

Facing Dictatorships With Confidence

The seriousness of the problem of dictatorships, the dangers they pose, and the need for effective means to deal with them have all increased since the First World War. Ordinary dictatorships - brutal though they have been for thousands of years - were superseded by the Hitler and Stalin regimes. With these developments totalitarianism became a far more formidable opponent. These totalitarian rulers attempted to engulf and control the whole life of each subject and every aspect of the society. The degree of control over individuals, transportation, communications, weapons, and entire social, economic, and political systems, increased dramatically over traditional dictatorships. Power became concentrated. Adolph Hitler

and Josef Stalin are now dead, the Nazi system is only a relic for historians, and the Soviet system is evolving. Nevertheless, the problem which dictatorships pose to people who believe in human dignity and freedom continues to grow.

The willingness of governments and political groups aiming to seize the State to deal ruthlessly with opposition and innocent people has not diminished. It may in fact have increased. Too often it is assumed that genocide was safely buried in 1945 under the rubble of Berlin. Various doctrines and ideologies, and fear of others, have provided political groups and regimes with a rationale and "justification" for policies and actions which otherwise would be seen as naked brutality. Recent technological advances in communication, transportation, data storage and retrieval, political organization, electronic surveillance, subliminal controls of populations, and the capacity to kill, have increased the capability of modern governments to establish and maintain effective dictatorships.

DANGERS OF NEW DICTATORSHIPS

Present liberal constitutional democracies are all imperfect, but remain clearly preferable to dictatorial regimes which are expanding in number. Yet severe problems within such democracies cast doubt on their durability. Internal imperfections, highly centralized controls, and decision-making "by small elites often raise doubts about the vitality and effectiveness of democratic processes. This is true even in the countries which pride themselves in their democratic traditions and institutions. Many people feel powerless and unable to control their own lives and influence major political decisions. Direct attacks in a variety of forms continue to be made on democratic structures. The United States is not exempt; "Watergate" was an attempt to subvert the American constitutional processes of free elections. In various countries internal coups d'etat by political and military groups, activities of police and foreign agents, political terrorism, and minority guerrilla wars continue to assault democratic systems, with the intent of replacing them with dictatorships. The groups using these means espouse diverse doctrines and wave various political flags. The growth in various countries and systems of powerful intelligence organizations, institutions of foreign agents, and central

government police bodies creates the potential of those bodies, or some section of them, to defy and to attack the legal government, instead of serving its will.* Military forces have done this repeatedly in dozens of countries as they have launched coups d'etat.

The underlying social conditions on which democratic structures rest have also changed. Social, economic, and political systems of all types have altered drastically since the advent of constitutional democracy in every country in which it has had a long history. The "grass roots" institutions of society, and even local and state or provincial governments, are increasingly subordinated to centralized administration. Powerful multinational corporations are taking control of the national economies outside of the countries themselves, and are using that control to manipulate governments in order to serve their own financial interests. All these conditions are inimical to freedom.

In the future, the tyrant will be able to use more subtle, yet no less diabolical, means of control through such methods as conditioning, psychological manipulation, and drugs provided by modern science to keep the subjects submissive and "happy." Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* may not be far away; dictatorships using such psychological means may supersede totalitarianism. Other signs of future dangers also exist. The expanding breakdown and even active destruction of traditional societies and indigenous cultures in those parts of the world emerging from European colonialism are creating the condition of *anomie*, psychological, ethical, and personal confusion, and social disintegration. This condition, especially when combined with deep genuine grievances, nurtures various kinds of mass movements - social, religious, and political. They can presage a new political messiah or doctrine of salvation which leads directly to political enslavement.

If effective means are not soon found to destroy dictatorships, and to alter the conditions which make them possible, the task of preventing and resisting them will rapidly become yet more difficult. The future may thus be one in which the word "freedom" will have no meaning, or will be only the remnant of a forgotten dream.

Many cultures and countries have their own traditions of love of freedom and opposition to all tyranny, even though the practice does

* On the capacity of such bodies to be shifted to different purposes, see Chapter Eleven, "The Societal Imperative,"

not always live up to the ideal. Opposition to political dictatorship was a basic American principle well before the adoption of the Constitution. The creation of new political structures on this continent, the colonial struggles against perceived tyranny, and the drafting of the basic frameworks for new governments were all motivated by belief in human freedom, whatever additional motives may have been present. The colonial fathers believed in a moral and political imperative to oppose existing dictatorships and to prevent the establishment of new tyrannies. (they were simultaneously, of course, often blind to their own imposition of tyrannical conditions on the Native Americans from whom they seized the land, and the Africans whom they enslaved, as well as the oppression of their own women.)

