Nonviolent Sanctions
News from the Albert Einstein Institution

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Letter from the President

Recent months have been the most exciting time I have experienced concerning the practice and promise of nonviolent struggle as an alternative to violence and war on the one hand and to submission to dictatorships and oppression on the other.

While we have an immense distance to go, continuing developments are highly encouraging. These are taking place in the areas of research, policy consideration, and public openness, and in the spread of nonviolent struggles throughout the world.

The countries in which major nonviolent (or predominantly nonviolent) campaigns, demonstrations, and struggles have taken place during the past five years, or are now ongoing, include: South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, the Philippines, Chile, Mexico, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Soviet Union (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moscow), Yugoslavia, China, the Middle East (West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem), Pakistan, South Korea, the United States (by environmentalists, miners, and both pro and anti-abortion groups), and Tibet.

In this period the Swedish parliament unanimously voted to add a small component of nonviolent struggle to Sweden’s predominantly military defense policy. The official Swedish “Commission on Civil Resistance” has begun a limited public education program and is going ahead with other aspects of its work.

There are signs as I write that the massive student demonstrations in China are self-consciously nonviolent. One impressive photograph shows disciplined students in Beijing, seated in rows on the street, facing three rows of soldiers also sitting down blocking the students’ way!

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The Albert Einstein Institution and Nonviolent Sanctions

The Albert Einstein Institution supports and conducts research, policy studies, and education concerning the nature and potential of nonviolent sanctions, in comparison to violent ones, for solving the problems of aggression, dictatorship, genocide, and oppression.

What are nonviolent sanctions?

Nonviolent sanctions provide a way of acting effectively in a conflict without the use of physical violence. Their use empowers a population by giving it the means to resist oppression and injustice. Nonviolent sanctions include political noncooperation, economic boycotts, symbolic protests, civil disobedience, strikes, popular defiance, nonviolent occupation, and the establishment of substitute institutions.

While these nonviolent forms of struggle do not directly kill, injure, or destroy, they aim to undermine the opponent’s social, economic, political, and military power. They do this by withholding or withdrawing the sources of support needed by the opponent to maintain power and to achieve goals.

Denial of a regime’s legitimacy may weaken and destroy the loyalty and obedience of its population. Economic boycotts and strikes can disrupt its economic power. Political noncooperation may nullify oppressive government policies. Disaffection and mutiny of troops facing nonviolent resistance can dissolve a regime’s military might.

The Albert Einstein Institution

The Albert Einstein Institution is committed to the defense of democratic freedoms and institutions and to the reduction of political violence through the
Sharp speaks at Norwegian defense meeting

Gene Sharp was one of two featured speakers at a Norwegian conference on complementary forms of national defense held March 1 in Oslo. The other main speaker was Norway’s defense minister, Johan Jorgen Holst. The conference was sponsored by the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, a private organization with close ties to Norway’s major political parties, trade unions, and parliament.

The Norwegian conference indicates the growing interest in the ways nonviolent resistance can strengthen a nation’s defense policy. In neighboring Sweden, for example, the Swedish Parliament decided in April, 1986, to add nonviolent resistance to its existing defense policy. The defense policies of Switzerland, Austria, and Yugoslavia already contain important elements of nonviolent resistance, and several other European governments have undertaken studies of this policy, including the Netherlands, France, and Finland.

In a civilian-based defense policy, as outlined by Sharp, the civilian population would wield diverse social, political, psychological, and economic “weapons,” rather than military ones, for national defense purposes. These nonviolent “weapons” include “the largely symbolic types of protest (such as vigils, flags, illegal publications, and political mourning), forms of noncooperation (such as social boycotts, economic boycotts, labor strikes, and political noncooperation), and acts of nonviolent intervention (including hunger strikes, nonviolent occupations, alternative institutions, and parallel government),” Sharp said. “The technique in rare cases may convert opponents, but much more often it achieves successes by accommodation, nonviolent coercion, or disintegration of the hostile opponents’ political, economic, or military capacity.”

