

PART FOUR

SHAPING THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Knowledge of the past practice of nonviolent struggle and understanding of the processes that have operated in those cases are highly important. They help us to understand what has happened in the past and to think about what may well happen in the future.

However, this knowledge and understanding do not tell us what, if anything, we might do if we wish to make this type of struggle more effective in the future than it has been in the past. Considering the gravity of present conflicts in various parts of the world, and also projection about possible future forms of oppression, domination, and exploitation, it is highly desirable that people who choose to oppose these systems have at their disposal new information about how they can apply this technique still more effectively than it has been applied in the past.

One of the most important skills that will greatly contribute to making this technique more effective in the future is the ability to plan strategies for waging this technique of struggle in a variety of conflict situations.

Of course, the types of conflict situations and the nature of grievances will vary widely. Agricultural exploitation, foreign military occupation, an attempted coup d'état, ethnic conflicts, racial segregation, religious discrimination, and an established internal extreme dictatorship are all different types of conflicts. Fur-

thermore, even within any one of these categories, the individual conflicts will never be identical.

However, the one capacity that could greatly increase the effectiveness of future attempts to apply this technique is the capacity to plan strategies to guide the conduct of the struggle and to apply these new strategies skillfully.

In Chapter Thirty-five, we shall argue that this technique can be made more effective in the future than it has been in the past. This chapter gives an introduction to strategic planning and identifies some factors influencing the success of nonviolent struggle.

In Chapter Thirty-six, we shall introduce the importance of accurately assessing the conflict situation, then offer some tools on how to do so. We introduce the main categories of strategic thinking, ranging from grand strategy to individual methods. The chapter concludes with an examination of the development of a strategic plan before the struggle begins.

Chapter Thirty-seven offers some guidance on how to face various issues that are likely to arise during the course of a struggle, including determination of the objectives, the strengthening of the resisters, the role of leadership, undermining the sources of the opponents' power, and methods of conducting the struggle as the conflict unfolds, such as persistence in the face of repression.

Chapter Thirty-eight focuses on key elements during the struggle, among them preparations of the population for struggle, maintaining the momentum, monitoring the conflict, and bringing the conflict to an end.

The final chapter, Thirty-nine, introduces the potential application of this technique in place of violence in several acute problem areas. These include the dismantling of dictatorships, providing national defense, lifting oppression of rejected groups, the lifting of social and economic injustices, extending democratic practices and human rights, preventing dictatorships, and blocking genocide. These discussions are necessarily only introductory, but are topics on which much further attention is required as we enter a new phase in the historical development and practice of this alternative to both passivity and violence.