Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent Intervention

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When the important work of third-party nonviolent intervention is undertaken by people with relative privilege, it runs the risk of hindering the empowerment of the local movements they aim to assist by replicating racist or classist dynamics in the struggle itself. By relying on the status attached to the economic, cultural, and military dominance of the Global North, nonviolent intervention organizations can facilitate a relationship of dependency that offers short-term strategic advantages but that in itself is less likely to promote the nonviolent empowerment of local movements. Sensitivity training within intervention organizations may help activists strategize in ways that avoid some of the pitfalls of operating from positions of privilege.

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The peace activist from the United States watched helplessly as an Israeli settler in the West Bank began pointing his gun at a crowd of unarmed Palestinians harvesting olives. Attempts at reaching a compromise with the man had not lessened the danger. All of a sudden, an elderly Israeli stepped in front of the settler's gun. "Every time the settler pointed his gun at someone," the peace activist wrote, "this 70-year-old man would block it, the barrel pointed at his chest." This act of courage emboldened the Palestinian villagers, who sat down in the olive grove as an act of civil disobedience in front of an increasing number of Israeli soldiers. Other activists—from the United States, Israel, and Palestine, all members of the International Solidarity Movement—negotiated with the Israeli military over the Palestinians' right to harvest. Having prepared themselves with knowledge of Israeli military codes, the activists successfully convinced the soldiers to leave and to escort the armed settlers out of the olive grove when they left.[1]

The approach increasingly known as third-party nonviolent intervention, an example of which is sketched above, is a collection of tactics

and methods used to support, rather than direct, social change work in intense conflict situations. Organizations using this method focus on protecting vulnerable populations and creating or widening the "space" necessary for nonviolent social movements to operate.[2] Over the past two and a half decades, civilian peacemakers have developed third-party nonviolent intervention as a method for preventing the escalation of dangerous conflict situations. The work has become an international phenomenon, with Western volunteers traveling to global conflict zones in attempts to support nonviolent movements operating in dangerous circumstances.

Nonviolent interventionists dissuade parties from harming one another by interjecting a third party into the situation whom one or both sides have reasons not to harm. This technique often relies on exposing the actions of opponents to a much wider concerned audience in hope that the parties to the dispute will refrain from actions that would diminish their prestige or that might provoke negative sanctions from third parties. Organizations like Nonviolent Peaceforce, Peace Brigades International, the International Solidarity Movement, and Christian Peacemaker Teams have met with considerable success, and they continue to expand their operations and develop the practice of third-party nonviolent intervention.

Nonviolent intervention is effective in large part because it draws on principles of power that have been harnessed by social movements and studied by scholars, especially over the past century.[3] Activists around the world have successfully challenged state governments, corporations, paramilitaries, and other dominant groups without the use of violence by withdrawing their consent to be ruled unjustly and thus undermining the capacity of opponents to carry out coercive agendas.

This article cannot cover all of the many strategic and ethical questions that must be addressed when developing and sustaining an intervention program, but we would like to draw attention—albeit from the comfort of our own safe, privileged positions of academic and activist—to a misalignment between the peace-building goals of such programs and the techniques that are most often used. In many cases, intervention can create circumstances that raise the cost of violence, but we query whether it can meet its intended goals of conflict transformation as effectively as possible when it relies primarily on leveraging the relationships between interventionists, the West, and disputants, bypassing the potential within local social movements to express their grievances powerfully and nonviolently. Nonviolent intervention in this mode may

circumvent violent encounters, but it may also diminish the potential for waging constructive conflict by local activists who are situated to devise their own powerful nonviolent strategies based on the knowledge of the culture and the conflict.

The ethical and strategic dilemmas intervention organizations face are formidable. Committed peace activists often become caught in the difficult position of weighing the plight of their clients against their own safety, agendas, and the ability to continue their work.[4] However, as they struggle to create space for local activists to discover and develop their collective power or influence,[5] they may be unintentionally contributing, however subtly, to the perpetuation of relations in which power flows from national and international institutions. We know of no easy solutions to this dilemma, but reflexive awareness of the ways in which intervention depends on the economic, political, and symbolic capital of the West or Empire is an important starting point.

A central challenge is to enable local movements to create alternative sources of autonomy and democracy. Sociological analyses of protest movements suggest that external aid can play an influential role in ensuring a movement's success, but external involvement necessarily influences the dynamics of the situation.[6] To prevent their work from re-inscribing the type of unequal power dynamics that fuel many of the conflicts they seek to transform, interventionists can at least recognize and acknowledge their own position within the predominantly white Global North. In short, they emerged from a tradition of Western humanitarianism that has fed people, so to speak, without learning how they fish.

