a constantly unfolding process. Sharp aggregates the methods of nonviolent action into three broad categories: methods of protest and persuasion, methods of noncooperation, and methods of nonviolent intervention. Methods of protest and persuasion are used to reveal a problem, illustrate the extent of dissatisfaction, rouse public support or the support of third parties, overcome fear and acquiescence, and expose the state's illegitimacy. They include methods such as protest demonstrations, marches, rallies, public speeches, declarations, the collective display of symbols, and vigils. Methods of noncooperation are used to disrupt the status quo and undermine the state's power, resources, and legitimacy. They include methods such as boycotts, strikes, open refusal to pay taxes or enter the military, and other forms of civil disobedience. Methods of nonviolent intervention are used to disrupt attempts at continued subjugation. They include methods such as sit-ins, nonviolent sabotage, pickets, blockades, hunger strikes, land occupations, and the development of parallel or alternative institutions.

Although exit, everyday forms of resistance, institutional political action, and noninstitutional political action have been distinguished for conceptual purposes, empirically they tend to occur together. Everyday forms of resistance often constitute the prior social practices and actions from which overt political action arises. Institutional political action spills into the non-institutional sphere. Violent and nonviolent action are often used in tandem, and typically struggles fall somewhere along a continuum from more to less violent. Nevertheless, as stated previously, in order to more clearly understand the dynamics of contention, it is necessary to make analytical distinctions between these various forms of resistance.

Political Contention in the Third World

Taking a broad look at political contention in the third world over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, one can discern a shift in the prevailing repertoires of contention used to challenge states. From the Chinese Revolution in 1949 through the 1970s, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-inspired rebellions and other forms of violence were the modal methods for challenging regimes in the third world (Colburn 1994). The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist strategy involved the political organization of peasants into a viable military apparatus and the prosecution of a protracted "people's war" against

the state. Local guerrilla operations would eliminate government control in specific areas and build autonomous political infrastructures. Armed force was used to expand the territory controlled by the guerrillas. This strategy had an enormous impact on revolutionary movements throughout the third world, and was implemented and elaborated upon by such revolutionaries as Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in Latin America, and Amílcar Cabral in Africa. However, since the late 1970s revolutionary movements successfully incorporating strategies of guerrilla warfare have become less common. This does not suggest that there have not been any successful guerrilla insurgencies since the late 1970s; witness the success of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. Nor does this suggest that there are no longer Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-inspired armed revolutionary movements; witness the ongoing struggles of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in Colombia, the New People's Army in the Philippines, and the Maoist insurgents in Nepal. This does not suggest that the "mythology of violence" has been eclipsed; witness the tactics of the Irish Republican Army, the Basque ETA, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Tamil Tigers.¹⁹ Nor does this suggest that violent political conflict has generally declined in the underdeveloped world.²⁰ Nevertheless, there was a notable change in the *modal* manner in which regimes in the third world were successfully challenged in the late twentieth century: armed guerrilla insurgencies and violent rebellion as methods for successfully challenging the state declined, while nonviolent strategies for successfully challenging regimes increased.²¹

A confluence of structural and normative processes in the late twentieth century contributed to this trend. The structural processes of state making and state expansion, as well as increased monopolies on the technologies of violence by states, contributed to a shift in the balance of power away from armed insurgents and toward state forces in many places. In the West a discernable change in the repertoires of contention from violent to nonviolent resulted from the increased capacities of nation-states to suppress private violence and monopolize organized violence within their territories (Tilly 1985, 1992). A parallel process in the expansion of state power has occurred more recently in the third world, although, as in the West, it has been highly uneven. In order for an armed guerrilla insurgency to succeed, guerrilla forces need sanctuaries for bases of operation, rest from combat, the provision of food, rearmament, and military training. When a state controls all of its territory, the insurgency's likelihood of finding sanctuaries, and therefore the likelihood of a successful armed revolutionary movement, decreases (Debray 1967; Goodwin and

Skocpol 1989; Zunes 1994). Of course there are still places in the world outside of state control, such as the jungles of Colombia and Burma, the mountains of Peru and Afghanistan, and the archipelagos of the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. And states may break down, as occurred, for example, during the 1990s in Liberia, Zaire, and Somalia.²² Nevertheless, the ability of states to completely penetrate and control their territories generally increased throughout the third world during the second half of the twentieth century.

