



University for Peace



NONVIOLENT TRANSFORMATION OF CONFLICT—AFRICA

# ONLY YOUNG ONCE

## An Introduction to Nonviolent Struggle for Youths

Christopher A. Miller







University for Peace



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# ONLY YOUNG ONCE

An Introduction to Nonviolent  
Struggle for Youths

Christopher A. Miller

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Cover photo: University of Zimbabwe students carry branches and fronds during a peaceful march from the campus to Harare city centre on 9 April 2001. The students, who were protesting the alleged beating to death of a student by riot police during a demonstration the preceding day, were dispersed by police who fired teargas. Photo: Howard Burditt/Reuters.

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Printed in Switzerland

ISBN 9977-925-46-1

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## Preface

*Only Young Once* addresses a problem endemic to Africa's quest for sustainable development—providing youths with ethical, moral, and effective life skills with which to counteract the powerlessness they feel in the face of events that threaten human security across Africa. For far too long, imperialism and the African ruling élites have subjected the continent to degrading and negative experiences stemming from the diabolical forces of materialism and hegemony with the sole burning passion of retaining power at all costs. Their actions reinforced structures and beliefs that created inequity, undemocratic political space, and violence in all its various forms. These structures then bred pathologies that distorted the human spirit, making the people easy to manipulate and easing maintenance of the debilitating status quo.

Youths have not been spared the ravenous effects of this condition. Though Africa's youth have been hyped as the major stakeholders and bastion of hope for the future of the continent, harsh economic, social, and political realities have hit them hard and deprived them of passionate optimism and belief in the future, the greatest assets of their stage of human development. They have instead learned to fear, mistrust, and accept aggression as part of life. Many have sought to hide their pain, anger, and frustration in drugs, gangs, and other destructive activities, unaware of how their actions affect themselves and others. Some, alas, have been reduced to 'dogs of war' and political opportunists—jumping onto any bandwagon of armed conflict, corruption, and all manner of social misconduct—without knowing why or for what, falling prey to personal greed and vicious manipulation.

Thus, on one hand, Africa's youth are demonised as a clueless, spineless generation, lacking in identity and direction. On the other hand, their restless response to prevailing conditions is often met with repression through the use of force and promises of 'You are the future

leaders of tomorrow', which is supposed to mollify their passion and vigor. The uncanny future and tomorrow seem to be in perpetual displacement in space and time, as it is with the traveler walking towards the horizon. It is incumbent on African youths to decide when the future becomes the present for their people and when tomorrow's dusk dawns as a new day.

*Only Young Once* represents a noble dedication to youths in the Niger Delta region in particular and to African youths in general. Through it, the UPEACE Africa Programme offers to young people basic knowledge in nonviolent struggle for social change. First and foremost, it is presented as a just alternative tool to armed struggle and crude violence in tackling very pressing and sensitive socio-political issues that have long hampered human security in these societies. Second, this publication seeks to awaken the understanding of African youths to the reality that violence only begets violence and solves nothing. They need to understand that suffering is real and that hurting people has terrible and often life-long consequences that can be difficult or impossible to rectify. Third, *Only Young Once* raises awareness of the fact that like every skill in life, nonviolent struggle must be carefully learned and integrated into one's psyche before aptly applying it. It is a wonderful thing that this booklet can serve as a source of inspiration to youths, prompting them to form visions of what can be, and at the same time provide them the tools and ways to make these visions come true—peacefully!



Phoebe Akinyi Nyawalo

Lead Evaluator

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## Introduction

The young are often made to feel insignificant in a world that values wealth and power, assets that are not usually accessible early in life. Africa has been rather exceptional in this respect; the young, and particularly students, have always been a powerful presence in society and political development.<sup>1</sup>

Youth is fleeting. We are young for only a short time. For many, the issues faced while a youth will fade with adulthood. As we age, perspectives and priorities change. Adults easily forget the anxieties of studying for exams, peer pressure, and bullies who badger the weaker to engage in questionable or criminal acts as ‘friends’. The irony of such amnesia is that youthful experiences leave lasting impressions. As young people venture into adulthood, the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of new generations affect visions of the future, how communities organise, and how institutions operate.

Over the past several decades, scholars and commentators have tried to define who exactly are youths? To avoid the limitations of categorising according to biological age, which is not particularly relevant for Africa or other places, youths can be defined as those in transition from childhood to adulthood. Youths represent the middle rung in social hierarchies: they are not completely dependent upon their parents and other adults to provide them with the necessities and guidance with which to navigate life, but at the same time they are not yet independently able to sustain themselves and provide solely for their own children and other family members. Among Africans in particular, youth may largely be determined by economic viability.

This small volume takes a broad view of youth. Within this vision, university students represent one category, along with secondary

school students, community activists, young soldiers and members of paramilitaries, and professionals early in their careers, such as the 'youth' members of parliament (MPs) in the Ugandan legislature and those organising non-governmental and civil society groups.

*Only Young Once* examines what youths throughout Africa can do when institutions, organisations, or traditional associations fail to solve or respond adequately to their grievances, hardships, and conflicts. How might youths fix the problems and disputes that adult institutions do not? What might be the immediate and long-term implications of actions taken by youths to improve a situation? Do youths consider and utilise all the options available to them? Why is strategic nonviolent action so often overlooked as a positive and effective way to address disputes and bring about justice? *Strategic*, from *strategy*, refers both to the plan and process of answering questions, such as Who will act? How will they act? When and where will they act in order to achieve specifically identified objectives? Strategy pertains to the purpose and goals and is related to but distinct from tactics, which are particular acts or steps decided on short-term bases.

Youths occupy a paradoxical position. Opportunity stretches in front of them; change is always a possibility. They have the energy and time to pursue dreams and hopes, yet their eagerness and passion are at times feared among older generations. It is not uncommon for youths to be viewed as troublemakers, hooligans, and unruly: '[They] are not typically conceived of as productive and constructive social actors . . . but rather as potential sources of political disruption, delinquency and criminality.'<sup>2</sup> *Only Young Once* takes an opposing view: Youths' combination of vision, determination, vigor, and potency can lead to effective initiatives, campaigns, and movements through which young people can voice their ideals and change the course of their societies.

Given the violence and trauma that many Africans have recently experienced through strife, acute conflicts, and civil wars, the prospects

for the nonviolent transformation of conflict on the continent may appear exceedingly idealistic. Historical and recent examples, however, prove otherwise. An important step in accepting the possibility of such change is first to acknowledge the rich history of successes by young people in overcoming assorted hardships and injustices and to look at whether the choices made by some of them provide lessons for the present or future. One must also come to understand how nonviolent action remains possible under what often seem like impossible circumstances.

Nobody expects all Africans to renounce violence, but blind faith in violent struggle can be challenged and perhaps eventually replaced for addressing particular needs and specific purposes. When legal and parliamentary institutions fail or acute conflicts destroy the fabric of communities, it is unlikely that vigilantism, rebel militias, and guerrilla warfare will be rejected unless alternative, nonviolent ways of fighting for justice have been developed and are considered to be at least as equally effective, if not more so. Arriving at such a situation requires a fundamental shift in perceptions of power and strength.

*Only Young Once* results from requests by African academicians, civil society leaders, and youthful peace builders that the Africa Programme of the University for Peace (UPEACE), an affiliate of the United Nations, develop and circulate materials for sharing knowledge on nonviolent struggle and transformation of conflict. This is one in a series of four publications related to nonviolent action and serves as an introduction to the basic theories and dynamics of nonviolent struggle, emphasising the need for strategy and the crucial role played by youths in nonviolent movements. Based on a series of projects initiated and conducted by the UPEACE Africa Programme, it is specifically designed for youths in Africa. The youth projects include a forum held in March 2004 in Abuja, Nigeria, following a UPEACE curriculum development workshop jointly sponsored with Nigeria's National Universities Commission in

cooperation with Professor Placid Njoku. A workshop was also held for civil society leaders—many of them youths—in Port Harcourt, Nigeria in November 2005.

This booklet can be used in combination with *Nonviolent Strategic Struggle: A Training Manual*, a tool designed for civil society leaders and directors of youth programmes interested in running or facilitating seminars, workshops, and training programmes on the use and effectiveness of nonviolent struggle. It may also be used in formal classes and courses as a supplement with the *Teaching Model: Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict*, a twelve-module curriculum with theoretical and historical background on the field of nonviolent struggle, notes for instructors, expected student outcomes, and suggested readings and class exercises. It may additionally be used in conjunction with *'Bite Not One Another': Selected Accounts of Nonviolent Struggle in Africa*, a chronicle of accounts of nonviolent action from sub-Saharan Africa covering nonviolent independence movements during the colonial era, contemporary struggles for human rights and social justice, and examination of the influential role of women as nonviolent activists.

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

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ake, 'WASU in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone', p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> De Waal and Argenti, *Young Africa*, p. 15.

# 1

## Nonviolent Struggle: An Effective Option in Disputes and Conflicts

**D**isputes and conflicts—essentially disagreements and incompatibilities over identifying specific ends and the means to reach goals—are inevitable. They occur within and among individuals, families, groups, nation-states, and regional and international organisations. This booklet concerns conflicts outside the inter-personal and family realms in which at least one party believes itself to be experiencing oppression, injustice, inequity, or hardship or to be in competition with others.

When faced with such situations, individuals and groups ultimately make choices. The first decision involves whether to act. Those who choose to take action must next decide how they will act. Many societies have accepted processes for addressing issues related to disputes and conflicts. For example, government departments and representatives may have within their mandates active roles in alleviating grievances; councils and courts can mete out justice; parliaments, through the laws they pass, hold some power in protecting or promoting the interests of citizens young and old. In addition to such formal channels, other forms of conflict resolution are also available that usually rely on some type of conciliation or compromise in which cooperative initiatives contain or address the issues and needs of all parties to a dispute.

