

A Study Guide Series on Peace and Conflict  
For Independent Learners and Classroom Instructors

# Nonviolent Civic Action



United States Institute of Peace  
Washington, DC



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## Preface

The international system has witnessed dramatic changes in the recent past. Questions relating to how and when ordinary citizens can stand against oppression, injustice, and abuse without resorting to violence challenge all of us to rethink our understanding of international peace and conflict. As academicians, educators, practitioners, private citizens, and students, what is our role in this increasingly complex global picture? What can we do to nurture and preserve international security and world peace?

One thing is certain. We must make sure our learners and educators have access to the best available information about the issues surrounding peace, justice, freedom, and security. Our country's future depends upon their interest in and understanding of these complicated topics. In the belief that knowledge of these issues is vital to civic education, we have developed this study guide to expand our readers' perspectives and knowledge of some aspects of international peace and conflict.

### About the Study Guide Series on Peace and Conflict

This study guide is designed to serve independent learners who want to find out more about international conflict and its possible resolution, as well as educators who seek to introduce these topics into their curricula. The main text of each guide briefly discusses the most important issues concerning the subject at hand, especially those that are related to the critical task of managing conflicts and building international peace.

Other features of each study guide include:

- A glossary to help the reader build vocabulary essential to the discussions about the topic.
- Discussion questions and activities to encourage critical thinking and active learning.
- A list of readings and multimedia resources for additional investigation and learning opportunities.

It is our hope that citizens around the world will find the contents of the study guide useful as they strive to deepen their understanding of international peace and conflict.

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## About the United States Institute of Peace

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict peacebuilding, and increase conflict management tools, capacity, and intellectual capital worldwide. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by its direct involvement in conflict zones around the globe.

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**Note to students who are planning to enter the National Peace Essay Contest:**

This guide is a brief summary of the key issues surrounding the issue of nonviolent civic action. Please do not use the guide as a reference in your essay or as a bibliographic citation. We encourage you to consult the references listed in the resource section and in the notes. These resources may be included as references in your bibliography.

## Nonviolent Civic Action

### Gandhi's Salt March

In the spring of 1930, a group of 78 Indian citizens set out on a 241-mile march to the sea. The march would be the latest act of civil disobedience in an ongoing nonviolent struggle against the British colonial power. The purpose of the journey was to protest the unjust Salt Laws that prevented Indians from collecting seawater to produce salt, a natural resource and an essential daily nutrient. Britain had imposed these laws, as well as a salt tax, to secure a monopoly on the sale of salt to the country's hundreds of millions of Indians. Led by Mohandas K. Gandhi, the 78 individuals would violate the colonial salt laws and seek to unify other Indians in their act of opposition.<sup>1</sup> As they marched through village after village, the original group slowly grew until tens of thousands of Indians approached the sea, where they broke the law by collecting seawater. The simple, but powerful, act sent shockwaves across India's 600,000 villages and united the country against the Salt Laws and also rallied the nation around a series of larger nonviolent independence protests. Indians paid a steep price for these acts of defiance, however. In the months following the Salt March, more than 60,000 people were arrested for acts of civil disobedience, including Gandhi, who spent almost a year in prison. India's long and difficult struggle for independence would take 17 more years, before coming to fruition in 1947.

#### American Protest: The Boston Tea Party

On the evening of December 16, 1773, a group of Bostonians boarded three ships in Boston Harbor and tossed their entire cargo of tea into the sea, to protest the British policy of taxation without representation. Almost 150 years later, Gandhi would say with a smile that the Indian Salt March reminded him of the Boston Tea Party.

### What Is Nonviolent Civic Action?

The Salt March exemplifies an historical phenomenon called "nonviolent civic action," which may also be referred to as collective nonviolent action, strategic nonviolent action, civil resistance, or nonviolent resistance. More recently, it has been described as "people power." Gandhi used the term *satyagraha* (which he rendered in English as "truth force"). The scholar Gene Sharp provides the following definition: "a general technique of conducting protest, resistance, and intervention without physical force."<sup>2</sup> There are, however, disagreements about the meanings of terms such as *nonviolent* and *nonviolence* because many languages have no words for these concepts.<sup>3</sup> Persuasive arguments have been made against the use of the word nonviolence, because it fails to differentiate mass popular action from normative, ethical, or religious beliefs in nonviolence.<sup>4</sup> Some groups choose even broader terms, such as civil resistance, contentious politics, popular defiance, or popular dissent, although these terms do not imply a disciplined prohibition of violence. Nonviolent methods, also called nonviolent sanctions, may attempt to weaken the power of the target group, but do not harm the lives of the adversary.<sup>5</sup>

Citizens involved in nonviolent civic action do not challenge their opponents by using violence or the threat of violence, which are often the tools of repressive authorities. The use of violence, even if only against property, usually strengthens the opponent and weakens one's cause. Once the protesters become like their oppressors by using violent methods, they may lose support from citizens and allies. Methods of nonviolent civic action include acts of peaceful opposition or persuasion (protest marches, letter-writing campaigns), acts or campaigns of noncooperation (boycotts, strikes), and rejection of authority (refusal to accept government actions, disobedience or non-compliance). Such actions may lead to painful consequences, but the initiative and responsibility for any violence remain with the opponent.

Gandhi called the technique of nonviolent civic action “the greatest and most activist force in the world”<sup>6</sup> and spent most of his life developing its use. Employing its methods, people around the world have at times achieved significant advancements in their political, economic, and social well-being. Nonviolent movements have helped end colonialism and foreign occupation, advance minority rights, improve transparency and good governance, and defend and obtain basic human rights. Higher working wages and improved working conditions have been won in the same way. Unjust laws and governmental policies have been repealed. New laws have been enacted in response to nonviolent campaigns to protect the environment. Ruthless dictators have been overthrown. The technique is a realistic alternative for those who have suffered grievances. In many cases, people, groups, and societies have learned to fight for their rights, or pursue a cause, without resorting to armed struggle and violence.

**It is important to keep in mind, however, that although nonviolent campaigns have had many successes in achieving political, social or economic change, such movements have not always been successful and have at times led to greater suffering and violence at the hands of those in power.** The recent demonstrations in the streets of Iran or in the Uighur provinces in China reinforce the point that any challenges to repressive regimes can have major negative repercussions and may even strengthen those in power. Furthermore, such methods can also be manipulated to destabilize societies, as many historians contend occurred in Russia during the years leading up to the Russian Revolution. Some caution that these methods can also undermine efforts at promoting or sustaining democracy, as seen in the past decade in Venezuela or Thailand. While this guide focuses on the possibilities and successes of nonviolent civic action, and makes the point that many nonviolent campaigns succeeded over time despite initial, and often very painful, setbacks, we should remember that history is littered with examples of unsuccessful movements of change, some of which ended up subverting democracy, were exploited by extremists, and fueled violence and undermined peace.

## Understanding Conflicts

At the heart of a conflict generally lies a grievance or dispute that needs to be resolved in order for individuals or the parties to the dispute to reach a solution or reconcile their relationship. Left unresolved, deeply rooted grievances and injustices can fester, leading to anguish, hostility, resentment, and hate between individuals or groups of people. Such ill feelings have the potential to trigger one party lashing out against another, sometimes creating a cycle of violence.

Dialogue and counseling tools may help individuals reconcile differences. Similarly, mediation and negotiation may be used to resolve conflicts between parties on a communal or state level. Most societies have established institutions and processes to maintain peaceful relationships by facilitating the settlement of disputes through courts, legislation, councils, or elders. Under the rule of law, individuals are theoretically assured justice and equity, regardless of, for example, their socio-economic status or race. If an individual or group suffers an injustice or inequality, he or she may depend upon various institutions to rectify the situation and harmonize the conflict.

But what if the institutions established to resolve or adjudicate unresolved injustices don't work? What if the wishes of the minority are ignored or denied by the majority? What if institutions or governments have passed unjust laws, violated the rights of minorities, ignored some groups and marginalized others, and basic rights of people have been restricted under the rule of law? Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution are sometimes insufficient to address certain conflicts, notably where the voices of ordinary people are being ignored. Such institutional failure frequently occurs in non-democratic states and authoritarian regimes, but it can also happen in democratic societies like the United States. Sometimes a more powerful group of people may take advantage of another group. In situations where societal institutions fail to protect and guarantee the basic rights of its citizens, individuals and groups must decide how to pursue their cause or resolve their grievances.

All too often, violence is chosen as the arbiter of disputes. U.S. history books are filled with examples where conflicts have been resolved by the sword or barrel of a gun. Too often, violence results in the domination and destruction of one party, or parties, to the conflict. Consequences on human life and property can be horrific, and yet the original grievance typically remains, perhaps worsened. The legacy of such violence is that for affected societies, it often takes generations or centuries to heal and reconcile.

### ***In the United States***

U.S. history has a host of examples of ordinary citizens who used nonviolent civic action to better their community, workplace, and country. Many of the men and women who built our country labored without the guarantees that we enjoy today, such as the right to vote, a minimum wage, an eight-hour workday, prohibitions against child labor, and safeguards for physical safety at the workplace. For example, the eight-hour day movement struggled for decades through much of the second half of the nineteenth century. Factory workers and labor unions implemented strikes, marches, sit-ins, walk-outs, vigils, and other forms of protest in most major U.S. cities including Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Boston. Many labor leaders were intimidated, fired, beaten, and even executed for mobilizing workers. Cities slowly, one by one, adopted the eight-hour workday. The federal government finally passed the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to guarantee to all American citizens their labor rights.

As another example, the right of American women to vote did not come easily either. For decades, women's suffrage movement staged campaigns of protests and persuasion until the Nineteenth Amendment was added to the United States Constitution in 1920, guaranteeing the ballot for women.

## **A Realistic and Strategic Alternative to Violence**

While conflicts are inevitable, they need not become violent when all formal institutional processes and other peaceful avenues have seemingly been exhausted. If a ruthless dictator terrorizes the citizens, nonviolent civic action presents an alternative to armed attacks or guerrilla warfare. If a corporation pollutes the well water of a small community and refuses to accept responsibility, the residents can mobilize with the methods of nonviolent action and force remediation. If a factory forces its employees to work overtime without pay under sweatshop conditions, the employees can unite and use nonviolent civic action to increase their power and leverage, and reach negotiations where they may be able to prevail. When institutions or governments fail to respond adequately to people's grievances, there is a realistic and often effective way for citizens to fight for their rights and achieve their objectives without resorting to violence.

