PARENTS OF THE FIELD PROJECT.

Interviewee: Dr Gene Sharp

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Interviewer; Dr Jannie Botes.

Jannie Botes: … I am more interested in talking to you about the span of what brought you to where you are today - how did you get to this point - than talking about non-violence in a very great intellectual depth…What we're about here is… what we deemed "fathers and mothers" in our field - and we interpret the field very broadly [as] anybody who worked in work related to peace or conflict… I think that you will acknowledge that your work has something to do with peace, right?

Gene Sharp: Sometimes - and definitely conflict.

Jannie Botes: Yes. So for that reason, if I ask you a question and you don't agree with my framing, reframe it.

Gene Sharp: Okay.

Jannie Botes: … If I ask a question and you think… "Well, you know, that's not really how I see myself," then just explain to me how I have it wrong and reframe it in the way that it makes sense for you.

Gene Sharp: Okay. :That will not mess you up?

Jannie Botes: No, not at all.. I'm not here to force your life into a format that fits my interview. I'm here to learn about you as one of the people that we deem one of "the founders"… people who… have been, since the Second World War, studying peace and conflict in some way, shape [or] …form. And I think broadly seen as that, my colleague, Chris Mitchell and I, absolutely both agreed …that you do fit the mold of that, if it's broadly framed.

Today is the 19th of October 2007, and we're here in Boston in your office talking to you about your career, your life. And I would like to start by asking you a question that'll take you back to essentially your high school days… I know that in your case, it

was around the Second World War, so let me phrase the question this way. I've read somewhere that… as long ago as your high school days… you were aware of the world in terms of peace and conflict and that the world at that time made you interested in studying…was it sociology [or] was it peace? What was your thinking at the time and what was happening in the world at that time?

Gene Sharp: That's a little more complicated than it might appear. I wasn't actively interested in peace and conflict in high school. I was more interested in economic injustices and racial segregation.

Jannie Botes: I see.

Gene Sharp: And then I went on from there, graduated in '46, coming on in the same city of Columbus, Ohio to Ohio State University. And also my undergraduate years - which were slightly less than four years because I went to summer schools - I was uncertain what profession or occupation I should have and I really didn't find one. I even started working with religious organizations - so justice …being a labor lawyer and all kinds of things like that. But none of them seemed quite to match, so I majored in Social Sciences… which was the broadest category I could fit into…And then, toward the end of that, I received a kind of fellowship from the Sociology Department… and did a Master's in Sociology with a thesis on quote "Nonviolence," which is a phrase I don't like…as a Sociological study… and that was my Master's thesis.

Jannie Botes: Give me a sense of which years we're talking about.

Gene Sharp: That would be… if I graduated from high school in '46, I got my B.A. in '49…and then in '51, I got my M.A.

Jannie Botes: So you graduated from high school the year after the Second World War ended?

Gene Sharp: Yes.

Jannie Botes: Was the war, and what was happening in the world at that time - the beginning of the cold war - did that play any role in your thinking, in your future and what you wanted to study?

Gene Sharp: Not directly. I was also concerned with – we knew there was the atomic bomb.

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: We knew that wasn't a very good thing.

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: We didn't yet have the hydrogen bomb. That was developed while we were there. I was introduced – I don't remember the origin exactly, but to the field of non-violent action through using non-violent direct action against racial discrimination in Columbus, Ohio… And then that led into a study group on non-violence and [we] read Richard Gregg's book, "The Power of Non-Violence," which… I thought was quite amazing because he found there were 12 cases of non-violent acts in all the world history and that was an amazing huge number…And then I did the thesis and I did not plan then to go onto further graduate studies because I thought the subject matter that I was interested in would not be acceptable. I think that was an error on my part in pre-judging, but then I sort of, with my Master's, I figured well, now, I'll go and do something in the real world in terms of action and helping people to organize. And so I left Columbus and went originally to East Harlem in New York, which is not only a part of Harlem, but it was a heavily Puerto-Rican area at the time. And I was very concerned about the conditions in Puerto Rico at that time, also.

Jannie Botes: Why did you think that as an area of social study that that would not be acceptable?

Gene Sharp: I don't know and I may have misjudged, but nobody was doing that kind of thing. I thought it was so unorthodox, that it just wouldn't be viable. And probably also I thought I knew most of what I needed to know at that time.

Jannie Botes: Being young ?

Gene Sharp: Oh, yes !

Jannie Botes: So if I understand correctly, it wasn't the violence of the Second World War, nor perhaps the atomic bomb, but social justice in America that led you to most of your work.

Gene Sharp: But we were aware of problems… elsewhere in the world – European colonialism was still somewhat still rampant…and South

Africa was something we were aware of, but weren't involved in doing much of anything about it.

Jannie Botes: That came later. But it was social justice issues more than anything else?

Gene Sharp: I would think so. But my early writings including into my draft writing did not mention purely the question of war and violence but also the question of totalitarianism…because we were just learning a lot - or I was learning a lot I did not know before about the Nazi regime. The Stalin regime was still omnipotent, you know, and I recognized that as a very serious problem which had to be address and not just the violence of war.

Jannie Botes: You mentioned your draft board ? Say more about that.

Gene Sharp: Faced with the alternatives at the time, I became a conscientious objector and took a very extreme position in that I should be cooperating with that, not even though I could get a conscientious objector exemption, which was really not an issue… but …feel I should not be participating in the system and saying, "Okay, will you let me out and… take somebody else?"

Jannie Botes: So what year are we talking about now?

Gene Sharp: That is probably would've been…'52, '53.

Jannie Botes: [The] Korean War ?

Gene Sharp: That was going on, but that was the instigation. That was the cause of the concern.

Jannie Botes: I would really like to know… you studied then as a Sociology Master's student ?

Gene Sharp: Yes.

Jannie Botes: What made you choose Sociology?

Gene Sharp: Instead of Political Science?

Jannie Botes: Yes, because you ended up there.

Gene Sharp: They offered me a fellowship ! And that's it - that's all right. I had a lot of Sociology courses already.

Jannie Botes: But you ended up being a Political Scientist. Is that how you would frame yourself today?

Gene Sharp: No, I wouldn't, - unless that's the job that's open !

Jannie Botes: Ah..

Gene Sharp: When I was teaching at Southeastern Massachusetts University – which is now the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth – I was a professor of both Sociology and Political Science, and because before when I had applied to one, they would say, "Well, you belong somewhere else." And so was the other place and they went back and forth, so I said, "Well, if I belong in both places, that's what I should be - that's the position I should have."

Jannie Botes: So –

Gene Sharp: But that was a long – there was a big gap in there of easily ten years.

Jannie Botes: Okay. I want you to fill that gap for me by asking this… a huge question…so could you give me… the trajectory of the journey that you made? When you left Ohio, when your left your Master's degree in Sociology, up to today… how would you tell that story?

Gene Sharp: That's a long gap.

Jannie Botes: It's a long gap.