THIRD-PARTY NONVIOLENT INTERVENTION

Third-party nonviolent intervention was born out of a history of international organizing to mobilize support for change in far-flung parts of the world through international pressure and/or local movements. In many cases, these projects were undertaken by white, upper-class Westerners with a particular interest in reinforcing their own power and influence in international institutions. The infrastructure of religion often helped provide for the mobilization of transnational organization.[7] Missionary work undoubtedly helped to form the underlying structures of transnational capital that make today's burgeoning cross-border solidarity possible. Though there are antecedents to the nonviolent intervention movement, such as Maude Royden's "peace army," Mohandas

Gandhi's Shanti Sena, Friends Peace Teams, the Balkan Peace Team, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and other mediation and conflict resolution programs, organizations specifically focused on protecting and nurturing local nonviolent movements have only developed in the past two decades.[8]

If nonviolent intervention is to contribute to transnational empowerment and the facilitation of local empowerment, practitioners should be able to identify the traditional power dynamics associated with intervention and work to counter vestiges of racism and classism. The history of attempts by privileged actors to "uplift" those they deemed less fortunate suggests that without this focus, social action across boundaries of nationality and race will replicate strains of the inequalities fueling conflicts that activists would hope to see dismantled.[9]

Clearly, many third-party nonviolent intervention teams are aware of the need for local empowerment. The most significant development of modern nonviolent intervention theory is an emphasis on solidarity rather than usurpation, and organizations like Peace Brigades International identify closely with principles of equity and consensus decision-making.[10] Whereas some earlier theories focused on the work of outside groups to build the movement, recent nonviolent intervention theories privilege the work of local groups.[11] "All external parties can do is to support people in the search for peace," Nonviolent Peaceforce states. "Only those who have the conflict are ultimately able to solve it."[12] Christian Peacemaker Teams, the International Solidarity Movement, and Peace Brigades International all subscribe to similar principles.

The main methods of contemporary third-party nonviolent intervention all seek to protect vulnerable noncombatants, support local activists, confront oppressive power structures, and open space for democracy to flourish. To some extent, third-party nonviolent intervention shares the "dissociative approach" of simply keeping parties in conflict apart with traditional forms of intervention, such as UN peacekeeping.[13] However, nonviolent intervention relies exclusively on nonviolent methods. Nonviolent Peaceforce, a relatively new but sophisticated transnational intervention group, summarizes the four methods of intervention: protective accompaniment, observing or monitoring, interposition, and presence. Over the years in which explicit third-party nonviolent intervention has been practiced, these techniques have emerged as the most effective means of intervention for small teams.

Teams engaged in *protective accompaniment* act to "put the local activists in a glare of publicity, which reduces the chance of

assassination."[14] The first truly third-party intervention organization, Peace Brigades International engages primarily in protective accompaniment, escorting peace activists who are at risk of attack from oppressive governments or violent sectarian groups.[15]

Those who are *observing and monitoring* "… carry cameras, notebooks, and in other ways provide a physical reminder that 'the whole world is watching,' thereby restraining the violence."[16] Often these techniques are used in the context of an election in which voting fraud by the ruling elites is anticipated. In Serbia in October 2000, and in 2004, during the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, nonviolent movements were able to prevent dictators from claiming electoral victory because of international election monitors.[17] This is probably the most frequently used technique of third-party intervention, and it is often used by organizations, such as the United Nations or international political agencies in the United States, that are not otherwise engaged in third-party intervention.

Interpositioning entails physically intervening between two or more parties who are escalating their confrontations and approaching the threshold of violence, while *presence* is marked by entering risky situations and "influencing the dynamics of the conflict itself" or modeling collective action that might otherwise not have been considered or would have been seen as risky.[18] The motto of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), "getting in the way," provides a concise description of their approach to intervention and, in particular, interpositioning and presence. CPT "provides skilled support to individuals and groups committed to faith-based nonviolent action in situations where violence is an immediate reality or is supported by public policy."[19] The central challenge that interests us here is how to get in the way effectively while also contributing to the kind of local nonviolent empowerment and resistance that can lead to a sustainable peace in which a new social contract can be negotiated.