## Power Imbalances

Nonviolent civic action is often utilized in response to a power imbalance. Consider the earlier case of the Indian Salt March. Despite the grievance felt by the Indians, it was not in the economic interests of the British colonial authorities to repeal the Salt Laws, because they were reaping huge profits from their monopoly of the market. On March 2, 1930, Gandhi wrote a letter to Lord Irwin, the British viceroy, summarizing the objections of the Indian people and advising him of the nonviolent protests being planned. He recommended a negotiated settlement, and encouraged discussion.<sup>7</sup> When those in power do not respond, or do so inadequately, how do citizens force those in power to listen or respond? How do those who are seeking change increase their own power and leverage, and oblige those who have authority to come to the negotiating table? How does a movement decrease the strength of those in power or those who have more power? To answer these questions, we must examine the nature of power.

Power is derived from many sources, including wealth, stature, influence, title, recognition, and education. Throughout much of human history, power has often been perceived to come from military strength and the ability to dominate or vanquish a weaker party. Power is the ability to influence others, even to get someone to do something he or she might not otherwise do. If the actor with more strength cannot compel the weaker to yield to authority or the weaker party does not consent to give up on its demands, the stronger actor's power is weakened. Often, this occurs because the weaker party is willing to accept the consequences of not complying.

If a government will use any means to exert and maintain power, citizens typically are no match for those who have access to state-controlled police, security, and military forces. The use of violence plays to the strength of the authorities. In essence, you cannot fight fire with fire; rather, the weaker party is more effective fighting fire with commitment, patience, discipline, publicity, and moral suasion or by creating economic, social, or political costs.

“You may well ask: ‘Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn’t negotiation a better path?’ You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” 1963.

According to a bottom-up understanding of power, governments and institutions depend upon the obedience and cooperation of their citizens, which can be withdrawn. Political power is based upon the voluntary support and compliance of the governed. It is therefore pluralistic and fragile. Without obedience, a government cannot govern.<sup>8</sup> This same principle holds true across all levels of society. No institution can function unless people carry out their roles and obey specific rules. This applies to schools as well. A high school principal runs the day-to-day operations of the school. But she or he cannot effectively do this unless everybody else does their assigned task or job: teachers teach; clerical staff handles administrative tasks; janitors maintain the grounds; cooks prepare meals. If one or two people refuse to do their task, they will likely be fired. But if the entire school staff refuses to obey the principal's order, the school will shut down. Authority is imposed from above only if it is accepted from below.

Many examples exist in history where oppressed, marginalized, disenfranchised people around the world, some of whom thought of themselves as powerless, have refused to accept the oppression or injustice imposed from above and have fought back with nonviolent civic action. Indigenous people have won the right to self determination, employees have been liberated from economic wrongs, dictatorship have been

dismantled, voting rights for women and marginalized populations have been secured, and community members have preserved their local environments.

## The Strategic Rationale for Nonviolence

In 2000, a Serbian student group called Otpor! (Resistance!) mobilized to overthrow the Balkan country's ruthless dictator, Slobodan Milosevic. The group organized around three demands: free and fair elections, academic freedom, and an unfettered news media.

Despite immense challenges, the youth-led group was successful, partly because the group united and mobilized diverse civic associations across the country. The Serbian group appealed to large segments of the Serbian population, because they maintained a strict adherence to *nonviolent* methods. For Otpor, even if an adversary threatened, intimidated, or physically harmed its members, any form of violence, revenge, or retaliation was strictly prohibited.

A recent empirical study conducted by Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth challenged the prevailing assumption that violence is the most effective means of waging political struggle. In their article, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict," the authors examined 323 violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns between 1900 and 2006 and discovered that campaigns that were nonviolent achieved success 53 percent of the time, compared to 26 percent for violent campaigns. When a campaign relies on methods of nonviolent direct action, as opposed to violence, this better enhances the campaign's domestic and international legitimacy; encourages broad-based participation; undermines an opponent's sources of political, economic, and even military power; and enhances the possibility of resolving the conflict through mediation and negotiations.<sup>9</sup>

"Nonviolent action is possible, and is capable of wielding great power even against ruthless rulers and military regimes, because it attacks the most vulnerable characteristic of all hierarchical institutions and governments: dependence on the governed."  
— Gene Sharp, "The Role of Power in Nonviolent Struggle," 1990.

It is the *policy* of shunning violence that is essential to success. Any form of violence would serve only to splinter a nonviolent movement, delegitimize its demands, and protract the conflict. It is not uncommon for agitators or provocateurs to try to sabotage a nonviolent movement by introducing violence, thereby weakening the movement's appeal to a larger population and legitimizing a violent response by those in authority. Strict discipline must be maintained and any form of violence immediately rebuked, even if the movement's opponent uses violence, which is not uncommon. If a movement introduces violence, it will lose the ability to recruit participants from large segments of the population and lose support from the international community.

Using a series of case studies in their book *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*, Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler identify a number of key principles at the core of analyzing a movement's strategic performance and its outcomes. Some of the principles include: formulating functional objectives; cultivating external assistance; expanding the repertoire of sanctions; maintaining nonviolent discipline; and assessing events and options in light of strategic decision making. A nonviolent movement needs to carefully consider its strategy and tactics in order to increase its chances of achieving its objectives.

In a separate article entitled "People Power Primed: Civilian Resistance and Democratization," Ackerman identifies three conditions that are necessary if a civilian-based, nonviolent movement hopes to achieve victory, specifically applied to overturning an oppressive government: unity, planning, and nonviolent discipline. Unity entails achieving consensus on short- and long-term goals, as well as organizational

cohesion. Planning is necessary to train members, channel resources effectively, maintain communication, and implement tactics. If the movement hopes to win over members of the regime (including military and security forces), nonviolent discipline must be maintained.<sup>10</sup>

As reflected in the word “civic,” nonviolent civic action is a technique or method that can be utilized by ordinary citizens, including the young, and is often implemented at the grassroots or community level. When individuals or groups of people share a common grievance, or experience an injustice together, they often find support by uniting. When unified, they can more effectively mobilize and challenge their opponent. As Otpor increasingly attracted support, generated sympathy, and brought in new members from among its fellow citizens, its power and leverage against Milosevic amplified. In order to increase its power, a movement must build a cohesive coalition of organizations, groups, and institutions that is unified around common objectives. The more members, resources, and external support the movement can attract, the stronger its capacity. Otpor also drew support from international groups and a number of countries, including the United States and several countries in Europe, as various forms of assistance were contributed to their movement.

Finally, nonviolent civic action requires targeted and skillful action. Like so many other movements around the world, Otpor could never have achieved its goals without a concerted, proactive, and determined effort. In the armed services, commanders attempt to outmaneuver and outflank their opponents, while simultaneously anticipating their responses. Nonviolent movements, too, must carefully plan their decisions to achieve their objectives with limited resources and under conditions of uncertainty. For example, in order to secure free and fair elections in Serbia, Otpor had to create a strategy to place monitoring teams in all voting precincts, and coordinate efforts to expose electoral fraud and mobilize mass protests in the aftermath of the stolen elections.

### ***Thoreau, Gandhi, and King***

Henry David Thoreau’s 1848 lecture “The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government,” later renamed “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,” helped shape the thinking of prominent nonviolent twentieth-century practitioners such as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. In his essay, Thoreau reflected upon his experience of being jailed for not paying a poll tax. He questioned if unjust laws, which violate a person’s morality, should be obeyed. If not, he asked, should citizens wait until a majority of legislators are persuaded to alter the law? Thoreau argued that because the state depends upon the consent of the governed, upon which its power and authority are derived, citizens could withhold their allegiance with a clear conscience.

Gandhi drew from Thoreau when formulating his concept of *satyagraha* as a method to achieve political power through nonviolent action to achieve his aims: independence from a colonial power, challenging the Hindu caste system, and working toward equality for women. Twenty years after the Salt March, when India had gained its independence, a young man in the United States was particularly intrigued by Gandhi’s Salt March and by the notion that any government or governing system would cease if its citizens refused cooperation. Martin Luther King, Jr., the young man, would draw heavily from the Indian nonviolent struggles in his leadership of the American civil rights movement.

## Extracting Allegiance from Pillars of Support

Institutions such as the police, civil service, organized religion, educational system, news media, business community, and labor unions are among the pillars that support any society. If nonviolent movements can undermine their opponent's power by obtaining allegiance from these pillars of support, they can increase their chance of success. Nonviolent movements must creatively devise a strategy to raise awareness of their grievances among the general public, create sympathy and willingness to take action, and undermine the structures that support their opponent. At the core of such a strategy is the selection and implementation of nonviolent methods, also called action steps or tactics. In *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two: *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, Gene Sharp identifies 198 methods of nonviolent action.<sup>11</sup> He categorizes the methods into the following three categories:

*Protest and persuasion*: formal statements; blogging; group presentations; distributing leaflets; wearing symbols; drama and music; joining Facebook protest groups; processions; honoring the dead; and public assemblies.

*Non-cooperation*: social or economic boycotts; text messaging of information that is banned or censored; labor strikes; boycotting rigged elections; and refusing to recognize the legitimacy of a regime.

*Intervention*: hunger strikes; sit-downs in streets; live video streaming of an opponent's abuse or fraud from cell phones to Internet sites; occupation of offices; seeking imprisonment; and overloading administrative facilities.

When conducted skillfully, a unified nonviolent movement of ordinary people can wield tremendous power, challenging even formidable military opponents, or at least bringing them to the negotiating table. Yet a tremendous amount of planning, strategizing, and management is essential in order to integrate individual, isolated acts of protest or defiance into a concerted, coordinated movement.

## Mechanisms of Change

Four different "mechanisms of change" or processes explain the aims upon which a nonviolent movement can build its strategy.<sup>12</sup> A number of factors influence which outcome will be achieved, including "the specific conflict situation, the issues at stake, the social structure of the resisting population, the nature of the opponents, . . . the specific methods used, and the skill, discipline, and tenacity of the resisters."<sup>13</sup> The following four mechanisms can be operating at different points of the struggle, or even concurrently in different parts of an opponent's system.

*Conversion*: A movement's opponent freely accepts the point of view and demands of the movement. The hearts and minds of the opponent are changed and power is transferred to the movement. This process only pertains to dictatorship and occupation struggles, and it should be noted that many movements deliberately avoid having political aspirations to increase their credibility with the people. Historically, this mechanism rarely occurs.

*Accommodation*: When confronted by a nonviolent movement, the target group or opponent decides the cost of standing firm is too high and yields to some of the demands. A compromise may be negotiated between the two parties. Or concessions start to occur without notice. This is the most common mechanism of the four: the shifting of power.