Since the time that the European settlers gained independence, American government policies and foreign alliances have not always followed that commitment to freedom and opposition to tyranny. However, the belief has remained fundamental for many Americans. The compromises that were made in practical policies were often perceived as necessary in face of a larger dictatorial threat. The First World War was fought, it was said, "to make the world safe for democracy." The Second World War was waged, most people were convinced, to defeat three dictatorial expansionist regimes, liberate conquered peoples, and, specifically, defeat the Nazi system - one of the most extreme forms of dictatorship yet known. The Cold War has been officially aimed at halting the expansion of Communist forms of dictatorship. Even the most interventionist United States activities in recent decades have been excused by their advocates as required to combat still more serious dictatorial threats. Although critics may at times, with justification, point to other motives, we still must confront the real dangers to freedom posed by all types of dictatorships.

INADEQUACIES OF THE TRADITIONAL ANSWERS

No easy answer to the problem of dictatorship exists. There are no effortless, safe ways by which people living under dictatorships can liberate themselves, or by which other people can defend themselves from future dangers. Nor do we have a simple way by which we can prevent the development of new tyrannies. Passivity in the face of such threats is clearly no guarantee of safety. In fact it is often

the opposite. In any case, passivity is neither an effective nor a democratic response to this challenge. Every possible course of action in support of liberation and in defense of freedom will involve risks, and potential suffering, and take time to operate. Nor can any means of action ensure success in every situation.

How, then, are we to deal with dictatorships? The spontaneous answer most people who believe in freedom give is that you must fight and destroy them. If your country is the victim of a dictatorial regime, native or foreign, you fight against it. If your country is attacked by a dictatorial State, you resist that attack. If the subjects of a tyrant are in rebellion, you provide help. If a chance exists that your country might be attacked by a dictatorship, you prepare in advance to repel it, hoping that if you become strong enough you will deter attack. These are the common answers of most people who believe in freedom and oppose tyranny throughout the world. While these broad answers may in principle still be as valid as ever, the changes in military technology and political organization now make it necessary - whatever was true before - to implement them in quite different ways than were usual in previous times.

To enable us to confront the dangers of dictatorships, we have created massive military systems with hitherto unthinkable destructive capacities. We have organized ourselves to conduct many of the same antidemocratic activities against dictatorial forces as they themselves have done. We have supported one dictatorial group against another. And we have lamented the erosions of freedoms and democratic processes in other countries and in our own.

Despite these measures, few signs exist that the antidemocratic trends of this century are being slowed, let alone being contained or reversed. In fact, our policies may even have facilitated consolidation of old dictatorships and the emergence of new ones. The problem is not how to achieve "peaceful coexistence" with extreme dictatorships. The problem is how to reassert popular control over them, even over totalitarian systems: how to defeat and disintegrate them.

Ironically, at the very moment in history when the greatest need exists for effective means of struggle against tyranny, the traditional means of last resort in international conflicts - war - has, because of modern technology, become a highly dangerous option. Yet, if effective alternative ways are not found to replace war in such conflicts, people will persist in threatening and using war despite its

dangers.* Similarly, very serious internal dangers also exist in attempts to revolt against domestic dictatorships. These are related to the concentration and destructiveness of military weaponry, the extreme costliness of civil wars generally, and guerrilla wars particularly, in casualties and social destruction, and the structural consequences of such violence.[†] Past means have often been inadequate even when they destroyed a specific dictatorship, for they allowed others to continue, facilitated their growth, or contributed to the development of new ones. The inadequacies of present means for dealing with dictatorships are so serious that we ought to consider how to develop alternative means. We require new policies, courses of action and conceptions of liberation and defense in order to face the dangers of modern dictatorships and to deal with them. The view that one must choose between massively destructive war and passive submission to tyranny is false.

Our past understanding of the nature of the problem of modern dictatorships, totalitarian movements, genocide, and political usurpation has been inadequate. Similarly, our understanding of the possible means of struggle against them, and of preventing their development has been incomplete. With inadequate understanding as the foundation of our policies, it is no wonder that they have proven ineffective.