Prior to his speaking in Norway, Sharp traveled to Mexico City to participate in a conference on Mexican security policy, sponsored by the Social Science Research Council.

Einstein Institution funds Burmese translation of Sharp essay

Responding to an urgent request from Burmese political opposition leaders for a Burmese-language publication on the theory and practice of nonviolent conflict, the Albert Einstein Institution has agreed to fund a Burmese translation of “The Role of Power in Nonviolent Struggle” by Gene Sharp.

The Einstein Institution recently approved a $3,000 grant to the Foundation for Democracy in Burma for translation and publication of the essay.

The initial request came from U Tin Maung Win, Chairman of the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma and General Secretary of the Democratic Alliance of Burma. Mr. Win visited the Einstein Institution in January to discuss the problems associated with waging a nonviolent struggle for democracy in the face of harsh government repression.

Mass demonstrations, sparked by severe economic decline, were led by students and monks in Burma last summer to protest against twenty-six years of military autocracy. The demonstrations resulted in the fall of three successive heads of state in just two months. The present leader, General Saw Maung, took power last September and attempted to crush the protests in a wave of repression which left at least 1,000 demonstrators dead. However, despite these harsh measures, the movement for freedom and democracy in Burma is showing signs of resurgence.

Taiwanese opposition leader visits Einstein Institution

Taiwanese opposition leader Huang Hua visited the Einstein Institution in February to discuss political developments in his country. An ardent advocate of nonviolent action to achieve political change, Mr. Huang has spent nearly half of his fifty years in jail for political “crimes.” He is currently the Organizing Director of the Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan’s largest opposition party.

In November and December 1988, Mr. Huang spearheaded the “new nation” movement, a series of forty-six public rallies all over Taiwan, aimed at creating a new nation, a new political system, and a new parliament by peaceful means. The rallies attracted huge crowds. Mr. Huang organized the demonstrations on behalf of the Formosan Political Prisoners Association, an organization of former prisoners of conscience which advocates the establishment of a democratic Taiwan, independent of China. At present, the government of Taiwan claims that it is the legitimate ruler of China, while the government of the People’s Republic of China claims that Taiwan is part of its sovereign territory and reserves the right to use force to make good upon this claim.

Mr. Huang was in the United States to lobby for U.S. pressure on the Taiwanese government to grant political freedoms and for U.S. support of Taiwanese independence.

Mr. Huang emphasized that there is a significant history of nonviolent action in Taiwan and called on scholars of nonviolent action to study the development of the nonviolent movement there.
AEI Board awards Einstein Fellowships

In a major expansion of the Einstein Institution Fellows Program, the AEI Board of Directors, at its May meeting, awarded fellowships to four scholars conducting promising research on nonviolent forms of struggle. The four were chosen as Einstein Institution Fellows from among twenty-four applicants, based on their research proposals and recommendations. They are:

John T. Crist, a doctoral student at Syracuse University, who is doing dissertation research on “The Comparative Effectiveness of Organizations Using Violent, Nonviolent, and Principled Nonviolent Sanctions during the Indian Nationalist Movement.”

David H. Kitterman, Professor of History at Northern Arizona University, whose project is entitled “Those Who Said ‘No!’: Germans Who Refused to Execute Jews and Other Civilians during World War II: Successful Nonviolent Sanctions against a Totalitarian State at War.”

Richard L. Leaver, a Research Fellow at the Australian National University’s Peace Centre, who is working on “The Theory and Practice of Economic Sanctions in Southern Africa.”

Gerald M. Platt, a sociologist at the University of Massachusetts, who is studying “The Rank and File in the Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968.”

In addition, a current Einstein Fellow, Nathan Stoltzfuus, was awarded a summer stipend and will remain in residence at the Einstein Institution during the coming academic year. He is working on his doctoral dissertation at Harvard University entitled “Toward Nonviolent Strategies for Limiting Genocide: Intermarriages in Nazi Germany.”