*Nonviolent coercion:* The nonviolent movement causes the opponent to change, without wanting to. The target group is forced to surrender to the demands of the movement.

*Disintegration:* In rare cases, the power system of the opponent completely collapses in the face of the power exhibited by the nonviolent movement. An example often cited is the fall of the Ferdinand Marcos regime in the Philippines in 1986.

## Use of the Technique in Diverse Cases

Throughout history, people have used nonviolent civic action, even if it was called by a different name, to achieve political, economic, social, and environmental advances around the world. A number of cases studies illustrate the utility of this technique in diverse contexts and countries.

### **Fighting to Overcome Authoritarianism in Nepal**

In 1990, an unarmed insurrection challenged Nepal's centuries-old Hindu monarchy, which demanded that Nepal's king lift his ban on political parties. After a series of widespread protest activities that at times drew hundreds of thousands to the streets of the capital of Kathmandu, the king succumbed to the movement's demands for democratic change. The country made a transition to become a constitutional monarchy in 1990, with the establishment of multiparty elections in 1991.

In 2001, a new king, Gyanendra, ascended to the Nepalese throne and slowly began to reverse the previous gains that had been made toward democracy. Four years later, Gyanendra seized absolute control of the state, having suspended the Parliament. He justified his actions as a necessity for internal security due to a ten-year-long civil war with Maoist insurgents that cost 13,000 lives on both sides.

In response to Gyanendra's authoritarian direct rule, an alliance of Nepalese political parties launched a nationwide movement of protests. For three weeks in April 2006, pro-democracy mobilizations, including a general strike, brought the daily activities of Kathmandu to a halt. Schools, offices, businesses, and public services ground to a halt. In response, the government cracked down on the populace and imposed a curfew with a "shoot-on-sight" order for those who disobeyed. In defiance of the curfew and their government, hundreds of thousands of citizens rallied in the streets of the capital for a series of major protest demonstrations. Their actions had brutal repercussions. The government security forces responded harshly with tear gas, rubber bullets, and long wooden batons used to smash protesters' heads, ribs, and extremities. Police also fired into crowds, killing 17 people in three weeks.

Despite the repression, the leaders of political parties defiantly insisted that they would not stop the social agitation until the king reinstated the Parliament and permitted a referendum on the Constitution that had given the monarchy control of the military. With most of the country united against the unpopular and repressive king, Gyanendra finally gave in to the movement's demands. Parliament reconvened and a seven-party alliance of the largest political parties began work on a constitutional referendum. The new government declared a ceasefire with the Maoist rebels and undertook efforts to include their participation in the political mainstream.

### ***Other examples of nonviolent movements fighting to overcome authoritarianism and military rule include the following:***

Russia: In 1905, some 150,000 workers in St. Petersburg challenged the autocratic rulers. Backlash was severe, and became known as "Bloody Sunday." However, the protest spread and led to the country's first elected national parliament.

Denmark: National noncooperation and acts of sabotage against the Nazi German occupation during World War II saved the lives of most Danish Jews.

Chile: The country-wide “No” campaign ended the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in the late 1980s.  
Georgia: The youth-led Kmara movement (literally “enough is enough”) brought about the end of the Soviet-style presidency of Eduard A. Shevardnadze, resulting in sweeping political reforms in 2003.  
Lebanon: During the Lebanese “Intifada for Independence” in 2005, one quarter of the country’s population gathered in Beirut to protest the assassination of a popular political leader to demand the resignation of the Syrian-controlled government and the removal of Syrian troops.

### **Fighting for Human Rights and Democratic Freedoms in Argentina: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo**

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an organization that grew over three decades with a simple demand: to know the fate of some 30,000 “disappeared” daughters and sons, who were abducted by agents of the Argentine government during the “dirty war” (1976–1983). During this time the military dictatorship, under the leadership of Jorge Rafael Videla, was responsible for systematic repression of trade unionists, activists, students, and others in what was known as the National Reorganization Process. The majority of those who “disappeared” were tortured prior to being executed. Standing up against a merciless military regime, a group of mothers gathered regularly on a weekly basis in the Plaza de Mayo Square, starting in April 1977, demanding to know the fate of their children.

The women’s actions spurred a human rights movement that would raise the issue of Argentina’s political repression to the consciousness of the international community. In quiet acts of bravery, for years the mothers stood together in the face of the ruthless military junta, which would “disappear” three of the founders, while many others faced threats and beatings. Their activism also challenged traditional social and cultural roles for middle-aged Argentinean women as housewives. In December 1981, the Mothers held their First Resistance March and have continued the annual tradition ever since. To this day, they still ask to learn the fate of their children, even though their movement has also incorporated other social issues such as national debt, poverty, unemployment, and the release of political prisoners.

### ***Other examples of nonviolent movements advancing human rights and democratic freedoms include:***

Pakistan: Known as the Pakistani Lawyers’ Movement, lawyers across Pakistan united in 2007 to demand the restoration of Pakistan’s chief justice, along with 60 other judges who were dismissed illegally by the military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf.

South Africa: The anti-apartheid struggle culminated with the release of Nelson Mandela from 27 years of imprisonment and his eventual presidency.

Madagascar: In 2001, a fraudulent election, followed by mass demonstrations, brought the entire country to a stand-still for seven weeks until the incumbent president fled the country.

Iran: In 2009, demonstrations were launched to protest the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmedinijad, particularly at the behest of opposition candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi.

United States: The U.S. civil rights movement, whose best known leader was Martin Luther King, Jr., brought about major changes in laws and policies upholding racial discrimination against black Americans.

### **Fighting Against Environmental Degradation: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Nigeria)**

In 1958, the Royal Dutch Shell Corporation discovered oil in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria that encompasses the land of the Ogoni people. Since then, this “black gold” has generated incredible revenues for both the corporation and the federal Nigerian government, but at significant social, human, and environmental costs. Profits were maximized at the expense of local communities and the environment. For decades, oil extraction was done with little care to the natural habitat and ecology upon which the local inhabitants have depended for their livelihoods. Aside from the environmental destruction

caused by infrastructure development, compounded by daily extraction, the refining and exportation poisoned whole habitats from oil spills and perpetual gas flare-ups.

Writer turned political activist Kenule Beeson (“Ken”) Saro-Wiwa became the catalyst for the Ogoni struggle for autonomy and self-preservation when he mobilized local leaders to form the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). MOSOP developed the Ogoni Bill of Rights in 1990 to promote: “(a) Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people. (b) The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of OGONI economic resources for Ogoni development. (c) Adequate and direct representation as a right in all Nigerian national institutions. (d) The use and development of Ogoni languages in Ogoni territory. (e) The full development of Ogoni culture. (f) The right to religious freedom. (g) The right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.”<sup>14</sup>

MOSOP conducted meetings across the Ogoni’s nine villages and mobilized the Ogoni people. MOSOP planned a nonviolent protest march in January 1992 that drew around 300,000 people to voice their grievances, with participation from an estimated 60 percent of the Ogoni population. It was a big step forward in unifying the Ogoni people. During the nonviolent campaigns, Saro-Wiwa was repeatedly arrested and detained without trial. In 1995 he was arrested and imprisoned for more than a year until a specially convened tribunal declared him guilty of “incitement to murder.” A year later Saro-Wiwa was hanged. Despite having successfully gained international attention, the Ogoni movement still struggles to achieve its aims. Like armed struggle, nonviolent resistance does not always succeed.

***Other examples of environmental nonviolent movements include:***

Kenya: The Greenbelt Movement, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Mathaai, provides income and sustenance to millions of Kenyans through the planting of trees.

Brazil: In January 2009, a thousand indigenous people formed a human banner to spell out “Salve a Amazonia” (Save the Amazon) to raise awareness and protest against the actions of loggers, ranchers, and oil companies that have polluted and degraded the rainforest.

New York: After unprecedented health problems in the Niagara Falls community linked to a toxic waste dump, the Love Canal Homeowners Association organized to fight against the state and federal governments to get a declaration of public emergency, their families evacuated, and the site remediated.

China: Using a wave of cell phone texts and online messages, local residents of Xiamen protested the construction of a vast petrochemical plant close to the city’s center for fear of adverse health affects.

**Fighting for Labor Rights: Poland’s Solidarity Movement**

In the early 1980s, thousands of Soviet troops occupied Poland, and the Poles lived under severe fear and repression under the Communist government. Any expression of dissent was harshly put down by the regime. In August 1980, workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk initiated a strike against a recent rise in food prices, among other grievances. Roughly 17,000 factory workers stopped work and many remained inside the factory walls in defiance of the ruling Communist Party. The group issued a list of demands that included the right to form an independent self-governing trade union, which they would name Solidarnosc, or Solidarity. As news of the strike spread across Poland, the movement swelled as sympathetic factory workers joined the cause. The shipyard workers, led by Lech Walesa, adhered to a strict code of nonviolent discipline. Polish strikers had learned the futility of violent confrontations against the iron-fisted Communists a decade prior when six people died in strikes. Within days this time, Solidarity successfully shut down entire industries across Poland and forced the Communist Party to the negotiating table. Communist officials finally agreed to most of the workers’ demands, including the establishment of a free trade union, a first in communist Europe. From a movement that started with a group of disgruntled workers at one factory, Solidarity grew to include around ten million members in a little over a year. In the years that followed, the Communist-led government renegeed on parts of the labor agreement, but Solidarity’s power and influence would pave the way for the first free elections ever in the communist bloc, in June 1989.

***Other examples of labor rights movements include:***

Tanzania: In 1945, some 500 Pare women organized and revolted against an unjust system of taxation and forced labor demands by colonial authorities. They refused their domestic duties of cooking, cleaning, and farming until their demands were met.

California: Attempting to improve the working conditions of migrant laborers, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, led by Cesar Chavez, organized a grape boycott and labor strike in 1965.

## Other Especially Challenging Cases

When conducted skillfully and strategically, nonviolent movements have the potential to topple the most ruthless dictator, force remediation from complacent businesses and industries, and reverse laws or policies that violate rights. Those in power do not typically concede their power voluntarily. Rather, they must be made to feel heightened political and economic costs in maintaining the status quo. While strategic nonviolent action has the potential to empower previously disenfranchised, disempowered, and marginalized people, there is never a guarantee that a nonviolent movement will succeed. Highly authoritarian regimes that are closed off from the global economy pose a particular challenge to would-be nonviolent resisters. In such environments, the risks and consequences for activists are high. Countless people have been arrested, tortured, and killed fighting nonviolently.