Advances in the technologies of violence and the development and training of counterinsurgency forces also contributed to tipping the balance of power in violent struggles from rebels to states. The development of "low-intensity warfare" by states to combat violent challenges produced experts in propaganda and disinformation, assassination, torture, forced relocations of potentially sympathetic populations, and selective but precise air strikes and limited military incursions.²³ The emergence of death squads, that is, paramilitary units with ties to state security services, also increased the costs of violent challenges. In sum, when challengers employ armed violence in their conflicts with modern states, they tend to become trapped in an escalating spiral of violence that they are unlikely to win (Tarrow 1998, 96; Zunes 1994, 1999a; Zunes and Kurtz 1999).

Technologies have multiple uses, but they are more easily used for some purposes than for others. While modern technologies of violence and war may be more useful to states than to challengers, newer communications technologies may be more useful to nonstate actors than to their oppressors (Ackerman and DuVall 2000, chapter 14; Martin 1996, 1999; Martin and Varney 2003). Traditional centralized mass media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, promote collective passivity, since they are one-directional and a small number of people (leaders of states or corporations) can influence or control what is transmitted to a large number of people. Newer decentralized communications technologies, on the other hand, are more independent of centralized control and more difficult for states or corporations to censor, and they permit direct communication among citizens, both within and between countries. The ability of states to control communications has diminished as communications technologies have become decentralized, cheaper, and more accessible. Short-wave radios, cassette tapes, video recordings, fax machines, mobile phones, the Internet, and electronic mail (e-mail) were used by activists during the course of many unarmed insurrections or by outsiders to publicize unarmed insurrections in the late twentieth century.²⁴ Of course these technologies are not necessary for unarmed insurrections to occur, but they facilitate their mobilization and the cultivation of third-party support.

Late twentieth-century transformations in communications technologies have seemingly compressed time and space through acceleration of the velocity of information sent around the globe (Giddens 1990; Harvey 1989; Held 1995). The possibilities of rapid transnational flows of information and the identification of people across borders are undoubtedly much greater now than a few decades ago. This, in turn, has facilitated the development of international audiences, transnational advocacy networks, transnational social movements, and a global civil society. These developments are significant given the crucial role that influential allies and third parties from abroad may play in the trajectories of unarmed insurrections.

The transnational social movement sector that mushroomed in the late twentieth century represents the development and deepening of a global civil society. The emergence of a global civil society is significant in that it provides an organizational infrastructure that permits nonstate and non-corporate actors to routinely interact with counterparts in other countries. While there are tremendous disparities between the power of states and corporations on the one hand and that of civil society actors on the other, the emergence of a global civil society at least increases the likelihood of providing a voice to the oppressed and is potentially a source of empowerment. While highly uneven, the expanding reach of transnational networks increases the likelihood that local or national challenges will become global, that is, involve actors that are geographically removed from the site of contention, and that frames, organizational templates, and methods of contention will become modular, that is, transferable to distant locations for various causes over short periods of time. Of course there are deep divisions between people based on their experience, education, language, nationality, gender, class, race, and religion. Nevertheless, the emergence of a global civil society provides, at the very least, a mechanism for people to articulate, recognize, and confront these differences and to discover their commonalities (Smith 1997, 1998).²⁵

While a global civil society provides spaces through which ideas and activities may be debated and diffused, transnational advocacy networks and social movement organizations provide the relational links through which oppressed groups may receive tangible support from abroad. Transnational advocacy networks are actors working internationally on an issue who are bound together by shared values, common discourses, and a dense exchange of information and services (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Transnational advocacy networks, and especially transnational social movement organizations, that is, organizations with active members in two or more countries that promote social change through institutional and noninstitutional channels (Smith

et al. 1997), amplify the ability of challengers within states to frame their grievances in terms that resonate transnationally, thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining resources and support from abroad. Challenges by oppressed groups may also be facilitated through the "boomerang pattern," whereby challenging movements within nondemocracies exert pressure on their own states indirectly through ties to transnational social movements that mobilize international pressure against the target state to help them achieve political change at home (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 12–13). When repression increases at home, activism may be directed to international media, international conferences, Internet campaigns, and protest actions abroad. Transnational social movements and the transnational networks in which they are embedded are significant, since third-party support is often crucial in tipping the balance of power in favor of challengers in nonviolent struggles.