Other options must, of course, be evaluated fairly. For example, in weighing alternative policies it is important to compare the worst possible results of each, as well as the best, and not (as happens) simply the best of one with the worst of the other. Also, one must consider not only the odds for or against certain results of optional policies occurring; attention is also required to the nature of those results, including possible corrective and remedial measures to counteract them. Inadequacies in present policies and in proposed new policies will need full examination, as will claims of strengths and effectiveness of each. By using such means of comparison, a fair evaluation becomes possible.

* See Chapter Ten, "Seeking a Solution to the Problem of War."

[†] See Chapter Twelve, "Popular Empowerment," subchapter: Sanctions and Society.

LESS THAN OMNIPOTENT

Our capacity to discover and to develop new ways of preventing dictatorships in the first place, and of destroying them once they exist, may be increased if we can locate characteristics of such systems which already constitute problems for the dictators, hindering their efforts to hold their systems together, or hindering implementation of their will. Remarkably, while great attention has been given to the means of police repression and to the military capacities of dictatorships, almost no attention has been given to their weaknesses. Indeed, we have constantly given dictatorial regimes credit for being far more efficient, effective, powerful, and durable than in fact they are. All dictatorships, including totalitarian ones, contain inherent weaknesses which, over time, even without deliberate efforts to aggravate them, tend to make the system less effective and less dictatorial. In some cases these weaknesses could cause the dictatorship to disintegrate.

Dictatorships, even totalitarian systems, are not fully monolithic, and certainly not omnipotent or eternal. It is really nothing completely new to say that dictatorships do not always accomplish their objectives. David Riesman and Karl W. Deutsch both pointed to this fact in the 1950s.

In 1952 David Riesman wrote that we often overestimate the capacity of totalitarians "to restructure human personality."! While people under pressures may play certain roles and often conform outwardly, they also may be apathetic and even indifferent to ideological appeals and indoctrination. They may reject the dictator's "ethics" which all are supposed to accept. People may retreat from politics - the process of "privatization." Instead of being determined by the doctrines and programs of the system, people's behavior may be motivated by their greed. Corruption and even crime may become widespread. People may deliberately behave with excessive enthusiasm to support edicts of the system in order to disrupt it, as by accusing everyone in the Party of deviationism. Power conflicts may emerge within the regime or Party.² Such responses involve, Riesman wrote, "sheer unheroic cussed resistance to totalitarian efforts" to remake human beings into the new image.³ Not even the terror can completely "destroy all bonds of organization among its victims."⁴ These limitations on the effectiveness of controls affect those systems

detrimentally, he wrote. However, our own absence of realism in understanding those limitations affects us also, for it leads us to "be unduly cowed or unduly aggressive"⁵ Instead, we ought to "seek ways to bring those regimes down without war"⁶

We have assumed in the past that dictatorships, especially in their extreme forms, differ from other systems of government more than they actually do. Contrary to popular opinion, a totalitarian ruler is, in common with all rulers, dependent on his subjects. All rulers depend upon the cooperation, submission, and obedience of the subjects for their positions and power. Their power is drawn from sources in society, such as economic resources, military capacity, knowledge, skills, administration, and authority. These in turn are each closely related to, or directly dependent upon, the degree of cooperation, submission, obedience, and assistance which the would-be ruler is able to obtain from his subjects - both from the general corps of full-time agents and aides and from the population as a whole. This submission may be induced by the use of terror, but the underlying dependence of the ruler on the subjects is nevertheless present. If the help and submission of either or both of these groups is withdrawn, the ruler's power is seriously weakened. If the withdrawal can be maintained in face of various sanctions, an end to the regime is in sight.⁷ This principle applies even to totalitarian rulers. This dependency may have considerable significance in the eventual solution of our problem.

Most people assume that this view is nonsense. They believe that with sufficient threats, intimidation, punishment, brutality, killings, and terror, the dictator can enforce his will upon any population without their having any choice or chance to change the situation. That view of enforced obedience and cooperation induced by repressive measures is very incomplete. It implies that this is always a one-way relationship. While on the surface that appears at times to be the case, the reality is fundamentally different. In special situations the regime in fact becomes incapable of enforcing its will. This may occur because too many people are defying it simultaneously, because its administrators are refusing to help, or because its agents of repression are not obeying orders to inflict the punishments. In some cases, these may all happen simultaneously.