Burma is currently under the control of a ruthless military junta, which has suppressed the basic freedoms of the Burmese for the past four decades. A highly coordinated pro-democracy movement has surged both internally within Burma's borders, and externally through diaspora populations and sympathizers. Burmese monks have orchestrated a series of protests, demonstrations, and marches—most recently in their 2007 Saffron Revolution. However, the junta's iron fist has squashed dissident efforts and tortured and killed numerous leaders despite international outcry. Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest for over 20 years. The Burmese nonviolent struggle continues but little progress has been made in liberating the country from the junta.

“Even the most despotic government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed, which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone.”  
—Mohandas Gandhi, *Young India*, June 30, 1920.

Despite attempts for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe, many citizens have either fled the country's recent economic and political crisis or continued to live in fear of President Robert Mugabe's notorious secret police, the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). Rumors of death squads and kidnappings are commonplace, particularly concerning dissidents who oppose the dictator. Those who have organized to defy Mugabe nonviolently have done so at great personal risk. However, civic groups such as Women of Zimbabwe Arise manage to defy restrictions, demanding education, medical care, and food. They bring international attention to the plight of Zimbabwe's citizens, much to the anger of the Mugabe regime.

Communist China continues to suppress many public pro-democracy and free speech demonstrations, including those associated with the nascent Charter '08 movement, Tibetan self-determination, and Uighur autonomy. In Belarus, dissident youth inspired by the Serbian Otpor student movement formed the Zubr movement to oppose “Europe's last dictator,” President Alexander Lukashenko, who won a landslide victory in a flawed election in 2006. Protests and demonstrations have often resulted in harassment and imprisonment of leaders by the Belarus police. Lukashenko recently declared defiantly, “In our country, there will be no pink or orange, or even banana revolution. All [those] colored revolutions are pure and simple banditry.”<sup>15</sup> This was said in reference to the bloodless democratic

revolutions in Serbia, Ukraine (Orange Revolution), Georgia (Rose Revolution), and Kyrgyzstan (Tulip Revolution).

One of the misconceptions about nonviolent civic action is that it is always used for altruistic and benevolent purpose. At times, however, unethical opportunists can incite and manipulate populations to advance their personal aims, particularly within zones of conflict. For example, a corrupt politician in a conflict zone may rally his constituents to approve a law that would allow a non-governmental organization to build a road to get humanitarian assistance to a remote village, although the real purpose might be to use that road for the transport of arms, drugs, or other illegal commodities.

One of the most challenging tests of nonviolent civic action involves cases of genocide. Prior to the Holocaust during World War II, Gandhi wrote an article in 1938 urging Jews to be steadfast and morally superior against Hitler and German oppression using the methods of nonviolent civic action. In response, the Jewish philosopher and educator Judah Magnes wrote “A Letter to Gandhi” saying that as much as he believed in nonviolent civic action he no longer saw it as a realistic alternative in the midst of such overwhelming evil. Magnes argued that the conditions in the Germany of his time were radically different than from those in South Africa and India where Gandhi’s nonviolent civic actions had successfully occurred. Having lost faith, he asked Gandhi to spell out precisely how Satyagraha could be of practical use to the Jewish people in those dire times. He wrote, “I am all too painfully conscious that I am beginning to admit that if Hitler hurls his war upon us, we must resist. For us it would thus become not a righteous war . . . but a necessary war, not for something good, but, because no other choice is left us, against the greater evil.”<sup>16</sup>

Tragically the Holocaust occurred shortly thereafter. So we are left to wonder, can the power of nonviolent civic action be effective even in the midst of such an unthinkable atrocity? On the one hand, some people point to the numerous documented cases of nonviolent civic action successfully implemented during World War II that saved the lives of many people. On the other hand, others argue that nonviolent action is no match for an absolutely evil system determined to exterminate large populations.

## Conclusion

This study guide presented a basic theoretical and historical foundation for readers to understand nonviolent civic action. Nonviolent activists can wield tremendous power to resolve grievances against an opponent to overcome authoritarianism and military occupation, achieve labor rights and environmental protection, and advance human rights and democratic freedoms.

In regards to the promotion of democracy and human rights, a recent 2005 report by Freedom House, *How Freedom Is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy*, analyzed 67 political transitions to democracy over the past 33 years. The report found that only 17 of the transitions resulted from accommodation efforts between political elites, while 50 transitions were driven in large part by nonviolent civic action.<sup>17</sup> While this survey affirms the historical effectiveness of nonviolent movements, cases such as Burma, Zimbabwe, China, and Belarus continue to pose formidable challenges. It should be noted that the United States has played an active role in helping many populations struggling for independence, including some of the movements mentioned in this study guide. Indigenous movements have benefited from the support of the U.S. government through various forms of external assistance, including material and financial assistance, training, press coverage, diplomatic engagement, sanctions, and international boycotts.

Conflicts do not necessarily have to be resolved through violent means. Strategic civic action enables anyone, including students, to play an important part in building peace in their community regardless of

gender, age, education, or economic status. If traditional, formal institutions fail to resolve a grievance or injustice, each person can contribute his or her unique skills and abilities to achieving political, social, and economic change. Nonviolent civic action serves as an effective tool for citizens when implemented strategically. At times the challenges and risks may be great, and opponents may be formidable. But through careful strategic thinking and commitment, dedicated individuals are using nonviolent civic action as a realistic alternative to violence to overcome injustices and promote equality, justice, and human rights.

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The endnotes begin on page 35.

## Glossary

These terms are taken in part, or in full, from *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies* by Miller and King.<sup>18</sup> (Permission granted by the authors.) The complete glossary can be downloaded at: <http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/GlossaryV2.pdf>

**Civil disobedience:** The conscious, individual, or collective violation of a law, regulation, or edict. The order violated is usually deemed to be immoral or unjust by those undertaking the action. Civil disobedience also includes disobeying neutral orders, which serve as symbols of more general opposition.

**Civil society:** A sphere of society distinct and independent from the state system, the means of economic production, and the household. This collective realm, or “public space,” includes networks of institutions through which citizens voluntarily represent themselves in cultural, ideological, and political senses.

**Civilian-based defense:** A policy designed to accomplish a full range of defensive objectives, including deterrence as well as preparations to defend against internal and external acts of aggression. Through non-cooperation measures, political defiance, and control of key social and political institutions, they [civilians] make it difficult or impossible for their home country or territory to be ruled by the aggressor. Civilian-based defense has also been variously referred to as “civil resistance,” “non-military defense,” “non-violent defense,” and “social defense.”

**Conflict:** From the Latin for “to clash or engage in a fight,” a confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. Conflict may be either manifest, recognizable through actions or behaviors, or latent, in which case it remains dormant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangements as governments, corporations, or even civil society.

**Conflict management:** Interventionist efforts toward preventing the escalation and negative effects, especially violent ones, of ongoing conflicts. Rarely are conflicts completely resolved. More often, they are reduced, downgraded, or contained. Such developments can be followed by a reorientation of the issue, reconstitution of the divisions among conflicting parties, or even by a re-emergence of past issues or grievances. Conflict management when actively conducted is, therefore, a constant process.

**Conflict resolution:** A variety of approaches aimed at resolving conflicts through the constructive solving of problems distinct from the management or transformation of conflict.

**Conflict transformation:** Changes in all, any, or some combination of the following matters regarding a conflict: the general context or framing of the situation, the contending parties, the issues at stake, the processes or procedures governing the predicament, or the structures affecting any of the

aforementioned. Conflict transformation may occur through the unintended consequences of actions taken by parties to the conflict, yet deliberate attempts at transformation may also be made. The latter aim to generate opportunities for conflict resolution or conflict management and ultimately more equitable outcomes.. Conflict transformation requires that the parties alter their previous strategies of handling or avoiding the discord in order to implement new approaches toward ameliorating the situation.

**Force:** The application or threat of coercion within the context of international relations. In physical terms, the use of force is usually associated with military weapons and personnel. Considerable debate surrounds the legitimacy of the use of force in various situations. At a minimum, force should only be exerted if it is properly sanctioned through internationally recognized vehicles. Even the sanctioned use of force is not, however, universally accepted. To appropriate the term “force” solely for military purposes represents a serious distortion, as it assumes that non-violent means are incapable of force.

**Human rights:** The universal, indivisible, equitable, and indispensable claims and entitlements that are endowed to all persons simply by the sake of being human.

**Non-cooperation:** A conscious and deliberate, partial or total, non-engagement in activities that can impede the objectives or interests of a particular person, group, institution, bureaucracy, or state system. Encompassing a large class of methods, non-cooperation may assume social forms (boycotts and stay-at-homes), economic forms (strikes and lockouts), and political forms (civil disobedience and mutiny). Non-cooperation rests at the core of nonviolent action and is based on the precept that all systems of government rely on cooperation from their respective populations, whether through consent, acquiescence, or duress. Individuals may refuse to provide such cooperation and withdraw their support.

**Nonviolence:** A holistic belief in and practice of abstaining from violent acts.

**Nonviolent action:** A technique of conflict engagement or prosecution that aims to achieve political objectives through the imposition of sanctions and various supporting methods excluding physical, violent acts. Nonviolent action involves two fundamental forms of activities: omission and commission. It operates on the precept that all political symbiotic relationships require varying degrees of obedience, cooperation, or acquiescence, which are manifested through identifiable sources. The supply of these sources is not guaranteed, and it can be purposefully withdrawn. Nonviolent action is also termed “nonviolent struggle,” “nonviolent resistance,” “direct action,” “civil resistance,” and “political defiance.”

**Pacifism:** A doctrine and historical school of thought that rejects war as the means of resolving conflict. Pacifism reflects several perspectives, all of which consider that conflicts should be settled through peaceful means.

**Peace:** A political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices, and norms.

**Peacebuilding:** Policies, programs, and associated efforts to restore stability and the effectiveness of social, political, and economic institutions and structures in the wake of a war or some other debilitating or catastrophic event. Peacebuilding generally aims to create and ensure the conditions for “negative peace,” the mere absence of violent conflict engagement, and for “positive peace,” a more comprehensive understanding related to the institutionalization of justice and freedom.

**Pillars of support:** The institutions and organizations that supply the necessary sources of power to a party in a politically symbiotic relationship, thereby allowing that party to maintain and exert its political power capacity. Pillars of support are most recognizable within a nation-state or society. Examples of

such pillars include authority figures, the business community, labor organizations, the media, military forces, police, prisons, and universities, among many possible others.