Every African people and community practices endogenous methods—that is, customs born of the society and possibly influenced by contact with the outside—for resolving strife and sorting out grievances. Time-honoured practices, some perhaps hundreds of years old, can be employed to alleviate communal disagreements. Reliance on arbitration using professionally trained go-betweens can avoid the costs and complexities of going to court. Mediation and negotiation can overcome the difficulties of getting conflicting parties to sit together and discuss mutually acceptable conditions and conclusions.





Children and youths march in Burundi in the Sangwe Festival, an event organised by Search for Common Ground that emphasises the common cultural heritage of the peoples of Burundi and the region. Photo: Search for Common Ground.

Yet, in some societies such measures and vehicles fail to function properly or consistently: Governments and parliaments sometimes pass unjust laws; courts issue biased or gender-insensitive rulings; the majority ignores the rights or perspectives of minorities. Institutional failures are particularly common in war-torn areas, weak nation-states, and when governments fail or collapse. When institutional and 'extra-institutional' vehicles prove to be non-viable options, where can individuals and groups turn? When the laws uphold injustice, what can one do? If the majority in a democracy runs roughshod over the rights of minorities, is there any recourse? Faced with injustice, discrimination, or repression, some persons rightly decide to fight, sometimes

with guns or bombs—often the only weapons they know. Many do not realise that another option—nonviolent action—exists. Nonviolent action is nonviolent ‘war’ and can be equally if not more effective than paramilitary operations, terrorist acts, armed insurrections, and other militarised forms of engagement.

*Positive action. Political defiance. Civil resistance. Militant nonviolence. Active nonviolence.* These are some of the terms that refer to nonviolent action—a practical political technique used for centuries by peoples on every continent in an array of disputes and conflicts for diverse purposes. Among recent examples of nonviolent action are the following:

To secure national independence and end European colonialism:

- the struggles for self-rule against British imperialism in India, Egypt, Ghana, and Zambia in the early to mid-twentieth century
- the Velvet Revolution of the Czech and Slovak peoples in Central Europe in the 1980s
- the drives for independence from the former Soviet Union by the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the late 1980s and early 1990s
- the liberation movement of the 1990s and achievement of East Timorese independence from Indonesia in 2002<sup>3</sup>

In struggles to overcome authoritarian or military rule:

- the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, possibly the largest upsurge of diverse grass-roots nonviolent activism, which may be marked by the founding of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912 and lasting until free and fair elections in 1994
- unarmed resistance movements against the Nazis and German

military occupation in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Holland, and Norway during the 1940s

- the Chilean 'No' campaign to end the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in the late 1980s
- the People Power movement in the Philippines that ended the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986
- the movement in Sierra Leone to delegitimise the junta of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) during the late 1990s
- the Serbian movement in the Balkans that undermined the regime of Slobodan Milosevic and brought it down in 2000
- the pro-democracy movements in the former Soviet republics popularly known as the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005<sup>4</sup>

In struggles to gain or expand democratic freedoms and human rights:

- the movements to end the trade in human cargo and abolish slavery, mostly in the nineteenth century
- the suffrage movements around the world during the twentieth century to enfranchise women with the vote
- the civil rights movement in the United States from 1955 to 1965
- the Solidarity movement in Poland against the communist apparatus throughout the 1980s
- the Soft Revolution in Madagascar in 2001 and 2002.<sup>5</sup>

Today, nonviolent struggles are under way in Belarus, Botswana, Burma, Iran, Nigeria, Venezuela, West Papua, Western Sahara, and Zimbabwe. Merely using nonviolent action, however, is insufficient to ensure

victory. Although major successes have been achieved through the use of nonviolent struggle, including some that received little recognition, attention should not focus exclusively on the achievements. Many non-violent protagonists have failed to accomplish their objectives or are still struggling. Among such examples are the following:

- the first Palestinian *intifada* (or 'shaking off') against Israeli military occupation from 1987 to 1991; the Palestinians remain under a belligerent occupation
- the Tiananmen Square movement in 1989, to which the Chinese government responded by killing some 2,600 people and wounding another 7,000
- the political defiance campaigns to end military rule in Burma from the 1980s to the present
- the civil resistance movement of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo who attempted to achieve self-rule in the 1990s<sup>6</sup>

Failures or cases that produce mixed results can teach as much as successes do.

More and more people seeking human rights, democratic freedoms, and social justice are coming to realise that it is not necessary constantly to 're-invent the wheel'. Historical accounts teach lessons. Such examples can help guide those who refuse to remain passive in the face of grave injustices and who find that the expected legal and parliamentary institutions have proven dysfunctional. Recognising the collective history of nonviolent struggle forces one to reconsider chronicles and recordings. In many societies, war and other forms of collective violence are glorified and romanticised. This bias affects not only how people view their past, but also how they deal with disputes and conflicts in the present and future.

'Nonviolent struggle' has numerous connotations, a situation that

causes some analysts and commentators to spend as much time and energy describing what the technique is not versus what it *is*—for example, how it is not ‘passive resistance’. In understanding nonviolent struggle, it is necessary to focus on descriptions of behaviours, rather than on beliefs. The adoption of nonviolent struggle does not rely on ethical systems, moral codes, religious adherences, or personal convictions. Faith and spirituality may be involved, but they are not necessary for engaging in it. Thus it is appropriate to refer to individuals and groups who practice or promote nonviolent action as ‘proponents’ or ‘advocates’ of the technique, regardless of their values (the unseen qualities treasured or revered in communities and societies).

In short, proponents or advocates of nonviolent struggle make deliberate decisions and commitments to conduct their campaigns and activities based on methods that exclude physical violence. They fight without physically harming their adversary. The personal beliefs and values of practitioners as well as their perspectives on physical violence may vary. People interested in nonviolent struggle as a political technique base the use of political, economic, social, and psychological methods that exclude violence on a theoretical understanding of power relations in a society regardless of whether this aspect of it is clearly articulated.

## Defining and Understanding Success

Numerous groups involved in a struggle have mistaken the act of negotiation or dialogue for success. Sitting down to discuss and possibly agree upon a settlement may or may not result in a satisfactory conclusion for both sides. Yet, nonviolent struggle can produce positive results even if the opposing parties never gather at the table for talks. The mechanisms of change or means for success are as follows:

*Conversion:* the target group accepts the objectives or goals of the nonviolent movement and adopts its demands or ideals based on a change in perspective or opinion. Such a shift in the hearts and minds of the target group is extremely rare, yet people and groups involved in nonviolent campaigns often hope that their point of view will be accepted through conversion.

*Accommodation:* an adversary and a nonviolent group reach a compromise, each achieving and conceding certain objectives. This is the most common mechanism of change, although no real changes in internal positions, attitudes, or deeply held opinions may occur. Often the opponent or target group decides to accommodate the nonviolent protagonists, because the cost of continued struggle is too high or it would be best to cut its losses.

*Nonviolent coercion:* an opponent is forced to concede based on the threatened or actual use of nonviolent methods by significant segments of the society. Objectives or goals may thus be achieved against the will of the opponent or target group, because its sources of power are no longer available for rejecting the demands of the nonviolent action group.

*Disintegration:* an adversary or target group is unable to continue business as usual, because defiance and withdrawal of obedience has become so extensive that the target can no longer implement decisions. Disintegration is extremely rare.

Understanding the mechanisms of change requires two abstract tasks. First, one must develop a vision of how to use nonviolent struggle to address the dispute or conflict in question. In other words, one must

envision how the hardship or grievance can be overcome. Second, one must put oneself in the shoes of the opponent or target group facing the nonviolent campaign. These factors combined require analysing what one wants to see happen versus what might happen based on what is known about the nonviolent group and the target group. With such an understanding, nonviolent protagonists can develop plans for achieving concrete objectives and moving toward more general goals.

Despite the strict nonviolent discipline of one party or group of activists, in some disputes the use of nonviolent struggle may provoke a violent response by the opponent. Newspapers and other sources may imply that such a situation can no longer be characterised as 'nonviolent'. Although activists remain visibly and staunchly nonviolent, the headlines might still proclaim, 'Demonstrations Marred by Violence' or 'Vigil Overcome by Violence' and so on. The understanding of the nonviolent technique presented in this booklet is based on the capacity to use it unilaterally. As such, nonviolent struggle is the use of nonviolent methods by at least one party involved in a conflict.

An opponent's violent response, which is sometimes expected, can prove advantageous for nonviolent protagonists. During a dispute or conflict, opponents typically prefer to deal with violent confrontation. In most cases, they are well prepared and possess vastly superior capacities for meeting violence with violence. Practitioners of nonviolent struggle can gain the upper hand by shifting the rules of the game and partially deciding how to play it. An opponent's violent response, rather than constituting a setback or defeat, might provoke nonviolent protagonists to increase their determination, conviction, or solidarity and lead outside parties and even parts of the target group to increase their support of the protagonists.

The opponent may attempt to undermine the discipline of the nonviolent protagonists by releasing false information about their activities or 'spinning' news to distort the cause and objectives of their

nonviolent campaign. They may inject *agents provocateurs* among nonviolent activists to push for violence in order to undermine the nonviolent strategy. Sociologist Monique Marks describes how youths ensured nonviolent discipline in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa:

Attempts to reduce spontaneous action led youth organizations to demand that their members behave in a 'disciplined' manner, both when engaged as members of organizations and as members of the community. . . . 'Discipline' formed a part of the discourse of activist youth. The notion of discipline is one that seems to have been central to what it meant to be a respected member of a youth organization. . . . To act in an unacceptable manner was tantamount to bringing the organization—and consequently the liberation struggle, which the youth held sacred—into disrepute.<sup>7</sup>

The target group of the nonviolent movement may potentially recognise the position of the nonviolent protagonists as fair and valid, but simply hoping for such an outcome is not enough. Placing oneself on a moral high ground will also not automatically lead to the desired result. Although external parties usually play roles in conflicts, one cannot always anticipate their participation or predict or control their actions. Third parties' involvement in a conflict often is based on their interests and terms.

