

Gene Sharp

Gene Sharp	
Born	January 28, 1928 Ohio ^[1]
Residence	East Boston, Massachusetts ^[1]
Citizenship	USA
Fields	political science, civil resistance, nonviolent revolution
Institutions	University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Harvard University, Albert Einstein Institution
Alma mater	Ohio State University, Oxford University
Influences	Mohandas K. Gandhi, Henry David Thoreau, others

Gene Sharp (born January 21, 1928) is Professor Emeritus of political science at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.^[2] He is known for his extensive writings on nonviolent struggle, which have influenced numerous anti-government resistance movements around the world.

Biography

Sharp was born in Ohio,^[1] the son of an itinerant Protestant minister.^[3] He received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences in 1949 from Ohio State University, where he also received his Master of Arts in Sociology in 1951.^[4] In 1953-54, Sharp was jailed for nine months after protesting the conscription of soldiers for the Korean War.^[1] In 1968, he received a Doctor of Philosophy in political theory from Oxford University.^[4]

Sharp has been a professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth since 1972. He simultaneously held research appointments at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs since 1965.^[1] In 1983 he founded the Albert Einstein Institution, a non-profit organization devoted to studies and promotion of the use of nonviolent action in conflicts worldwide.^[5]

Sharp's contributions to the theory of nonviolent resistance

Gene Sharp described the sources of his ideas as in-depth studies of Mohandas K. Gandhi, Henry David Thoreau to a minor degree, and other sources footnoted in his 1973 book *"The Politics of Nonviolent Action"*, which was based on his 1968 PhD thesis.^[6] In the book, a "three-volume classic on civil disobedience,"^[7] he provides a pragmatic political analysis of nonviolent action as a method for applying power in a conflict.

Sharp's key theme is that power is not monolithic; that is, it does not derive from some intrinsic quality of those who are in power. For Sharp, political power, the power of any state - regardless of its particular structural organization - ultimately derives from the subjects of the state. His fundamental belief is that any power structure relies upon the subjects' obedience to the orders of the ruler(s). If subjects do not obey, leaders have no power.

In Sharp's view all effective power structures have systems by which they encourage or extract obedience from their subjects. States have particularly complex systems for keeping subjects obedient. These systems include specific institutions (police, courts, regulatory bodies) but may also involve cultural dimensions that inspire obedience by implying that power *is* monolithic (the god cult of the Egyptian pharaohs, the dignity of the office of the President, moral or ethical norms and taboos). Through these systems, subjects are presented with a system of sanctions (imprisonment, fines, ostracism) and rewards (titles, wealth, fame) which influence the extent of their obedience.

Sharp identifies this hidden structure as providing a window of opportunity for a population to cause significant change in a state. Sharp cites the insight of Étienne de La Boétie, that if the subjects of a particular state recognize

that they are the source of the state's power they can refuse their obedience and their leader(s) will be left without power.

Sharp published *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* in 2005. It builds on his earlier written works by documenting case studies where nonviolent action has been applied, and the lessons learned from those applications, and contains information on planning nonviolent struggle to make it more effective.

For his lifelong commitment to the defense of freedom, democracy, and the reduction of political violence through scholarly analysis of the power of nonviolent action, The Peace Abbey of Sherborn, MA awarded him the Courage of Conscience award April 4, 2008.^[8]

A feature documentary by Scottish director, Ruaridh Arrow, "How to Start a Revolution" about the global influence of Gene Sharp's work was released in September 2011. The film won "Best Documentary" and "The Mass Impact Award" at the Boston Film Festival in September 2011.^[9] The European premiere was held at London's Raindance Film Festival on October 2nd 2011 where it also won Best Documentary.^[10]

Sharp's influence on struggles worldwide

Sharp has been called both the "Machiavelli of nonviolence" and the "Clausewitz of nonviolent warfare."^[11] It is claimed by some that Sharp's scholarship has influenced resistance organizations around the world. Most recently, it is claimed that the protest movement that toppled President Mubarak of Egypt drew extensively on his ideas, as well as the youth movement in Tunisia and the earlier ones in the Eastern European color revolutions that had previously been inspired by Sharp's work, although some have claimed Sharp's influence has been exaggerated by Westerners looking for a Lawrence of Arabia figure.^{[12] [13]}