EMPOWERMENT AND PEACEBUILDING IN AN AGE OF EMPIRE

Transnational nonviolent intervention groups endeavor to open space for marginalized groups to emerge and engage in a conflict nonviolently, thus helping to transform a conflict into one based on participation rather than resignation and fear.[20] Gene Sharp captures the challenge in his latest seminal work on nonviolent action:

> Real and lasting liberation requires significant changes in the power relationships within the society, not merely replacement of personnel. Liberation should mean that the members of the previously dominated and weak population obtain greater control over their lives and greater capacity to influence events. If we wish to create a society in which people really shape their own lives and futures, and in which oppression is impossible, then we need to explore alternative ways to meet the society's basic need for means of wielding power. We also need to explore the origins of political power at a much more basic level.[21]

A society in which "oppression is impossible" is one that has developed political constituencies that can eventually sustain cooperative relationships because they are empowered nonviolently. It is a lack of power to develop cooperation in civil society that leads states and corporations to employ violence, for which they have studiously prepared. Similarly, movements resorting to guerrilla campaigns may be able to hobble and even stalemate powerful militaries, but they are often less equipped to build civil society as they expose and undermine regimes that rely on intimidation and fear to produce a compliant citizenry. As parties develop parity, or when the only ones remaining employ nonviolent means, the potential arises for democratic politics based on negotiation and compromise to develop. Getting to that point is the difficult task of peace building to which nonviolent intervention organizations aspire, and it takes place on a transnational stage.

Intervention operates within the international context of latemodern capitalism, globalized neoliberalism, and the geopolitical supremacy of the United States. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have termed this state of affairs "Empire," and it is critical to consider it both as the general framework in which intervention operates and for the constraints and limitations it places on transnational nonviolent empowerment.[22] They differentiate between modern European state-centric forms of imperialism and a new situation in which power is no longer primarily consolidated in political institutions, but is generated across multiple overlapping systems including international politics, global economics, and the production of culture. Rather than a single dominant state or ruler, life is governed by a system; Empire is "the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world" and "a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule."[23] This logic is to be understood

as transcending space and time, to the point of suspending history.[24] Foreign and domestic policy, for instance, now exist together in a "state of exception" in which temporary techniques of state control such as a declaration of war or a war-time economy have been superseded by a ubiquitous and hegemonic emphasis on "security" that allows governments—often in contract relationships with large corporations—to rationalize and extend their jurisdiction in public and private life.[25] This fundamental shift in political boundaries, sovereignty, and biopolitical control has implications for transnational empowerment.

While third-party intervention may frame its work in terms of human security, political and economic elites around the globe are focusing instead on "national security" and adopting more defensive postures to movements that manage to challenge certain agendas or institutions that are embedded in Empire. However, as Hardt and Negri also point out, many of the features of Empire, including global communications and the expanding flow of resources and knowledge, present new opportunities for a diverse "multitude" of people engaged in producing global social life to create parallel forms of global democratic relationships.[26] Instead of movements developing local power in struggles with local opponents, transnational groups will have an increasingly important role to play in facilitating the connection between local struggles and cross-border movements for democracy. Indeed, in Hardt and Negri's views, the relationship between "local" struggles and third parties has been transformed. When a movement challenges dominance anywhere, it becomes subversive everywhere. "All of the movements are immediately subversive in themselves and do not wait on any sort of external aid," they write. "These struggles do not link horizontally, but each one leaps vertically, directly to the virtual center of Empire." As a result, they argue, there cease to be any weak links, and "every struggle must attack at the heart of Empire."[27]

Nonviolent intervention is itself a manifestation of alternative transnational relationships, but it can also contribute by demonstrating the power that can be generated through nonviolent action while creating space for local movements to develop their own means of grassroots power. Interventionists should have a solid understanding of their position within Empire to ensure that their networking with Western nongovernmental organizations and embassies serves, but does not preclude, the development of sustainable, independent, and democratic politics.

Under these circumstances, transnational groups will have an increasingly important role to play in facilitating the connection between

local nonviolent struggles and cross-border movements for democracy. Interventionists must therefore have a solid understanding of their position within Empire, and the potential risk involved with using privileged positions to support local nonviolent movements and build peace. Do third-party nonviolent intervention teams contribute to the empowerment of local parties and the long-term goal of constructive democratic politics? Are current intervention techniques optimized to meet both goals of violence reduction and peace building?