The four mechanisms outlined above provide guidance for nonviolent group action toward achieving a certain outcome. They help to explain how nonviolent methods can be used to challenge or alter existing power relations in a community, society, or nation-state in order to bring about the nonviolent transformation of conflict and positive social change.



## NOTES

- <sup>3</sup> For a strategic and theoretical account on the use of nonviolent struggle in the Indian independence struggle, see Ackerman and DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, pp. 61–111. On Egypt, see Crow, Grant, and Ibrahim, *Arab Nonviolent Struggle in the Middle East*. On Ghana and Zambia, see George-Williams, *'Bite Not One Another'*. On the Czech and Slovak Velvet Revolution, see Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, pp. 271–6. On the independence movements in the Baltic states, see Eglitis, *Nonviolent Action in Liberation of Latvia*, and Miniotaite, *Nonviolent Resistance in Lithuania*. On the East Timorese movement, see Fukuda, 'Peace through Nonviolent Action'.
- <sup>4</sup> For an account on the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, see Ackerman and DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, pp. 335–68. For accounts on nonviolent action in anti-Nazi struggles, see Semelin, *Unarmed against Hitler*. On Chile and the Philippines, see Ackerman and DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, pp. 279–301 and 369–95. "Also on the Philippines, see Forest and Forest, *Four Days in February*. On Sierra Leone, see George-Williams, *'Bite Not One Another'*. On Serbia, see Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, pp. 315–39. On Georgia, see Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution*. On Ukraine, see Åslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*. On Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, see generally Brill Alcott, *Central Asia's Second Chance*.
- <sup>5</sup> On the civil rights movement in the United States and the Polish Solidarity struggle, see Ackerman and DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, pp. 305–33 and 113–74. See also King, *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, pp. 85–172. On Madagascar, see George-Williams, *'Bite Not One Another'*.
- <sup>6</sup> For an account of nonviolent struggle in the first Palestinian *intifada*, see King, *Quiet Revolution*. On the Tiananmen Square movement, see Zhao, *Power of Tiananmen*, and Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, pp. 353–69. On Burma, see Andrieux, Sarosi, and Moser-Puangsuwan, *Speaking Truth to Power*. On Kosovo, see Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*.
- <sup>7</sup> Marks, *Young Warriors*, p. 58.



# 2

## Sources of Power and Pillars of Support

There exist two underlying theories in nonviolent struggle that are useful in analysing past cases and in helping nonviolent protagonists plan their own struggles. First, all political relationships and systems rely on the obedience, cooperation, or acquiescence of individuals, organisations, and groups. For instance, employers need workers to operate machinery. Community leaders need residents to uphold their status as brokers and negotiators. Governments need citizens to pay taxes. ‘Power-holders’ require the support of constituencies. In ensuring such cooperation, power rests on authority, wealth, political and legal controls, economic pressures, exploitation of moral or cultural symbols and norms, intimidation, and sometimes outright repression. The effectiveness of psychological, economic, or physical coercion, however, is limited in that obedience granted under harsh conditions or duress necessitates constant oversight and supervision—by police, military, security, and intelligence forces—which generally creates unease throughout a society. Cooperation is ideally best if natural, reciprocal, or instinctual. Of great importance, such support, however, can be denied to an employer, a communal leader, or government officials.

Realising that consent can be given or taken away is an initial step towards understanding that cooperation is not necessarily guaranteed. It can be purposefully and strategically withdrawn. The next step is to identify the types of support required to rule or exercise power. Sources of power include the following:

- *authority, or legitimacy*: a quality possessed by law, status, or practice that compels and secures allegiance, support, loyalty, or solidarity and that underlies political obligation and obedience
- *human resources*: the people. Numbers count!

- *skills and knowledge*: practical and technical know-how, including of technologies, and understandings of political, economic, and social systems
- *material resources*: cash, investments, businesses, buildings, housing, equipment, land, and natural resources
- *intangible factors (psychological and ideological)*: symbols, such as flags or emblems, cultural and religious beliefs, political party platforms, manifestos, and theoretical approaches and schools of thought
- *sanctions*: the capacity to enforce or threaten punishments (or approval) physically, politically, economically, or psychologically

Because obedience is voluntary, the availability of the sources of power varies over time and in degree. In other words, power is dynamic and fragile and dispersed throughout communities, societies, and nation-states. Understanding these dynamics offers one the potential to shift and reconfigure the power relations among parties. Therefore, nonviolent struggle operates based on strategically withholding the sources of power to a ruler or adversary thereby changing the power relationships.<sup>8</sup>

Although every society is unique, most channel sources of power through the institutions and organisations of the community or nation-state. The second underlying theory recognises that power manifests itself through 'pillars of support', which allow individuals and groups to maintain and exert power. The mainstays of such backing may include, for example, news media, civil servants, police, university students, and labour organisations. In other words, power is pluralistic, deriving from multiple sources across a society. The table below cites familiar pillars of support in various societies and the sources of power that they can provide.

	Authority	Human resources	Skills and knowledge	Material resources	Intangible factors	Sanctions
<b>Pillar of Support</b>						
Business community and investors			•	•		•
Civil servants	•	•	•	•		•
Cultural and issue-oriented organisations	•	•			•	
News media	•		•	•		•
Military services	•	•	•	•	•	•
NGOs and civil society groups	•	•	•			
Police and security agencies	•	•	•	•	•	•
Political parties, including youth branches	•	•	•	•	•	
Religious organisations	•	•			•	•
Student and faculty unions		•	•			•
Workers and labour organisations		•	•			•

The examples above will not hold true in every society. Also, they do not attribute support to an opponent or group of nonviolent protagonists. For example, youth organisations were active supporters of nonviolent struggle in Burkina Faso in 1996 and 1998 against the increasing authoritarianism of the Compaoré government. In Benin in 1989, students went on strike for six months to protest the regime of Mathieu Kerekou, the government’s refusal to pay student grants, and the elimination of national student-assistance programmes. Student organisations also participated in various forms of nonviolent protests against the military regime of Moussa Traoré in Mali throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Although they also unfortunately engaged in

marauding, looting, and rioting, particularly in 1989 and 1991, Malian students emerged as the leading proponents of nonviolent methods throughout that period. By 1993, however, students in Mali again found themselves fighting against the very democratic government that they had helped to bring to power.



Kenyan youths raise their voices and placards against perceived government corruption in Nairobi on 17 February 2006. Youths joined civil society organizations and political opposition groups in seeking the resignation of senior government officials implicated in corruption scandals. Photo: Antony Njuguna/Reuters.

Students have been a strong force behind anti-government protests that have subsequently toppled dictatorships, but while challenging corrupt regimes, part of the politics of student protests has been to gain access to the very networks of patronage that dictatorships produce. Thus, in Mali, student protests were pivotal in the overthrow of the Traoré regime, but in 1993, after multi-party elections, students

rioted and provoked the sacking of the democratic Ministry of Education in pursuit of better scholarships.

Student groups were ... a primary force in protests in Malawi in 1992. This development proved to be particularly ironic given that young educated men leaving universities had for decades been a primary pool for recruitment into the infamous red-shirted Malawi Young Pioneers, the previously government-sponsored militia.<sup>9</sup>

Such examples demonstrate not only how a particular pillar of support, in this case student organisations, can supply sources of power to an opponent or a nonviolent group, but also how that backing can shift from one side to another over time and in relation to particular issues. Each side is likely to have supporters in some of the pillars identified. In other words, not all student groups can be idealized as supporters of a nonviolent group or of their opponent. Considering pillars collectively, however, can provide a general picture of a conflict situation. For example, one might hear such assertions as 'We are losing the media and public relations battle' or 'The military's legitimacy, human resources, and ability to enforce sanctions is simply overwhelming the majority of our efforts'. Scrutiny of the pillars of support should inform the action plan or strategy.

Identifying and analysing the pillars of support and the sources of power they provide can often be accomplished quite easily in an historical sense or for a specific period. On-going, real-time monitoring in the midst of a dispute or conflict, however, sometimes offers extremely complex challenges. Players and positions change. Resources fluctuate. Power relations shift. Assessing such developments can reveal challenges and opportunities for the nonviolent protagonists, highlighting the *power potential* of institutions and organisations across a society. The marketplace of citizen action usually has more vitality and potency than thought.



## Youth Organisations in Action

Although the pillars of support operate in every society, some are particularly relevant to youths. For example, in 1908 the Young Turks—originating among secret societies of university students and military cadets and known officially as the Committee of Union and Progress—successfully led a revolution against the Turkish Ottoman Empire, which had ruled much of the Middle East for some four centuries. Gaining as much notoriety for their brutality as for their ideology, the Young Turks became a symbol for the power of youths at the international level and an inspiration for young people, particularly for Muslims from lands stretching from Eastern Europe to India at the beginning of the twentieth century. They served as a model for the Young Bukharans in what is present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in Central Asia.