In 1953 Karl W. Deutsch applied this view of the interdependency of enforcement and obedience to totalitarian systems. The passage is highly important:

The ... enforcement of decisions [by totalitarian government] depends to a large extent on the compliance habits of the population. Compliance and enforcement are interdependent; they reinforce each other, and the varying proportions in which they do so, form as it were a continuous spectrum. At one end of this spectrum, we could imagine a situation where everybody obeys habitually all commands or decisions of the totalitarian regime, and no enforcement is necessary; at the other end of this spectrum, we could imagine a situation where nobody obeys voluntarily any decision of the totalitarian system, and everybody has to be compelled to obey at pistol point, or under conditions of literally ever-present threat and ever-present supervision.

In the first of these cases, enforcement would be extremely cheap and, in fact, unnecessary; in the second, it would be prohibitively expensive, and in fact no government could be carried on, on such a basis Somewhere in the middle between these extremes of universal compliance and ubiquitous enforcement is the range of effective government. There a majority of individuals in a majority of situations obeys the decisions of the government more or less from habit without any need for immediate supervision.⁸

These considerations apply to totalitarianism as they apply to all types of government, but in their application to totalitarianism they again suggest a paradox. Totalitarian power is strong only if it does not have to be used too often. If totalitarian power must be used at all times against the entire population, it is unlikely to remain powerful for long. Since totalitarian regimes require more power for dealing with their subjects than do other types of government, such regimes stand in greater need of widespread and dependable compliance habits among their people; more than that they need to be able to count on the active support of at least significant parts of the population in case of need.⁹

Severe problems exist in transforming this general insight into deliberate concrete resistance actions to undermine and destroy the totalitarian system. It is not easy, for example, to maintain the withdrawal of support in the face of severe repression from still faithful police and troops. As present policies for dealing with dictatorships also have their own problems, the existence of difficulties in possible options is no reason to halt exploration of their potential for dealing with modern dictatorships.

WEAKNESSES IN EXTREME DICTATORSHIPS

On the basis of what we know of the Nazi and Communist systems, and certain lesser dictatorships, it is possible to indicate various specific weaknesses in them. These are factors which will in time, even without deliberate efforts to aggravate them, produce changes which in differing degrees will modify the capacities and characteristics of the dictatorship. For example, these weaknesses may produce the following results:

- restrict the freedom of action of the regime;
- induce the regime to be more considerate of the needs and wishes of the population;
- reduce the brutality and repression;
- contribute to the regime's becoming less doctrinal in its own actions;
- reduce the degree to which the regime is in effective control of the society;
- destroy the myth of the regime's omniscience;
- at the mildest, cause the system to become somewhat "liberalized" or even democratized; and
- at the extremity, cause the system to disintegrate.

The following are some of the weaknesses of extreme dictatorships, including totalitarian systems:

1. The cooperation of a multitude of different people and groups which is needed to operate the system may be restricted or withdrawn.
2. The regime's freedom of action may be limited by past policies, the requirements and effects of which still continue.
3. The system may become routine in its operation, therefore more moderate and less able to shift its activities drastically at the service of doctrinal imperatives and sudden policy shifts.
4. The allocation of personnel and resources for existing tasks will limit their availability for new ones.
5. The central command may receive from the lower echelons inaccurate or incomplete information on which to make decisions, for subordinates may be fearful of inducing displeasure from higher echelons.
6. The ideology may erode, and the myths and symbols of the system become unstable.

7. Firm adherence to the ideology may lead to decisions injurious to the system because insufficient attention is given to actual conditions and needs.
8. The system may be inefficient due to deteriorating competency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy, or to excessive controls and red tape; consequently, the system's policies and normal operations may become ineffective.
9. The system's internal conflicts of various types may detrimentally affect and even disrupt its operation.
10. Intellectuals and students may become restless in response to conditions, restrictions, doctrinalism, and repression.
11. The general public may over time become apathetic or skeptical.
12. Regional, class, cultural, or national differences may become acute.
13. The power hierarchy will always be to some degree unstable, at times highly so.
14. Sections of the political police or the military forces may possess sufficient power to exert pressures to achieve their own ends, or even to act against the established rulers.
15. In the case of a new dictatorship, time is required for it to become firmly established, which allows an especially vulnerable period.
16. The extreme concentration of decision-making and command means that too many decisions will be made by too few people to avoid errors.
17. If the regime, in order to avoid some of these problems, decides to diffuse decision-making and administration, this will lead to further erosion of central controls, and often to the creation of dispersed new power centers which may seek to expand their power at the cost of the center.