Sharp's handbook *From Dictatorship to Democracy*^[14] served as a basis for the campaigns of Serbia's Otpor (who were also directly trained by the Albert Einstein Institute), Georgia's Kmara, Ukraine's Pora, Kyrgyzstan's KelKel and Belarus' Zubr. Pora's Oleh Kyriyenko said in a 2004 interview with Radio Netherlands,

"The bible of Pora has been the book of Gene Sharp, also used by Otpor, it's called: From Dictatorship to Democracy. Pora activists have translated it by themselves. We have written to Mr Sharp and to the Albert Einstein Institute in the United States, and he became very sympathetic towards our initiative, and the Institution provided funding to print over 12,000 copies of this book for free."^[15]

Sharp's writings on "Civilian-Based Defense"^[16] were used by the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian governments during their separation from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Iranian government charged protesters against alleged fraud in the 2009 elections with following Gene Sharp's tactics. The Tehran Times reported: "According to the indictment, a number of the accused confessed that the post-election unrest was preplanned and the plan was following the timetable of the velvet revolution to the extent that over 100 stages of the 198 steps of Gene Sharp were implemented in the foiled velvet revolution."^[17]

This coverage produced a backlash from some Egyptians bloggers including US based journalist Hossam el-Hamalawy:

"Not only was Mubarak's foreign policy hated and despised by the Egyptian people, but parallels were always drawn between the situation of the Egyptian people and their Palestinian brothers and sisters. The latter have been the major source of inspiration, not Gene Sharp, whose name I first heard in my life only in February after we toppled Mubarak already and whom the clueless NYT moronically gives credit for our uprising."^[18]

However the Associated Press had reported as early as September 2010 more than 4 months before the revolution that Gene Sharp's work was being used by activists in Egypt close to political leader Mohammed El Baradei. <http://www.cnsnews.com/node/75374> The New York Times along with several other international publications reported that Sharp's book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy* was available for download from The Muslim Brotherhood's website throughout the revolution.

Works

- *Sharp's Dictionary of Power and Struggle*. Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0199829880
- *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* with Joshua Paulson, Extending Horizons Books, 2005. ISBN 978-0875581620
- *From dictatorship to democracy: A conceptual framework for liberation* ^[19] The Albert Einstein Institution, 2003. ISBN 978-1880813096
- *Gandhi as a Political Strategist, with Essays on Ethics and Politics*. Indian edition with a new Introduction by Dr. Federico Mayor. Original Introduction by Coretta Scott King, New Delhi: Gandhi Media Centre, 1999. (See 1979 edition below.)
- *Nonviolent Action: A Research Guide*, with Ronald McCarthy, New York: Garland Publishers, 1997.
- *Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System*, with the assistance of Bruce Jenkins, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 978-0691078090
- *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775*, Co-editors Walter Conser, Jr., Ronald M. McCarthy, and David J. Toscano, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1986.
- *Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-based Deterrence and Defense* (see article), London: Taylor & Francis, 1985. ISBN 978-0850663365 Second Edition with a Foreword by George F. Kennan. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1986.
- *National Security Through Civilian-based Defense*, Omaha: Association for Transarmament Studies, 1985. ISBN 978-0961425609
- *Social Power and Political Freedom*, Introduction by Senator Mark O. Hatfield. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1980. ISBN 978-0875580913
- *Gandhi as a Political Strategist, with Essays on Ethics and Politics*, Introduction by Coretta Scott King. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1979. ISBN 978-0875580920
- *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Introduction by Thomas C. Schelling. Prepared under the auspices of Harvard University's Center for International Affairs. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973. ISBN 978-0875580685
 - I, Power and Struggle. 114 pp., June 1973. ISBN 978-0875580708
 - II, The Methods of Nonviolent Action. 348 pp., June 1973. ISBN 978-0875580715
 - III, Dynamics of Nonviolent Action. 466 pp. Boston: Porter Sargent, November 1985. ISBN 978-0875580722
- *Exploring Nonviolent Alternatives*, Introduction by David Riesman. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1970.
- *Civilian Defense: An Introduction*, co-editors Adam Roberts and T.K. Mahadevan. Introductory statement by President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967.
- *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power: Three Case Histories*, Foreword by Albert Einstein. Introduction by Bharatan Kumarappa. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960.