Gene Sharp: Well, first of all, I went to New York… and because I took a civil disobedience position on conscription, sooner or later the FBI came around to find me. And I was sentenced to two years prison sentence at Danbury Correctional Institution in Connecticut. I served nine months and ten days. I can't tell you how many hours because I didn't count those. And after I got out, then I worked in New York again, first with A.J.Muste, who was regarded by Time Magazine as "America's number one pacifist"…because first of all, I needed the job and he needed an assistant. But I thought that he had a quite remarkable analysis of the world and the problems and the potential of non-violent action to deal with those [problems]. After working with him quite a number of months, I

concluded he didn't have it. So I left and got an ordinary menial job and during that period then I was invited to move to London to join the staff of what was a weekly newspaper called, "Peace News," which was a pacifist newspaper. And I worked on that for another - I suppose - two and a half years probably, during which time I was writing articles, analyzing things in the world, including the British, French and Israeli invasion of the Suez Canal and the Hungarian Revolution, and those were noticed in Norway. by Professor Arne Naesse the philosopher who is still living and a very wise man.

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: He invited me over for one month to go slow and then invited me back for another month at the Institute for Social Research. The first one was at Circle [?] at the University.

Jannie Botes: And which years are we talking about now - in London and Norway?

Gene Sharp: … That had to have been '53, '54 into maybe a little bit of '55. And… from London, I was in Norway two one-month periods separately and then brought back to the Institute for Social Research, which was an independent institution. And then I was there 50, I think [I'm not reliable on dates] we have to look things up - from '55, '56, '57, in London.

Jannie Botes: As a peace journalist?

Gene Sharp: And I then was invited to stay at the Institute for Social Research and they gave me a full stipend for a year, after which I had to try to help raise my own money which is always a bit of a problem. And so I was there focusing on studies of non-violent action, things that were initially pieces of study of the nature of this type of action, but not the whole thing. They were pieces – like lists of methods… And trying to find this theory of "power" Where did the power of governments and dictatorships come from?

And I concluded I was having problems because I didn't know much about power. And you would get certain inklings of an idea, - understanding them, from some of Gandhi's statements, from some of Tolstoy's statements - that it was all quite inadequate. So I concluded that I really needed to go back to do further study in political theory on the nature of political power. And so rather unexpectedly, I got admitted to St. Catherine's College. I was in

St. Catherine's "society", which meant they didn't have their own buildings. And later on, Allan Bullock, the biographer of Hitler, was the Master of St. Catherine's.

Jannie Botes: And we're now in the sixties?

Gene Sharp: We're at the beginning of '60 - or this is really '59/'60 - because by '60 he had admitted me to St. Catherine's College. And so I spent four years in Oxford, primarily studying under John Plamenatz, the political theorist. And there's where I did all my basic study on the nature of political power, which became the basis of the chapter in "The Politics of Non-Violent Action" and also a chapter - which was really the second half - in the book, "Social Power and Political Freedom." But there was a chapter on the role of social groups and institutions in regulating and influencing the potential of the power of any government.

Jannie Botes: Before we talk more about the period of study in England, you studied in Norway under Arne Naess ?

Gene Sharp: I was not a student of his.

Jannie Botes: You were not?

Gene Sharp: He gave me a… kind of a research position… And then he arranged through the Institution for Social Research, directed by **Eric Renda**, to come there full time. But I was not under anyone's tutelage. I was having to seek my own help wherever I could find it.

Jannie Botes: And did you at that period …because… peace and conflict studies, the Norwegians would say, as they understand it, pretty much kicked off in '57 or '58 with the Journal [of Peace Research] that started and also with people like you [and David Singer] who came [from outsider]…

Gene Sharp: It started before that.

Jannie Botes: Before that…I was really asking, did you meet up with that movement and with those folks?

Gene Sharp: Yes. Before that, there was the work that Arne Naess had done in trying to open up Gandhi's theories and analysis to social science examination... And… I was working in this field, for example,

during those two one-month periods in Norway with Arne Naess. I was doing my own thing, but he showed me reviews, critical reviews, of a book that he had co-authored on Gandhi's politicall ethics. And some of the reviews it had received were especially critical reviews. It was saying - despite their… apparent ignoring their own history of Norwegian experience - saying, "But of course, this wouldn't work against a totalarian [regime] - which of course they had done it, to prove that it did. And there was a plan for a research project on Gandhi's politics and ideas. That was the issue, but not for the Peach Research Institute, which did not exist.

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: But in Ann Arbor, Michigan, there was the Journal of Conflict Resolution.

Jannie Botes: '57, right?

Gene Sharp: I'm not good on the United States.

Jannie Botes: I believe that's when it started, but that's besides the point. I'm sorry for interrupting you.

Gene Sharp: Well, this was not the first issue. This was probably about… maybe the third issue. And there was a special issue that you can find in the library somewhere - The Journal of Conflict Resolution. I had an article in it, which you can find from my publications list, on the types of nonviolence. But I was, at that time, including in [nonviolence] as a generic term which I really don't like today. Both belief systems, in ethical and religious nonviolence, and nonviolent action practiced for pragmatic reasons…

And so that article… was one article of - maybe five or six articles in this special issue of the Journal of Conflict Resolution, which would announce that this was the beginning of a new program. I was brought back to be what they called – I thought this was only a Norwegian word, but it's an English-language word also - "anchorman," to sort of hold that development together.

But they brought in someone else later to take charge of this program. And that program and that plan was essentially – I don't want to go into names, because I don't want to start calling names.

Jannie Botes: OK.

Gene Sharp: But that program was dumped. The non-violent action, the Gandhian orientation, that was dumped.

Jannie Botes: We're talking about Norway now?

Gene Sharp: In Norway. And they broadened it out to a generalized "peace research" program.

Jannie Botes: Under who's leadership?

Gene Sharp: I really don't want to get into names here. I'm trying to be friendly to people. And not what happened many years ago.

Jannie Botes: All right.

Gene Sharp: But… I was got far enough along in my work on nonviolent struggle to realize this is a very important field on its own. And I wanted to continue, so I did not want to become someone else's research assistant for their projects, what they're thinking and their ideas. I wanted to continue this.

Jannie Botes: And that led you to London?

Gene Sharp: Not yet, no, no. No, no, I'd been to London before at "Peace News". So that's when I could stay on as an independent scholar within the Institute for Social Research and continued my research. And I did not become part of the founding of the Peace Research Institute, you know, so...I did that, and then that's where I was doing some of my earlier studies on Gandhi - not my first, because I had done my first book on Gandhi that was published in India called, "Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Mortal Power." I did that before the prison time. I wrote that, completed that book,… really by '53 when I was 35.

And Einstein took an interest in my contents and objective, civil disobedience position. And he also wrote an introduction to that point. And in Norway, it was the Institute of Philosophy and the Institute of Ideas and the Institute for Social Research [where] I continued some of my studies on Gandhi, some of which are included in the book, "Gandhi as a Political Strategist." And there was thinking there that was not widely, accurately understood.

And so I would work on that one paper at a time, you know, not planning a whole book. I'd had those ideas years ago. It didn't work out.

And so I tried, first of all, to go to London School of Economics, but they had had a requirement you have to apply for a position there to be admitted as a doctoral student, I don't know, it was six or eight months in advance of the term.