**Political *jiu-jitsu*:** Deriving from the Japanese martial art, a process by which participants in a nonviolent struggle refuse to reciprocate violent actions of their opponent, which can result in a disruption of the opponent's political equilibrium. In turn, the nonviolent resisters can be strengthened by new or altered third-party or constituent allegiances and support. Requiring steadfast discipline by nonviolent resisters, political *jiu-jitsu*, a rarity in practice, shows how nonviolent protagonists, despite an asymmetrical position, can employ techniques that will throw off balance their adversary.

**Political power:** The summation of means, influences, and pressures available to a government, institution, group, or individual that are exploited to achieve respective objectives or to change targeted conditions. Political power may be exerted positively, in the form of incentives, or negatively, as in various types of sanctions. Differentials in political power can be a crucial factor in determining the outcomes of disputes, but in such situations the underlying causes of the conflict in question are often purposefully ignored. Groups are often unaware of their full power capacity, creating distorted assumptions of the balance of power among contending parties.

**Reconciliation:** A process that attempts to transform intense or lingering malevolence among parties previously engaged in a conflict or dispute into feelings of acceptance and even forgiveness of past animosities or detrimental acts. Reconciliation may involve recourse to justice, particularly where one party has suffered egregiously relative to or at the hands of the other party. Reconciliation is often considered essential to creating conditions for durable resolutions and stability, especially since the trauma of extensive violence is often passed on to future generations, contributing to perpetual cycles of retributory violence.

***Satyagraha*:** A Gandhian concept denoting active nonviolent resistance to injustice, oppression, and exploitation. The term was derived from two Sanskrit roots: *satya* means truth but also implies love and firmness, while *agraha*, often translated as “insistence on,” or “pursuit of,” serves as a synonym for force.

**Security:** A subjective state in which an individual or collectivity feels free from threats, anxiety, or danger.

**Social contract:** The notion that individuals and nation-states tacitly agree to a set of mutually binding stipulations and obligations. The social contract has long served as a philosophical foundation for understanding modern conceptions of citizenship and constitutionalism, whereby individuals willingly submit some of their personal freedoms to political authority in return for the general benefit of all members of a given society.

**Sources of power:** The origins or loci of political power: legitimacy, human resources, skills and knowledge, material resources, intangible factors, and sanctions. Sources of power can be identified in any politically symbiotic relationship, as can their manifestations through institutions and organizations.

**Strategy:** The activity, process, or plan to attain desired objectives or goals as efficiently as possible, usually in the face of or in competition with others who are developing and implementing similar activities. Strategy is essentially the application of means to attain desired ends.

**Structural violence:** Embedded social and political hierarchies—enacted most often by societies and their institutions—that impose conditions which place people at high risk for negative consequences, such as unemployment, malnutrition, mental illness, suicide, crime, disease, and ill health.

**Tactics:** Limited and particular actions decided on short-term bases. In conflict situations, tactics refer to such actions during encounters with contending parties. If conducted efficiently, the choice of tactics will be informed by a strategy.

## For Discussion and Investigation

This section provides a variety of interactive exercises that can be facilitated in a classroom or group setting to encourage discussion.

### Discussion I: The Conflict Environment

**Before** reading “Nonviolent Civic Action,” answer the following questions individually or as a group.

It will be helpful for students to relate their existing knowledge to the topic. Depending on the knowledge the students have, conduct a brief discussion before the reading. Choose one or two topics. The goal of this discussion is to frame a known conflict in the context of civic action and the environment that influences the choices of civic action.

Here are some examples of questions you might ask. If the participants have knowledge of another conflict, please formulate your own questions.

- You are a factory worker in London in the 1800s. How can you improve your living and working conditions?
- You own a small general store in Boston in the late 1700s. You believe that the British Parliament does not have Massachusetts’s best interest in mind. What are some of the issues with gaining representation in Parliament?
- You are a college student in 1965. You believe the U.S. government does not have the right to force its citizens to take up arms in war and that the war in Vietnam is wrong. How can you influence policy?
- You are a minister in South Africa in 1980 during the apartheid era. You want people who are “non-white” to have equal access to all public facilities and to be treated as equals under the law. How can you influence law and policy?
- You are a parson of a church in East Germany in 1989. You want the authoritarian regime to give its citizens more rights, such as the right to travel freely and elect a democratic government. How can you safely bring about change?

For each case, you might ask the following questions.

- Who has the authority to change your condition, give you rights, or ensure that your rights are upheld.
- Are there channels through which you can influence change?
- How easy is it to influence those who have the authority to make changes or implement the change? Why is it easy or difficult?
- Who are your allies? Are there parties outside your group that, although they would not benefit directly from the change you seek, would be able to influence other allies or the authority?
- What are some of the possible downsides and dangers of engaging in nonviolent civic action?

### Discussion II: Tools, Actors, Constraints

**After** reading “Nonviolent Civic Action,” answer the following questions individually or as a group.

- What are the key traits of nonviolent civic action?

- What are some of the tools that ordinary citizens can use to influence change in their community, region, country, or the world?
- Other than citizens and those who have authority to enact change, who are some other actors that may play a role in bringing about change?
- What are some constraints and risks to citizens who decide to use nonviolent action to bring about change?
- What are some issues for which you would like to see change?
- If you want to bring about change, what are the steps you would need to take? What conditions would you need to consider? What are some of the obstacles and where do you see opportunities? What if you live in a place with restricted rights and under the authority of people who use violence and intimidation?
- Can a charismatic leader exploit the people's desire for change for the purposes of his or her own political and personal gains?
- Can nonviolent civic action succeed in the face of an opponent or opponents who only want to destroy or kill the other side?

## Activity I: Real-life Applications

**After** reading “Nonviolent Civic Action” and having the discussions above, do the following activity individually or as a group.

Learning objectives:

Participants will apply the concepts of nonviolent civic action to a real-life grievance in their own lives.

Time required:

1 class period of group discussion, presentations, and critique, plus homework.

### Part I. Group Work (30 minutes)

Step 1:

Divide the participants into small groups of 4–5 people. Each group will brainstorm a real issue or grievance that matters to them. Encourage participants to choose an issue important to them or their community and ask them to develop strategies to bring about the desired change.

Here are some examples if the students have difficulty brainstorming:

- something in school (for example, improve quality of food in the cafeteria)
- at the local library (for example, get more computers)
- community recreation center (for example, prevent the city from closing it down)
- within their community (for example, provide recycling).

Step 2:

After a topic has been chosen, each group must discuss the following and prepare a presentation:

- What are your group's objectives? (What do you hope to achieve? Why is this important?) What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- Who has the authority to enact change?
- Are there groups or people who can be your allies?
- Who and what make up the pillars of support?
- What methods can you employ to raise awareness of your grievance, create sympathy and willingness to take action, and increase your power?

- Determine if your strategies accomplish conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, or disintegration (see page 10).
- Describe what you think might happen if you actually implemented your strategy.
- What are some possible negative consequences, direct and indirect, to your group, other groups, your class, school, or community?

#### Part II. Presentations (30 minutes)

After the discussions, each group makes a presentation to the class and answers questions. The audience should bring up possible obstacles and ask the group that is presenting how they would handle the obstacles.. Those in the audience should be encouraged to think creatively.

#### Homework:

After the presentations, each student writes a reflection paper (1–2 pages) evaluating his or her group’s plan and discussing the obstacles posed by the class. This assignment should be graded based on the thoughtfulness of the reflection, not on the group’s plan.

## Activity II: Analyzing Cases

**After** reading “Nonviolent Civic Action” and having the discussions above, do the following activity individually or as a group.

#### Learning objectives:

Participants will learn how to provide an introductory analysis of a case where nonviolent civic action was used, including factors such as actors, grievances, and methods.

#### Time required:

The main components of this exercise are research, presentation, and homework. Some options are:

- 1 class period: research and presentation preparation as homework assignments and 1 period for presentations and discussions, or
- 2 class periods: 1 period to start students off on the research and 1 period for presentations and discussions, or
- 3 class periods: 1 period to start students off on the research, 1 period for students to finish up research and prepare the presentation, and 1 period for presentations and discussions.

#### Part I. Group Research and Presentation

The facilitator assigns students to small groups of 2–3 people. Each group will choose one of the nonviolent movements included in the reading. Groups will research their selected movement and will give a brief presentation in class.

Group presentations should address the following:

- Describe the movement and the environment in which it happened.
- Who are the actors?
- What is the grievance?
- What nonviolent methods were used?
- Describe the short- and long-term objectives of the movement.
- What were some of the strengths and weaknesses of both the movement and those in power?
- Did the movement have allies?
- How did the movement increase its power?

- What are some obstacles and threats the movement’s supporters faced?
- Did they achieve their objectives?
- In your opinion, why was the movement successful or unsuccessful?

## Part II. Group Discussion

After the presentations, break up the students into new groups (2–3 people) in which the members have studied different cases. Ask them to discuss the following.

What are some commonalities of the movements? Differences?

Are there differences in the ways that the students gauged the success of the movements? For example, was one movement successful when looked at from one perspective, but not successful when considered from another perspective?

Could the outcome of each movement have turned out differently if certain events and factors did not play a role? If certain events and factors did play a role or a bigger role?

Homework:

In the final small group, the students should produce one document that summarizes their discussions and findings, addressing the questions in Part II.

## Activity III: Simulation

### ***What Is a Simulation?***

Simulations are educational exercises that allow participants to put themselves in the shoes of a person in a fictitious scenario, thereby helping participants understand the kinds of issues, challenges, and conflicts that people in such situations face. Through this civil resistance simulation, participants will be challenged to strategize, persuade others, and build alliances to increase their leverage in order to achieve their role’s objectives within the allocated time frame. Each participant will be assigned one of seven roles and will be given a set of background information and guidelines written specifically for that role. A debriefing will be held at the end of the simulation to allow participants an opportunity to reflect upon what transpired during the simulation and what they learned.

### ***Preparation, Time, Participants, and Materials***

The simulation is designed to run roughly two hours depending on the number of participants. A minimum of seven participants is necessary but the simulation can be successfully conducted with any number over the minimum (each role can be assigned to multiple participants). The seven roles are: Administration; Police; Church of Tampulo; Labor Union; Non-Governmental Organization (NGO); Tampulo Women United (TWU); and Open Democratic Party (ODP). The simulation coordinator will serve the role of the Courier. Materials needed to implement the simulation are: Roughly 50 5” x 7” note cards (or scrap paper) and nametags and markers to identify participants and their roles.

The simulation coordinator should pass out copies of the scenario and background reading and review the information with the group. After explaining the four sessions to the participants, the simulation coordinator should assign the roles and give each participant a copy of his or her role description.