In ensuing decades, international student movements emerged, with the formation of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in 1945 (originally based in London but now headquartered in Budapest) and the International Union of Students in 1946 (based in Prague); both brought together student groups from around the globe into their umbrella organisations promoting historically leftist ideals. Youth organisations found themselves under the global spotlight during the 1960s, particularly in 1968 and 1969, as student movements swept across the United States and much of Europe. U.S. students were active promoters of nonviolent resistance in the civil rights movement, which in turn inspired the contemporary women's movement, the mobilisation against the war in Vietnam, and subsequent environmental preservation movements. In 1974, Anthony Esler, an historian of youth movements, noted, 'The young have been in the streets in unprecedented and growing numbers these past two centuries. To this concrete historical extent, the youth revolution is a reality.'<sup>10</sup> He was in part referring to student activism in the United States and to European student strikes and pro-

tests, which had become widespread, especially in France and Germany by the late 1960s.

Student and youth organisations recently once again stepped into the spotlight with the pivotal student-led nonviolent struggle that brought to an end the regime of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia in 2000. Most active between 1998 and 2000, the youth group Otpor! (Resistance!) represented the primary impetus behind change in the Balkan country. It also served as a model for student and youth organisations in the successful wave of mobilisations, including the 'coloured' revolutions:

- Kmara (Enough), in the Rose Revolution, Georgia, formerly part of the Soviet Union, 2003
- Pora (It's Time), in the Orange Revolution, Ukraine, formerly in the Soviet Union, 2004
- KelKel (Renaissance of the Good), in the Tulip Revolution, Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, 2005
- Revolution Pulse of Freedom, in the Cedar Revolution, Lebanon, in the Middle East, 2005

Other movements are also currently using a similar organisational model:

- Kifaya (Enough), in Egypt
- Mjaft (Enough), in Albania, in the Balkans
- Oborona (Defense), in Russia
- Yezzi Fock (Enough Is Enough), in Tunisia, North Africa
- Yokh (No), in Azerbaijan, Central Asia, formerly part of the Soviet Union
- Zubr (Bison), in Belarus, formerly part of the Soviet Union

African youths have not been passive or insignificant in their respective countries or at the international level. In the early part of the twentieth century, African student groups on the continent and abroad focused their efforts on cultural and educational activities and territorial solidarity groups. Operating almost exclusively as mutual aid societies, early student groups tended to be conservative and apolitical. This had changed, however, by the end of World War II, with a newfound emphasis on pan-Africanism and advocacy for independence. This was especially the case in Francophone Africa, where in 1950 the Association Générale des Étudiants de Dakar became the first formal student organisation recognised in French Africa. (The group changed its name to the Union Générale des Étudiants d'Afrique Occidentale in 1956.)

The Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France (FEANF) was one of the most active student-led organisations advocating independence for countries under French colonial rule. Although founded in Paris in 1950, the FEANF included representatives from Cameroon, French West Africa, French Equatorial Guinea, and Togo, and by 1960 also included members from Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal, and Sudan. Young leaders of FEANF attributed much of their intellectual grounding to the writings of Cheikh Anta Diop, the renowned Senegalese historian and anthropologist who also was an avid student activist and after whom the University of Dakar in Senegal is now named.

Although the rejection of assimilation played well among populations under French colonial rule, African student groups elsewhere on the continent under British control adopted generally less militant tones and remained largely conservative in their approaches and activities. Among the most well known was the West African Student's Union (WASU), formed in London in 1925. Operating until 1958, WASU counted members from Ghana (including Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister and later president of the country who led a nonvio-

lent movement for national independence), Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Throughout the colonial period, student organisations played only supportive roles in the struggles for independence, even where they were most active, as in Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia.

NOTES

- <sup>8</sup> For a more in-depth examination of this pluralistic theory of power, see the latest work of the foremost scholar in the field of strategic nonviolent struggle, Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, pp. 359–423.
- <sup>9</sup> Harrison, *Issues in the Contemporary Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 119.
- <sup>10</sup> Esler, *Youth in Revolution*, p. ix.

# 3

## Methods of Nonviolent Action

**N**onviolent struggle existed before humans began to record history. It includes innumerable methods, for example, demonstrations, marches, vigils, strikes, and boycotts—familiar across Africa and throughout the rest of the world. In most struggles, however, the vast repertoire of methods available remains largely unknown and unexplored. As a result, the technique of pursuing social justice through nonviolent action is often discarded after limited use, usually because relying on one or a few particular methods tends to stifle momentum, create boredom, or lead to predictability. Use of the simplest and most efficient methods is always preferable, but in reaching a long-term objective or goal, this approach also necessitates planning so that the various actions proceed from one to another. Moving from simpler methods to more complicated actions also gives the opponent or target group the chance to respond at different intervals to different pressures and presentations.

When youths consider what types of actions to undertake, they usually end up starting with what they already know, which is a good launching point for any group conducting nonviolent action. Although some methods are not feasible, acceptable, and suitable, expanding the action methods can translate into practical advantages. Results and repercussions will, of course, vary, depending on the interpretations of particular methods by those who use them and by members of the target group and external and neutral parties. Youths will find themselves more adept at certain methods than at others. For example, young people typically have more time and energy than do other groups in a society, but they also tend to have less legitimacy, skills and knowledge, and material resources.

Nonviolent action methods ultimately should be evaluated and selected according to effectiveness, appropriateness, and legitimacy. The following three qualities help in planning and in utilising methods efficiently:

- *Effectiveness*: Individuals need to be educated on how to conduct the action method, especially in places where nonviolent sanctions are not widely used, or where armed rebellion and guerrilla warfare have become accepted. Basic information or training will likely be needed, along with information about logistics, and factors such as timing will need to be stressed.
- *Appropriateness*: The successful use of a method in one situation does not mean it will necessarily prove profitable in another. Circumstances matter. Nonviolent protagonists may gain experience from repeating specific actions, but such recurrence also gives the target group the opportunity to develop effective counter-maneuvers. In other words, predictability can be a liability.
- *Suitability*: Creativity and ingenuity help in maintaining momentum, initiative, and interest. The adoption of new action methods, while directed at the target group, should also be aimed at encouraging broad participation. This must be done, however, without forgetting the need for preparation and training and the potential risks of utilising new, unfamiliar methods. Such a caution is especially relevant for youths, who might not fully grasp the potential danger of a situation or who could easily get carried away.

Single methods—even the most powerful, attractive, or familiar—should not be confused or substituted for the technique of nonviolent struggle in general. The nonviolent protagonists stand to benefit from in-depth exploration of the entire repertoire of tools available to them; in addition, every struggle typically relies on some degree of innovation in the midst of the campaign or movement. (See the Appendix for 198 methods of nonviolent struggle compiled by the scholar Gene Sharp.)

The methods of nonviolent struggle fall into three broad categories: protest and persuasion (actions designed to send a message); noncooperation (actions that suspend cooperation and assistance); and nonviolent intervention (actions that disrupt patterns, making it impossible for 'normal' activities to continue, or create new patterns).

## Protest and Persuasion

The most commonly recognised and employed methods of nonviolent action are those of protest and persuasion. If one wants someone or something to change, then one must explain what the problem is and what kind of alteration one expects. Slogans, songs, petitions, skits, vigils, and mock funerals can be employed to express an injustice or portray the stance of a group on a particular issue. They offer the ability to convey disagreement or support or to expose the actions or positions of an opponent. Methods of protest and persuasion have the capacity to be explanatory as well as symbolic. Sometimes their effectiveness depends upon gaining widespread attention, but they usually are not suited for achieving large, overarching objectives. They require use in combination with clear communication of the grievance and usually with methods that attack or undermine the pillars of support of an opponent. Used alone, they serve only to gain attention and perhaps to change perspectives on particular issues. Although methods of protest and persuasion are usually the first to be used in any nonviolent struggle, various forms of these simplest and most basic tools are normally relied upon throughout the course of a conflict.

The demonstration, which tends to ignite popular imagination, is one of the most common methods in the category of protest and persuasion. Properly promoted and conducted demonstrations were powerful tools used in conflicts in Guinea, Kenya, Senegal, and Sudan.





Schoolgirls march in Sierra Leone in March 2000 to protest the use of child soldiers.  
Photo: Amnesty International.

Those who advocate demonstrations, which are popular and familiar, sometimes do not know what purpose they serve or how to conduct them effectively. A demonstration represents first and foremost a peaceful symbolic act that brings together a group of people in a public space who voice a collective opinion on a particular issue, grievance, or target. It might be conducted by a group representing a single demographic, such as women or children, or by a purposefully diverse group. Nonviolent protagonists sometimes incorporate music and singing, which can

make the demonstration festival-like, or alternatively, mournful. As organised public events, demonstrations hold the potential to educate the general population or particular groups, recruit volunteers, and build support. Demonstrations that attract large numbers of people inherently display the strength of the nonviolent campaign. Methods of protest and persuasion are historically the most common forms of nonviolent action used throughout Africa and the rest of the world with varying symbolism and intensity.

## Noncooperation

Methods of noncooperation directly target the sources of power and pillars of support of an opponent or target group. They can impede

a particular person, group, institution, bureaucracy, or state system from pursuing its objective or interests. The use of noncooperation consciously and deliberately stands to end or limit engagement or participation in specific activities, either partially or completely. At the heart of such methods lies the reality that all political relationships and systems depend upon the cooperation of the governed, whether through consent, acquiescence, or duress. Through noncooperation, individuals refuse to provide obedience, they withdraw their support, or they do not assist. Noncooperation constitutes the largest group of methods in the toolbox of nonviolent action.

The boycott and strike, which are quite versatile, represent the most common examples of noncooperation. Consumers, producers, managers, funders, governments, and international third parties all possess the ability to conduct boycotts. Strikes vary by targeting particular industries and by length. They range from ‘lightning’ and farm workers’ strikes to student and prisoner strikes. Noncooperation in the form of strikes need not be confined solely to economic matters. Social forms, such as the suspension of a sporting activity, can be effective under certain circumstances as can political noncooperation, such as the boycott of an election. Other methods include simple reluctance to perform particular acts, stalling, or severance of diplomatic relations.

