

CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Nonviolent Strategies for Social Change

PCTS 3950/3

SESSION III – JUNE 20-24, 2011

Course Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR: Professor George Lakey

TIMES: SESSION I – JUNE 20-24, 2011, 9am-5pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will explore several major topics that bear on the art of strategizing: (a) discerning the three major applications of non-violent action and how the framing of these affects strategy; (b) exploring two developmental models for strategizing (Bill Moyer's and George Lakey's); (c) studying the uses of strategy concepts such as "center of gravity" (Clauswitz), "campaign," and "narrative." Although theory matters for the course, the goal will be to assist participants to become more useful in the actual strategizing task. Case studies and strategy games will therefore be used.

GOALS

1. To learn the three major applications of nonviolent action and implications for strategizing: Social change, Social defense, Third party nonviolent intervention
2. To explore two developmental models for strategizing (Moyer & Lakey)
3. To practice designing NV campaigns for change
4. To explore synergistic ways of relating tactics and strategy

READINGS

Bill Moyer, *Doing Democracy* (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 2001).

Daniel Hunter and George Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy: Third Party Nonviolent Intervention Curriculum and Trainer's Manual*. Philadelphia: Training for Change, 2004. Available free on website:

http://www.trainingforchange.org/opening_space_for_democracy

George Lakey, “Strategizing for a Living Revolution” in David Solnit, ed., *Globalize Liberation* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004). Available electronically for free on website: www.TrainingForChange.org<http://www.trainingforchange.org/node/181>

George Lakey, “Three Applications of Nonviolent Action.” Available as faculty lecture at Swarthmore College: http://media.swarthmore.edu/faculty_lectures/?p=60
Abridged print version appended to this syllabus.

MONDAY

Morning:

Reviewing goals and methods of the course.

Building the container in the class.¹

Sharing previous experience of participants in (a) nonviolent action, (b) strategizing.

Goal-setting by students for their individual learning this week.

Afternoon:

Experiential sequence through which we clarify what are the three major applications of NVA.²

Small groups identify situations of conflict and/or oppression and consider the pros and cons of using each of the three applications in those situations.

Presentations to the whole group and debrief.

Assignment for Tuesday:

Read “Three Applications of Nonviolent Action” and Part One of *Doing Democracy*

TUESDAY

Morning:

Review previous day’s learning

Experiential exercise: Four roles in social change (based on Moyer)

How does this influence choice to use one or more of the three applications?

Moyer’s eight developmental stages of successful campaigns – how does the model help us strategically? What are the model’s limits?

¹ The concept of and procedures for “building the container” are in my new book *Facilitating Group Learning*, Jossey-Bass, 2010.

² See *Facilitating Group Learning*, pp. 97-101.

Afternoon:

The tactics of Third Party Nonviolent Intervention. (Experiential practice of some tactics, and stories of others drawn from the group as well as teacher.)³

What does strategy mean when working with these tactics in situations of great uncertainty?

Assignment for Wednesday:

Read *Opening Space for Democracy*:

What is Third-party Nonviolent Intervention (TPNI)?

What is the Core Training?

Scan the curriculum, particularly noting:

-Introductions to each of the four methods of TPNI (protective accompaniment, monitoring/observation, interposition, presence),

-The use of simulations

-Approach to evaluation

Civil Society Defending Civil Society

Recommended Reading

WEDNESDAY

Morning:

Review previous day's learning, and checking in on the learning goals of the participants. Lakey's five developmental stages for successful movements. How does the model help us strategically? What are the model's limits?

Afternoon:

Film: "Bringing Down a Dictator" (documentary of overthrow of Serbian dictator Milosevic).

Discussion that invites comparisons with the 2011 "Arab wave" of nonviolent social change movements in N. Africa and the Middle East. Strategic lessons.

Assignment for Thursday:

Read: "Strategizing for a Living Revolution"

³ These tactics and the training practice that prepares for them can be found in the Training Manual and Curriculum "Opening Space for Democracy" by Daniel Hunter and George Lakey, much of which can be found on the Training for Change website.

THURSDAY

Morning:

Simulation: Campaign Strategy game

Opportunity for students to apply strategic principles as understood so far. Extensive debrief follows: what were the strategic conceptions that were most usefully applied? Which were less well applied?

Afternoon:

Winnipeg experience: students get to try a training activity in the “real world” of Winnipeg, a method equally useful for all three applications and many strategies.

Debrief back at the university.

Assignment for Friday: Review readings of the week.