And I was excluded because of time, but someone else tipped me off about Oxford and Allan Bullock so we had a correspondence back and forth, and he offered me a position at St. Catherine's. So then, in 1960, I went to Oxford and was there for four years. And during which time, I was considering continuing this work on non-violent struggle, but really on power. What is the nature of power, where does it come from?

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: And I was given the whole series of major standard books and political theory to study. And after those, I could call insights because many of these reputable, long-accepted political theorists had had aspects of this same idea - that all rulers depend for sources of power from people and organizations under them. And if they don't get those sources of power, as the people do not cooperate and submit, then the power of the ruler is just weakened and potentially dissolved. So I did that kind of work there and it wasn't always easy. And there were financial problems and so forth, of course.

I tried working with peace research, peace studies. It was really peace "research" at that time - English groups, which did not work out well at all. And again, I don't want to go into that.

But it really was not a friendly welcoming. And… so I was there for the four years, after which time, I was running out of money. And so Arne Naess invited me to come back to Norway for a year at The Institute of Philosophy and the History of Ideas at the University, which I did...and from that, I had written the papers on - well, one of the papers was on… the methods of non-violence - actually specific types of activity, specific types of strikes or boycotts or civil disobedience or protests.

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: And I think my first disseminated paper on that, which was sort of mimeographed, [suggested] 65 methods in the politics [of non-violent action]…

Jannie Botes: Okay.

Gene Sharp: But that became something important… We were interested in the relationship of peace and war. Not how can you witness against war, which most of the [people] were interested in doing, but how can you get rid of it? Which they didn't really seem to think it was possible, except that if you accumulate a sufficient number of conscientious objectors, then the war disappears. That's rather romantic and naïve.

Jannie Botes: So that work you just referred to,.. was then back in Norway, in '65 ?

Gene Sharp: Uh huh.

Jannie Botes: But I wanted to ask two questions about London…or Oxford, if I may.

Gene Sharp: Yes.

Jannie Botes: One is: What exactly was your doctoral work on them and what did you do - and what do you think you achieved - during those years?

Gene Sharp: Again, those were difficult years because my first idea was not to do a study on non-violent action. Long ago, I had also separated the ethical and political belief systems of being non-violent from the type of action, which was often practiced by people who did not believe that way, but were still being non-violent.

Jannie Botes: And in that case, you referenced India, if I remember correctly ? I'm still interested…about the period when you went back to Norway, when you did the 65 actions – the piece that was referenced that you just talked about. What did you achieve during your Oxford years, from your perspective, in terms of personal growth and the growth of your work?

Gene Sharp: I found out that I couldn't do the thesis I originally planned to do at Oxford, which was to compare the effectiveness of the methods that were used in the Norwegian resistance to the Nazis and the methods that were used in the 1956-57 Hungarian Revolution in terms of effectiveness with the… now identified weakness of a totalarism system. And I discovered I couldn't do that because there was no single… [study] of the Norwegian Resistance that was adequate. And although I could use the Norwegian documents and memoirs and so forth, I couldn't use the German archives

there. And the idea of getting Soviet archives or Hungarian archives was impossible. And nobody had really studied the weakness of totalitarian systems. Karl Deutsch was the best probably. There were others – David Riesman and others had said there are weaknesses. There are no detailed study of them, so I had to give that up and I had to go back and take the manuscript that I had started in Norway that I came to Oxford with.

Of about 1100 pages at that time on the nature of non-violent action and take that up and rework it completely - but based now upon a much more profound understanding of political power. Because that had been what was missing - and I knew that. That's why I went to Oxford to get that.

So I had to abandon part of the work and then I was developing the in-depth study of non-violent struggle with particularly power, but also how does this work. And I had many, many, many - potentially hundreds - of references and little pieces of paper in reference to pages.

Of how this works and that eventually became a new thesis. I had been brought to Harvard [from Norway] by Professor Thomas C. Shelling… who came to see me… he came for other reasons, but in Norway [he] came to see me… about whether I would be willing to join a project that he was in directing at Harvard.

Jannie Botes: Now, I understand your reluctance to mention names, but I would like to understand something, if you could, answer a question in this way, which is: During your period at Oxford and in England, you seemed to try to connect with peace studies, peace research, and you said it was not successful. I'm not really interested so much in names, but more in what were they doing, what…were you studying and how was there a disconnect?

Gene Sharp: The disconnect was not so much in what I was studying. In fact, the English peace researchers then accepted what I was doing as important and valid.

And so they included - asked my permission - they included my projects in a proposal to a major U.S. foundation. And part of that was that a grant was under consideration. [I don't think they ever got it.] I wrote and said, "Look, if you get the grant, since you've included my project, will you fund my work – fund my grant?"

And they were aghast and accused me of violation of professional ethics, which I thought kind of ridiculous. And that cut that cooperation pretty completely !

Jannie Botes: I see. That explains it. Thank you very much.

Gene Sharp: There are issues - there are times when there's been something of a comparable nature or a comparable seriousness…But increasingly… well, even back in the Norwegian days, my first days in the nineteen fifties - no, it would be the late 50's like '56, '57, '58, '59 – sometime during that period. When I was with these peace research people - Theodore, what's his name, Lenz and his wife came there. And we were all friendly and talked and they were interested in peace research. Okay, that's fine, but what peace research? I was concerned again, not with witnessing for peace, it's the poser.

Jannie Botes: Maybe you could just start again by saying – let me give you another example. When Theodore Lentz and his wife came…

Gene Sharp: We were friendly and… peace research, that's fine. But I was concerned. My focus was not – it was on … what is a theory, the outstanding viewpoints or assumptions, about how you can get rid of war… The World Federalist had another view - you just needed a super government and so forth.

And… many kinds of research projects would've been possible on any one of those. So I said, "Why don't we identify what are the major conceptions of how war can be eliminated?" Examine whether they're assumptions and then examine are those assumptions about? And by that, we should be minimally able to reduce the hypotheses about eliminating war down to a handful. And then those could be examined to find out which one or two or three … might be the most fruitful for investigation.

Jannie Botes: Uh huh.

Gene Sharp: Nobody was interested in that !

Jannie Botes: In contrast, what were the peace studies people doing?

Gene Sharp: This is what they were doing, but other kinds of things they would be doing today in the terms of general fields, but not focusing on what are the most important of those questions. Also, we had been doin the work that became part of the Journal of Conflict Resolution… I think it was Stein Rokkan - he said, "Well, how is this relevant politically and internationally?" And nobody had really spelled that out.

So I tried to do some preliminary work and that's how I started my work. It became talking about a function, like, equivalent to violence… equivalent to war. Because war has been used for many purposes, many of them terrible, but some of them good, like, for defense, etcetera, etcetera. So what are the purposes and can you just eliminate that form of activity for nothing - or then think it serves some use for the world in society, in politics. And if it does, is that the only type of activity that could serve that role?

And that's how I got the basis of two or three of the chapters in the books - especially *Power and Political Freedom* and other articles - sometimes very small, little papers that were done when at Oxford…

Jannie Botes: So post-Oxford, you went back briefly to Norway where you wrote, among other things, the 65 Non-Violent Actions?