Perhaps most importantly, do nonviolent intervention teams have a role to play in such a broad vision of peace-building? Most intervention organizations seem to believe that they do. Nonviolent Peaceforce, the newest nonviolent intervention group, is consciously recruited from the bottom up, with an international governing council made up of local nonviolent leaders from around the world. It seeks to create "the space for local groups to struggle nonviolently, enter into dialogue, and seek peaceful resolution."[28] Peace Brigades International similarly cites a desire to encourage "the growth of civil society activism in repressive situations" as well as promoting the "nonviolent transformation of conflicts."[29]

THE CENTRALITY OF PRIVILEGE

Many involved in the work embrace goals of large-scale conflict transformation, but they encounter an array of pressures and mitigating factors that constrain them from aligning themselves too closely with local social change movements. In order to gain and maintain access, many organizations limit their activities and collaboration with the various parties to a conflict so as not to alienate the others. To enter many areas, team members need visas and passes controlled by states. In some cases, state governments may welcome intervention teams for their ability to reduce levels of violence, but in other cases, interventionists must rely on their status as citizens of influential states as leverage to gain access.[30] Thus, intervention teams depend heavily on the privileged status that underpins the primary methods of intervention.

Interpositioning often relies heavily on international status, but actions such as monitoring and accompaniment also depend on the pressure or threat of military, economic, or political intervention by the international community, as Liam Mahony explains:

> The premise of accompaniment is that there will be an international response to whatever violence the volunteer witnesses.

> Behind such a response lies the implied threat of diplomatic and
> economic pressure—pressure that the sponsors of such violence
> prefer to avoid.[31]

Accompaniment, more than other forms of intervention, has often
relied on the premise that soldiers will not attack Westerners because of
the reaction such an action would provoke on the part of the interna-
tional community.[32] Implicitly, then, these organizations are relying on
being visibly foreign—and, most often, visibly white, as many interven-
tions are disproportionately so. "While the international accompani-
ment technique itself may not have racism at its core," Patrick G. Coy
writes, "it does nevertheless engage the preferential dynamics of racism,
and it flirts with colonialism."[33] Not only does this endanger the effec-
tiveness of non-white, non-Western participants in these groups, it "con-
tradicts this notion that the organization ought to model the society
they are trying to build."[34] Without any training in the dynamics of
oppression for its largely white teams, intervention risks reinforcing struc-
tural oppression, Coy argues:

> As long as the organization continues to field largely uninformed
> white volunteers from the north and west in the east and south, it
> risks structuring the context of political action in such a way that
> the primary dynamics and symbols it activates are those associated
> with racism and classism.[35]

Third-party nonviolent intervention organizations are compelled to
rely heavily on their privileged outsider status to maintain operations
and, unaware of their own privileged position within Empire, unwit-
tingly reinscribe certain fundamentals of oppression such as deference
to institutionalized authority that can undermine grassroots power. We
refer to this advantageous status as "privilege" to underscore the way
in which, although third-party intervention seeks to shift power from
global elites to local activists, they nonetheless are able to do so by
virtue of their own place in relation to sources of institutional power.

From a sociological standpoint, privilege is both socially structured
and socially constructed. Privilege represents access to institutions, re-
sources, knowledge, and skills that improve life chances, provide pro-
tection, and enhance efficacy. A white male lawyer named John Smith
who volunteers to serve on an intervention team is more likely to have
the resources to buy a plane ticket and contacts in the State Department

to secure a visa, and his name is less likely to draw attention during security checks that would complicate others' journeys.[36]

Privilege is also a culturally conferred form of legitimacy. Some privileges, such as holding an advanced degree, are earned. Others, such as having white skin in Western societies, are inherited.[37] Either way, the *perception* of an activist as having instrumental or affective ties to influential or respected networks can convey power to the activist. By extension, however, we have to note that perceptions of privilege can vary, as the 2005 abduction of four members of Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq illustrates. The organization's work in Hebron and its connections to the antiwar movement provoked an outpouring of support in the Muslim world, but Tom Fox's U.S. citizenship distinguished him from his comrades and probably factored into his murder by his captives. His death is the first Christian Peacemaker Teams casualty at the hands of combatants.

As third-party intervention organizations support the empowerment of local activists, they challenge the dynamics of Empire, yet in many cases they do so without recognizing the benefits they continue to receive from this system in the form of privilege. In some situations, deference to the privilege attached to interventionists can become hegemonic as it is perpetuated and made so commonplace that it becomes nearly invisible, especially to those whom it benefits. Thus, regardless of the type of privilege an interventionist has, she or he must be aware of it in order to counteract negative consequences that can flow from it.