The general strike is often identified as the most powerful weapon within the arsenal of nonviolent movements. Gene Sharp, one of the foremost thinkers and writers in the field of nonviolent struggle, defines the general strike as ‘a widespread stoppage of labor by workers in an attempt to bring the economic life of a given area to a more or less complete standstill in order to achieve certain desired objectives.’<sup>11</sup> Sometimes called total noncooperation, this ‘blitzkrieg’ approach, has often unfortunately been adopted without adequate strategic or long-term planning. A general strike is easy to call, but difficult to implement. High risks and negative repercussions normally accompany it. A

failed general strike stands to worsen the position or conditions for the nonviolent movement.

A number of factors, including potential effects, should be considered when employing this method. The general strike requires an extensive organisational capacity involving numerous constituencies, businesses, offices, and service providers. Appropriate personnel must be notified of the timing and purpose of the action. Beyond logistical coordination, those asked to participate must agree with the viability of this act of noncooperation and that it is in their best interest to partake. Sir Adam Roberts, a scholar of international relations at Oxford University, describes the general strike as 'a rather indiscriminate weapon' that fails to exemplify and communicate the real issues at stake.<sup>12</sup> The same can be said, however, for a variety of methods of nonviolent action. A general strike in action is so widespread that the issue for which the strike was called can easily be lost. The responsibility to communicate the grievance falls upon those who call for the action.

Requesting individuals not to attend work directly affects those individuals' lives. In most countries, employers do not pay striking workers regardless of their objective, and even trade unions with strike funds never have enough money to sustain striking workers over a long period. Going without pay can deprive a worker and his or her family of food and other necessities. Those coordinating a general strike should recognise its potential consequences and attempt as much as possible to compensate for them. Adequate preparation can place a tremendous resource burden on organisers.

Additional, society-wide costs or losses exist in association with the general strike. According to Roberts, 'If a general strike really is general, a society must be prepared in advance to operate without communications, piped water, sewage, transport except of the primitive kind, and power.'<sup>13</sup> Agreements may be negotiated in advance,

however, on keeping certain services operating. Roberts's reference to the 'indiscriminate' nature of the general strike acknowledges that the consequences of the action affects not only the parties engaged in the conflict, but neutral bystanders in the society as well. Such a situation sometimes results in an escalation of competition over limited resources and assets. While a general strike is under way, organisers must be responsible for protecting the production of specific resources, ensuring means of distribution of essentials, and seeking or establishing alternative means of production. Particular resources that merit attention include food, clothing, energy, medical supplies, negotiable currency, communications facilities, and transportation.

Although by definition a method of economic noncooperation, the general strike also has a symbolic aspect. The successful orchestration of such a drastic action is likely to affect the morale of both the opponent and the nonviolent group. Ensuring absolute compliance with a general strike is extremely difficult, evident for example in Zimbabwe in early 2003. When select individuals, groups, or industries refuse to join in the action, it suggests disorganisation, disunity, or a general lack of support in the broader community for the nonviolent campaign, thus lessening the pressure and leverage for social change. Such an image of weakness has the potential to produce both short- and long-term detrimental effects on morale. Also, some uninvolved individuals may be willing to replace workers on strike. These strike-breakers raise for organisers the issue of how such individuals should be addressed and handled.

Discussion of the general strike also necessarily involves consideration of strategy and tactics. Strategic questioning involves asking whether a general strike should be used in a particular nonviolent campaign. In other words, will a successful general strike help to achieve a particular objective by converting an opponent or target group or lead to accommodation, coercion, or disintegration? How will the action

affect other initiatives by the nonviolent group? Such considerations remain separate from the tactical issues involved. That is, for example, which individuals or groups will participate in the action and for how long? A particular method or action can be well organised on the tactical level, but devastating on the strategic front. (For example, it might contradict other nonviolent campaigns under way.) Conversely, organising a general strike may be a useful idea strategically, but its effectiveness might be limited because of tactical failures. These are questions and issues that nonviolent groups too often do not consider.

Social and economic noncooperation are powerful action methods, but political forms can be equally potent. For example, boycotts of presidential elections in Nigeria in 1993 and parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe in November 2005 proved to be influential. Noncooperation comprises the most powerful class of nonviolent methods, because most such actions collide directly with an opponent's sources of power. Their use signals that the majority of the populace or key groups desire change.

## Nonviolent Intervention

Methods of nonviolent intervention disrupting established patterns of behaviour or creating new ones include sit-ins, pray-ins, nonviolent blockades, and the organisation of alternative (or parallel) institutions. Some forms of nonviolent intervention, such as hunger strikes and sit-ins, have been popularised. Other methods include land seizures and nonviolent occupations, such as the ten-day siege of oil company facilities in the Niger Delta region in 2002: 'The [more than 2,000] women, who were between the ages of 30 and 90, seized control of the Chevron-Texaco oil terminal, airstrip, docks and stores, which provide the only entry points to the facility, disrupting production of about

450,000 barrels of crude oil each day the protest lasted. Sometimes working in shifts of 200 at a time, they kept the facilities occupied round the clock'.<sup>14</sup>

The practice of methods of nonviolent intervention involves more risk than most other action methods. Individuals who conduct nonviolent intervention place themselves under public scrutiny. All nonviolent actions require thorough preparation and training, but methods of nonviolent intervention often result in intense circumstances and developments that demand great readiness and preparation.

Although youths may be more willing to conduct methods of nonviolent intervention than others in a society, the actions in this category typically are conducted by highly trained and disciplined members of a nonviolent group. Not only should activists be well versed on how to conduct the action in question, but they should also understand and anticipate the likely responses or reactions of the opponent and on-lookers. Given that such actions are often conducted by small numbers of persons, they do not always generate publicity similar to that produced by mass demonstrations or widespread industry strikes. Methods of nonviolent intervention can offer shock value and thus possess the potential and capacity to attract attention. If chosen in desperation, rather than implemented as part of a carefully devised plan, however, they can jeopardise members of the nonviolent movement: 'It must be understood that the disruption of normal patterns of life, efforts to make change via outside channels, and imposing costs on opponents are forceful ways of acting'.<sup>15</sup>

The creation of alternative or parallel organisations—institutions or groups established by members of a community or society to address needs or problems being neglected—represents another forceful form of intervention. People usually form alternative organisations when a government bureau, official agency, or other established organ proves itself unable or unwilling to fulfill its responsibilities or simply leaves

widespread grievances unattended. Parallel institutions may also be developed to shift reliance away from a target group. By reducing dependence on the products and services offered by an opponent, this complex method increases self-reliance and empowerment. Alternative organisations hold the potential to address an array of issues and grievances, including markets, education, health, and security, with flexibility in approaches to accepting or challenging existing power relations in a society. Common examples are the community-based organisations found throughout Africa that are involved in a variety of areas, among them economic development, education, peace building, conflict resolution, and security. These are formal and informal alternative institutions ranging from the Nigerian *esusu* (indigenous savings and credit associations) to Rwandan *gacaca* trials (a traditional mechanism for addressing disputes over land and other communal issues).

Mohandas K. Gandhi is well known for his personal commitment to nonviolent methods, but he did not rely strictly on this approach. Gandhi outlined ways for his fellow Indians, friends, and colleagues in South Africa and those he inspired to begin living under new circumstances before the old injustices against which they fought had been resolved. He called this approach a 'constructive programme'. It promoted self-reliance, village and household sanitation, local industries, full participation of women, economic independence, and calls for action and commitment from youths, whom he called the hope of the future. As envisioned by Gandhi, a constructive programme aims to increase self-reliance and confidence, build a sense of community, and provide needed services through parallel institutions. It provides a way of meshing means and ends, realising the goal sought in a manner consistent with the long-term purpose. Under a constructive programme, communities begin living their goals at the grass-roots level long before they are able to assume the reins of power or effect significant social change.

Author and scholar Jonathan Schell weaves together accounts of constructive programmes and parallel institutions as employed by some of the world's great leaders in effective nonviolent movements: Gandhi and the Indian anti-colonialist struggle; writer, activist, and later president of the Czech Republic Václav Havel; Polish Solidarity leader Adam Michnik; and Hungarian intellectual Gyorgy Konrád:

[I]t was a mistake to try to overthrow the system. Activism should be directed at achieving immediate change in daily life. [Havel] proposed unshakable commitment to achieving modest, concrete goals on the local level. . . . [Havel, Michnik, and Konrád] in effect lowered their field glasses from the remote heights of state power and turned their gazes to the life immediately around them. Gandhi had faced neither totalitarian rule nor nuclear stalemate, yet he, too, had arrived at a decision to aim not at state power directly but at immediate local improvement of life, to be achieved through direct action in the form of the constructive program, which he, too, saw as the essence of things.<sup>16</sup>

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

- concrete positive changes in the everyday lives of people
- a sense of individual and community identity and pride
- empowerment for persons to act and realise their power potential
- encouragement of people to support activities that a nonviolent movement might some day undertake
- alteration of power relationships among groups in a society
- advocacy of actions that reflect movement goals, such as choosing means consistent with the ends

Nonviolent struggle often involves risks, and with hazards come responsibility. Situations and opportunities arise that inevitably raise



ethical, moral, or other issues deserving of serious consideration. Although the most basic tools of nonviolent action are persuasive and symbolic measures, individuals and groups may turn to extra-legal and extra-parliamentary methods when the customary, legal, or constitutional frameworks fail, are dysfunctional, corrupt, or not meting out justice, or no other means exists for seeking redress. This holds true even in democracies, where minorities continue to find a need for nonviolent action to correct the tendency of majorities to neglect or overrule minority rights.