FRIDAY

Morning:

Review of knowledge gained and identification of further work needed by each student to deepen and broaden her or his own work in the art of strategy.

Afternoon:

Application back home:

- (a) scenario-writing
- (b) sharing in small groups
- (c) roleplays to practice sharing the knowledge with significant persons in the student’s orbit back home.

Evaluation of course

Farewells to buddy and to whole group.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT STUDENTS

Book review (20% of course credit)

Select one book of at least 100 pages about nonviolent struggle not in this syllabus and write a review of the book from the point of view of this course. Show how the book does or doesn’t connect with major concepts of the course and how it does or doesn’t extend our knowledge of nonviolent struggle. The review should be between 900 and 1200 words. Submit by email to glakey1@swarthmore.edu by July 10.

Case analysis (20%)

Choose a case of successful nonviolent struggle and analyze it, using one or more concepts in the course. For example, you could show how it does or doesn't follow the developmental stages described by Bill Moyer. The analysis should be between 900 and 1200 words. Submit by email to glakey1@swarthmore.edu by July 10.

Essay: comparison of models (20%)

Compare the developmental models offered by Moyer and Lakey. Show the strengths and limitations of each in comparison to each other. Use references to theory or history, or both, to illustrate your points. The comparison essay should be between 900 and 1200 words, and submitted by email to glakey1@swarthmore.edu by July 10.

Major strategy paper: use three applications for a case (40%)

Choose a case somewhere in the world where there is an ongoing conflict and where it can be said that one side is trying to change something and the other side is trying to defend something. This can be on a macro or a micro level, but for this assignment it is important that the conflict be relatively bi-polar.

- (a) Outline a strategy for the side that is seeking change, relying strongly on the methods of nonviolent struggle to achieve their goal.
- (b) Outline a strategy for the side that is trying to defend the status quo (or part of it), relying strongly on the methods of nonviolent struggle to achieve their goal..
- (c) Outline a strategy for a third party to intervene, not with the goal of helping one side to win, but with the goal of opening the space for the conflict to continue with less destruction and violence. The strategy should rely strongly on the methods of third party nonviolent intervention.
- (d) Imagine that all three of these strategies were implemented. What are your speculations, if any, about outcomes? Note any synergistic effects you might see, or new doors opening that previously have been closed.

Note: your presentation in this paper may not follow the above outline; perhaps you'll start with (b) and go on to (a), or (c). Whatever the order of presentation, all four elements need to be included.

The major strategy paper should be between 1800 and 2400 words, and submitted by email to glakey1@swarthmore.edu by August 8.

EVALUATION

Note: Canadian Mennonite University Academic Office will mail marks to students in September. It is the responsibility of the instructor and the student to arrange how to return marked papers/projects to the students.

In general, I expect you to *follow the guidelines* of the assignment and to discuss deviations from them with me before turning it in. In evaluating your work, *quality* is more important than quantity. I appreciate creativity, clear expression of ideas, evidence of engagement with the reading and class sessions, and projects that are of real interest and value to you.

In your papers, be sure to avoid any form of *plagiarism*. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, a useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. Plagiarism is a serious issue and will result in grade reduction or action by the university (see university policy on this).

Good communication skills are essential for justice and peacebuilding work. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well organized and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale below.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Handing an assignment late should be arranged with the instructor before the due date for the assignment. If the due date is already past, marks will be deducted for the papers. The Canadian School of Peacebuilding has set Aug 8th, 2011 as the very last day that students can hand work into instructors. This is so grading can be completed and share with students as quickly as possible.

LETTER GRADE/PERCENTAGE SCALE

| Letter Grade | Percentage | Grade Points | Descriptor |
|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| A+ | 95-100 | 4.5 | Exceptional |
| A | 88-94 | 4 | Excellent |
| B+ | 81-87 | 3.5 | Very Good |
| B | 74-80 | 3 | Good |
| C+ | 67-73 | 2.5 | Satisfactory |
| C | 60-67 | 2 | Adequate |
| D | 50-59 | 1 | Marginal |
| F | 0-49 | | Failure |

HOW IS NONVIOLENT ACTION *APPLIED*?

George Lakey

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This article was first presented to a political science colloquium

at Thommasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Nonviolent action has three major applications:

- social change
- social defense
- third party nonviolent intervention.

Social change is the most popular application, and best known. Usually the campaigners have reform goals: they are seeking change in policies or conditions but not a change in the power structure. Every day's major metropolitan daily newspaper reports on action of this sort.