Cross-cutting structural transformations in the late twentieth century were growing normative concerns with human rights by the international community and increased reservations about the negative consequences of violence as a strategy for social change. While widespread international concern with human rights can be traced back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, prior to the 1970s the idea that the human rights of citizens in one country are the legitimate concern of the people and governments of other countries was considered radical (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 79).²⁶ Significantly, many transnational advocacy networks and international social movements are concerned with human rights issues. From 1973 to 1993 the number of international nongovernmental social change organizations concerned with human rights increased from 41 to 168 (Smith 1997, 47). Not only do international human rights organizations work to expose and prevent state violence; they also promote nonviolent resistance to oppression.

One of the first and most influential transnational human rights organizations was Amnesty International (AI), which was formed in 1961 and contributed to making the people in one country aware of human rights abuses in others. In contrast to the mass media's coverage of human rights violations, if they were covered at all, AI developed a tactic of emphasizing the human side of state violence, that is, making it clear that victims of human rights violations were human beings with names, faces, histories, and family members. Thus, they focused on promoting the cases of individual victims of human rights abuses to increase the identification between the victim and the public. To protect itself from accusations that it was using human rights abuses to pursue a broader ideological agenda, AI selected one

urgent case each month from a country in the first world, one case from the second world, and one from the third world. Significantly, AI promotes only dissidents who use nonviolent rather than violent methods to advance political change (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Scoble and Wiseberg 1974).

Another human rights group, Peace Brigades International (PBI), founded in 1981, pioneered the tactic of "accompanying," whereby activists threatened by state repression are shadowed by a team of international volunteers. PBI's accompaniment takes many forms, including escorting activists twenty-four hours a day, being present at the offices of threatened political organizations, accompanying refugees or political dissidents returning to their home countries, and serving as international observers at collective action events. The logic of the tactic of accompaniment is based on the notion that governments and death squads do not want their activities exposed to the outside world, since it would adversely effect their foreign aid and international legitimacy. The physical presence of PBI volunteers prevents violence from occurring, and if it does occur, exposes it to the international community. Significantly, the PBI volunteers are unarmed, and they promote nonviolent resistance to oppression by providing training in nonviolent action to people involved in conflicts with their states (Mahony and Eguren 1997).

The Unrepresented Peoples Organization (UNPO) was founded in 1991 to promote the interests of people unrepresented in major international organizations, such as the United Nations. Typically these include oppressed peoples without states, such as indigenous peoples and minorities, who are struggling against human rights abuses and for political or cultural autonomy. The UNPO provides professional services, education, and training in diplomacy, international and human rights law, building democratic institutions, and protecting the environment. Moreover, one of the principles of the organization's charter is the promotion of nonviolent action and the rejection of violence and terrorism as methods for promoting change. For peoples to become members of the UNPO, they must adhere to the principle of nonviolent discipline. Thus, for issues concerning autonomy or self-rule, issues that have historically involved violent strategies and terrorism, UNPO is forging a nonviolent strategy for social change.

Thus, human rights organizations like these do not merely document state violence and provide protection to victims of human rights abuses, but they also promote nonviolent rather than violent struggles against political oppression throughout the world. Along with an increased recognition by the international community of human rights abuses, there has been an increased recognition by scholars and activists in the third world of the power

of nonviolent action and a desire to break vicious cycles of violence.²⁷ An awareness has grown that armed struggles often result in an ethos of violence and an elite vanguard, and that what is won through violence must be defended with violence. An awareness has also developed that violent struggles often produce major social and environmental dislocations, the loss of life among innocent bystanders as well as parties to the conflict, and long-term negative consequences such as social distrust, economic decline, and increased militarization. Moreover, more people have become aware of the power of nonviolent action and some of its virtues, such as diffusing power and maximizing the segments of the population that can participate in a challenge, and the idea has developed that a people can create a new political order *through* struggle rather than hoping to create a new political order *after* the destruction of the old one (Sharp 1990, 38; Zunes 1994; Zunes and Kurtz 1999).