Through the Fellows Program, the Einstein Institution supports research, writing, and systematic analysis and thought on nonviolent sanctions. Its primary goal is the advancement of knowledge about the strategic uses of nonviolent sanctions in relation to problems of political violence. The Einstein Institution Fellows Program offers support to scholars conducting research on the history, characteristics, and potential applications of nonviolent sanctions. It also supports practitioners in the preparation of accounts, documentation, and analysis of their experiences in the use of nonviolent struggle.

Applicants to the Fellows Program must be in one of the following three categories:

- Candidates for doctoral degrees undertaking dissertation research or writing dissertations,
- Advanced scholars undertaking specific research projects, and
- Practitioners in past or present nonviolent struggles preparing documentation, description, and analysis of conflicts.

Research projects undertaken by past Einstein Institution Fellows include:

- A study of the Finnish tradition of nonviolent resistance, especially against rule by the Russian Empire, 1861-1918;
- An analysis of the Danish resistance to Nazi occupation, 1940-1945;
- Beginning of a collection of essays on civilian-based defense; and
- A study of American colonial nonviolent resistance movements.

The Fellows Program is supervised by Dr. Ronald McCarthy.

AEI Board approves increased support for Harvard’s Program on Nonviolent Sanctions

The Program on Nonviolent Sanctions at Harvard University’s Center for International Affairs will receive more than $200,000 from the Albert Einstein Institution during the next fiscal year, according to a decision made by the AEI Board of Directors in May. This represents a 9% increase over last year’s funding level.

Securing financial support for advanced academic research at the Program on Nonviolent Sanctions is one of the main activities of the Einstein Institution.

The Program on Nonviolent Sanctions is the first university research program to focus exclusively on the nature and potential of nonviolent sanctions. The goal of the Program is to learn whether, and if so to what degree, nonviolent sanctions may provide effective substitutes for violent ones in resolving the grave problems of dictatorship, war, terrorism, genocide, and oppression.

The Program focuses primarily on: (1) examining the nature of nonviolent sanctions — social, economic, psychological, and political — how and when they work, why they succeed or fail, and (2) exploring the future potential these sanctions might have in refined and developed forms.

The following researchers are currently affiliated with the Program:

Douglas Bond is an Assistant Professor at Kyungnam University, in Seoul, Korea. He is initiating a comprehensive, sustainable data collection effort to be developed and used by Program affiliates and other researchers in the field.

Ximena Bunster is an anthropologist from Santiago, Chile, who has been conducting participant-observer studies of opposition groups in Chile, in particular the Sebastian Acevedo Movement Against Torture and Mujeres Por La Vida (Women for Life). She is writing about the significance of these groups for a possible transition to democracy in Chile. Her studies will have important implications for the use of nonviolent methods under conditions of severe repression.

Barbara Harmel is former Associate Director of the South Africa Program at the Aspen Institute in Washington, DC. She is studying nonviolent sanctions within the context of political power and struggles, with special reference to post-World War II South Africa.

Bradley Klein, Assistant Professor at St. Lawrence University, is working on a conceptual reconstruction of the major approaches available in the study and practice of contemporary peace and security. The project involves the relationship between social theory and
La Lucha Política Nonviolenta published in Chile


At a public forum in Santiago in January, practitioners and scholars of nonviolent action discussed the book and its significance for struggles being waged in Chile.

“Now we have before us, in our own language, the synthesis of what I consider the most outstanding work that has been written so far about nonviolent struggle,” said journalist and political scientist Otto Boye. “It offers, in a nutshell, Sharp’s essential, most important thinking.”

Boye is Co-director of the Institute for a New Chile and director of the Christian Democratic journal, *Política y Espíritu*.

The book was translated and condensed by Jaime Gonzalez Bernal and edited by Caridad Inda and Gene Sharp. It was published first in Mexico in March, 1988, and then in Chile in October by Ediciones ChileAmerica CESOC. The Chilean edition includes photographs of Chilean demonstrations and an introduction by Ximena Bunster, a Visiting Scholar at Harvard’s Program on Nonviolent Sanctions.