Sometimes, however, nonviolent action is used for revolution. In South Africa the ANC obviously wanted to replace the white monopoly of formal power with a new system, and after 1982 they mainly relied on people power to end apartheid. The Solidarity movement in Poland used nonviolent action to throw out the Communist dictatorship, and thousands of Serbian young people in Otpur led the nonviolent struggle that succeeded in overthrowing Milosevic in 2000.

Social defense may not be as popular an application, but it is growing in recent years. In this application, nonviolent action is not used for change, but instead is used to defend the status quo. In Northeast Thailand, villagers and monks have been fighting to save the forest by using nonviolent action. This is environmental defense. There are probably, as you read this, thousands of environmental defense campaigns going on around the world using nonviolent action.

There are also thousands of cases of community defense. For example, some urban black neighborhoods in the U.S. used nonviolent action to fight the invasion of drug dealers; they march, prevent drug dealers from using favorite street corners, and even use sledgehammers to beat down the doors of crack (cocaine) houses and chant their way inside while the dealers run out the back!

Another version of social defense is using it on a national level, either against invasion from outsiders or against a coup d'etat from insiders. In Russia in 1991, for example, much of the KGB, army, and Communist Party leadership decided to seize the state. They arrested top leader Gorbachev, took over the media and mobilized tanks. They also ran into such major noncooperation from the people that the waverers in the middle turned against them and they lost their coup. Similar events happened in Argentina in the mid '80s; a million people demonstrated in Buenos Aires, the fence-sitters turned against the military plotters, and civilian government remained.

Third Party Nonviolent Intervention (TPNI) is the physical intervention of a third party into the arena of the conflict in such a way as to reduce the level of violence. Mediation and arbitration are also done by third parties, but they are not nonviolent third party intervention; here are some differences:

- nonviolent third party intervention is unilateral (does not require both parties to participate in structured interaction),
- expresses the value of process, rather than determination/judgment,
- enables the struggle to continue (rather than shutting down the struggle).

Since this is the application of nonviolent action least researched and written about, I am giving it extra attention in this essay.

There are four forms of third party nonviolent intervention (TPNI) I have so far identified: **accompaniment, interposition, observation/monitoring, and presence.**

1. Accompaniment: The threats from the drug pushers had worried her somewhat, but the Philadelphia neighborhood leader shrugged them aside until a bullet nearly hit her and her children. That was too much.

"What shall I do?" she demanded to know in the meeting the night after the gunshots. The response from her neighborhood was heartfelt: we will protect you, they said, by holding a demonstration at your house and accompanying your children to the school bus. They did just that, and the threats stopped.

Accompaniment has recently become sufficiently developed as a technology so that a specialized agency offers this service globally. Called Peace Brigades International (PBI), the agency in the early '80s sent to El Salvador and Guatemala volunteers who accompanied human rights activists threatened with assassination. The international volunteers put the local activists in a glare of publicity which reduced the chance of assassination. In 1989, during a wave of killings of lawyers in Sri Lanka, the national bar association invited PBI to send a team there to do the same, and, while death threats

continued against the lawyers, none of those accompanied by PBI was killed. The author was a member of the first team.

2. *Interposition* is used when two forces are moving into battle and a third force (it may be a crowd) intervenes physically -- and nonviolently -- to prevent or reduce the violence. In 1986 Philippines dictator Marcos was shaken by the pro-democracy campaign and General Ramos decided to rebel with the troops under his personal command. The Ramos troops took cover in an army base, and Marcos sent the main force of the army to Ramos to destroy the rebels. The Catholic radio station broadcast urgent messages to the people to go to Ramos' base as well. Tens of thousands converged between the two armies and stopped Marcos' forces in their tracks through nonviolently and forcefully confronting the soldiers.

3. *Observation/monitoring* is increasingly used in election situations where violence is expected. Rather than interpose themselves between violent individuals or groups, observers/monitors are expected to carry cameras, notebooks, and in other ways provide a physical reminder that "the whole world is watching," thereby restraining the violence.

4. *Presence* consists of individuals and teams entering a situation of open conflict and, through body language, acts of service, and words, assisting people to choose other-than-violent behaviors. This form differs from interposition in that the third party teammates do not physically place themselves directly between the fighters, but use other behaviors, like active listening, to embody values of decency and respect. The Russian group Memorial reportedly has substantial experience in this form of intervention in inter-ethnic battles, entering the "conflict field" and, in largely subtle ways, refusing to cooperate with the prevailing atmosphere in the field of hostility and violence.

How do different applications require different strategies?