While the guerrilla and counterinsurgency cycle of violent contention was largely state driven, with revolutionaries supported by the Soviet Bloc or China and counterinsurgencies supported by the United States, post-Cold War challenges in the third world have tended to receive support and funding from more dispersed and decentralized transnational sources. If states, transnational corporations, and capitalist international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization represent globalization from above, transnational social movements that have arisen in response to them represent globalization from below. While responses to globalization from above are not inherently nonviolent, globalization from below has provided a predominantly nonviolent counterforce to the exploitive and often violent engines of globalization from above. As Richard Falk has noted, "Much of the energy of globalization from below is directed against violence and militarism, and more fundamentally, refrains from tactics that rely on counter violence" (Falk 1995, 219).²⁸

Whether or not the theory and project of Marxist-inspired violent revolutionary change has run its course, the problems that motivated it remain, including political oppression, capitalist economic exploitation, patriarchy, and inequalities between the North and the South. In response to these problems, over the past few decades there has been an expansion of challenges via nonviolent collective action on the part of the oppressed in the less-developed and nondemocratic world. These challenges address a range of issues, such as human rights, women's rights, indigenous people's rights, workers' rights, sustainable development, and environmentalism, and they have arisen for the most part beyond the control of the state. Whereas the goals of violent challenges are often to capture state power or gain con-

trol over territory, in the late twentieth century the goals of many of the challenging movements in the third world were not to capture state power or exercise a monopoly of power over a piece of territory, but rather to roll back the frontiers of the authoritarian state, make the polity more inclusive, and promote sociopolitical empowerment. It is possible that these goals may be more readily realized through civilian-based nonviolent action than through armed violence.

Terrorism as a Strategy for Political Change

In addition to "people power," the ability to engage in transnational terrorism²⁹ as a method of political contention also seems to have benefited from advances in communications technologies and the growth of transnational networks that are not dominated by states or corporations. Nevertheless, terrorism has an abysmal track record in promoting change unless it is combined with forms of mass political contention. Of course terrorism can have a symbolic value in forging identities and promoting mass collective action; however, when a challenge occurs primarily through acts of terrorism or when challengers turn to terrorism because they lack popular support, they are not likely to succeed. In fact, a major difference between a "people's war" and "people power," on the one hand, and terrorism, on the other, is that the former depend on mass collective action and support, while the latter does not.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the late twentieth century, as nonviolent action became a modular and global phenomenon there was a shift in the modal manner in which successful struggles against states in underdeveloped and nondemocratic countries were prosecuted. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to view this trend as part of a linear history, since factors that converged in the late twentieth century to facilitate nonviolent action may diverge in the future.

Moreover, despite the profound political transformations that were facilitated by unarmed insurrections in the late twentieth century, nonviolent action is not a panacea, nor is it always effective in promoting political change. In order to understand why unarmed insurrections contribute to political transformations and regime change in some instances but not in others, we need to make sense of how challengers, states, and third parties interact during episodes of contention. To this end, in chapter 2, I examine theoretical perspectives on nonviolent action and social movements. Then in chapters 3–5 I consider six episodes of unarmed insurrection.

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People Power Primed

Civilian Resistance and Democratization



Tisovets, a popular ski resort in the Carpathian Mountains, is a tiring four-hour drive in a four-wheel-drive from Lviv. The journey was exceptionally challenging for Ukraine's newly elected president, Viktor Yushchenko, and Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. Meeting there on January 5, 2005, they reviewed the events that led to their elections. The democratic movements that propelled them to power had to overcome obdurate regimes, defeat corrupt individuals, and confound the disbelief of international observers.