The use of some methods justifiably generates debate in certain situations, as various issues generally arise in the midst of a nonviolent struggle, particularly where danger lurks. For instance, children might well be able to participate in a march or a vigil, but where it is reasonable to expect an overbearing security or police presence, is it acceptable to put them at risk? How do nonviolent protagonists deal with individuals who refuse to participate in a boycott for which their support is crucial? There are no ready-made answers for such questions. Each depends on context. For nonviolent activists, understanding the range of weapons available helps spark creativity as well as strategic thinking and planning, all of which are essential skills in effective nonviolent struggle.

#### NOTES

<sup>11</sup> Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*, p. 275.

<sup>12</sup> Roberts, *Civilian Resistance as a National Defence*, p. 285.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>14</sup> Wokoma, *Women's Nonviolent Direct Action in the Niger Delta*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> McCarthy, 'The Techniques of Nonviolent Action', p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> Schell, *Unconquerable World*, p. 193.



# 4

## Countering Arguments for Violent Action

Individuals and groups offer various reasons for choosing to adopt nonviolent struggle, one of the most prominent being faith in its moral righteousness. Other justifications include desperation—usually resulting from a belief that violent confrontations will prove fruitless or suicidal—contextual advantages, or authentic belief in the effectiveness of the nonviolent technique. Yet, criticisms of and arguments against nonviolent struggle persist.

The attitude of ‘we tried it, and it failed’ is one of the more common arguments hindering nonviolent struggle. When referring to ‘it’, individuals engaged in conflicts usually mean a particular method of nonviolent action, for example, demonstrations or consumer boycotts. After these specific methods appear to fail, leaders of movements usually do not consider whether the failure resulted from strategic or tactical errors on their part. They instead hastily presume that a ‘stronger’ technique of action, such as guerrilla warfare, will work. Oddly enough, paramilitary operations and conventional warfare do not evoke the same criticisms as does nonviolent action. Rather, poor strategies are blamed for failures on the battlefield, not the overall effectiveness of militarised forms of engagement.

The most common testament against nonviolent struggle is the advocacy of violence in disputes and conflicts. Youths are particularly vulnerable to such arguments as ‘what is taken by violence must be returned by violence’, which has emanated even from struggles displaying considerable sophistication in the use of nonviolent methods. During the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, for example, the African National Congress made repeated calls for public support of its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). Young ANC radicals established this guerrilla wing in 1961 following a brutal crackdown the year before by the white South African government on nonviolent protesters in the black township of Sharpeville. With more than seventy killed and nearly two hundred injured, the episode be-

came popularly known as the Sharpeville massacre.<sup>17</sup>

After discussions with leaders from several African independence struggles, Bill Sutherland and Matt Meyer concluded that the 'Sharpeville Massacre was the decisive factor in the conclusion by principal leaders in the South African liberation movement that nonviolence could no longer work'.<sup>18</sup> South Africans at that time apparently failed to realise that the range of their continued nonviolent protests and acts of noncooperation, most notably in what they called a Defiance Campaign, had actually wrangled the centres of power in the capital. Umkhonto we Sizwe never represented a serious challenge to the apartheid regime, but massive noncooperation pointed to the readiness of hundreds of thousands of people to disobey and refuse cooperation, a real threat to any system. Incidentally, the ANC never fully abandoned nonviolent methods. The breadth and depth of the popular nonviolent movement would prove decisive in South Africa in decades to come.



In Africa, community radio can be a potent channel for sharing news and reports on nonviolent action and how it can help to build strong societies, including resistance to organized violence. Some radio programmes are produced by and for youths. Here a young boy in the Democratic Republic of Congo interviews activists for such a broadcast. Photo: Amnesty International.

The promotion of violent struggle instead of more accessible popular nonviolent struggle is not unique to South Africa or Africa in general. Similar arguments for armed self-defence surfaced during the civil rights movement in the United States, advocated by prominent leaders and organisations, including Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. Some floundering or stalled nonviolent movements have opted for forms of violent engagement in desperation. In Kosovo, the southernmost province of the former Republic of Yugoslavia, ethnic Albanians, comprising 94 per cent of the province's population, conducted a remarkable non-violent struggle for independence from what is now Serbia. It included the extensive development of alternative institutions, among them hundreds of schools and approximately ninety clinics. After a complex, nearly ten-year nonviolent struggle during the 1990s, some frustrated Kosovars and others returning from abroad formed the Kosovo Liberation Army, which called for violent struggle.

In Burma, after decades of guerrilla warfare, a brief respite of non-violent struggle, or 'political defiance' as the peoples of Burma prefer to call it, succeeded in bringing down three successive governments in 1988. Nonviolent protagonists could not, however, consolidate these gains and pro-democracy parliamentarians were never seated though duly elected when the military junta allowed elections in 1990. Despite the mixed success of nonviolent struggle in Burma and the movement's strong appeal to the outside world, sporadic and overwhelmingly unsuccessful guerrilla operations continue throughout the jungles of the country's periphery.

Some justifications for violence build on the assumption that human beings are inherently violent and thus are merely submitting to their natural instincts. Such an understanding of human nature deems cultures of violence 'normal' and to be expected. This position underscores anthropologist Nicolas Argenti's observation that 'it is very often the case that young people are not simply abducted against their will, but

that the environment in which they struggle to survive leads them to see military service in a government army or rebel force as a rational choice'. Faced with the prospects of hunger and homelessness, violence might be viewed as an ordinary part of life, especially where survival is at stake: 'In other words, the conditions of economic collapse, of free market restructuring programmes, and of crises of legitimacy all affecting Africa's nation-states, coupled to the compromised authority of local elites seen to be either "mired in tradition" or in league with a criminal state, are fertile ground for the mobilisation for violence of youths with few other life choices'.<sup>19</sup>

More widespread than the previous positions has been the ideological advocacy of violent action. According to some Marxists, substantial or fundamental social change cannot ensue without a violent centre-piece. The vanguards of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia promoted this position, as did those of the Cultural Revolution in China between 1966 and 1969. Similar sentiments flowed through a series of Marxist and guerrilla revolutions throughout the world, most recently in ongoing Maoist revolts in Nepal and among contingents of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. According to Monique Marks,

Apartheid was a 'sickness' that, if not 'destroyed', would contaminate a new society. The need for violence, youth asserted, was common to all liberation struggles. They were well aware of the histories of liberation in places such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Namibia and Angola, and glorified the 'violent' revolutions that had taken place in these countries.<sup>20</sup>

With the publication of Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* in 1961, arguments for violent struggle raged throughout Africa. Born in 1925 in the French colony of Martinique in the Caribbean and schooled and trained as a psychiatrist, Fanon has had an enduring impact on liberation struggles across the globe. Drawing on radical psycho-therapies primarily involving Algerians who had suffered torture at the hands of

French colonisers, the popularised 'lessons' of Fanon's writings conclude that violence is not only necessary in the face of oppression, but is essential also in healing. He imbued violence with 'cleansing properties'.

Undervaluing considerations of the pragmatic effectiveness of violent resistance against oppression, Fanon's arguments made some sense to some people. The use of violent action can boost morale, solidarity, and self-empowerment among rebels and the dispossessed. Its 'positives' are often characterised as euphoric; they are, however, short term. What do spurts of violent struggle build or sustain? Whatever is achieved through violence must be supported and maintained by violent behaviour. It is not that advocates of armed struggle lack principles or ethics; they often have passionately held beliefs and strong moral codes. Yet, they are probably not students of how the means affect the ends. Changes in leadership are evident in societies that used revolutionary violence to overthrow authoritarian regimes or colonial powers to achieve independence. This holds in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, Angola between 1975 and 2002, China from 1927 to 1950, Indonesia from the 1960s to the 1980s, and Cuba from 1953 to 1959. Yet, for the most part, the old repressive leaders are merely replaced with a new set of repressive leaders.

When a respected organisation like the ANC in South Africa calls for violent resistance, the general population may be inclined not to protest. Arguments on behalf of violent resistance by such proponents tend to sound logical: 'resistance by any means necessary'. Other factors also contribute to violence being an easily promoted option. Poor prospects of employment and a life of misery can entice youths towards violence. Those under the influence of alcohol and drugs and their purveyors, particularly over the long term, are easily persuaded towards violent acts.

Youths are particularly susceptible to justifications for violent action,



whether through manipulation, coercion, or choice. Take for example the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Sons of the Wolf in fascist Italy. Both were recruitment tools and vehicles of intimidation. The Boy Brigades in Botswana and the Green Bombers in Zimbabwe offer additional examples of youths who act as repression on-call for authoritarian regimes.

Youths also are vulnerable at tender ages to being incorporated, usually against their will, into militias. While such situations are not unique to Africa, the Lord's Resistance Army, formed in 1987 to overthrow the Ugandan government, is remarkable for having kidnapped an estimated 20,000 children and making them 'child soldiers' and sex slaves. The Democratic Republic of Congo armed local youths in the provinces of North and South Kivu to fight troops and rebels supported by Rwanda from 1998 to 2003. Popularly known as Mai Mai, these ethnic militias were not party to the peace agreements that officially ended the war. In turn, various Mai Mai groups directed their arms against the general population, resulting in ghastly attacks. Militia activity has also been on the rise in Nigeria, particularly over the distribution of revenue, benefits, and services in the oil-rich Niger Delta region. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, composed primarily of young persons, has escalated the capture of foreign oil-company workers as hostages, sabotage, destruction of oil flow-stations, and shootouts with Nigerian government military task forces.<sup>21</sup>

Although militias may be viewed as forms of organised, structured, and perhaps legitimate activity, the majority of such groups operate with impunity. Led typically by charismatic yet autocratic leaders, militias and paramilitary wings commonly lack discipline and long-term direction and may operate whimsically and by invoking brutal 'standards'. When illness, arrest, or death claims magnetic and often uneducated leaders, armed groups may be left aimless and volatile. Militias tend to consist of disenchanting or frustrated youths, traditional tribal

groupings, fleeing refugees, internally displaced persons, or politically motivated resistance fighters. Most often, militias are simply loose associations of youths that collectively engage in pointlessly violent acts of looting, vandalism, rape, maiming, and killing. Such was the case in Somalia with the youth 'militia' known as Mooryan, or bandits, during the Somali civil war.