### ***Scenario***

The city of Tampulo is the capital of a large island nation in the south Pacific. The country gained its independence 20 years ago when a charismatic warrior-intellectual named Michael Regombe organized a militia that rebelled against colonial rule. When the European minority rulers fled, Regombe seized

power. The local population hailed him as a hero and Regombe became the self-declared president with little opposition. On the annual Independence Day, coming up in two days, the government will be hosting huge festivities to celebrate 20 years of independence.

Unfortunately, not everyone in Tampulo is in the mood for celebrating. Living in Tampulo in recent years has become difficult, as Regombe's administration has transformed itself into an authoritarian and repressive regime. Various groups in Tampulo have expressed their dissatisfaction with recent policies and human rights abuses, only to be crushed under the brutal iron fist of the administration. A political opposition party, the Open Democratic Party (ODP), was planning a mass protest on the holiday to demand restoration of civil liberties taken away by the administration in the past couple of years. Fearing the festivities would be disrupted, the administration issued a statement saying demonstrations would not be tolerated and anyone participating would regret the consequences. As additional precaution, the administration arbitrarily arrested over two dozen leaders of ODP and Tampulo Women United, an influential grassroots organization advocating social change. The administration called these leaders a "menace to Tampulo's peaceful way of life" and said they would be held indefinitely until thoroughly "processed." There are scattered reports that members of the administration severely interrogated many of these leaders inside the police station to extract information on their activities and their groups' memberships.

The arrests caused quite a stir in town, including among members of the labor union, NGO, and Tampulo church. Two social events taking place tonight will give an opportunity for community members to discuss how to respond. The police are hosting a cocktail party at the governor's mansion. Tampulo Women United is hosting a candlelight vigil for the prisoners. Each of the seven major actors in town—the administration, police, labor union, NGO community, Church of Tampulo, Tampulo Women United, and Open Democratic Party—will have to decide which of the two social events they will attend. On the day of the independence celebrations, ODP has promised demonstrations at the police station to protest the arbitrary arrests and suppression of civil liberties. The administration has promised severe repercussions for anyone participating. At the end of the simulation, each group will announce any declarations or decisions concerning the current events and their efforts to mold the future of Tampulo.

### ***Tampulo Background***

For many years, the population of Tampulo enjoyed relative economic prosperity and freedom of expression. However, this prosperity came to a halt a few years ago after the administration instituted a new plan for "economic redistribution." The administration mismanaged the federal banks and state-owned industries. The redistribution plan was disastrous and the economy and the local currency collapsed. Thousands of desperate citizens left Tampulo for bordering states. Regombe became more and more paranoid and disconnected, claiming the collapse of the economy was due to "sinister forces" from abroad, alluding specifically to the British and Americans.

Regombe, the once-idolized liberator, now faced severe criticism. Many called for him and senior administration members to resign. Pockets of intellectuals also began to criticize policies and call for reform. A couple of new political parties arose to take advantage of the public's discontent and the declining popularity of Regombe. The Open Democratic Party was formed, financed and organized privately by concerned citizens. Paranoid and slightly erratic, Regombe centralized his grip on power, created a new ministerial position for "communication," and strengthened the existing police force with a mandate to "enforce the administration's policies," which it often implemented through brutality.

The administration's power consolidation and its tight grip on information control could be felt throughout society. The administration tightened its control of media outlets, including installing censors within the offices of the largest newspaper. A number of editors and reporters were fired for criticizing

Regombe's policies. The government also shut down a hundred or so blogs and web sites. A new law was enacted that required permits for gathering in public squares for political reasons. To date, every permit submitted by ODP has been denied. In a number of cases, the ODP leaders were either beaten or tortured after making the request. One well-known ODP leader recently "disappeared" and many people believe it was at the hands of the administration, which has increased its frequency of covert actions. A political science professor was beaten and tortured in the middle of the night in his home for publishing a scathing critic of Regombe in an American newspaper. His friends say they barely recognized him in the hospital. A high school teacher received a letter threatening "severe consequences" should she fail to present a more favorable view of administration actions in her class. One of her students had reported her to authorities.

A large portion of the population laments the crackdown on their civic rights. However, many have accepted the status quo for fear of the consequences of protesting. Rumors of violent acts by the secret police spread like wildfire, keeping many in a state of fear and uncertainty. Others remain too complacent to act. Many other citizens are still willing to look past the social ills, holding fast to their esteem of Regombe. Regombe has the ability to rally support among police and the veterans of the independence movement, and can generally rely on the military for support (although it is well known that the military has some independent tendencies). The minister of communication has been successful in convincing a portion of the population that the crackdown is necessary for everyone's security against outside "evil-doers."

ODP was hoping to oust Regombe's administration and usher in democratic reforms through the recent presidential election. A poll had revealed ODP's candidate as holding a significant margin over Regombe but somehow Regombe won the election by an "official" margin of 58 to 42 percent, as reported on the state-run television station. The NGO issued statements alleging election fraud after it received many complaints of voter intimidation in rural communities. ODP rallied a series of protests, but after a couple of weeks, the public's outrage abated and the public shifted toward a sense of powerless acceptance. ODP was unsuccessful in rallying larger segments of the population into their protest movement. ODP soon accepted the results and retreated.

### ***Simulation Assignments***

#### **Session 1: Group meetings (25 minutes)**

Participants will gather into groups representing each role.

The two social events taking place tonight offer a unique opportunity for community members to discuss the current events in Tampulo. The police are hosting a cocktail party at the governor's mansion. Tampulo Women United is hosting a candlelight vigil for the prisoners. Each event will provide a valuable opportunity to interact with others. In order to achieve your group's objectives, you may need to build alliances. Both meetings are taking place at the same time, on opposite ends of town.

Your group must decide at the end of Session 1 which of the two events you will attend. You have the option for all members of your group to attend only one event or you can split your group so that some attend one and some the other. You can communicate with other groups by writing messages on note cards. Messages must be delivered directly to the courier, who will redirect all messages to their intended recipients.

Tip: Since time is limited, you should keep messages short and written to solicit a direct response. For example, "We will offer you x, if you can promise y." Try to write messages that solicit a "yes/ no" or "agree/ disagree" response.

## **Session 2: Meetings commence (20 minutes)**

One room will be designated by the simulation coordinator as the candlelight vigil hosted by Tampulo Women United. Another room will be designated as the police's cocktail party. (If logistics don't allow for two rooms, the two events can be held at opposite ends of a room.) Each participant will attend his or her chosen event and must remain for the duration of Session 2. The host of the event will officially welcome everyone in attendance and will briefly offer some thoughts on the recent arrests and the upcoming national holiday. **Participants are encouraged to mingle freely with everyone at their event, using this opportunity to try to achieve their group's objectives and attempt to build alliances.**

At the end of this session, the host of each event must issue a brief press statement to be delivered to the courier. The press release will be read publicly and should reflect whether the two hosts have changed their positions.

## **Session 3: Each group convenes (25 minutes)**

Participants will again gather into their designated groups. You have 25 minutes to prepare for the national holiday tomorrow and can communicate with other groups by writing messages on note cards. Each group will decide how the press statements from the hosts will influence what they plan to do on the national holiday. The courier will redirect all messages to their intended recipients.

## **Session 4: National holiday (15 minutes)**

Each group will make a short speech in front of the entire group, offering any public declarations or decisions, particularly concerning how they will respond to anticipated actions of the other groups. ODP begins first.

## **Debrief (40 minutes)**

The simulation coordinator will allow participants an opportunity to reflect upon what transpired during the simulation. Suggested debrief questions include:

- Each group had its own objectives. How did you overcome the differences between the various groups in order to work together?
- How did you strategize with other groups to increase your leverage?
- What would have happened if the groups had operated in isolation from one another?
- What were the variables that you had to consider in deciding which evening event to attend? In planning for the national holiday?
- What would be some good steps for the groups to take next? Bad steps? Why?

## **Roles**

The simulation coordinator will distribute the following role descriptions. Each group should see only its role description.

### **1. Administration**

As officials of Regombe's government, you are interested in maintaining the status quo and will use your authority and force (when necessary) to quell dissident activity or public uprisings. Your crackdown on

civil liberties has been needed to preserve societal order, which is in the best interests of everyone in Tampulo. As for the economic crisis, you are merely the scapegoat for a global recession. Since your public support has been eroding in recent years, you want to win the public's favor with the festivities over the national holiday, and will do anything to keep anyone from disrupting them. This is why you jailed those trouble-making activists. Yes, you asked the police to "rough up" some of them in jail, but the accusations of brutality and coercion are exaggerated.

Your needs from:

NGO: You depend upon their development funds to pay the police and other parts of the government. Without those funds you would likely have to lay off some of the police force, and their loyalty to you might waiver. Additionally, without the NGO funds, you might have to raise taxes on the general population, which would likely erode some of your public support.

Church of Tampulo: Since the vast majority of the population in Tampulo is religious, you need the moral backing of the church or you will lose your legitimacy in the eyes of the public. It is important to appease the church and avoid any criticism that could result in the population's defecting to the opposition.

Police: The police provides the muscle power that maintains control over the population and enforces your policies. You especially need their unconditional obedience during the holiday to crack down harshly on any protests.

Your comparative advantage:

Police: They usually obey you since you pay their salaries and health benefits.

Labor Union: Since the nationalization of private enterprises, your government is the largest employer in Tampulo. Therefore, unions depend upon you for contracts and are often afraid of losing their jobs, which you have significant influence over.

Church of Tampulo: You provide the church tax-exempt status. The church aims to appease you to ensure it doesn't lose this status, otherwise it will face a financial crisis.

## 2. Police

At the end of the day, your job is to protect and to serve the population of Tampulo, maintaining harmony in society. You do not want civil unrest. You are conditioned to obey orders from your superior, the administration; however, you have been known to be lax at times in enforcing the rules. At times you are ruthless, and other times accommodating, depending upon the circumstances and the party you are confronting.

Your needs from:

Administration: You need the administration to pay your salaries and health benefits. Therefore, you typically obey them and follow their policies.

Labor Union: You need the labor union to maintain your vehicles and buildings at a moment's notice. If they do not respond appropriately, you cannot operate effectively. They also give you a discounted rate for their services, which you depend upon due to your tight budget.

NGO: You want to maintain favor with the NGO because the police department recently applied for a huge grant from the NGO for new ambulances, police cars, and uniforms. Your crew is anxious to receive these new purchases. If you lose the NGO support, your entire crew will likely become less responsive on the job.

Your comparative advantage:

Administration: You provide the administration's muscle power that maintains control over the population and enforces administration policies. They especially need you during the holiday to crack down harshly on any protests.