Gene Sharp: No, no, I had already done that. And I was – expanding. That was… a work in progress, always.

Jannie Botes: So take me on this journey, post-Oxford, to back to Norway and eventually back to the U.S.

Gene Sharp: Yes, I was continuing my work at the Institute for Philosophy and the History of Ideas. I was doing some teaching assistant work there at the Institute. And Tom Shelling … he had read something of my things. He was quite taken by them. I found there's a very cold and analytical examination of the nature of this technique, which appealed to the young very much. It wasn't the emotional thing…and so he brought me to Harvard at the Center for International Affairs.

Jannie Botes: As?

Gene Sharp: As - they use different words for the position over the years - as a kind of a research fellow or a research – is it? It was always research, I forget all the different titles because they changed. It essentially is a research fellow, but I had support at that time from grants that he had received to the University.

Jannie Botes: And we're now talking about what year?

Gene Sharp: That would've been in – I came to Harvard in December of '65. And I had full-time support there for a very short number of years,

then [again] I had to be trying to raise some of my own money to support my own research.

Jannie Botes: But you were a full-time researcher, not an academics, per se?

Gene Sharp: Yes, but after several years, then it was necessary, -since the money available for me being full-time and paid was shrinking - I had to take on part-time teaching - which I did.

Jannie Botes: So what was the period in which the work that really…pushed your career forward dramatically? In 1973 was *The Politics of Non-violent Action*. What was the gestation period that really created that work? Was that the years at Harvard?

Gene Sharp: Oh, it was several… Harvard was more the culmination of that work, but definitely the years in Oxford and much of the years in Norway. So it was cumulatively learning… What made it succeed, what made it fail? Whether it's dynamic in relation to a repressive regime, I'm learning pieces in here and here and here - and gradually putting it together.

Jannie Botes: Dr. Sharp, most people would say that… when other people put pinnacles and time and achievements on one's career, you see it differently. But do you see the publication in 1973 of that book, T*he Politics of an Nonviolent Action,* as a really crucial event in your career?

Gene Sharp: It was a crucial event, but I had anticipated… [with] this published and all my problems about getting grants and stuff, what will disappear?

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: And of course, that wasn't true. I still continued to have major problems after that, and I had to be doing major full-time teaching. And there were…things that might've happened that did not happen that would've made a big difference.

Jannie Botes: Such as?

Gene Sharp: Time magazine was very interested in this work and they held a major conference of all the editors of Time-Life at Harvard. And I was there and spoke at that. They had the head of their… bureau interview me twice for two or three hours each to do a major study

of "*The Politics of Non-Violent Action.*" which had just come off the press. The Harvard [faculty] hosted a public sort of reception to launch the book… And things like that. The Time magazine article was done by a very competent journalist. It never got published. It always got bumped for something else that was "more timely". And of course, if that had come out, then it would've made it a big difference.

Jannie Botes: Can you remember the name of the journalist?

Gene Sharp: Again, I would not.

Jannie Botes: I'm asking because it would be interesting to go back to Time to see – perhaps - if that exists.

Gene Sharp: Oh, I'm sure it wouldn't. They wouldn't keep files of unpublished manuscripts [they] have drafted.

Jannie Botes. So – unfortunately - it didn't do that much for your career.

Gene Sharp: At the time.

Jannie Botes: At the time, - but what did you feel you achieved with that?

Gene Sharp: It takes [time] for those things to soak in, particularly if you're been working on it for so many reason because it's very hard to say when I first started working on that. That "Politics" was a cumulative product of many years of work and thinking and experience and study and formulation of drafts and so forth - at least 15 years, but probably closer to well over 20.

Jannie Botes: And it's impact? Could you have foreseen the impact that eventually happened?

Gene Sharp: Now it's gone. It is probably the study that I'm most proud of and satisfied with, but that, in turn, made possible a whole series of other explorations of the potential of nonviolent means, some of which related to concrete problems, like national defense. So in August of '64, we could hold a major academic, international, by invitation only, small conference as Oxford on the nature of what we then called "civilian defense." I now call it "civilian based defense," to avoid a certain confusion.

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: Where you examine how this is relevant to planning, so that if our country is invaded, it will be very, very difficult to rule it, and therefore, it might not be invaded at all or, if it is, you're prepared with further defense…for example. How to formulate this kind of resistance to undermine existing dictatorships. Hence that booklet of mine, [which has become more famous than "The Politics…"] "From Dictatorship to Democracy"…which has its own history…We have a document on that history which - if you don't have it - we can get it for you.

And it's made possible - the spreading of the knowledge - in many more [countries] now there are alternatives to both violence and submission that you can fight - and fight effectively, if you do it by knowing what you're doing and how to do it skillfully.

Jannie Botes: In '05, you published a book that… put your career together, if I understand it correctly ?

Gene Sharp: Then you're talking about **[inaudible]**?

Jannie Botes: Yes.

Gene Sharp: I had good help on that, particularly from Joshua Polson, who authorized a number of the case histories …and that drew upon all this other work, but much of it in a much more condensed way. But then… apart from new cases …it revealed a long struggle which [was] not something peculiar…but we would say [a] worldwide phenomenon.

Jannie Botes: So we talked bout 1973 and we jumped to 2005; what happened in between?

Gene Sharp: I was teaching full-time… [in] "Southeastern Massachusetts University," - which is not the University of Massachusetts. I taught also full-time and part-time at several universities and colleges in the Boston area. There was major work. I was writing other papers as best I could. It was a very difficult period because…Southeastern Massachusetts University is 65 miles south of Boston and I would drive down and back in the same day, a minimum of two and sometimes as much as five days a week. It didn't leave a lot of time for other things. I tried to get grants for funding research as best I could. I was kept on at Harvard in a research position - contrary to their rules to limit such nonsense - for almost 30 years. And there were other problems during that

period. The other people who were working the area…were revealed to have had their own motives and their unprofessional objectives […cover your ears and mine] rather than the work itself. So some things were kind of disappointing.

Jannie Botes: I gather from what you're saying - and maybe you will tell me that this is not a fair assumption - that other than the normal… professional jealousies and institutional problems that one has in any career, that people working in the peace and conflict field don't always work together.

Gene Sharp: Of course not, but what's new? Or they do if, temporarily, they think it's for their interests. Other people have been very supportive and very cooperative and very helpful.

Jannie Botes: … You mentioned along the way a couple of names. I believe you mentioned Morton Duetch, you mentioned Tom Schelling. You didn't mention J. David Singer. I just wondered who were people who were doing interesting work while you were doing yours? Who influenced you, who were you aware of?

Gene Sharp: I was in touch with Morton Duetch, but I didn't mention his name now. It wasn't a major influence. David Singer was not a major influence for me. Tom Schelling really was, because he, unlike most peace people, he could think strategically and realistically. And so he was one of the people really had extremely important [influence] and still understands this work and still think it's important. And he, as you know, he did an introduction to "The Politics of Non-Violent Action," which is very insightful.

Jannie Botes: And you mentioned in one of your writings… Kenneth Boulding.