In South Africa, *tsotsi* (youth gangs) became notorious for their violent crimes and related activities, particularly during the 1980s. The *ode-lay* societies, groups of young men formed throughout the 1990s in Sierra Leone, held public masquerades and processions, but were also well known for their riotous and anti-social behaviour. The outlawed Mungiki sect in Kenya displayed a penchant for violence, often turning to intimidation, torture, and occasionally killing during the night. These youth groupings are less structured than militias. Youth violence can also be spontaneous, as when youths turned to petty crime and destruction in response to the skyrocketing price of goods in Mozambique in 1995 and in Guinea in 2005.

These groups and their actions illustrate some of the temptations and appeal of violent activities confronting young people in Africa. In the face of reasonable-sounding arguments, frustration, threats, and promises of financial and personal rewards, the likelihood dims that individuals and groups, particularly youths, will choose to press for reform, restitution, or policy action through nonviolent struggle. This technique must be taught, learned, and understood.

## NOTES

<sup>17</sup> Chainawa, 'Southern Africa since 1945', p. 260.

<sup>18</sup> Sutherland and Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> De Waal and Argenti, *Young Africa*, pp. 147 and 145.

<sup>20</sup> Marks, *Young Warriors*, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> For more on child soldiers, see Brett and Specht, *Young Soldiers*.

# 5

## Today's Actions and Tomorrow's World

Youths in Africa today are passionate and enthusiastic, rebellious and raucous. They are idealistic and risk-taking, yet easily manipulated and trouble-making. They are glorified and demonised, inspiring hope for the future but raising concerns of a present danger. Although much attention is paid to improving the conditions and care of youths, they also generate suspicion and unease.

Youth is probably the most turbulent period in life, a time spent searching for identity and place. Family responsibilities may as yet be limited. Education (formal and informal) offers enlightenment for some, though for many it is difficult to attain. Opinions develop, and career paths begin to form. Most important for our purposes here, ideas take shape about how to address disputes and conflict.

As with any social group, youths suffer their share of generalisations and stereotyping, particularly in Africa. The first study of student movements in Africa appeared in 1963, in an article on the West African Student's Union. The first extended study arrived in 1979, with S. A. Amoá's *University Student's Political Action in Ghana*. Francophone Africa would wait for several more years, until the 1985 publication of Sékou Traore's *La FEANF*, on the Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France. This relatively late academic attention has remained sparse, as how African youths respond to disputes and conflicts, particularly their use of nonviolent struggle, continues to be underresearched and poorly understood.

When faced with the nearly universal issues of life's early years, youths want to better themselves, their family members, their friends and peers, and their societies. When their idea of what constitutes 'better' runs counter to the objectives and desires of the power centres in communities or governments, leaders and officials respond in many cases with 'justified' repression to quell the anarchy and chaos that they associate, rightly or wrongly, with young persons. In turn, youths may unwittingly respond with a mentality resembling 'resistance by

any means', although that is the choice most likely to harm their futures. The violence continues, creating vicious circles and cycles of retribution:

The reading of 'youth' as a social problem has a grounding in reality that must be addressed, but it also has become a pretext for repression for some autocratic visions of social inclusion. . . . Inevitably, state violence and state-sponsored 'third forces' used to incite ethnic conflict and legitimize the imposition of states of emergency followed by military intervention have bred resistance amongst those young people most affected by such violence, which is in turn used to justify further and greater state repression.<sup>22</sup>

Being viewed by elders as a social problem is, unfortunately, the situation in which many young Africans find themselves. In such an atmosphere, the young can develop an over-reliance on violence, leading to its use in increasing numbers of situations. Without discussions of alternatives, youths come to think of violent actions as the primary, if not only, technique of addressing disputes and conflicts. Thus, whether random or coordinated, violence evolves into a way of identifying with others through shared perspectives, opinions, and experience. Violent measures become engrained or institutionalised. Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania and an advocate of nonviolent struggle, noted this phenomenon at the national level: 'Governments would inevitably look more militarized if armed struggle had been a decisive factor. In Tanzania, we were the most civilian of governments because we did not engage in armed struggle. . . . When you have a society that goes through, as you say, almost a culture of violence and for such a long time—well, you inherit some of it.'<sup>23</sup>

The breadth of the choices of how to face conflict has only received passing attention. According to Gene Sharp, 'Rarely are the violent and nonviolent techniques carefully and fairly compared in terms of time, casualties, successes and failures (using specific criteria), adequacy of

preparations, type of strategy, and the like.<sup>24</sup> Too often, some type of violent action is undertaken as a 'knee-jerk' response by policy-makers, activists, and freedom fighters.

Although the use of violent actions by youths and to put down youths is widespread, it would be remiss to ignore initiatives designed to protect and improve the lives of youths. For example, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, sets out the basic civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children. Broadly similar in conception and substance is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, enacted in 1990 by the Organisation of African Unity, now the African Union. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977 also specify protections for children as victims of war and other atrocities. Attended by world leaders in September 1990, the World Summit for Children resulted in the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children in the 1990s and a plan of action for enhancing children's health and welfare in face of war, discrimination, and hunger. Many international organisations, such as UNICEF and UNESCO, also sponsor and conduct projects and advocate on behalf of children and youths, as do private voluntary agencies, such as Save the Children and the African Network for the Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

This booklet, however, focuses on what youths can do in response to disputes and conflicts, particularly when faced with options that overwhelmingly favour violent action. In fact, youths have successfully used nonviolent struggle in seeking humanitarian aims, human rights, equality before the law, and democratic ideals. In addition to students playing significant roles in nonviolent struggles in Benin, Burkina Faso, Malawi, and Mali, youths stood up as major proponents in nonviolent student political movements in Sudan in 1985, in Ethiopia in 1991 and 2005, in Sierra Leone in 1997, in Guinea in 2005, and in the struggle of the



Young men demonstrate against war in Dakar, Senegal. This peaceful action attracted an estimated 10,000 participants. The southern province of Casamance has been the site of civil war for more than twenty years. Photo: Amnesty International.

Ogonis and other peoples of Nigeria beginning in the 1990s.<sup>25</sup>

As noted, groups choose to employ nonviolent struggle for a number of reasons: having no other way to fight, faith in its moral righteousness, and belief in its effectiveness. Furthermore, utilising nonviolent methods avoids attempting to defy an opponent, particularly a nation-state, at its strongest points. Challenging the policies and practices of a state or government by confronting its military and police apparatuses is likely not the best strategy. States typically have a monopoly on violence through military-industrial complexes, armed

military services, police and security forces, and perhaps quasi-official militias. If, however, a cause is pressed by shifting the struggle to nonviolent action, it may be possible to overcome what appear at first to be insurmountable odds. The strength of a target group can in fact transform into a weakness. The mismatch of an opponent's superior capacity for violent action and the protagonists' capacity for nonviolent struggle can become a strategic advantage that generates popular sympathies, international approval, and eventually greater legitimacy and resources.

The choice to employ nonviolent struggle should be viewed in relation to more general political concerns and outcomes. For instance, unlike violent confrontations, which create a thirst for retaliation, the use of nonviolent struggle allows parties to address a grievance without arousing a taste for revenge. Nonviolent action is more likely than violent action to lead toward reconciliation and resolutions that benefit both sides or all parties to a dispute. The target group, not fearing threats of violence or attack, is more likely to listen and note the grievances and issues at stake as articulated by nonviolent protagonists. Nonviolent action targets the power of the adversary, not their physical well-being.

Separating the antagonist from the antagonism also places the grievance front and center, rather than the means of tackling the problem. In contrast, with guerrilla warfare or acts of terrorism, the nature of the violent action often overshadows any grievance and causes target audiences and potential supporters to dismiss the substance or legitimacy of the protagonists' cause. The risks of casualties resulting from nonviolent action also tend to be drastically lower than those from actions involving violence. Today, such knowledge and understanding is forcefully being brought to the fore not so much by academicians, although their work is significant, but by practitioners, those individuals whose wisdom comes largely from experience.



Groups that use nonviolent struggle to fight for social justice often focus on achieving goals and objectives, as they should. Yet, use of nonviolent struggle also produces long-term, structural effects. In 2002, 'veterans' of past nonviolent struggles and representatives from other groups engaged in conflict—including some groups advocating violent resistance—gathered at a conference convened by the United States Institute of Peace to share and record some of their experiences. The group noted that 'while guerrilla armies or militias may sometimes be effective vehicles for protecting a community from repressive violence or unseating a dictator, they are typically undemocratic in their organisation and often are unsuitable candidates for democratic leadership after the old regime is gone'.<sup>26</sup>

In other words, a direct connexion exists between the means and ends in regard to how individuals and groups respond to a dispute or engage in a conflict. Not only can nonviolent action be used to overcome hardships and alleviate grievances, it also helps in laying the groundwork for a safer and more just society by effectively shifting the emphasis and conceptualisation of power from the physical to the political and social. A report recently published by Freedom House, a human rights organisation, found that during the past thirty-five years, nonviolent resistance played a pivotal role in fifty of sixty-seven transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic government. By first recognising the numerous cases and the significant force of nonviolent struggle across the globe, the report acknowledges 'the activity of strong nonviolent coalitions reduces the appeal of opposition violence and at the same time leads to more positive outcomes for freedom'.<sup>27</sup> What begins with methods of nonviolent struggle is given a greater chance to end with lasting democracy. Likewise, actions taken while young influence one's adulthood, and we are only young once.