NGO: The NGO is very concerned about the deterioration of civil liberties in Tampulo and especially about the recent arrests. They want information and access to the prisoners and you can provide both.

Inside information:

You heard rumors that the administration depends upon the NGO's support to fund the police department. Without that support, there will likely be severe cuts in your paychecks and even layoffs.

### 3. Church of Tampulo

Almost all Tampulans identify themselves as Catholic which means that the church is a powerful structure that is part of everyone's life. Many clergy have taken advantage of the pulpit to express social grievances with little repercussions. However, many of the government's highest ranking officers are parishioners so the church tries to maintain a balanced, moderate position in society. For the most part, Regombe's administration spares the church, because they do not want the deeply religious population to turn against the government. But you still must tread carefully. Therefore, choosing sides on the holiday will not be easy. You want public order in Tampulo but also are concerned with the brutal suffering that some in your congregation have endured.

Your needs from:

Tampulo Women United: The majority of your congregation is women, with a large representation from the women's movement. Many of them are angry and disturbed by recent arrests. You need to be able to sympathize and comfort them. Otherwise, they will become disenchanted with the church and only come on Christmas and Easter, significantly decreasing the tithes that you need to pay the church bills.

Administration: The government has graciously exempted you from paying taxes. You certainly don't want to anger the administration and lose this status, since it would present you with a financial crisis.

Your comparative advantage:

Administration: Since the vast majority of the Tampulo population is religious, the administration needs your moral backing or they will lose legitimacy in the eyes of the public. They want to appease you to avoid any criticism that could result in the population defecting to the opposition.

ODP: The opposition party has developed strong ties with your top leaders in an effort to generate your support. Your blessing equals legitimacy in the public's eye, which ODP needs.

Tampulo Women United: Members of the movement want to maintain strong ties with you because you provide services to their families including pre-school and day care. The members feel strongly about these services and don't want to lose them.

### 4. Labor Union

You represent an umbrella organization of trades and therefore have a lot of power in Tampulo society. You have the power to shut down the entire city. At your call, there can be no public transportation, no infrastructure maintenance (for sewage, trash, water, and electricity, for example), no construction. The union is a tight group and even includes teachers at schools, nurses in the local hospital, and employees at the telephone company.

Your needs from:

Administration. Since the nationalization of private enterprises years ago, the government is the largest employer in Tampulo. By issuing large contracts, the administration controls who gets which jobs and for how long. You want old contracts renewed and new projects contracted so that your members can keep their jobs or find new ones.

ODP: You admire ODP since they are bravely advocating progressive labor rights including safe working conditions against the repressive government. You need ODP to keep pushing for reform

because many of your workers have gotten sick or hurt on the job from the lack of safety enforcement by the government.

Your comparative advantage:

Police: The police depend on you to maintain their vehicles and buildings at a moment's notice. Without you, they cannot operate efficiently. Besides, you give them a discounted rate that helps with their tight budget.

ODP: Many of your members support ODP. Since you can shut down the city at a moment's notice, ODP needs your help to bring the administration to its knees.

## 5. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

You play a critical role in society ensuring everyone has access to food, healthcare, and education. You are very concerned about the recent arrests and more broadly about the deterioration of human rights in Tampulo. A smaller, less well-funded NGO was kicked out of the country last year, so you need to appear neutral. You desire strict adherence to nonviolent methods in the protests, at least partly because you will be the one taking care of the wounded. You will have to decide if you will support the protests, even though you think it likely that violence will occur, or ignore them.

Your needs from:

Police: You need information and access to the arrested prisoners so that you can ensure their safety and try to advocate for their release.

ODP: Since you are concerned about human rights and the welfare of the population, you need ODP to continue advocating progressive human rights and reform policies. Otherwise, there is no telling what rogue policies and brutal acts of oppression the administration may implement next.

Your comparative advantage:

Administration: They depend upon your development funds to pay the police and other parts of the government. Without your support they would likely have to lay off some of the police force, whose loyalty might waiver. Additionally, without your development funds, they might have to raise taxes on the general population, which would likely erode public support.

Police: The police department recently applied for a huge grant from you for new ambulances, police cars, and uniforms. They are anxious to receive these new purchases. You know that if they lose your support there will be a lot of dissatisfaction among the rank and file.

Tampulo Women United: The women's movement depends upon your funds for their grassroots mobilization efforts. They use your money to purchase materials from ODP, which they distribute across the country to help increase membership.

Inside information:

ODP organized a protest last year in which many people were badly hurt. A very small minority of their members resorted to violence, which led to a severe backlash by the administration. You fear this may happen again on the national holiday.

## 6. Tampulo Women United (TWU)

So far, your group has been very effective at attracting and training new members, organizing rallies to bring attention to the plight of starving families, and raising awareness of Tampulo civil rights violations. You wield tremendous power from your huge membership base, which represents people living across the country. You have very strong grassroots networks and chains of communication to quickly organize public actions. You have never resorted to violence even though the security services in Tampulo have used excessive and occasionally deadly force against you during marches and protests.

You and OPD want similar reforms, not to mention release of the prisoners, who include some of your leaders. You have tried to build a coalition with ODP in the past but without success. At a joint rally recently, a handful of ODP members provoked the police by throwing rocks. In response, the police dispersed the demonstration with tear gas. The event tainted TWU's reputation and subsequently made it more difficult to recruit new members and attract crucial financial assistance from donors.

Your needs from:

Church of Tampulo: You want to maintain strong ties with the church because they provide services to your members' families, including preschool and day care. Your members feel strongly about those services, and without those services, you risk losing your members' support as well as the ability to attract new members.

ODP: You share ODP's platform for fair elections without intimidation or corruption; freedom of speech; freedom of the press; and the end of arbitrary arrests. Their members include a large number of intellectuals and scholars, who regularly publish materials articulating these concerns. You distribute these publications across the country to increase your membership.

NGO: You need funds from them to purchase ODP's publications. Since most of your members have a modest income, you also depend upon the NGO's funds for your overall operating budget. Without them, many of your activities would be cut.

Your comparative advantage:

ODP: You command an extensive grassroots network of members with a large membership. ODP is thrilled you are disseminating their materials because it extends their influence and voice throughout the country. If you stop, ODP may fizzle into obscurity.

Church of Tampulo: Your members represent a majority of the congregation of the Church of Tampulo. The church tries to remain neutral politically, but if they get too cozy with the administration you can encourage your members to stop attending church. The church depends on the tithes of its congregation and does not want to anger you.

## 7. Open Democratic Party (ODP): Opposition party

Many of your members are well-educated professionals including teachers, ousted political party members, and intellectuals who are committed to working towards a free democratic society. Many of your members write in publications advocating guaranteed civil liberties and economic opportunities for all. Your party's platform includes fair elections without intimidation or corruption; freedom of speech; freedom of the press; and the end of arbitrary arrests.

However, there is a debate within the party about the use of violence. A minority of your members has concluded that nonviolence doesn't work against the administration's aggression. They want a confrontation with the government to raise the profile of and support for the party at home and abroad. During a recent joint protest with WTU, a handful of ODP members provoked the police by throwing rocks and the police dispersed the demonstration with tear gas. Among other things, the violence hurt ODP's relationship with TWU. The party's leaders feel that it is important to try to prevent any violence from spoiling ODP's actions and to get the release of those arrested last week. Otherwise, your party may splinter and you will lose the possibility of future joint activities with the women's movement. At the same time, you want to improve the political prospects of the party and the hope of gaining political power.

Your needs from:

Church of Tampulo: Since the vast majority of the population in Tampulo is religious, you need the backing of the church or you will lose your legitimacy in the eyes of the public. It is important to appease the church and avoid any criticism that could result in the population defecting to the opposition.

Labor Union: The union has the power to shut down the entire city. At their call, there can be no public transportation, no infrastructure maintenance (sewage, trash, water, and electricity, for example), no construction. You know this would bring the administration to its knees.

Tampulo Women United: They command an extensive grassroots network of members with a large membership. You are thrilled they are disseminating your materials and extending your influence and your party's platform throughout the country. You know that if they stop, you may fizzle into obscurity.

Your comparative advantage:

Tampulo Women United: The women's movement shares your party's platform. They depend on your regularly published materials that articulate these concerns. They distribute the publications across the country to help increase their membership.

NGO: Since they are concerned about human rights and the welfare of the population, the NGO needs you to continue advocating progressive human rights and reform policies. They are very worried about the rogue policies and brutal acts of oppression that might be implemented next by the administration.

Labor Union: The labor union admires you since you are bravely advocating progressive labor rights including safe working conditions. They need you to keep pushing for reform in the midst of the repression because many of their workers have gotten sick or hurt on the job from the lack of safety enforcement by the government.

Inside information:

Tampulo Women United is able to purchase your publications using the funding from the NGO. Without that funding, your publications would not have as much influence as it has since the TWU disseminates your materials around the country and builds support for your shared platform.

## Resources

### Articles and Chapters

Ackerman, Peter, and Jack DuVall. "People Power Primed." *Harvard International Review* (Summer 2005): 42–47.

The article seeks to answer three questions: What is people power? How does people power succeed? Why does people power matter?

<http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/PDF/HIRPPP.pdf>

Crist, John, Harriet Hentges, and Dan Serwer. *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Lessons from the Past, Ideas for the Future*. Special Report 87, May 2002. United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C.

Describes the lessons learned from past nonviolent movements and how they might be applied in the future.

<http://www.usip.org/resources/strategic-nonviolent-conflict-lessons-past-ideas-future>

Dubner, Stephen J.. "How Much Do Protests Matter? A Freakonomics Quorum." *NYTimes.com*, August 20, 2009.

Experts from diverse fields comment on the question of what do protests actually accomplish.

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/20/do-protests-matter-a-freakonomics-quorum>

Karatnycky, Adrian, and Peter Ackerman. *How Freedom Is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy*. New York: Freedom House, 2005.

Examines 67 countries in which dictatorships have fallen since 1972 and concludes that transitions generated from nonviolent movements have far better success for advancing freedom than by top down approaches initiated by elites. [http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special\\_report/29.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/29.pdf)

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." In *Why We Can't Wait*. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

King's famous letter defending the Civil Rights movement to a group of critical Alabama clergymen. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf>

King, Mary E. "The Significance of Nonviolent Struggle: Strategies and Potential." In King, *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance*. New York: Nation Books, 2007. A brief historical overview of nonviolent civic action.

Stephan, Maria J., and Erica Chenoweth. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 7–44.

An in-depth study on why civil resistance has been more successful in achieving political aims than has the use of violence.