"The people of Ukraine and Georgia have demonstrated to the world that freedom and democracy, the will of the people, and free and fair elections are more powerful than any state machine, notwithstanding its strength and severity," the two presidents announced in a joint statement. This confident assertion would not have surprised President Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines, President Ricardo Lagos of Chile, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, or President Vojislav Kostunica of Serbia and Montenegro—whose countries were also transformed by "people power." Yet the ideas Yushchenko and Saakashvili endorsed in Tisovets still flout the world's conventional wisdom.

Commentators outside of Ukraine seem unable to believe that ordinary Ukrainians were behind the Orange Revolution. An Oxford professor attributed the victory to US support for Ukrainian opposition groups, coming from businessman George Soros and US agencies such as the National Endowment for Democracy. One *New York Times* article identified the American Bar Association's training of Ukrainian judges as the key factor. Russian pundits cited the training of young Ukrainian activists conducted by veterans of Otpor, the Serbian student group that helped bring down Slobodan Milosevic.

That outside analysts gravitated to external factors was no doubt vexing to the two men who had spearheaded the Orange and Rose Revolutions. In their Carpathian Declaration, Yushchenko and Saakashvili had an unambiguous response: "We strongly reject the idea that peaceful democratic revolutions can be triggered by artificial techniques or external interference. Quite the contrary, the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine happened despite such political techniques or outside interference."

So the road to Tisovets was not paved with US money or built with Serbian advisors. It took Ukrainian and Georgian drivers to maneuver the sharp turns and hard terrain that they and their people knew best. Still, the basic knowledge of how to drive had already been conceived, by many people in many countries.

What is People Power?

"People power is a form of consciousness." "People power is a euphemism for mob rule." "People power' is about restoring the 'invisible institution of morality.'" None of these phrases, plucked at random off the Internet, comes close to defining the historical phenomenon of people power. Most references in news coverage

are just as errant. The term was coined in the Philippines to describe the outpouring of popular opposition to the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, yet it was a split in his military forces, facilitated by the protests that immobilized Manila, that actually compelled Marcos to resign.

Protest by itself cannot pry a ruler from office because power does not come from a public show; it comes from applying force. When directed strategically by a civilian-based movement, protest is only one of many nonviolent tactics, including strikes, boycotts, blockades, and hundreds of other acts of economic and social disruption that can dissolve the political or military support beneath a ruler. The power in "people power" is best understood as the yield from detonating these nonviolent weapons.

Mohandas Gandhi was the first in the 20th century to discern what ordinary civilians could do—or refrain from doing—to change their country's course. "Even the most powerful cannot rule without the cooperation of the ruled," he said. If enough people withdraw that cooperation, they will shrink the government's legitimacy and raise the costs of enforcing its will. The instrument for bringing this about is a self-organized movement, which political scientist Sidney Tarrow describes as having "the power to trigger sequences of collective action" based on a unified frame for common goals. When non-violent movements of this kind have drained a ruler's sources of support, the results have changed history:

In 1980, the Solidarity Movement in Poland used industrial strikes to make the Communist regime permit a free trade union. Ten million Poles soon joined. The movement continued underground during martial law, and President Wojciech Jaruzelski eventually asked Solidarity to help negotiate Poland's first free elections, which it won.

From 1985 to 1990, the United Democratic Front in South Africa used boycotts and strikes to damage apartheid-supporting businesses, eroding their support of the racial system to help make the country ungovernable, in turn forcing the ruling party to negotiate a new political system.

In 1986, after President Marcos stole an election, fueling state-wide anger among Filipinos, a veritable army of his civilian opponents surrounded and protected key military units that

had defected, signaling that the president had lost the option of repression. He resigned.

In 1988, following five years of growing protests against the military government of General Augusto Pinochet, Chileans organized a "crusade of civic participation" to win a plebiscite that Pinochet called and that persuaded his fellow junta members to refuse orders to crack down and compelled him to step down.

From 1989 to 1990, in Prague, East Berlin, Sofia, Ulan Bator, and other Soviet-sphere capitals, tens of thousands of ordinary citizens occupied public squares as the world watched on television, forcing these regimes to hold free elections and liberating more than 120 million people from authoritarian control.