Such weaknesses of extreme dictatorships do not, of course, mean that disintegration occurs quickly, or even at all, regardless of other factors at play in the situation. Dictatorial systems are often aware of at least some of their weaknesses, and take measures to counteract them. Also, under appropriate circumstances even very inefficient and incompetent regimes often manage to survive for remarkably long periods of time, and people may, as Riesman said, "mistake blundering compulsions or even accidents of 'the system' for conspiratorial genius."¹⁰

It should be possible, however, to learn much more than we now know about dictatorships and about alternative forms of opposition and resistance to them. With this knowledge, people living under

dictatorships might be able to aggravate deliberately such inherent weaknesses in order to alter the system drastically or to disintegrate it. In such efforts, the interdependence of enforcement and patterns of obedience is especially important. Nonviolent forms of struggle are premised on the capacity of the populace to withhold its obedience and cooperation. This withholding makes it possible for the required sources of power of the dictatorship to be restricted or severed.

UNPREPARED RESISTANCE TO TYRANNY

Severe problems would be involved in such disobedience and noncooperation struggles against extreme dictatorships. We must remember that we do not have available an option without difficulties and dangers. The problems of this type of struggle need to be viewed in the perspective of the present limitations of the various types of political violence for resisting and destroying dictatorships. Serious exploration of the future potential of disobedience and noncooperation for aggravating weaknesses of dictatorships in order to control and destroy them needs to begin on the basis of an understanding of dictatorships, of the nature of nonviolent struggle, and of the history of the previous nonviolent struggles against dictatorships. Though still insufficient, all of these are necessary for a beginning. Instances of nonviolent action against lesser oppression are therefore relevant: one cannot understand how a major nonviolent struggle operating against a totalitarian system could be conducted, or what would be all of its problems, weaknesses, and strengths, without first studying its application against lesser obstacles. The general history of this technique is therefore relevant. Considerable understanding of the range of particular methods, strategic principles, basic requirements for effectiveness, and the dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent action is necessary background for this exploration.* Without this, it is impossible to appreciate adequately

* See the introductory discussions of some of these aspects in Chapter Nine, •• "The Political Equivalent of War" - Civilian-based Defense," subchapter: Control of Political Power and Conduct of Open Struggle, and Chapter Ten, "Seeking a Solution to the Problem of War." However, more in depth understanding is required. For this, see Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1973).

the general characteristics and capacities of this technique. These include:

- how nonviolent action wields power and counteracts the power of the opponent;
- how use of this technique breaks the spell of conformity and fear;
- the roles of symbolic and psychological resistance;
- the many ways in which economic and political noncooperation wield and affect power;
- the necessity of maintaining nonviolent discipline in order to apply political jiu-jitsu to counter violent repression and to use it to aid the resisters;
- the constantly changing strengths of the contending parties during a nonviolent struggle;
- the ways in which the struggle can continue after any recognizable leadership has been seized;
- the processes by which additional support can be aroused during the conflict from members of the general populace, the opponent's own camp, and third parties; and
- the mechanisms of change which may bring success (the operative mechanism is rarely conversion, more often accommodation, sometimes nonviolent coercion, and even disintegration of the opponent's regime).

In a number of important cases, nonviolent struggle has been applied against totalitarian systems, either alone or in combination with political violence. While no totalitarian system has been permanently overthrown by nonviolent struggle, more such resistance has occurred than is generally recognized. These cases establish that nonviolent struggle against extreme dictatorships including totalitarian systems is possible. The degree of success and failure of these cases has varied, depending in part on one's criteria. In several instances this type of struggle presented formidable problems for the regime. Sometimes it forced concessions and won at least partial victories.