[http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/PDF/IS3301\\_pp007-044\\_Stephan\\_Chenoweth.pdf](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/PDF/IS3301_pp007-044_Stephan_Chenoweth.pdf)

Thoreau, Henry David. "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience." In *Walden and On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. New York: Signet, New American Library, 1960.

Thoreau argues that citizens can withhold their allegiance to the state with a clear conscience in order to prevent their participation in an injustice. [http://publicliterature.org/books/civil\\_disobedience/xaa.php](http://publicliterature.org/books/civil_disobedience/xaa.php)

## Bibliographies

Albert Einstein Institution (AEI)

An invaluable resource of publications on the subject, most of which can be downloaded for free.

<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations07e3.html>

International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC)

Resource list: <http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resources.shtml>

Nonviolence International

Annotated bibliography for nonviolent action trainers: <http://nonviolenceinternational.net/biblio.htm>

Peace and Islam Annotated Bibliography:

[http://nonviolenceinternational.net/islambib\\_001.htm](http://nonviolenceinternational.net/islambib_001.htm)

Peacemakers Trust

A Selected Bibliography by Catherine Morris:

<http://www.peacemakers.ca/bibliography/bib37nonviolentdirect.html>

## Books

Ackerman, Peter, and Jack DuVall. *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000 [hardback]; Palgrave-Macmillan, 2001 [paperback].

The authors present 10 case studies of nonviolent civic movements throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within each decade, the authors give accounts of ordinary people mobilizing to overcome difficulties without resorting to violence.

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

Outlines 12 “principles” of nonviolent civic action that increase the likelihood of a movement’s success.

Helvey, Robert. *On Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Thinking About the Fundamentals*. Boston: Albert Einstein Institute, 2004.

Addresses how to build a strategy for a nonviolent movement including identifying objectives, preparing a strategic estimate, and operational planning considerations.

<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations/org/OSNC.pdf>

King, Mary E. *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Power of Nonviolent Action*. New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Mehta Publishers, 2002.

A detailed study on how Gandhi’s ideas and techniques reached King, and the shared philosophies between the two. Information and order form available at:

<http://www.maryking.info/books.html>

Popovic, Srdja, Andrej Milivojevic, and Slobodan Djinovic. *Nonviolent Struggle: 50 Crucial Points—A Strategic Approach to Everyday Tactics*. Belgrade: Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies.

A practical, tactical field guide for conducting a nonviolent movement.

<http://www.canvasopedia.org/content/special/nvstruggle.htm>

Sharp, Gene. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 3 vols. Boston: Porter Sargent.

These three volumes—1. *Power and Struggle*; 2. *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*; and 3. *The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action*—provided an important theoretical framework for the academic analysis of the field.

Sharp, Gene. *There Are Realistic Alternatives*. Boston: Albert Einstein Institute.

A short introduction to nonviolent civic action.

<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizationsbc25.html>

Sharp, Gene. *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Practice and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Potential*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 2005.

A thorough explanation of the technique and strategies of nonviolent civic action. Provides 23 case studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Teaching and Training Guide

King, Mary E., series ed. *The Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict: Africa*. Geneva: University for Peace.

This four-publication series was developed for an African audience, but each publication is a valuable resource for a diverse audience including youth, community leaders, and educators around the world. The first publication, in particular, is extremely useful for educators teaching this subject or designing their own curriculum.

### 1. Teaching Model: Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict

Mary E. King and Christopher A. Miller

A twelve-module teaching curriculum with theoretical and historical background, suggested readings, learning outcomes, and class exercises.

[http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc\\_Teaching\\_Model.pdf](http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc_Teaching_Model.pdf)

2. Only Young Once: An Introduction to Nonviolent Struggle for Youths

Christopher A. Miller

[http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc\\_only\\_young\\_once.pdf](http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc_only_young_once.pdf)

3. Strategic Nonviolent Struggle: A Training Manual

Christopher A. Miller

[http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc\\_Training\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc_Training_Manual.pdf)

4. “Bite Not One Another”: Selected Accounts of Nonviolent Struggle in Africa

Desmond George-Williams

[http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc\\_bite\\_not\\_one\\_another.pdf](http://www.africa.upeace.org/documents/nvtc_bite_not_one_another.pdf)

## Films

The first three films were produced by York Zimmerman Inc. and can be ordered through Amazon.com or through the producer.

<http://www.yorkzim.com/about/howToOrder.html>

York, Steve (producer/director/screenwriter). *A Force More Powerful* (DVD). York Zimmerman Inc., 2000.

Presents six case studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which nonviolent movements overcame oppression and authoritarian rule. For a study guide, see <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/films/bdd/eo/bdad-discussion-guide.pdf>

York, Steve (producer/director/screenwriter). *Bringing Down a Dictator* (DVD). York Zimmerman Inc., 2001.

Tells the story of the student-led movement, Otpor, which led to the overthrow of Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic

York, Steve (producer/director/screenwriter). *Orange Revolution* (DVD). York Zimmerman Inc., 2007.

A documentary on Ukraine’s 2004 election, which led to 17 days of political protests in which its citizens defended their right to a free and fair election.

Corcoran, L. (producer). *In Our Own Backyard: The First Love Canal* (DVD). Bullfrog Films, 1983.

A documentary on the toxic waste emergency in Niagara Falls, N.Y., during which community members developed a strategy of public protest to influence the governmental response. The film can be ordered at: <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/lc.html>. A recent interview with the movement’s leader, Lois Gibbs, can be found at: <http://transition.turbulence.org/Works/superfund/video.html>.

Hirsch, L. (producer/director/screenwriter). *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony* (DVD). ATO Pictures, 2003.

Shows the role music played in the South African movement against apartheid.

Munoz, S. (director), and L. Portillo (director). *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza De Mayo* (DVD).

An Academy Award–nominated documentary about the Argentinean mothers’ movement to learn the fate of 30,000 “disappeared” sons and daughters.

Tusty, J. (director/screenwriter), M. E. Tusty (director), and M. Majoros (screenwriter). *The Singing Revolution* (DVD). Northern Lights, 2006.

The story of the nonviolent movement in the Baltic country of Estonia in which singing played a central role in uniting the country against Soviet occupation in the late 1980s.

## Computer Video Game

*A Force More Powerful: The Game of Nonviolent Strategy*. York Zimmerman Inc., 2006.

This simulation video game allows players to take the role of a strategist for a nonviolent movement in a variety of scenarios. Can be ordered through Amazon.com or through the producer York Zimmerman: <http://www.yorkzim.com/about/howToOrder.html>.

## Web Resources

### Albert Einstein Institution

The Albert Einstein Institution is a nonprofit organization advancing the study and use of strategic nonviolent action in conflicts throughout the world. The web site is an invaluable resource for free, downloadable materials, many by Gene Sharp, and available in a number of different languages.

<http://www.aeinstein.org>

### Freedom House

Freedom House is a nonprofit organization working to promote democracy and freedom around the world. Freedom House’s four annual surveys, *Freedom in the World*, *Freedom of the Press*, *Nations in Transit*, and *Countries at the Crossroads* are available in their entirety on their web site, along with numerous special reports.

<http://www.freedomhouse.org>

### International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC)

ICNC is a non-profit foundation that develops and encourages the study and use of civilian-based, nonmilitary strategies to establish and defend human rights, democracy, and justice worldwide. It offers a free, biweekly “News Digest” to inform subscribers about contemporary nonviolent struggles, and the “Resource” section of its web site lists valuable materials in the field.

<http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org>

### New Tactics in Human Rights

Developed by the Center for Victims of Torture, New Tactics offers valuable tools and resources to equip human rights advocates.

<http://www.newtactics.org>

### Nonviolence International

Nonviolence International is a decentralized network of resource centers that promotes the use of nonviolent action. It offers an annotated bibliography for nonviolent action trainers, an annotated bibliography on peace and islam, and the Nonviolent Action Network blog.

<http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net>

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Mary E. King, *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Mehta Publishers, 2002), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Gene Sharp, *There Are Realistic Alternatives* (Boston: Albert Einstein Institution, 2003), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> “The difference between hyphenated and the non-hyphenated styles of the word nonviolent, or nonviolence, is not a prim spelling detail, because of the predicament that ‘nonviolent action’ could be construed as meaning solely the negation of violence. If so, hyphenating the word accentuates a negative connotation. Without a hyphen, the word becomes a direct affirmation, because violence itself—whether that of the warrior, machinery controlled by the nation-state, structural violence in the girders of a society, or cultural violence as in so-called honor killings—is inherently negative. It either ends life or compromises its possibilities.” Mary E. King, “Nonviolent Struggle in Africa: Essentials of Knowledge and Teaching,” *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal* 1, no. 1 (December 2008): 40.

<sup>4</sup> Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Practice and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Potential* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 2005), pp. 20–21.

<sup>5</sup> King, “Nonviolent Struggle in Africa,” p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace and War*, vol 1. Mahadev Desai, comp. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1945), pp. 121–122.

<sup>7</sup> King, *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King*, p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, part 1: *Power and Struggle* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 2002), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,” *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 7–44.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, “People Power Primed: Civilian Resistance and Democratization,” *Harvard International Review* (Summer 2005): 42–47.

<sup>11</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, part 2: *The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent), p. 357.

<sup>12</sup> George Lakey, “The Sociological Mechanisms of Nonviolent Action” (master’s thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1962); Lakey, “The Sociological Mechanisms of Nonviolent Action,” *Peace Research Review* 2, no. 6 (1968): 1–102. Other scholars have also contributed to differentiation of the mechanisms, including Gene Sharp, in works that build on Lakey’s work.

<sup>13</sup> Sharp, *There Are Realistic Alternatives*, p. 13.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ogoni Bill of Rights: Presented to the Government and People of Nigeria*, November 1990. Retrieved March 31, 2009, from Urhobo Waabo: Urhobo Historical Society.

<http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/RightsDeclaration/Ogoni.html>

<sup>15</sup> “The Backlash Against Democracy Assistance,” report prepared by the National Endowment for Democracy for Senator Richard G. Lugar, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, June 8, 2006. Retrieved March 14, 2009, from the National Endowment for Democracy.

<http://www.ned.org/publications/reports/backlash06.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Judah Magnes, “A Letter to Gandhi,” in Murray Polner and Naomi Goodman, eds., *The Challenge of Shalom: The Jewish Tradition of Peace and Justice* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1994), p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman, *How Freedom Is Won: From Civil Resistance to Durable Democracy* (New York: Freedom House, 2005). Retrieved March 14, 2009.

[http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special\\_report/29.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/29.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Christopher A. Miller and Mary E. King, *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Geneva: University for Peace Africa Programme).



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