References

- [1] Ruaridh, Arrow (21 February 2011). "Gene Sharp: Author of the nonviolent revolution rulebook" (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12522848>). BBC. . Retrieved 22 February 2011.
- [2] "Gene Sharp: Author of the nonviolent revolution rulebook" (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12522848>). *BBC News*. February 21, 2011. .
- [3] Philip Shishkin (2008, Sep. 13), "American Revolutionary: Quiet Boston Scholar Inspires Rebels Around the World" (http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122127204268531319.html?mod=todays_us_nonsub_page_one). *Wall Street Journal*, p. A1.
- [4] "GENE SHARP A Biographical Profile" (<http://www.peace.ca/genesharp.htm>). Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace. . Retrieved 22 February 2011.
- [5] Gene Sharp biography at Albert Einstein Institution web site. (<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations9173.html>)
- [6] Sharp, Gene (2007-06-12). "Corrections - an open letter from Gene Sharp" (<http://www.voltairenet.org/article30032.html>). Voltaire Network. Archived (<http://www.webcitation.org/5tQiUZymd>) from the original on 2010-10-12. . Retrieved 2010-10-12.
- [7] Walker, Jesse (May 1, 2010). "Protect & Serve" (<http://www.amconmag.com/article/2010/may/01/00035/>). *The American Conservative*. .

- [8] The Peace Abbey Courage of Conscience Recipients List (<http://www.peaceabbey.org/awards/cocrecipientlist.html>)
- [9] 2011 Boston Film Festival (schedule) (<http://www.bostonfilmfestival.org/schedule.shtml>) (accessed 8 Sep 2011)
- [10] (<http://www.raindance.co.uk/site/index.php?id=543,7826,0,0,1,0>) (accessed 8 Sep 2011)
- [11] Weber, Thomas (2004). *Gandhi as Disciple and Mentor* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=P8nC80pG4GIC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Gandhi+as+disciple+and+mentor+weber#v=onepage&q&f=false>). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 232. ISBN 9780521842303. .
- [12] KIRKPATRICK, DAVID and SANGER, DAVID (2011-02-13). "A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/world/middleeast/14egypt-tunisia-protests.html?hp=&adxn1=1&adxn1x=1297656097-vGFYS7755whguQSAOstIA>). New York Times. pp. 1. . Retrieved 2011-02-13.
- [13] Walker, Jesse (2011-02-25) Teaching People Power (<http://reason.com/archives/2011/02/25/teaching-people-power/singlepage>), *Reason*
- [14] <http://aeinstein.org/organizations98ce.html>
- [15] "Radio Netherlands" (<http://www.radionetherlands.nl/currentaffairs/region/easterneurope/ukr041125>). 2011-02-13. . Retrieved 2011-02-13.
- [16] [See, for example, <http://aeinstein.org/organizationsd7c2.html> Sharp, Gene] *Civilian-based Defense*
- [17] [Tehran Times, August 2, 2009, http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=200033]
- [18] "Nabil Fahmy: 'This revolution actually serves Israel as well'" (<http://www.arabawy.org/2011/04/17/fm-nabil-fahmy-this-revolution-actually-serves-israel-as-well/>). 2011-04-17. . Retrieved 2011-04-28.
- [19] <http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations/org/FDTD.pdf>