In 1996 and 1997, thousands of Serbian students and workers marched in Belgrade to demand that President Slobodan Milosevic accept opposition victories in municipal elections. He finally did so. In 2000, the protesters were joined by hundreds of thousands of ordinary Serbs from all over the country who converged on the capital after Milosevic refused to accept his own electoral defeat. When the dictator's defenders refused his orders, he had to leave.

The similarities among these civilian-based transitions



Opposite: Voters in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia go to the polls to elect a new president to replace Eduard Shevardnadze in what became known as the "Rose Revolution." **Above:** Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko arrives at the European Council in Strasbourg with Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili.

to democracy are readily apparent. That they have not caught the attention of many policy makers or pundits is due to three misconceptions.

First, nonviolent action is often misread as a form of peacemaking or conflict resolution rather than as a way to wage and win a conflict. When launched, especially against a repressive ruler, nonviolent action is usually dismissed as lacking punch or needing outside patrons. Once civilian-based resistance is seen for what it is, as a way to defeat rather than soften or persuade an opponent, the home-grown strategy and tactics that often produce success can be identified.

Second, elite policymakers and news producers naturally pay ample attention to the moves of high office-holders, commanding generals, and famous figures. The potential or even imminent actions of ordinary citizens usually fly beneath their political radar. When a regime succumbs to such a strategy, outside observers are flabbergasted.

Third, any victory of people power tends to be written off as *sui generis* once a catalytic factor is noticed that seems sufficient to have turned the political tide. In Ukraine, it was Yushchenko's poisoning that appeared to galvanize the opposition; in Serbia, the independent vote count; in South Africa, the leadership change to Frederik Willem de Klerk;

in Chile, Pinochet's decision to hold a plebiscite. Yet none of these circumstances would have mattered if there had not been indigenous civilian resistance applying extreme pressure on these regimes' institutions and backers, making the cost of repression prohibitive. Dismissing these misconceptions and understanding the necessary conditions that produce such a constructive crisis is essential if the adoption of people power as a means of democratization is to spread.

How People Power Succeeds

The great strategic scholar Thomas Schelling wrote nearly a half-century ago about the dynamics of conflict between violent and nonviolent opponents: "The tyrant and his subjects are in somewhat symmetrical positions. They can deny him most of what he wants—they can, that is, if they have the disciplined organization to refuse collaboration. And he can deny them just about everything they want—he can deny it by using the force at his command.... It is a bargaining situation in which either side, if adequately disciplined and organized, can deny most of what the other wants, and it remains to see who wins." In other words, the outcome will be determined by the skill of the contestants, not history, nebulous international forces, or other collateral factors. For a civilian-based nonviolent movement to

PEOPLE POWER IN PROGRESS



1980

1980-1981

Polish workers go on strike to urge the Communist government to allow free trade unions. ▣

1982



1986

After stealing an election and causing outrage among Filipinos, President Ferdinand Marcos resigns after civilian opponents protect defecting military units. ▣



1986

1985-1990

The United Democratic Front of South Africa protests pro-apartheid businesses. ▣

PEOPLE POWER: CIVILIAN RESISTANCE AND DEMOCRATIZATION

overturn an oppressive government, three conditions are necessary for victory.

The first is unity, encompassing the full spectrum of groups and activists who want an open, democratic society. Unity must be predicated on a consensus about goals, both short-term and long-term. Unity of purpose also fosters organizational cohesion so that leaders' decisions can be carried out to maximum effect. In Serbia's 2000 presidential campaign, opposition leaders set aside personal ambitions to unite behind Kostunica as a respected candidate against Milosevic and to prevent the regime from playing opposition groups against each other. Beyond avoiding internal conflicts, only a coalition-based campaign can plausibly claim to represent the preponderance of the civilian population, whatever its ethnic or ideological divisions.

Though the global media tend to focus on the looks and words of a movement's leader, some of history's people power revolutions lacked charismatic leaders. All were driven by robust coalitions. Solidarity, for instance, became the agency by which conservative Catholics, left-wing intellectuals, shipyard workers, and merchants in Poland coalesced into a civilian force that put continuing pressure on the Communist regime, even during the years of martial law. The people's movement that roused the majority of Chileans to

oppose Pinochet included groups of every political shade, from radical socialists to free-market conservatives.