These risks include alienating local groups in ways that could cut down on access and consequently inhibit intervention teams' abilities to support these groups. In his handbook for trainers, George Lakey shares several ways in which privilege breaks down communication and limits coalition-building.[38] The obstacles range from different communication styles to unthinking presumptions and divergent work styles. Each inhibits collaboration in practical terms, but it also creates an environment of distrust, especially when local social movements see their privileged supporters behaving, perhaps unwittingly, in ways subaltern communities usually associate with their oppressors. "Empowerment is often assumed to be the byproduct of the protection afforded to local activists by international accompaniment," Coy writes. "The truth is, however, that the reliance on the outsider by international and even national accompaniment organizations to protect local activists may produce various forms of disempowerment."[39]

Reinforcing privilege by tactically relying on it can subtly undermine the value of local social movements in the eyes of others involved in the conflict and bystander publics, and it can undermine social movements' confidence in their own capacities. Daniel Hunter, a training associate at Training for Change,[40] relates how in a nonviolent training workshop in Sierra Leone, participants were at first "placing full responsibility on the success" of the Western trainer's experience. Even when intervention fails, "disempowerment keeps people blaming leadership and stuck in a cycle of dependency," he writes.[41] If the training had not been focused on showing local activists their own capacity to effect change, it would have done less to support the movement.

By utilizing Western privilege as a primary feature of their techniques, third parties risk promoting the belief among local activists that only outside parties are equipped to handle the conflict effectively. If, on the other hand, the local nonviolent movement begins achieving success, government leaders might legitimately accuse local activists of being led by "outside agitators," hurting the movement in the long run. Slobodan Milošević used this argument, without much success, in countering the student movement Otpor with accusations that leaders were being trained by the United States.[42] In an incisive analysis of the Orange Revolution, one British reporter characterized the nonviolent campaign as "an American creation, a sophisticated and brilliantly conceived exercise in Western branding and mass marketing that, in four countries in four years, has been used to try to salvage rigged elections and topple unsavory regimes."[43]

Because Western privilege is based on the assumption that Western nations will take measures if their citizens are threatened or harmed, interventionists may be playing with fire without having control over the consequences.[44] Intervention groups could press for a dictator to be tried before the International Criminal Court, for instance, but once awakened, Western powers may choose to invade instead.

Interventionists' privileged statuses also allow them to engage parties using violence—often state security forces—with a degree of confidence that is often not shared by local activists. For instance, despite Nigeria's Ogoni autonomy movement cultivating international support, including pressure from President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister John Major, and President Nelson Mandela, it nonetheless suffered brutal repression. The repression was a direct consequence of a change in tactics designed to gain international attention, and interventionists should carefully weigh the risks of triggering repression against local movements.

Susan A. Lyke and Joseph G. Bock note that Christian Peacemaker Team members sometimes, in "absorbing aggression which would have been directed at others," nonetheless increase the level of punishment for local activists who participate with them in nonviolent resistance.[45] On one occasion, when Christian Peacemaker Teams positioned themselves in front of Israeli soldiers, a Palestinian joined them. "I don't think it's very likely that they will pull the trigger on me," said one Western CPT member. "But he's a Palestinian. What's going to happen to him?"[46] In a reflection on his experience with the International Solidarity Movement, Micah White says that a local activist told him, "You came to protect us but we will die for you, in your place." He writes, "How do you respond to such a statement? … How do you explain that isn't what you want—that the guilt of being an American is eating you up inside and that you want to die in their place?"[47] Interventionists should try to answer these questions, addressing the Palestinian's vulnerability either by sharing some measure of Western privilege with Palestinians or educating for the type of grassroots nonviolent empowerment that was evident during the first Intifada.[48] As they confront their guilt over the privilege they possess, interventionists can use the process as an opportunity to work with local activists to develop ways to share that privilege.[49]

DESTABILIZING PRIVILEGE: TRAINING AS THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM

To prepare themselves for third-party intervention, organizations can make a commitment to anti-oppression fundamentals. Most already recognize the necessity of these principles on an organizational level. Coy attributes considerable attentiveness to all Peace Brigades International members: "Rare is the [Peace Brigades International] member who is not aware of and troubled by the substantial discrepancies between their personal situation and those they came to accompany. Not only are the risks the [Peace Brigades International] volunteers face of a lesser magnitude while on site, but one day soon they will leave their associates behind, return home and face none of those risks at all."[50] Nonetheless, in order to mitigate the pitfalls outlined in the previous section, we believe transnational nonviolent empowerment should also incorporate anti-oppression awareness through experiential training. Just as those under oppression may need to come to a new realization of their own power, so too can interventionists become aware of their privilege.