Gene Sharp: Yes. Kenneth and wife, Elise who's still operating. I have great respect for both of them.

Our thinking is not identical. Kenneth helped me get a one-year grant from the organization that sponsored the Journal of Conflict Resolution. And I visited them in Michigan, in Ann Arbor one time and they gave me, I think, a $3000 grant that year.

His thinking and mine are not identical.

Jannie Botes: Other contemporaries…whose work you found interesting or that had any impact on you?

Gene Sharp: Herbert Kelman at Harvard was very interested. I had met him first back, if my memory is [correct]… maybe in '49 or '50, I think, in St. Louis or Kansas City at a conference of the Congress **[inaudible]** the core of the direction action against racial discrimination in the United States. And still we have mutual respect for each other, but his work in this field, too… was not of major assistance to my personal work. I mostly didn't have somebody. I didn't have a mentor or somebody that I was trying to imitate or simply learn from.

Jannie Botes: Dr. Sharp, the question, then, is which thinkers, previous literature…from whateverer field… was instrumental in some of your thinking?

Gene Sharp: There's a whole series of those, but there's no single one that stands out above everything else, except Gandhi. Not Gandhi [the pacifist] which, off the record, I think is really not the best way to identify him…but as a political thinker. He has very profound insights into political power and conflict …and that's why you find him quoted throughout parts of the politics [textbooks] maybe even in the first chapter on power …

But I looked… I was hoping there would be people that I could rely upon more strongly than I did. When I got back from Norway, I was at Harvard. I went to the Harvard libraries… trying to look up – I don't know whether I should include this or not - American writers on political power. Maybe I didn't understand them, maybe I had a bias against them that I didn't know about, but - to be honest - I was too horrified at the superficiality that I simply dropped that and returned back to the classics that I had studied at Oxford.

Jannie Botes: And which of your - other than your '73 book - chapters would you like to reference as perhaps places where you really can find, [in footnotes or otherwise] those classic authors that you reference?

Gene Sharp: They're in the "Politics [of Non-Violent Action]". Later on, I hadn't been doing that kind of analysis because I already did it - not that it couldn't be improved on. But my part of that, I think, I did and now I've been focusing on amplifications of the nature [of non-violence] and particularly on its practical applications and its potential, so that people could choose it - consciously - to use these methods. And on developing strategic thinking about how to plan strategies, which even Gandhi didn't write on…

Jannie Botes: I thought there was a chapter that, in our conversation earlier, off-camera you mentioned to me as one that one should look at… The topic was works that you used in developing your own thinking.

Gene Sharp: Yes - the variety of them ! But they're all footnoted there. Karl Deutsch is one of them, you know? Even Alexis de Tocqueville… you know, writing a century or two earlier…and many, many other writers that are footnoted there.

Jannie Botes: But the place to start there would be the 1973 core work?

Gene Sharp: Yes, but not just the first volume. The first volume is only 100 pages and the second chapter is very inadequate now. But all through the whole 900 approximate pages.

Jannie Botes: As you look back over your career and as we've interviewing other people in the series, what struck me is how many of them - peace and conflict scholars - have lamented how they struggled to be funded, to have their work legitimized, etcetera. I get a sense that you're telling me something similar.

Gene Sharp: And probably more emphatically, oh, yes. During my time in Oxford, my mother even had to go to work in the post office just to get money to send me to stay in Oxford one year. That's how bad it was. In Oxford, I tried to get money. One time I wrote - pre-computer days, typewriter - letters of inquiry and application to, I don't remember if it's 89 or 90 American foundations that I found in a directory of foundations that I thought would be interested. I think I got replies from, I don't know if it's three or six [but] none of them gave me money.

Jannie Botes: And why do you think was that struggle occurring - not only for you, but also for others?

Gene Sharp: For the others, I can't speak because they were not focused on the same exact material and subject matter that I was focused on. I think this focus was unusual. The foundations are set up to serve specific purposes and those change with a direction of partly the staff and their board of directors and they vary over time. But they almost never [are] in advance of an issue. After it becomes fashionable, then they want to fund.

I know one case in which the Ford Foundation gave Harvard multi-millions of dollars for a project in the field of arms control… When I had even in-person interviews at the Ford Foundation, this was a very sympathetic and understanding staff person - and we got nothing.

Jannie Botes: So does this have anything to do with the fact that the word "peace" itself, in the start of the Cold War, was really not that popular?

Gene Sharp: That I can't judge.

Jannie Botes: You think that it had more to do with the fact that nonviolence is an area of study that was not understood, was new, was different?

Gene Sharp: And to some degree, in spite of the amazing developments in Eastern and Central Europe, and other parts of the world, it still is - to a significant degree. There have been changes. For example, just last June, the United Nations General Assembly at the behest of India and I think 130 or so other countries voted to establish October 2, Gandhi's birthday, as the International Day of Nonviolence. But nonviolence itself isn't an attractive term for most people. Even nonviolent action doesn't denote any "toughness".

Interviewer It didn't help that you did things like - expand nonviolent action examples to 198?

Gene Sharp: No.

Jannie Botes: Because that's very practical.

Gene Sharp: Yes, now, that's for the funders. For the other people, in doing actions, that was amazing when it was expanded to 65. I was among those who attended [I was in Norway at the time]…I was invited to a conference in Ghana At the time, Nkrumah was President - before some of his other activities became infamous.

And I took with me a Xerox paper, not this big. I was merely listing, with brief descriptions, 65 methods. Delegates from Somalia and South Africa told me they stayed up all night reading that. Sometimes people find this discussion overall really amazing because they had no idea that [there was] this was thing…Three weeks ago, when we were at… the United Nations for the launching of this First Annual International Day of Nonviolence,

not many, but a number of the other countries sent representatives there, as well as there were six or seven other speakers and myself.

But I was told that one of those delegates from an independent country said he was absolutely amazed at the part of [the proceedings] which we have a copy of …that I could list all these countries in which [non-violent change] has happened in recent decades. He was actually shocked by that.

Jannie Botes: But it must be very gratifying to you to have, in essence, some paradigm shift in many people's thinking… and maybe to think that you've had some impact in a lot of places in the world.

Gene Sharp: When we were doing the production of "The Politics " somebody had to do an index. And my two best students from the university where I was teaching were paid as work-study students to work on this index for me. Very bright Sociology students and so…they had studied the whole manuscript. The manuscript, mind you, was 2000 pages in actual number. And they said that they didn't think they'd learned anything new, but their heads had been rearranged !

So recognizing that [non-violence] can wield great power. Even Hobbes noticed this by being fearful that disobedience would threaten the whole establishment of all government. And these other much more standard and respected political theorists, Bentham and Hume and… many others, as well as Tolstoy and Gandhi, you know. That does rearrange the concept and the thinking. If you once recognize that this wields great power, then you can't as easily fall back into the standard of thinking - which is so common in Washington and many other places - that only violence can deal with a tough situation.

Also, it's clear that these writings, particularly in some of the simplified versions and the application versions, had influence. And not the [case of] Lithuania, where they thought "We're all incorporated in this Soviet Union ". They wanted out. They used my books, the page proofs of the "Civilian Based Defense" book, published by Princeton University Press. And they got out and they kept it disciplined and they had extremely few causalities. I know the numbers. The largest number of casualties in any one country was about 14; the smallest was zero.