The second necessary condition is concerted planning. Organizing a movement is not done spontaneously. It requires tactical capacity building so that personnel can be trained, material resources marshaled, and independent communications maintained. And it requires the strategic sequencing of varied tactics in order to probe, confuse, and even overwhelm the opponent. In Georgia in 2003, the youth group Kmara invited veterans of the Serbian group Otpor to come to Tbilisi and provide advanced training in nonviolent action. From that flowed better planning and better execution in Kmara's sequence of graffiti, leaflet, and poster campaigns against corruption and for media freedom. At the heart of developing a campaign strategy is analysis of the opponent's sources of support, including the country's business leadership, its religious establishment, and its security apparatus—and then the application of tactics to weaken and splinter these regime pillars. Internal audiences are even more crucial than external supporters, and both are influenced by the contest for legitimacy between movement and regime.

Winning that contest is impossible unless the opposition refrains from violence, because just as repression may

1988

General Augusto Pinochet is forced to step down after civilians call for a "crusade of civic participation" to win the plebiscite. ▣



1990

1989-1990

Civilians in several Soviet capitals, such as Ulan Bator, stage public demonstrations to force the government to hold free elections. ▣

1992

1996-1997

Serbs in Belgrade protest the cancellation of opposition victories in municipal elections and urge President Slobodan Milosevic to resign. ▣

1994



Source: Peter Ackerman and Jack Duval

delegitimize a regime, armed attacks may discredit the values and strategy of a movement. Nonviolent discipline is therefore the third condition of success in civilian-based struggle. Without it, a movement cannot enlist the participation of most people, who will avoid the risks associated with violent resistance. Moreover, violence converts the conflict into a contest of arms, in which most regimes have an advantage.

Nonviolent discipline is also critical in co-opting regime defenders. Defections from the police and military frequently break the back of a repressive state. Soldiers are unlikely to switch allegiance to people who are shooting at them. A dictator's defenders come from the same communities and

their counterparts in the Ukrainian police and army. "Do not forget that you are called to serve the people," they argued. When the Interior Ministry ordered troops to shut down the huge demonstrations in Kiev, the Army Chief of Staff said his troops would be "on the side of the people." The crackdown was aborted.

Afterward, two senior Security Service commanders disclosed that their wives had been among the protesters, and one said his daughter was on the streets, too. This dynamic is nothing new. At the height of people power in the Philippines in 1986, with the military split into opposing camps, one protester got on an independent radio station and addressed his nephew, a key military officer: "Artemio, this is your uncle Fred speaking... please listen to me." Then he explained why his nephew should join the people.

The people's cause is what a unified, well-planned, and disciplined civilian-based movement comes to embody. It elevates the struggle above the level of "technique," in the words of the Carpathian Declaration, and to the question of the country's future. In some way, every nonviolent movement represents a simple, existential proposition: it is time to rule ourselves, it is time to be free. Thus the meaning of *Poroz*—"It's Time!"—the name of the Ukrainian student group.

As Yushchenko and Saakashvili knew, they would not have taken power without the catalyst of outrage over a stolen election. But opportunities do not materialize without planning and preparation. As the two presidents also surely knew, the revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia sprang from strategies and decisions that supplied the prerequisites of people power.

Why People Power Matters

In a 2005 study, Freedom House counted 67 transitions from nondemocratic to democratic governments in the world between 1970 and 2003. Strong or moderately strong nonviolent civic forces were present in 50 of these cases. More than 70 percent of those involved broad-based nonviolent popular fronts or civic coalitions that were highly active.

The tens of thousands of civilians who make people power work become the cadres of politically active citizens who make democracy work. That is a major reason why such states tend to remain democratic long after the change. Freedom House noted that the stronger the nonviolent civic coalition operating in societies in the years immediately preceding the transition, the deeper their transformation in the direction of freedom and democracy. This correlation—between indigenous civilian-based resistance and the sustainability of democratic rule—should reframe the debate about how the international community or any government should encourage democratization.