Such training, which George Lakey calls "direct education,"[51] helps participants identify privilege based on race, skin color, nationality, gender, class, and other factors, and facilitates the development of strategies for working across these dynamics of power.[52] If interventionists have developed their capacities to recognize their own privilege and to be open to the experiences and knowledge of others, they are more likely to be sensitive to and address feelings of disempowerment on all sides of a conflict.[53]

However, as in other privileged progressive movements—like the early-twentieth-century humanitarianism from which transnational intervention sprang—some have resisted addressing the rank carried by interventionists into local situations. When Training for Change conducts workshops on third-party intervention, they often encounter resistance to anti-oppression training. "Racism, sexism, imperialism is like smog that everybody breathes in," said Hunter. "Everybody has it in their lungs whether in the form of patterns of being an oppressor or as internalized oppression. And though it's damaging to us, people often resist the deep healing work."[54] Christian Peacemaker Teams offers an intensive three-week training course covering nonviolent action, techniques of third-party intervention and conflict resolution, but no work centering on privilege.[55] The International Solidarity Movement gives two days of training for a two- to three-week intervention, focusing on historical narratives and nonviolent theory, but not on anti-oppression.[56] The International Solidarity Movement recognizes the role of privilege in its work, but it narrowly defines that privilege as the holding of "international status" which, minus uniforms or other identifying features, often translates into light skin color.[57]

After a member of Nonviolent Peaceforce's International Governing Council resigned in the spring of 2005, another member, from the Global South, suggested that the discontent manifest in the resignation was due to the extra weight given to Western voices within the organization. "It is very clear in my mind that white male[s] and this time female[s] in a position of Western influence tactically or strategically have hijacked the concept of nonviolence in terms of application yet again," he wrote. In his view, Nonviolent Peaceforce had set up a "certain class" of individuals who were given greater privilege, a class based primarily on Western citizenship and English as a primary language. He pointed out that nearly all the heads of committees and most of the staff members were white, with the primary offices in Europe and the United States—no staff in Africa, only one in Asia, and one part-time director

in Latin America.[58] Despite the commitment by Nonviolent Peaceforce to recruit from global nonviolence movements, the management structure has continued to reflect its Western, privileged heritage. Until systems of privilege are addressed in the context of intervention teams as much as the societies in which they intervene, third-party nonviolent intervention may remain structured in ways that exclude members of the Global South from participating, and will therefore more likely fail to support the empowerment of the movements they most want to help.

Experiential or direct education helps destabilize privilege by preparing teams to relate to local movements while training for the intervention itself. Through direct education, participants discover their own social status, capacities, and weaknesses via small-group work. Facilitators help participants become aware of their own status and skills, appreciate others' skills, and uncover strength in diversity. The process is empathic and relational, and it focuses on communication. When necessary, constructive conflict is carefully facilitated within the group, and this is why training is so crucial: simply reading about the history of a conflict—even if it acknowledges the role of the Global North and the resulting privilege of members from those countries—will not alter participants' understanding of their own privilege. They must experience the connections between privilege and disempowerment, as nearly every group of people can be divided along multiple lines of rank and status. Role-playing may force participants to argue against their own beliefs or experiences and consequently give them insights into the sources of their identity.[59]

In this respect, direct education is similar to Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger's concept of transformative mediation in which a mediator elicits empowerment by assisting disputants to discover more fully their own agendas, recognize others' perspectives, and discover that they can respond effectively and confidently to others in dispute situations. When empowerment is combined with recognition, an ability and willingness to understand, legitimate, and accommodate the experience of another party, the disputant has developed "compassionate strength," a new capacity to engage in conflict confidently and constructively.[60] Similarly, experiential or direct education develops new capacities and cohesion among an intervention team, but more importantly, it presents a clear model of interaction—just as members of intervention groups are trained in an atmosphere of respect and collective knowledge, so too can they engage local activists.

SHARING PRIVILEGE

In some cases, promoting one's international status may be effective because some privilege can be shared, such as when the release of International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activists arrested during a nonviolent demonstration was successfully used as a precedent to release three Palestinians as well.[61] Sharing privilege will likely prove most effective after substantial training, planning, and coordination with local groups on how best to leverage their privilege.