Some of the young people who went to Palestine to be human shields return to their homes in Europe and the U.S. with powerful stories to tell of deterring violence. Some were veterans of protests in their own countries, challenging corporate and governmental policies, yet this time around they were not the center of the action; instead, they were a kind of third force intervening between the primary players: the Israeli army and the Palestinian people.

The way one returnee put it in a report: When Palestinians staged a protest without us, they most likely would be fired on, but when we internationals were present, they instead would be tear-gassed and not killed.

This use of people power that I call Third Party Nonviolent Intervention, has different dynamics, suggests different strategies, and can be appropriate for very different situations from the other two applications: social change and social defense.

Confusing change and defense – a Russian case

Two of the applications that frequently get mixed up in the heads of activists are social change and social defense. I had been working with activists in Russia for a year, in my role as a trainer/consultant, when elements of the KGB, army, and Communist Party attempted a coup in 1991. The cabal arrested President Gorbachev, seized broadcasting stations, and sent their tanks into Moscow. The plotters did not reckon on the fierce determination of the people to noncooperate with the coup, at many levels and in many ways. Tens of thousands of people poured into the streets to challenge the plotters, among other things surrounding the House of Parliament. Tank crews, often surrounded by defiant people, began to go over the people's side. The coup attempt failed.

Because I followed developments closely through email dispatches from friends on the scene in Moscow, I was especially eager to learn their personal stories. When I asked, they changed the subject.

Finally I implored my friends at least to tell me why they would not tell me their stories! They got long faces, and said it was too depressing to tell their stories because it reminded me of their Great Failure. Failure! I exclaimed. It was a brilliant success. The whole world watched you bring down the coup!

"You do not understand," they said; "With all those people in the streets, all those people standing up for themselves, all the risks we took -- it seemed like the revolution was at hand. In our euphoria we believed that now, at last, everything would change. And it did not. The privileged got richer and the poor got poorer, and we lost our big move for radical change."

For the next hour we had my most intense discussion in Russia, a land of intense discussions. We came to see the differences between social CHANGE, which my friends believed they were attempting, and social DEFENSE, which was in fact what they did. Objectively, they defended Gorbachev and his guided liberalization process from attack by his enemies.

Environmentalists confusing defense and change

Here is another example, from environmental justice organizers in the U.S. South. During a strategy workshop I included the distinctions between social defense, social change, and third party nonviolent intervention.

"At last our organizing puzzle makes sense!" an organizer exclaimed. They had been going into low-income, often Black, towns which were targeted for toxic waste dumps. The organizers, with a social change framework in their heads, contacted sympathetic but marginal people in the towns: old civil rights activists, a rabbi or Quaker or Unitarian, etc. With those people on the periphery they developed action strategies that gradually won mainstream agreement to keep out the toxic waste.

The puzzle was that sometimes in early actions mainstream types would join them, far ahead of when mainstream leaders should -- according to organizers' timelines.

Organizers would be nonplussed to see mainstream leaders acting with them so early, sometimes even demonstrating or blockading roads against waste trucks.

Now they could see that, in the eyes of these mainstream figures, this fight about toxic waste was not about social change, it was about *defending their community*. Who is motivated for defense? Leaders, most of all! (It is a primary function of leadership to defend a neighborhood, a family, a town, a nation.) The leaders saw a battle shaping up to defend their town and often felt required to join it!

With this insight the environmental justice organizers could become much more efficient, framing their action as defense and working directly with leaders as well as the people they were used to mobilizing.

“Human shields” and the third application

The newest of the three applications, in terms of conscious organizational effort, involves protective accompaniment, monitoring (“the whole world is watching”) and other tactics that together can be called third party nonviolent intervention. The unique power of this application is enhanced when its profile is nonpartisan.

There is, of course, a history of *partisan* intervention by third parties. During the civil rights movement some Northern activists in the U.S. went South to march with Dr. King. Such partisan intervention can tip the balance, and if the struggle is defined as defensive I would call it outsiders joining the defense, and if the struggle is framed as social change I would call it outsiders joining the offensive.

The third application, third party nonviolent intervention (TPNI), works in a different (and more subtle) way. ***The unique power of TPNI is to increase the political space available to the local contenders.***

In a typical conflict involving human rights abuses, repression or terror, the political space has contracted. Activists have less room to act on their issue.

Partisan outsiders joining one side in a struggle may not help at all; in fact they may even decrease the political space for the moment.

TPNI, by contrast, is about expanding the political space and protecting the local activists from violence to enable them to continue their struggle.