The following cases are among the more significant ones:

- the civil disobedience, political noncooperation, and rescue of Jews by the Norwegian Resistance during the Nazi occupation 1940-45;

- the political noncooperation, labor strikes, psychological resistance, rescue of Jews, and the Copenhagen general strike, 1944, by the Danish Resistance, 1940-45;
- the political noncooperation, mass circulation of underground newspapers, massive adoption of new identities, religious opposition, and major strikes of 1941, 1943, and 1944 by the Dutch Resistance, 1940-45;
- the protest marches, strikes, and sit-downs before tanks during the East German Revolt, June 1953;
- the strikes in the political prisoners' camps (especially at Vorkuta) in the Soviet Union in 1953;
- the street demonstrations, general strikes, political defiance, formation of workers' councils, and establishment of a federated council substitute national government during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956-57;¹¹
- the popular pressure and street demonstrations for political liberalization and on economic grievances in Poland in 1956 and 1970-71;
- the leafleting, public demonstrations, and sit-ins by Soviet civil rights activists and by Soviet Jews seeking permission to emigrate in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s;
- the refusal of collaboration, street demonstrations, resistance radio and television broadcasts, Government and Party defiance, student protests, and efforts to undermine the morale of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968-69 against the Soviet invasion and measures to reimpose a rigid Communist dictatorship.*

All of these cases occurred without advance preparations. They were waged by people who had little or no real understanding of the nonviolent technique, its dynamics and requirements, except perhaps that gained by extremely limited experience or hearsay. It is, therefore, reasonable to explore whether by using increased knowledge of this technique with (where possible) advance training and other preparations based upon deep knowledge of extreme dictatorships and their weaknesses, we might be able to aggravate those weaknesses seriously and increase the effectiveness of nonviolent struggle against totalitarian systems.

* For a brief survey, with references, of the Czech and Slovak resistance, see Chapter Nine, "The Political Equivalent of War" - Civilian-based Defense."

PROBLEMS OF RESISTANCE UNDER TOTALITARIANISM

A host of difficult problems arises as soon as one begins to think seriously about waging nonviolent struggle in a liberation movement against a totalitarian system. Since variations in circumstances will influence to a high degree the course of a struggle against the system, we will need to know the particular situation as well as possible in order to deal with those problems. These variations will be revealed by the answers to such questions as the following:

Is the totalitarian system newly formed or long established? Have the subjects ever had any type of experience or previous practice which would constitute advance training, or preparation for nonviolent struggle? Has informative, analytical, and instructional literature on nonviolent struggle been circulated and read, as by *zamizdat*?* To what degree have any independent groups and institutions not under State or Party control (loci of power) survived the system or been newly created? Is the totalitarian system of domestic or foreign origin, or in what combination? Was the regime originally established with foreign assistance, or is it now foreign supported? How did the system originally develop: was it initiated by a coup d'etat, guerrilla war, foreign invasion, gradual evolution, or in another way? To what degree are the present administrators bureaucrats, civil servants, police, and troops loyal to the system and satisfied in their present positions? Do any significant groups or institutions exist, such as labor, religious, cultural, and the like, which are presently or potentially opposed to the system? What are the attitudes of the general public to the system as a whole, to any specific grievances or positive points of support, and how do they see the future?

PROBLEMS OF STRUGGLE REQUIRING RESEARCH

In addition to the background understanding of the particular situation revealed by the above questions, we also need greater knowledge about the problems of nonviolent struggle against extreme

* The Russian term for illegally reproduced and circulated manuscripts and publications.

dictatorships and the options available to the resisters. Here, advance research, analysis, and strategic planning can provide helpful insights for later use in actual struggles. These are the kinds of questions we can research to aid advance planning:

1. In face of the system's control over communications and publication and dissemination of literature, how can one spread information and understanding about nonviolent struggle? What role may exist for illegal literature, foreign-based radio broadcasts, and "teaching by example" through small planned actions or by spontaneous ones?
2. In face of effective political police, how can one solve the problem of leadership for nonviolent struggle? What role is there for an underground movement, for individuals and small groups setting examples, for spontaneous "leaderless" actions, or for "anonymous" or radioed instructions?
3. In face of the political police, censorship, and other controls, how can one plan action and resistance, and spread knowledge of such plans and instructions among the people who are expected to carry them out? What role is there for "underground" communications, spontaneous actions, and consensus on the types of issues to be resisted?
4. How are the particular problems related to the dynamics of nonviolent action operating under extreme dictatorships to be solved? These problems may be associated, for example, with the absence of civil liberties, and lack of access to public means of communication. Other problems may be linked to the strong ideological basis for the systems; this suggests a lesser role for attempts to "convert" the leaders and believers, and a greater role for actions which mobilize increased support for resistance, or which restrict or sever the ruler's sources of power.
5. How can one destroy confidence in the Leader and the Party, and achieve widespread and deep dissatisfaction? How can one at appropriate stages turn such dissatisfaction into withdrawal of cooperation and defiance of the regime?
6. How can one best approach the problem of the totalitarian ideology? Is it most effective to question it, reinterpret it, criticize it, or repudiate it? To what extent does the official ideology give meaning and direction to the lives of individuals? Is it better to offer a clear rival ideology with a different outlook on life, or to refuse to do that, encouraging people to develop a variety of outlooks and philosophies as they find most desirable?