In order to distribute privilege across a diverse intervention team, many third-party organizations have begun to wear clearly recognizable uniforms, to halt repression similar to that of the Nigerian government that we discussed above.[62] Third-party intervention may help to identify them with peacekeeping forces, so that every member of the team can be quickly identified without resorting to surface-level assumptions about ethnicity or nationality. This decision was a watershed moment within third-party intervention; until teams adopted this practice, David Grant says, "white skin [was] a main protective device."[63] Fears that interventionists of color will be harassed to a greater extent than white interventionists are not without merit in many contexts, and creating effective intervention that can be performed by individuals from all parts of the world should be a primary focus, in order to share privilege and deconstruct the polarized notions of the privileged versus the "other" that contribute to inequality and fuel destructive conflict. Equally important, the inclusion of women, people of color, and working-class people brings important knowledge to organizing and strategizing.

Interventionists can also commit to recruiting members from communities of color and the Global South, as some are now beginning to do. Recognition by intervention organizations of the contributions of feminism and the global women's movements to transnational empowerment has enabled the inclusion of women in positions of leadership, a welcome development.

INTERVENTION AND EMPOWERMENT

Empire often de-emphasizes the effectiveness of local movements and grassroots knowledge, and intervention projects risk the same oversight. Interventionists, who by and large hail from positions of privilege in the international community, enter into conflict with Empire at a different ethnopolitical location than local social movements. Networks reach

across international boundaries, "seem[ing] to embody elements of agent and structure simultaneously."[64] But they are also shaped by those boundaries, and the interactions within them are not always balanced or mutually beneficial. The tendency, given this difference in location, is for Western activists to see themselves as beneficiaries of unique knowledge manifested through influential tactics.

Local movements, however, possess the most important knowledge of their own situations, a critical factor in securing their own paths toward liberation or building sustainable peace processes; they may, however, need external actors to support them along the way. Hunter uses an analogy of nonviolent intervention as a greenhouse.[65] "It's a very modest role—it's the passive role of being glass: letting sunlight in, keeping strong wind out … they become really important when the wind blows; otherwise movements might not even notice them." In describing their approach to nonviolent action in the Palestinian Territories, Huwaida Arraf and Adam Shapiro write:

> The truth of the matter is, we're not showing Palestinian society a new way to resist. Sit downs, marches, teach-ins, strikes are all part of the history of Palestinian resistance. It's not the tactics that inspire people but rather either the victory or the strategy. [The strategy is] the building of a powerful nonviolent resistance movement.[66]

Activists in Guatemalan peace societies, truth and reconciliation commissions in South Africa, and labor movements in South Korea are at least as likely to have practical knowledge of peace-building as interventionists from Europe and North America. Interventionists' roles may include demonstrating the power of nonviolent action through a successful intervention or modeling the collective development of nonviolent strategy through consensus decision-making processes,[67] but ultimately the direction and method of action comes from local activists, not interventionists.

The recruitment of third-party interventionists should therefore utilize existing stores of experience from around the globe, creating a network of "popular knowledge," to use Michel Foucault's term,[68] that is greater than the sum of its parts—rather than pulling solely from isolated communities in the Global North. Nonviolent Peaceforce is moving toward fulfilling this vision by serving as a coalition of sorts between a global range of peace and nonviolence organizations, many from the Global South. Concerns remain about the distribution of

influence within the organization, as we noted above, but despite these concerns, the utilization of local movements to build a larger community of transnational empowerment does have a substantive working model.

If nonviolent intervention teams endorse the broad view of peace-building that we introduced earlier, they will also be concerned for all parties to embrace powerful nonviolent methods of waging conflict. They may help these social movements understand principles of relational power, including the ability to withdraw consent from unjust regimes or cycles of violence.[69] However, local sources of influence should be explored. In some situations, regimes may be as hesitant to fire on local activists as on Western interventionists, especially if a significant number of soldiers share a common origin, culture, or language with them. During the nonviolent movement to depose Milošević, local activists were strategic in opposing but not demonizing the security and police forces. When the movement culminated in an occupation of the parliament, the military stood back, unwilling to attack their fellow Serbians. When possible, interventionists can highlight and encourage the cultivation of local sources of power.

Some methods will prove more effective than others, and in many cases, local activists can apply their nuanced understanding of local culture to enhance the effect of nonviolent tactics, especially symbolic persuasive ones. Instead of guerrilla tactics, for instance, resistance movements may hold mock funerals for local nonviolent heroes in order to express their grievances in a way that resonates broadly within the culture. In short, nonviolent action based in local culture can make its own important contribution to constructive conflict. Third-party nonviolent intervention teams can model many of the most important principles of effective nonviolent struggle such as strategic planning and maintaining nonviolent discipline under provocation and repression. The focus should be on avoiding undermining the local potential for nonviolent power by associating nonviolent action with Western privilege and failing to encourage the adoption of nonviolent struggle on local terms by local activists.