Publication of the book comes at a critical time in Chile’s history. Since the overthrow of Salvador Allende in 1973, Chile has been ruled by a brutally repressive dictatorship headed by General Augusto Pinochet. But in a plebiscite last October, the Chilean people voted overwhelmingly against Pinochet’s continued rule, forcing him to call for open elections in 1990. Author/activist Enrique Correa called this “the most important historical triumph of the implementation of nonviolence in Chile.”

Correa was a coordinator of the Campaign for the “No” leading up to the October plebiscite. The Campaign did two important things. It organized a major voter registration drive, and it set up a massive network of 60,000 poll-watchers across the country, enabling 100% of the vote to be counted independently from the military government, thus preventing election fraud. “There are incredible anecdotes of what went on that day,” Correa recalls, “of youngsters riding their bicycles or rowing boats in different parts of Chile to deliver polling results to Campaign offices.”

“We went from boys on bicycles and people rowing boats to the modern world of computers and fax machines in organizing millions of people. I think this is extremely important, that somehow, through nonviolent political mobilization, we were really able to defeat the dictatorship. We did this time what we were unable to do in 1973, the year of the coup. This time the whole opposition acted in unison.”

Correa, like thousands of other Chilean activists, had never been exposed to Gene Sharp’s writings. Now, with the publication of the Chilean edition of *La Lucha Política Nonviolenta*, Sharp’s theoretical and strategic thinking is far more accessible to them.

Rosa Silva Alvarez, another practitioner of nonviolent action, works with a variety of community-based organizations in Chile and is a member of the Execu-
dominantly of women. Alvarez explains: “Most of the people who have been executed by the military regime have been men. So we (women) are the only ones who can continue struggling for the recognition of their deaths, the only ones who can continue struggling to have an explanation of why they were killed.”

To help coordinate the efforts of women’s groups in Chile, an umbrella organization, *Mujeres por la Vida* (Women for Life), was formed in 1983. Ximena Bunster, who organized and moderated the January forum in Santiago, has been studying the development of this movement from its beginning. “*Mujeres por la Vida* is a Chilean women’s movement that embraces all major women’s organizations in Chile, women involved in opposition political parties as well as women who find themselves participating in social, humanitarian, community, student, and professional organizations,” said Bunster. “It is very far reaching as a group; it brings together established women’s groups and individual activists who have previously had very little contact with each other. *Mujeres por la Vida* has maded possible an exchange of ideas and mutual support among all these women’s groups.”

“*Mujeres por la Vida* has been able to build up a profound trust between women of different political positions and different social sectors. . . . (It) represents the widest political spectrum of all the major opposition groups in Chile, from Christian Democrats to the left, . . . So there is a great emphasis on unity that permeates all of the activities that *Mujeres por la Vida* coordinates, such as mass meetings, fasts, public demonstrations, and public mobilizations in support of democracy and human rights. It also supports campaigns for victims of repression and organizes meetings to explore women’s daily problems and possible solutions. *Mujeres por la Vida* has become a solid new arm for the democratic movement in Chile.”

Another important opposition group in Chile is the Sebastian Acevedo Movement Against Torture. Its leading founder, Father Jose Aldunate, also finds Sharp’s work helpful. “It is only after reading Sharp carefully that one is ready to systematize the movement’s nonviolent style of protest. His work has helped me rethink and understand the theoretical essence of this topic. The key to this understanding is the principle that a government’s power rests on the obedi-
Nonviolent sanctions in the news

Increasingly, nonviolent sanctions are in the news. They are being used in struggles all around the world. Listed below are just a few of the stories which appeared in April in the Boston Globe:

WARSAW, April 6, 1989 — The leaders of the Solidarity trade union reached a historic accord with Poland’s Communist leaders yesterday, paving the way for the banned union’s relegalization and creating a more democratic structure for Polish politics.