This kind of struggle is being studied for its potential for undermining dictatorships. This piece "From Dictatorship to Democracy" was denounced by the SLARC military dictators in Burma when it came out first in '93, in Burmese and English. And they kept on denouncing it forever - as recently as, I think, two years ago…

Several - I'm not sure of the exact number, but at least eight - Burmese were sentenced to prison for seven years each, merely for having a copy of that [book]. We're under vicious attack by a number of people: Hugo Chavez is only one of them. He's mild compared to some of them, making up total lies against us because there are people in the world who do not want ordinary people to learn that they can liberate themselves nonviolently.

Jannie Botes: So clearly your work has had impact, but hard to qualify, hard to quantify? I mean, you mentioned Lithuania, the Soviet Union and some of the writings about your people mention Poland.

Gene Sharp: We had almost nothing to do with Poland.

Jannie Botes: Really?

Gene Sharp: No. My power analysis was condensed and published in the Polish language exile journal called "Annex," printed out of London, but we really had nothing to do… we can claim no merit from Poland.

Jannie Botes: So from your perspective, what could you claim in terms of places or cases where some of your work had some impact or was used?

Gene Sharp: I don't try to collect that information - as probably I should - because we always understaffed. Even when we had lots of money, we've understaffed. It's very hard to say accurately and definitely and without bragging. And so often, with other factors involved, even in [Serbia] and Lithuania, they were learning from it [but] also about nonviolent means from their own experiences. They had tried guerrilla warfare and their people who did it are heroes, but it didn't succeed.

Jannie Botes: And that was a huge cost, also.

Gene Sharp: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Jannie Botes: So tell me a little bit more about why Hugo Chavez and others are trying to [discredit] this work.

Gene Sharp: I wish I knew all the reasons. I've just done a kind of generic response to that that we're still editing which we can get to you when it's finished. Jimmy is doing some editing on it now and I did some more this morning. It's hard to say because we don't

know who they are, where their money comes from. There's some people just doing it for evil reasons. There's one graduate student in Australia that's been writing a lot of diatribes against us. Maybe some people just want to show that they're somebody and they've got power and they've got control and they can denounce somebody who's known.

Jannie Botes: But you also seem to indicate that there is a seeming discomfort among powerful authoritarian regimes that this kind of learning might lead to the kind of political action that makes them very uncomfortable.

Gene Sharp: Yes, yes ! But, for example, take Russia. Supposedly moving, for a while, in a somewhat democratic direction, thus from dictatorship to democracy. Without our knowledge, [the book] got into Russia. There were four independent translations made and distributed. When the fifth one came up, we were contacted, so we had to evaluate it along with the fifth one to see which one of these is a tolerably acceptable translation - because translations, in this field, can mess things up more than any other field [to my knowledge] because the concepts are not known.

There is vocabulary that's claimed to be somewhat about the same thing, but is really – I choose my words very precisely. We often have to make up words or redefine concepts. That stack there… that's a stack of material and these piles [are] for a dictionary of terms for the field. Not only nonviolent action, but dictatorships and repression and guerilla warfare and strategy.

Over 800 entries, which I started having to define, for self-defense, I had to start defining terms in 1950. But I mean, most languages don't have the vocabulary that we've built up… in various glossaries over the years. And this means that the translations are difficult, but also if you can get the ideas conveyed into these other languages… They're now many – 27 [languages] - that we know of. We frequently don't know. That makes regimes very uncomfortable.

Jannie Botes: Why did you choose to make your next project a dictionary of the field ?

Gene Sharp: Because without clear concepts, and clear terminology, you can't communicate accurately. But this isn't something, again, that I started, flat-out, "Let's do a dictionary." After all, I was doing this bit by bit, even in my Master's Thesis, basically on the

methods, the types of principle that are ethical, nonviolent. That was in 1950, '51.

And then there was some here and there in doing the "Politics of Nonviolent Action", which went through three totally different manuscripts, each of which - or several of which, the last two of which, at least - had multiple, individual revisions. The Power Analysis, which I was assigned at Harvard after my thesis version, I was assigned by the [publishers] with an extraordinary competent editor, who was herself a [political scientist] and she helped me write on it. And we sent that back and forth between us at least eight times each… You had to do that. And then you find that you are defining these terms and then… all these problems continue to exist. If you're going to develop a plan for using this kind of resistance for, say, defending against foreign aggression… what's your language or how to convey the different possible ways of doing that? And the terms often didn't exist.

Jannie Botes: I suppose translating that will be quite an effort, too.

Gene Sharp: It will be a dangerous effort because someone who, just has a big ego or doesn't really understand the concepts, may want to try to do it.

Jannie Botes: How far along are you in this project?

Gene Sharp: Well, very far. There was a manuscript… , This was page 93 of one draft and the previous draft. From that draft, there were, I think, 440 pages. We have deleted some of those terms as unnecessary. We've had to redefine. We've had to add new terms.

Jannie Botes: And you hope to be done by?

Gene Sharp: I used to say last January and that's gone by the way. One of the cases where we did get a good grant, I was able to hire the two people in the world that I knew had the most confidence to help evaluate the existing manuscript. One of those had submitted all of her recommended comments and the other who has submitted all of his recommended changes on the entries, but still is working on the preface.

Jannie Botes: But we can look at seeing this within the next two years or so?

Gene Sharp: Yes. I'm working on it now. I'm already, you see, I'm up to that number of pages. My estimate is about 18 pages of preface. And even if this is revised and added to, the manuscript itself should be done…Let's see, this is October. I would hope - reasonably - the manuscript can be finished by June. But then, who's the publisher? And believe it or not, publishers still are not eager to publish in this field.

Jannie Botes: Nonviolence.

Gene Sharp: Yes, and nonviolent action.

Jannie Botes: And why do you think that is?

Gene Sharp: Usually there are several reason. One is, they don't think it'll sell. They don't know anything about the field or its importance. Or they have certain rules, particularly about reprinting a book that appeared years ago. This is not; this is new. They have certain rules against that.

We have a 6 or 7 hundred page book on the American nonviolent struggle for independence that was published. We had to waste money to get it printed. It sold out. That publisher's decided not to print it again and now we're having trouble getting it reissued again and it's the most remarkable and scholarly book on the struggles between 1765 and 1775 that really resulted in at least nine or ten of the colonies achieving de facto, independence from British rule.

Jannie Botes: I would like, Dr. Sharp, to play devil's advocate just for a moment with you and to say that… the military regime in Burma has been around for a long time.

Gene Sharp: Yes.

Jannie Botes: And people have seemingly been using your work for a long time and I can hear the skeptics say, "So Sharp, if this stuff was so good, why is not ending that conflict?"

Gene Sharp: Well, I'm not in touch with the Burmese situation recently very much. The so-called "National Coalition Government of the Union of the Burma,"… that's based in Washington, D.C. of all places. Why not near Burma? They don't understand that they have a different agenda, so even though we invited them up for a

weekend of really introduction to this field, they didn't grab it and they didn't run with it.