A Ukrainian resident waves orange ribbon at a religious procession in downtown Kiev to support the Ukrainian opposition led by Viktor Yushchenko.

families as the movement's legions. They know what is at stake: their livelihood and future prospects in a society that has a chance to escape from capricious, deadly misrule.

Once election fraud occurred in Ukraine, commanders in the Security Service faced a decision. As one top general said, "Today we can save...our epaulettes, or we can try to save our country." Four days later, security officers went to

Thus far that debate has been mired in the supposed dichotomy between "hard power," threatening the big stick of military force, and "soft power," relying on the carrots of diplomacy and trade. But whether the effect is supposed to be coercive or seductive, both these tools of influence are projected from outside the domain of a menacing, repressive regime. By contrast, people power is an indigenous force and operates inside that domain, with more intimate access to a regime's foundations of power.

The reality is that foreign nationals cannot formulate a civilian movement's discourse, analyze its opponent's pillars of support, or make tactical decisions in a fast-flowing conflict. Action to produce each of the conditions necessary for

societies happily accept economic, social, or humanitarian assistance from international, regional, or national development agencies. Accountability for results has long been seen as critical for effective absorption of this aid. Because democratic governance provides that accountability, international help for civilian-led democratization is a smart way to protect the world's investment in human development.

And the stakes are even higher. Repressive regimes deal in death. All imprison or execute dissidents. Some profit from traffic in women and children procured for slavery or the sex trade. In their most destabilizing form, they are purveyors or customers of weapons of mass destruction—and they inspire insurrectionaries who often turn to war or terror as a means

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people power can be derived only from local expertise. What can come from abroad are communications equipment, funding for tangible articles like computers or bumper stickers, and training in the generic skills of nonviolent resistance—all of which quicken the pulse of people power.

At Tisovets, Yushchenko and Saakashvili implicitly endorsed the idea of international assistance for civilian-based resistance, when they said that they appreciated "the support from democratic states and organizations for the nonviolent struggle of our citizens." Much criticism of this support has come from those who suspect ulterior US motives even though training in vote monitoring from the European Union and aid from non-US-affiliated non-governmental organizations were equally if not more helpful to the movement in Ukraine.

Transnational assistance to nonviolent movements is nothing new. Catholics in Europe and North America aided nonviolent activists in Poland and the Philippines. US labor unions assisted the anti-Pinochet campaign in Chile. African-American organizations were vital in their support of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. The liberators of the Philippines, Chile, and South Africa were Filipinos, Chileans, and South Africans. But as the Carpathian Declaration made clear, the material and political solidarity given to indigenous movements, plus the knowledge of people power harvested from abroad, have been highly opportune.

Drawing the cloak of sovereignty over their abuses, some regimes claim that their own people's demands for change are a symptom of foreign intervention. Yet most undemocratic

of liberation. They should no longer be tolerated.

The most effective and least costly agent for dissolving these regimes is not violent revolt, not war, and not even external power. It is the capacity of civilians in these societies to wage a struggle for freedom, if they are equipped with the knowledge of how to use strategic nonviolent resistance. In the shadow of the horror that the regimes they oppose could otherwise perpetrate, refusal to assist indigenous forces would be a humanitarian failure.

To protect and expand this assistance, and to insure it does not serve any government's agenda for "regime change," an international institution or new international foundation should channel aid to civilian groups that choose people-power strategies. Such an institution should be independent and adopt new international norms for dispensing help. For example, assisted groups should commit to nonviolent action, democratic self-rule, and the standards enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Now that the knowledge of how ordinary citizens can democratize their own nations has been developed, the international community should make it available everywhere. Distributing this new literacy of liberation cannot manufacture people power. But it can accelerate it. Georgians and Ukrainians followed Indians, Salvadorans, Czechs, Mongolians, and a score of other peoples who used nonviolent strategies to reconstitute or replace governments that had trampled on their rights. Many others will take the same road in the years ahead. The only question is whether the world will heed the words from Tisovets and help them. ■