At a formal signing ceremony, Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, the interior minister who initiated the round-table talks after nationwide strikes last August, shook the hand of Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, and lauded “the creation of a new model of political culture.”

MOSCOW, April 9, 1989 — Thousands of people defied Soviet tanks and soldiers yesterday and took to the streets of Tbilisi in a protest demanding independence for the southern republic of Georgia, residents said.

MEXICO CITY, April 18, 1989 — About 500,000 Mexican school teachers calling for a 100 percent wage increase and union reforms walked off their jobs yesterday, leaving millions of students without classes to attend, union leaders said.

JOHANNESBURG, April 18, 1989 — About 1,500 black members of the National Union of Mineworkers, South Africa’s biggest trade union, went on strike yesterday to protest a colleague’s death but the mine owners said they would return to work today.

BEIJING, April 18, 1989 — In the biggest pro-democracy demonstrations since early 1987, thousands of students staged rallies and marches in Beijing yesterday and early today in honor of Communist Party reformist Hu Yaobang, who died Saturday of a heart attack.

BEIJING, April 23, 1989 — Tens of thousands of university students marched triumphantly back to campus yesterday after staging a stunning challenge to the ruling Communist Party that capped a week of antigovernment demonstrations.

Undaunted by thousands of soldiers and police, the students gathered in Tiananmen Square and chanted pro-democracy slogans directly at government leaders who were climbing the steps of the Great Hall of the People to attend the memorial service yesterday for Hu Yaobang, the ousted party chief who died April 15.

The demonstration was the biggest student gathering of its kind since the Communist takeover in 1949.

MOSCOW, April 24, 1989 — Troops arrested 47 persons yesterday at a rally commemorating the killing of 20 persons by Soviet troops at a demonstration in Soviet Georgia two weeks ago.

Crowds several thousand strong milled around Moscow’s central Pushkin Square, chanting “shame” and “Fascists” as Interior Ministry troops pulled the 47 out of the throng.

DETROIT, April 24, 1989 — A group of black students at Wayne State University ended a 1 1/2-week protest in a campus building yesterday after administrators promised to beef up the black studies program and minority recruitment.

BEIJING, April 25, 1989 — After a week of prodemocracy protests, tens of thousands of students at leading universities in the Chinese capital began boycotting classes yesterday to press the government to meet their demands for basic human rights.

The students, presenting one of their greatest challenges to the Chinese government in more than a decade, vowed to stay away from classes until their demands are met, and said they were sending representatives to other cities to turn the boycott into a nationwide show of strength.

JOHANNESBURG, April 25, 1989 — In a landmark court verdict that is expected to broaden legal antiapartheid activities in black townships, five black activists were acquitted yesterday of charges of subversion and sedition stemming from the formation of “alternative” government structures during civil unrest in 1986.

Judge P.J. van der Walt, in a four-hour verdict, ruled that the forming of township street committees and “people’s courts,” and the staging of rent boycotts during the civil unrest, was a reasonable response to mostly justifiable grievances and aspirations. He said the activities were intended not to make South Africa ungovernable but to improve poor conditions in the township.

Letter from the President

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Student leaders in the capital have deplored the violence which occurred elsewhere in China as both counterproductive and contrary to their policy of nonviolence.

It appears to me that we are in the midst of a major world-wide explosion of interest in the potential of nonviolent struggle. It is vital, therefore, that people have available to them adequate information about nonviolent sanctions, and that they seriously examine these alternatives to violence in acute conflicts.

The mission of the Albert Einstein Institution — to conduct and support basic and problem-solving research, policy studies, public education, and consultation about the nature, problems, and potential of nonviolent forms of struggle — is now more important than ever.

That’s why we’re increasing our support for the research at the Program on Nonviolent Sanctions in Harvard’s Center for International Affairs. Major research projects being conducted there are nearing completion. We’re also expanding the Einstein Institution Fellows Program to encourage new scholarly studies in this field.