NOTES

<sup>22</sup> De Waal and Argenti, *Young Africa*, p. 146.

<sup>23</sup> Sutherland and Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa*, p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*, p. 74.

<sup>25</sup> On the use of nonviolent struggle by students in Ethiopia, see Abraham, *Ethiopia: From Bullets to Ballot Box*. On Sudan, see Greenfield, 'Two Months That Shook Sudan,' and Middle East Research and Information Project, 'Sudan's Revolutionary Spring', pp. 2–28. On Sierra Leone and the Ogoni struggle, see George-Williams, *'Bite Not One Another'*. For detailed accounts and information on young persons engaging in activities and initiatives related to conflict resolution and peace building across Africa, see Mekenkamp, von Tongeren, and van de Veen, *Searching for Peace in Africa*.

<sup>26</sup> Crist, Hentges, and Serwer, 'Strategic Nonviolent Conflict', p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Karatnycky and Ackerman, *How Freedom Is Won*, p. 9. This report is freely available for download at [http://65.110.85.181/uploads/special\\_report/29.pdf](http://65.110.85.181/uploads/special_report/29.pdf). It cites statistics on the strength of nonviolent civic coalitions, government transition agents, sources of violence during periods of transition, and statistical analysis of the effects of nonviolent civic coalitions and violent actors in relation to transitional or static outcomes.

# Appendix: The Methods of Nonviolent Action



The following is reprinted from Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (Boston, Albert Einstein Institution, 2002), pp. 69–76.

## **Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion**

### **Formal statements**

1. Public speeches
2. Letters of opposition or support
3. Declarations by organizations and institutions
4. Signed public statements
5. Declarations of indictment and intention
6. Group or mass petitions

### **Communications with a wider audience**

7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
10. Newspapers and journals
11. Records, radio, and television
12. Skywriting and earthwriting

### **Group representations**

13. Deputations
14. Mock awards
15. Group lobbying
16. Picketing
17. Mock elections

### **Symbolic public acts**

18. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
19. Wearing of symbols

20. Prayer and worship
21. Delivering symbolic objects
22. Protest disrobings
23. Destruction of own property
24. Symbolic lights
25. Displays of portraits
26. Paint as protest
27. New signs and names
28. Symbolic sounds
29. Symbolic reclamations
30. Rude gestures

### **Pressures on individuals**

31. "Haunting" officials
32. Taunting officials
33. Fraternization
34. Vigils

### **Drama and music**

35. Humorous skits and pranks
36. Performances of plays and music
37. Singing

### **Processions**

38. Marches
39. Parades
40. Religious processions
41. Pilgrimages
42. Motorcades

**Honoring the dead**

43. Political mourning
44. Mock funerals
45. Demonstrative funerals
46. Homage at burial places

**Public assemblies**

47. Assemblies of protest or support
48. Protest meetings
49. Camouflaged meetings of protest
50. Teach-ins

**Withdrawal and renunciation**

51. Walk-outs
52. Silence
53. Renouncing honors
54. Turning one's back

**Methods of Social Noncooperation****Ostracism of persons**

55. Social boycott
56. Selective social boycott
57. Lysistratic nonaction
58. Excommunication
59. Interdict

**Noncooperation with social events, customs, and institutions**

60. Suspension of social and sports activities
61. Boycott of social affairs
62. Student strike

- 63. Social disobedience
- 64. Withdrawal from social institutions

### **Withdrawal from the social system**

- 65. Stay-at-home
- 66. Total personal noncooperation
- 67. "Flight" of workers
- 68. Sanctuary
- 69. Collective disappearance
- 70. Protest emigration (*hijrat*)

## **Methods of Economic Noncooperation: Economic Boycotts**

### **Action by consumers**

- 71. Consumers' boycott
- 72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
- 73. Policy of austerity
- 74. Rent withholding
- 75. Refusal to rent
- 76. National consumers' boycott
- 77. International consumers' boycott

### **Action by workers and producers**

- 78. Workers' boycott
- 79. Producers' boycott

### **Action by middlemen**

- 80. Suppliers' and handlers' boycott



**Action by owners and management**

81. Traders' boycott
82. Refusal to let or sell property
83. Lockout
84. Refusal of industrial assistance
85. Merchants' 'general strike'

**Action by holders of financial resources**

86. Withdrawal of bank deposits
87. Refusal to pay fees, dues, and assessments
88. Refusal to pay debts or interest
89. Severance of funds and credit
90. Revenue refusal
91. Refusal of a government's money

**Action by governments**

92. Domestic embargo
93. Blacklisting of traders
94. International sellers' embargo
95. International buyers' embargo
96. International trade embargo

**Methods of Economic Noncooperation:  
The Strike****Symbolic strikes**

97. Protest strike
98. Quickie walkout (lightning strike)

### **Agricultural strikes**

- 99. Peasant strike
- 100. Farm workers' strike

### **Strikes by special groups**

- 101. Refusal of impressed labor
- 102. Prisoners' strike
- 103. Craft strike
- 104. Professional strike

### **Ordinary industrial strikes**

- 105. Establishment strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 107. Sympathy strike

### **Restricted strikes**

- 108. Detailed strike
- 109. Bumper strike
- 110. Slowdown strike
- 111. Working-to-rule strike
- 112. Reporting 'sick' (sick-in)
- 113. Strike by resignation
- 114. Limited strike
- 115. Selective strike

### **Multi-industry strikes**

- 116. Generalized strike
- 117. General strike

**Combination of strikes and economic closures**118. *Hartal*

119. Economic shutdown

**Methods of Political Noncooperation****Rejection of authority**

120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance

121. Refusal of public support

122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance

**Citizens' noncooperation with government**

123. Boycott of legislative bodies

124. Boycott of elections

125. Boycott of government employment and positions

126. Boycott of government departments, agencies, and other bodies

127. Withdrawal from governmental educational institutions

128. Boycott of government-supported institutions

129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents

130. Removal of own signs and placemarks

131. Refusal to accept appointed officials

132. Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

**Citizens' alternatives to obedience**

133. Reluctant and slow compliance

134. Nonobedience in absence of direct supervision

135. Popular nonobedience

136. Disguised disobedience

137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse

138. Sitdown

139. Noncooperation with conscription and deportation

- 140. Hiding, escape, and false identities
- 141. Civil disobedience of 'illegitimate' laws

**Action by government personnel**

- 142. Selective refusal of assistance by government aides
- 143. Blocking of lines of command and information
- 144. Stalling and obstruction
- 145. General administrative noncooperation
- 146. Judicial noncooperation
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents
- 148. Mutiny

**Domestic governmental action**

- 149. Quasi-legal evasions and delays
- 150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units

**International governmental action**

- 151. Changes in diplomatic and other representation
- 152. Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
- 153. Withholding of diplomatic recognition
- 154. Severance of diplomatic relations
- 155. Withdrawal from international organisations
- 156. Refusal of membership in international bodies
- 157. Expulsion from international organisations

## Methods of Nonviolent Intervention

### Psychological intervention

- 158. Self-exposure to the elements
- 159. The fast
  - a) Fast of moral pressure
  - b) Hunger strike
  - c) Satyagrahic fast
- 160. Reverse trial
- 161. Nonviolent harassment

### Physical intervention

- 162. Sit-in
- 163. Stand-in
- 164. Ride-in
- 165. Wade-in
- 166. Mill-in
- 167. Pray-in
- 168. Nonviolent raids
- 169. Nonviolent air raids
- 170. Nonviolent invasion
- 171. Nonviolent interjection
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

### Social intervention

- 174. Establishing new social patterns
- 175. Overloading of facilities
- 176. Stall-in
- 177. Speak-in
- 178. Guerrilla theatre

- 179. Alternative social institutions
- 180. Alternative communication system

**Economic intervention**

- 181. Reverse strike
- 182. Stay-in strike
- 183. Nonviolent land seizure
- 184. Defiance of blockades
- 185. Politically motivated counterfeiting
- 186. Preclusive purchasing
- 187. Seizure of assets
- 188. Dumping
- 189. Selective patronage
- 190. Alternative markets
- 191. Alternative transportation systems
- 192. Alternative economic institutions

**Political intervention**

- 193. Overloading of administrative systems
- 194. Disclosing identities of secret agents
- 195. Seeking imprisonment
- 196. Civil disobedience of 'neutral' laws
- 197. Work-on without collaboration
- 198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

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## Biographical Sketch: Christopher A. Miller

Christopher A. Miller is a consultant researcher with the Africa Programme of the University for Peace. He worked formerly as a research assistant for Professor Mary E. King and served as programme coordinator for the Albert Einstein Institution, Boston, Massachusetts. There he began and has since continued researching groups and movements employing strategic nonviolent struggle in various regions of the world, including in Belarus, Nigeria, Tibet, and Venezuela. He has also lectured and taught on nonviolent action in Lithuania and Ukraine and has assisted in training programmes on the subject in Africa and Asia. He is the author of a number of publications in the field of nonviolent resistance. Mr. Miller received his master of arts degree in international affairs with a concentration on Eurasia from the American University School of International Service, Washington, D.C., and his bachelor of arts degree in sociology from Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York.









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