7. How, under those political circumstances, can opposition and resistance be most effectively organized and conducted: with considerable openness, as in Russian Jewish and civil rights cases in the 1960s and 1970s, or with secrecy, as in many cases of resistance to the Nazis? What are the real implications and consequences of both positions? This is more complex than it might first appear.
8. How can one determine the optimal strategy for resistance during a crisis and in advance of one? Are there advantages to a prior determination of the points and conditions at which resistance will be offered without specific instructions? Under what conditions should a strategy of total noncooperation be practiced? When should selective noncooperation at particularly important points and issues be applied instead?
9. In the early stages of extreme dictatorships moving toward totalitarianism, how can one prevent the "atomization" of the population and the destruction of the society's loci of power? In advanced stages of a totalitarian system when the destruction of independent institutions has gone very far, how can new groups and institutions outside of the system's control be created and strengthened?
10. How can one resolve the problems imposed on a resistance movement by the atmosphere of fear in a totalitarian society? Based on past experience and on analysis, under what conditions can subjects cast off such fear or act defiantly despite it? In a political atmosphere of extreme fear, what impact do acts of brazen defiance conducted apparently fearlessly have? How and why?
11. How can resisters withstand severe repression while continuing their defiance? Repression may include imprisonment, internment in concentration camps, execution, reprisals on nonparticipants, treatment with drugs, detention as mental cases, control of food, water, and fuel supplies, agents provocateurs, and selective and massive deportations. What different problems for the resisters may be produced by other responses by the system to the nonviolent challenges? These may include: (a) milder control measures applied to avoid creating martyrs or attributing exaggerated strength to the opposition, or (b) extremely severe repression and terror applied to force restoration of cooperation, obedience, and

* See the discussion on loci of power in Chapter Two, "Social Power and Political Freedom,"

- submission, their withdrawal being perceived as the most severe threat possible to the system. How can these problems be solved? Can some kind of balance be achieved between the need for action to win immediate objectives and the capacity of the subjects to defy and to withstand the resulting sanctions?
12. Ought external assistance to the struggle movement - such as radio broadcasts, smuggled literature, headquarters for exiled leaders, and international economic and political noncooperation with the dictatorial regime - be accepted? Can it benefit the struggle movement? Or, would external aid discredit the movement by allowing the resisters to be labeled "foreign agents"? Could such aid contribute either to dependence on, or to control by, foreign political groups or regimes? How could a resistance movement against an extreme dictatorship be completely independent of all foreign help in the internal struggle itself, while accepting external aid by embargoes and diplomatic sanctions, for example? What problems would this position present and how might they be resolved?
 13. Does the extreme conformity and interdependence within a totalitarian system increase disproportionately the impact of acts of defiance and resistance, making very limited acts become very significant? Or, does the extreme conformity instead make it possible to dismiss the resisters as mentally ill, antisocial persons, or foreign agents, and easily to quarantine the acts themselves?
 14. What are the implications for opposition strategy and tactics, and for the general course of the movement, of the fact that the nonviolent defiance may produce differing reactions among various sections of the population and types of personnel and officials in the system? For example, responses may vary among fully committed Party members, "soft" Party members, idealistic followers of the Party who lack real understanding, differing social classes, various religious, national, or cultural sections of the population, members of different branches and levels of the military forces, members of the political police, and the top hierarchy.
 15. How can one maintain the necessities of life, such as food, water, fuel, against State restriction of them, and of employment and money, as repression to control resisters?
 16. How can resistance strategy be deliberately aimed at aggravating identified inherent weaknesses in the system, thereby damaging the

system fundamentally in ways which will be difficult to counteract?