With greater financial resources, we will be able to support additional scholarly work to extend and deepen our knowledge and understanding of these alternatives to violence. This scholarly work is crucial, because it provides the necessary foundation for the broader

(Continued on next page)
educational, public-outreach, and consultative activities which are now widely needed.

There is probably more interest than ever before among the general public, policymakers, and people involved in conflicts in learning about these options. My personal travels reflect this interest.

In recent months, for example, I have attended a conference in Mexico City on Mexican security policy, presented a paper in Oslo on civilian-based defense as a supplement to Norway’s defense policy, and discussed the nature and potential of nonviolent resistance as an alternative to violence with top officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunis. This summer I plan to visit Jerusalem, Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. In Israel I expect to speak at the Israeli Institute of Military Studies, the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies of Tel Aviv University, and the Center for Negotiation in the Davis Institute of Hebrew University. (On two previous visits to these areas I discussed nonviolent action with Israeli academics, strategists, right-wing and liberal members of the Knessett, and with Palestinians in various positions.)

I have lectured in recent weeks to the Peace Studies Association and to the Program on Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security at the University of Illinois. And I was interviewed by an Israeli film producer for a special feature television documentary on nonviolent struggle in Chile, the Philippines, and the Middle East. These personal experiences are but small reflections of the widespread interest in nonviolent options in many parts of the world.

The opportunities before us are exceptionally large and the responsibilities intimidating. Programs and activities I would like the Einstein Institution to undertake during the next three years could cost between five and ten million dollars. That is the scale on which we could now work effectively, if our financial resources permitted.

The Einstein Institution is in an excellent position to take up this work. We have six years experience and a superb staff prepared to move ahead into a new period of major activities. We now need to expand in order to respond effectively to the hunger for alternatives to violence which is now widely felt in many parts of the world.

Whether we are able to do so depends on available financial resources. Many of you have already understood the importance of this work and have contributed in small and large amounts to make possible the achievements of the Einstein Institution thus far. Thank you very much for that. In the future, your continued support (expanded if you can) will be extremely helpful. You may also think of other individuals or have contacts with major funding sources who could help.

We are grateful to you for your confidence and support, and look forward to being able to bring you more good news of progress in moving away from political violence toward increasing reliance on nonviolent ways of dealing with acute conflicts.

-- Gene Sharp

This is the premier issue of Nonviolent Sanctions: News from the Albert Einstein Institution. Future issues will be sent free to our contributors. Others who wish to receive the newsletter are invited to subscribe. Subscription rates are $5 per year in the U.S., $8 per year outside the U.S. To subscribe, please fill out this coupon and return it with your check to The Albert Einstein Institution, 1430 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

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use of nonviolent sanctions. It is dedicated to examining how freedom, justice, and peace can be achieved without sacrificing one to the other. Just as the study of military strategy has yielded a more refined understanding of warfare, the strategic study of nonviolent sanctions can potentially yield a more refined understanding of their capacity and requirements for success.

The immediate goals of the Institution are to understand the dynamics of nonviolent sanctions in conflicts, to explore their policy potential, and to communicate this through books, pamphlets, monographs, translations, conferences, and other forms of public communication and education.

Its long-range goal is to develop nonviolent sanctions and expand their capacity to make them effective alternatives in conflict and defense.

Funding for the work of the Einstein Institution comes primarily from individuals and private foundations.

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Harvard Program

The Program on Nonviolent Sanctions also sponsored the following seminars during the Spring ’89 semester:

- “The Essence of Strategic Nonviolent Conflict,” by Christopher Kruegler.

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La Lucha Política Nonviolenta

ence of its subjects,” Father Aldunate said.

“Those of us who are organizing the will of the people in grassroots organizations should feel reassured by Sharp’s evaluation of the source and dynamics of political power, because it is inside these grassroots organizations and in the hearts and minds of the people who belong to them that we find the secret to our recent political success.”

“We have been able to witness the tremendous strength of the will of a people and the fact that the titanic strength of a people is not found in their armed cadres but in their efficient and disciplined organization and their working together in solidarity. This is the key to understanding nonviolent action.”

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