External links

- The Albert Einstein Institution's web site (<http://www.aeinstein.org>) offers many of Gene Sharp works for download, in English (<http://aeinstein.org/organizations90b2.html>) and in over sixty translations (<http://aeinstein.org/organizations5e7c.html>).
 - 198 Methods of Nonviolent Action (<http://aeinstein.org/organizations103a.html>)
- Seven Downloadable Online Books by Gene Sharp ([http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Sharp, Gene](http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Sharp,%20Gene)) at the Online Books Page
- Works by or about Gene Sharp (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-132155>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
- Gene Sharp: A Biographical Profile (<http://www.peace.ca/genesharp.htm>) at Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace
- Interview: Gene Sharp (<http://www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/interview/>), Noreen Shanahan, *The New Internationalist*, November 5, 1997
- Teaching People Power (<http://reason.com/archives/2011/02/25/teaching-people-power/singlepage>), interview with *Reason* magazine (Feb. 25, 2011)
- U.S. Advice Guided Milosevic Opposition (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A18395-2000Dec3?language=printer>), Michael Dobbs, *Washington Post*, December 11, 2000
- Gene Sharp 101 (<http://www.peacemagazine.org/archive/v19n3p16.htm>), Metta Spencer, *Peace Magazine*, July-Sept 2003
- Ukraine: The Resistance Will Not Stop (<http://www.radionetherlands.nl/currentaffairs/region/easterneurope/ukr041125>), Margreet Strijbosch, *Radio Netherlands*, November 25, 2004
- The dictator slayer (<http://thephoenix.com/boston/news/52417-dictator-slayer/>), Adam Reilly, *The Boston Phoenix*, December 5, 2007
- American Revolutionary: Quiet Boston Scholar Inspires Rebels Around the World (http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122127204268531319.html?mod=todays_us_nonsub_page_one), Philip Shishkin, *Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 2008; Page A1.
- Revolution of the mind (http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2009/12/20/iran_dissidents_draw_ideas_from_us_visionaries/), Farah Stockman, *Boston Globe*, December 20, 2009
- Shy U.S. Intellectual Created Playbook Used in a Revolution (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/17/world/middleeast/17sharp.html>), Sheryl Gay Stolberg, *The New York Times*, February 16, 2011

-
- Gene Sharp: Author of the nonviolent revolution rulebook (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12522848>), Ruaridh Arrow (director of "Gene Sharp - How to Start a Revolution" film), *BBC News*, February 21, 2011
 - Gene Sharp on Non-Violent Revolution (<http://www.cbc.ca/asithappens/features/2011/02/23/gene-sharp-on-non-violent-revolution/>), *As It Happens*, February 23, 2011
-

Article Sources and Contributors

Gene Sharp *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=460878410> *Contributors:* 87v7U76fc4iguwevf7657436253yd4fug754ws67dtfugiy67i8576, Aberwulf, AgarwalSumeet, Alro, Amakuha, Anatoly Makarovsky, Angela, Angr, Arthuredelstein, Attilios, Auntof6, Babbage, BanyanTree, Bolivian Unicyclist, Boud, Carolmooredc, Cgingold, Crusoe8181, D6, Detruncate, Dirtbiscuit, Eastlaw, Emersoni, FT2, Flatterworld, Fourhofour, Gaius Cornelius, Ghaly, Hodgson-Burnett's Secret Garden, Hu, Hyacinth, Jeixav, Jerry, JmCor, Julian Morrison, KConWiki, Kalki101, Katsam, Longsun, LoopZilla, Maximus Rex, Mdy66, Mgelap6, MickPurcell, Mischimichi, Mzajac, Never29, Nicky Scarfo, Nirvana2013, Originalexplorer, Otto ter Haar, Piperh, Presearch, Prof75, Rbrwr, Relaxing, Reneeneuwatkins, Riurik, S5100e1300, ScottDavis, Sesel, Silvonen, Skoosh, Solar, Sp783, Stephegeis, Synergyawp, Szopen, The wub, WeijiBaikBianji, Whkoh, Wikimische, Writtenright, Zeidan87, Zenomax, Иванов Михаил Геннальевич, 67 anonymous edits

License

Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported
[//creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)