Some of the younger Burmese opposition did - temporarily. The old Burma Student Democratic Federation, which was both political and guerrilla, did grab a hold of it temporarily until their guerilla branches in their next annual conference decided to kick it …out. There are places where we have got a hearing, but did not grasp the power and the capacity of this and never did anything other than verbal comments to advance it.

We've had two other countries - that I will not name - ask us for advice. I've concluded that our consultations - meaning oral workshops and lectures, or even workshops that lasted for two weeks or four weeks - did not transfer the knowledge of nonviolent struggle into their heads so that they could use that in combination with what they knew about their political situation. And very few of them could think strategically.

Jannie Botes: Oh, a couple of questions in this regard. And the first one is, so how do you see your work? In some ways, when I listen to you talk, I feel, again, your skeptics might say, "Is this a form of activism and are you intervening in other people's countries," etcetera, etcetera. And should you be doing that?

Gene Sharp: We have very strict guidelines, which we can give you, for our consultation work. We do not become participants in those other struggles. We do not tell people in those other countries what they should do. We're often expected to do that and some people want us to do that, but we say, "No, that's your job. You know your situation. And if you think you do and maybe you don't, you better find out in depth what [is] the situation. What are the weaknesses of that regime?"

You also need to learn about nonviolent struggle and that we cannot talk to you and have you absorb that full understanding because you won't have it. And then the people who just can't think strategically - and that's not to deprecate what brave people have done - but think that you can march down the streets in the capital or the former capital and the regime will come tumbling down. It's nonsense.

Jannie Botes: But it does apply - to a degree - to [such] mass action as that, correct?

Gene Sharp: Yes, but you need to do it wisely. If you're going to have some dramatic first start - say marching, say monks marching in

Rangoon - followed by the populous coming out. You've got to expect that the regime, seeing it's threatened, it's going to be brutal as hell. You've got to plan for that. You have to anticipate that and know what you can do then. Why not say, "We have one day of traumatic marching bravely down the streets before the regime really does the dirty work? And then maybe for the next three days, everybody stays home, paralyzing in silence the cities." There are alternatives. How can you undermine, as was done in Serbia? How can you undermine the soldiers in the army so they won't carry out orders to shoot?

Jannie Botes: I think what I'm hearing you saying is something that you write about in your work - criticizing people who try to use your work, but not understanding that underneath that lies very serious strategic planning.

Gene Sharp: Absolutely.

Jannie Botes: Which often is not done.

Gene Sharp: Absolutely.

Jannie Botes: At a cost to the people who participate.

Gene Sharp: Yes.

Jannie Botes: Say more about that, please.

Gene Sharp: You did it, you said it very well. They don't think strategically. They don't understand this well enough….it's how could an army carry out an effective campaign or battle if there's no idea how the battle should start, how it should develop and expand and what to do when your enemy shoots back. Or what you're going to do if part of your opponent's forces become weak; what should you do? If they shoot at you, what should you do? How can you identify what are the sources of power which are in the realm of politics, the identified sources of power.

They're like the legs on a table. If they're taken away, whether by termites… and then you get a little bump, the whole table will come down. If you have to remove the pillars of support, moral authority, economic control, political administration, agencies of repression and violent punishments and on and on down the line. You have to take those away. And if you only start on the symbolism, you won't defeat the regime.

Jannie Botes: So nonviolence is a form of strategic action just similar to the way that military regimes or authoritarian regimes or people that use violence use it as a form of waging a battle against people…So you would say that nonviolence is a way of action that needs planning and needs serious thinking?

Gene Sharp: Absolutely plus, plus, plus. In those situations, I would not use the term "nonviolence," but that's merely the absence of something. That's why…I've been using the term "nonviolent struggle." And even that is –

Jannie Botes: Or "action."

Gene Sharp: "Action," I've used, also.

Jannie Botes: Okay.

Gene Sharp: I think "struggle" is probably wiser, but most people don't understand. They think of the only thing is we don't use violence.

Jannie Botes: I would venture to argue that your study of power in relation to nonviolence has been really crucial to your work. Is that fair to say?

Gene Sharp: Absolutely.

Jannie Botes: And how do you think you've shifted the debate or the discussion on that?

Gene Sharp: I don't know. People don't always tell me. We have no time or energy for investigations.

Jannie Botes: But the core of what you argue is that power is something that's given to authority and that can be taken away.

Gene Sharp: Yes. It's more complicated, but that's the gist.

Jannie Botes: So tell me a little - what is it, then, that makes it so crucial for understanding power in terms of nonviolent struggle.

Gene Sharp: Because the way you can identify those sources of power, but the way you can take them away is through nonviolent struggle - and not all of them at once. You know, you have to undermine the

moral authority or the legitimacy of certain types of activities that you can engage in that contributes to that.

And obviously, in economic control, in labor strikes and economic boycotts, etcetera, if it's the military themselves and the reliability of the soldiers which may be conscript soldiers, may not want to be there in the first place. How you can make the police unreliable, that specific activity ? In some cases, this is exactly what has happened.

Jannie Botes: I understand your reluctance to talk about the place of your work in history, but could you talk a little about the place of nonviolence in history?

Gene Sharp: Oh, that's much more complicated and diverse because, again, you're using a term which has a very broad scope. Nonviolence ? On that I absolutely couldn't. You are talking about nonviolent resistance, nonviolent action, nonviolent struggle, which I assume is what you mean.

Jannie Botes: Correct.

Gene Sharp: That has played a far more significant role than people have imagined in the past. I mentioned the American Colonial Revolution and the ongoing struggles within a ten-year period, three separate, very sophisticated campaigns. The undermining of the Czarist regime in Russia was by these means. The Bolsheviks had almost nothing to do with it. They were in to grab the spoils after the regime had already been destroyed. Many, many other cases required a basic reassessment of this history of their own countries. In many cases, this research has not been previously done.

When our people were doing research on the American Colonial non-cooperation-on-importation campaigns, some of the archives that got into looked like [they told me] they had never been examined before. And now we have a history book on this and we're having trouble even getting it reprinted, even though single copies on the web are retailing, old used copies, for $145 each. And it's amazing. One University Press says, "Oh, [you can't simply] reprint. You've got to add new chapters or you have to do this and that and so forth."

Jannie Botes: So from history to the current Iraq war and America, there are people that say that there have been attempts at nonviolent action and nonviolent struggle, that haven't gotten us far.

Gene Sharp: After you mess up a situation by invasion and military occupation, then you expect somebody to come out and do a miracle. "You can do this now," and everything will be fine.

If anyone in the White House had been calculating… if their motives [assuming they had good motives… sorry !] If anybody in Washington had been paying attention to what has happened to Eastern and Central Europe ! These countries, [Serbia], Lithuania, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia at a minimum, were all under totalitarian rule for decades. There was no military invasion to liberate them. The casualty rates in every case of the people themselves were small. Somebody might've said, "Well, if that could happen with Soviet troops already there, often with the imported Soviet populations settled in those countries, with the other history of Arab countries and Muslim nonviolent struggle there, couldn't that be used as a model for helping get rid of Sadam Hussein?"