17. Can resistance be designed to create conflicts, or aggravate existing ones, within the ruling echelons of the system? Could such internal conflicts help the resistance movement even though the resisters would rarely if ever know about them at the time unless they produced major changes in personnel, policies, or structures?
18. How can one encourage deliberate inefficiency, laxity in carrying out duties, and perhaps eventual mutiny among the system's officials, bureaucrats, administrators, police, and soldiers? What different effects on these possibilities tend to be produced by passivity, violent action, and nonviolent action? How might such failures and refusals to supply information to the center, to relay orders to lower personnel, to carry out policies and instructions, and even to carry out repression, be developed on a sufficient scale to be catastrophic to the dictatorship?

These eighteen questions illustrate the many practical problems which require investigation if we wish to learn how to destroy extreme dictatorships, including totalitarian systems. This effort to find solutions to extreme dictatorships and to explore the potential of nonviolent struggle against them must be based upon full appreciation of the diverse and serious problems involved. If the required research and analysis are carried out on a sufficient scale and are of the needed quality, however, we can obtain the knowledge required to enable people to formulate effective nonviolent struggle strategies to resist and destroy extreme dictatorships.

USING KNOWLEDGE FOR FREEDOM

The continuation and revitalization of political democracy require that we take deliberate measures to enrich it and to counter those developments and forces which restrict and endanger it. These measures include both the conscious cultivation of necessary underlying social and political conditions, and the improvement of democratic institutions, constitutional processes, and laws. Examination is urgently needed of democratic means of correcting social and economic injustices. This is because justice ought to be closely associated with freedom and democracy, and because many of the attacks on democratic government are launched in the name of

justice. The development of new measures for emergency action against internal and external dictatorial threats to practicing democracies is also required.

The development of such means requires major research on the nature of dictatorships. This research should include both their means of control and their weaknesses, so that opposition might be concentrated on vulnerable points. The research should also focus on political violence in its various forms and its impacts on political systems, on possible alternatives to violence in serious domestic and international struggles against dictatorships, and on genocide. We need to know much more about the conditions under which genocide can occur and about past efforts to undermine and to defeat it. More knowledge is required on the viability of political freedom and optional forms of vitalized democratic structures and processes, and on underlying conditions which may be requirements for a practicing political democracy. Capacity to resist dictatorial attacks may be enhanced by greater knowledge of the modes of attack and requirements for success of the various forms of usurpation.

We also need to give attention to the ways to structure and prepare our society so that in the future we will be more able to avoid the development of dictatorships and more able to deal with them when we encounter them. These are some of the important long-term policy questions which we should examine:

1. How we should structure our social, economic, and political institutions to facilitate a free and democratic system, and to make most difficult or impossible any internal or external imposition of a dictatorship.
2. How we should organize people's resistance capacities to enable them to defeat attempts at internal usurpation and foreign rule which might occur.
3. How we should - without dangerous internal political violence or international war - assist people in other parts of the world to defend their independence and their abilities to maintain or to achieve democratic political systems and social justice without our doing it for them, and without dominating or manipulating them.
4. How people should act internally to undermine effectively a dictatorship which is already established - as by concentrating resistance on its inherent weaknesses, aggravating its internal

problems, or creating dissension within the regime, rather than by using means which unify the regime and arouse the population to support it.

5. How we can develop alternatives to modern military struggle to provide effective self-reliant defense, even for smaller countries.
6. How we can develop ways to improve societies, increase justice, and distribute power more equitably among the population without dictatorial means.

Such research and policy studies may reveal some blind alleys which could be by-passed in the future. However, this work is very likely to provide fundamentally significant new political options which can contribute to the revitalization of political democracy, the development of programs of dictatorship prevention, and the introduction of new, more effective policies for constitutional and national defense.

We need not only to rededicate ourselves to basic political principles of freedom and justice; we need also to discover and develop policies and means of action which in the face of the dangers of modern dictatorships will enable those principles to survive, to be implemented, and to become revitalized both in theory and in practice. This will enable us to face both the internal and foreign threats of dictatorships with the confidence that we can withstand their assaults and triumph over them.

NOTES

1. David Riesman, "Some Observations on the Limits of Totalitarian Power" in David Riesman, *Abundance for What? And Other Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 81 and 89.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
6. *Ibid.*
7. For a fuller presentation of this power theory, see Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1973), Chapter One, "The Nature and Control of Political Power."
8. Karl W. Deutsch, "Cracks in the Monolith," in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 313-314.

9. Ibid., pp. 314-315.

10. Riesman, "Some Observations on the Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 81.

11. For references to various of the above cases, see Sharp, **The Politics of Nonviolent Action**.