Apparently no, nobody knew. Nobody paid any attention. So what are we supposed to do then? This [book] "From Dictatorship to Democracy" is a generic analysis of what people can do. That's why some governments ban it.

Jannie Botes: As a political scientist… You will have appreciation for the statement, even if you're uncomfortable asking it or rather answering it. I'm going to say it again: as a political scientist, you will have appreciation for the statement, even if you're maybe uncomfortable answering it. But you've been referred to as "the Clausewitz of nonviolent action"..

Gene Sharp: That's all right. I would consider that as a compliment because Clossovitz studied how military action actually operates and went ahead to do it, to plan it effectively and strategically if you're going to succeed. So that's all right.

Jannie Botes: And you're saying the same thing, but with a different kind of action?

Gene Sharp: Yes, with a very different kind of action. There'd be some things Clausewitz would have recommended, but actually are the worst possible things you could do. And there would be some things, that maybe he didn't mention, that you do need to do.

Jannie Botes: Dr. Sharp, I'd like to ask some final questions. Some of them are somewhat philosophical - somewhat looking back on your own

life. Were there major disappointments along the way in terms of your work?

Gene Sharp: Oh, sure, of course. I would like to have been able to work more speedily, that there wouldn't have been so many delays, that I could've had more help when I needed it, that some people would've put greater weight on the potential usefulness of this kind of work instead of how they can try to control it for their own reasons or see it is a threat - when it's not. It is a threat to oppressive regimes but, to many people, it is a very great and powerful tool for empowerment and democratization and greater justice and liberation.

Jannie Botes: Things that surprised and exhilarated you along the way?

Gene Sharp: I'm not sure.

Jannie Botes: I wondered how you would explain to me what your hopes and dreams still are in terms of the practice, applicability, utility of your life's work.

Gene Sharp: Dreams of the future?

Jannie Botes: Essentially.

Gene Sharp: I don't know. As I approach the end of the work, there are some things I still want done. I hope that this getting the terminology and the concepts done - that this is major [goal]. The popularization and spreading - if it's accurate - that is important. Our efforts to establish an institutional base for the future work have been greatly frustrated and impeded in a way which has made our work [to help] people much more difficult. I wish those things hadn't happened.

Jannie Botes: But in spite of that, it's my understanding that your phone still rings all the time. People want to know about this.

Gene Sharp: No, you haven't heard it ring once this morning. It doesn't all ring all the time, but you never know who's quite going to be there when it does ring.

Jannie Botes: But my greater point is that media and other organizations still have an interest in the work, don't they?

Gene Sharp: Yes. Oh, more than ever.

Jannie Botes: So have you been surprised "along the way" with the way in which your work has taken…root in different places ?

Gene Sharp: Yes.

Jannie Botes: Have you been disappointed in the fact that it didn't happen more and more strongly?

Gene Sharp: No, I've been surprised. When I was doing the manuscript of the [study] in Oxford in the very, very first draft, I hoped that maybe it might be helpful to people in difficult situations sometime in the future - and certainly it has. But it could've happened earlier. It could've happened more widely.

Jannie Botes: Is there a direction that you hope this work will still take off, that you still want to do or you hope that people will pick up on and develop?

Gene Sharp: I don't think… whether there are directions I've been worried about that it might go which would not make me comfortable if I was still around to notice.

Jannie Botes: Such as?

Gene Sharp: Concern for their own egos, their own power and control. There's been too much of that already. But not keeping this out of the field of political doctrines and ideologies is very important. That's one thing we have done that our consulting policy helps to back up. But… there's still that pressure.

Jannie Botes: Did you study the Algerian - is it fair to call it "revolution" - under the French?

Gene Sharp: Not in depth.

Jannie Botes: I was struck by the fact that today the transformation in that country hasn't really occurred, that there are now people who are standing up against the people who stood up against the authoritarian regime, i.e. the French. So have you been disappointed, in any way. in people using your tools of political action - of nonviolent action - who then turn out to become oppressors themselves?

Gene Sharp: No, not surprised, because sometimes people will come into the position of president or dictator or something like that, but you can't expect too much in one huge step. And people often think that once you have a major movement and it appears to succeed, then everything's going to be fine forever, and that of course isn't true. You have other problems you have to deal with, both currently and in the future.

Jannie Botes: I'd like end with a question which is going to sound negative, but I don't think it is - which is: how do you respond to people who say that, "…As much as I am sympathetic to the notions that you've spent your life's work on, unfortunately, we're all dreamers to think that that's going to work and that people will really use them and put them in place" ?

Gene Sharp: Well, they need to wake up to reality. People already have been using these means for decades and centuries and it appears to be accelerating. And new people are exploring these options and that's happening. So denying the reality is not a very sound [policy]

Jannie Botes: Dr. Sharp, other than the dictionary, seeing that I want to end on a positive note, are there other things that you still hope to write about, to develop?

Gene Sharp: After this, I have an essay I wrote maybe ten years ago. It was published in our newsletter called "The Structural Approach to Human Rights." And we brought together about six or seven major participants in human rights work for discussing that. And we have their recorded and transcribed comments on that.

I want to get that available. That's going to take some work yet because the analysis there is that whatever other types of activity for human rights are done and important, the biggest violations of human rights are conducted by certain types of governments. And therefore, instead of working primary on a particular issue or saving a particular group of people, you have to figure out how to change those governments so that those violations aren't conducted by the same crowd and the same political machine as before.

Jannie Botes: You will forgive me for saying this, but on the plane this morning, my colleague, Paul Snodgrass, and I looked at your birth date. And I said, you're about to have another big milestone and you're at least ten years beyond the age that most people retire.

Gene Sharp: Oh, yes.

Jannie Botes: But it's not in your future?

Gene Sharp: No.

Jannie Botes: You're going to continue this work?

Gene Sharp: As best I can.

Jannie Botes: Well, again, thank you very much for talking to us.

Gene Sharp: Well, thanks for your thoughtfulness and your fantastic preparation for the discussion.

Jannie Botes: Thank you. We mentioned Iraq. There is an anti-war movement [in the US]. How strategically successful have they been in their actions and seemingly unsuccessful in moving the Bush administration at all?

Gene Sharp: I'm not expert on the current anti-war movement. There are other people who know it much better than I. But I think there's an underlying problem. There's an assumption that you can reduce, control or get rid of war by protesting against it. I don't think that's true. I think you can get rid of war if people have something else effective that they can do to deal with the problem, then they have a choice. Otherwise, they don't have a choice. It's that or nothing, they think.

Jannie Botes: What would it be in this case?

Gene Sharp: There was no anti-war movement needed in the United States to help the liberation of Poland, of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, you know? I guess we find something else they can do. So there are no U.S. troops needed.

Whatever the United States government did or didn't do financially, I don't know. But they didn't send troops or the troops were not needed and nobody was making the argument. All the NATO forces and all of the U.S. forces during the Cold War accomplished absolutely nothing in the liberation of those millions and millions of people.

The people themselves, using these nonviolent means did - and so there was no war to protest against. The peace movement mostly doesn't understand that.