PRACTICE, EMPOWERMENT, AND PEACE-BUILDING

Third-party nonviolent intervention has demonstrated a great deal of promise in supporting local social movements, often within seemingly intractable conflicts. We encourage intervention organizations to pursue their highest goals of peace-building to acknowledge their roots in

predominantly Western, white, and male privilege and use that aware-
ness to mitigate unintended consequences of privilege. Interventionists
should closely examine the extent to which their strategies of recruit-
ment, intervention, and support rely on traditional forms of privilege
and consider whether opportunities are being missed to facilitate the
empowerment of local movements in the process.

We want to be clear: interventionists should continue to use the rank
they have to influence conflict situations positively, but they should not
do so blindly. If only white males from the United States are able to be
interventionists, or if organizations place a higher value on them be-
cause they have more traditional privilege, then the intervention has been
placed on a racist foundation. Committing to a strategy that leans on skin
color, gender, or national citizenship *more* than other types of rank means
that only white people (or men, or Westerners) will be able to fill the role.

We do not pretend to offer concrete solutions to the wide array of
situations intervention teams face in the field, and we acknowledge the
many strategic challenges interventionists face in their work. Finding
the correct balance of using privileged statuses effectively and support-
ing the empowerment of local movements as part of peace-building is a
difficult task. We believe, however, that intervention teams can better
pursue their peace-building missions with experiential training in rank
and privilege for staff and field workers, renewed attention to structural
divisions along geographical, ethnic, and linguistic lines, and consistent
and committed awareness of local activists' own histories and expertise.

"False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the 'rejects
of life,' to extend their trembling hands," Paulo Freire writes. "True
generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals
or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that
more and more they become human hands which work and, working,
transform the world."[70] We believe that nonviolent interventionists re-
cognize this need for local empowerment and will benefit from training
in anti-oppression fundamentals.

NOTES

1. John Petrovato, "Harvesting Olives in Yasuf," in *Live from Palestine:
International and Palestinian Direct Action against the Israeli Occupation*, eds.
Nancy Stohlman and Laurieann Aladin (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003),
161–62.

2. Patrick G. Coy, "Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," in *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State*, eds. Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield, and Ron Pagnucco (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 99–100.

3. Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994); Nancy Bell, "Alternative Theories of Power," in *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict*, ed. Lester R Kurtz (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1999); Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, vols. 1–3 (Boston: P. Sargent Publisher, 1973); Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, Inc., 2005).

4. Patrick G. Coy, "Shared Risks and Ethical Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30/5 (2001), 575–606.

5. We would like to offer a cautionary note to ourselves and the reader. In considerations of empowerment and disempowerment, these poles should always challenge one another constructively. Thinking of power in terms of cultural hegemony is often useful, as we hope to demonstrate, but it runs the risk of underestimating the latent power in all social relations and local culture that is available to those generally considered weak. Ironically, to focus exclusively on issues of privilege and hegemony can encourage a self-fulfilling prophecy of disempowerment and hide local power potentials from view.

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7. Jackie Smith, Ron Pagnucco, and Winnie Romeril, "Transnational Social Movement Organizations in the Global Political Arena," *Voluntas* 5/2 (1994): 130.

8. For a full history, see Thomas Weber, "From Maude Royden's Peace Army to the Gulf Peace Team: An Assessment of Unarmed Interpositionary Peace Forces," *Journal of Peace Research* 30/1 (1993), 45–64.

9. Ivan Boothe, "Transnational Nonviolent Empowerment" (Thesis, Swarthmore College, 2005).

10. Patrick G. Coy, "Negotiating Safety and Identity under the Gun: Consensus Decision Making on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, ed. Patrick G. Coy (Oxford: Elsevier Science/JAI Press, 2002).

11. Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1972).

12. Donna Howard, Christine Schweitzer, and Carl Stieren, "Strategies, Tactics and Activities in Intervention," in *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study* (Hamburg, Germany: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2001), 171.

13. Johan Galtung, *Peace, War and Defense* (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1976), 282.

14. Daniel Hunter and George Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy: Third-Party Nonviolent Intervention Training Curriculum* (Philadelphia: Training for Change, 2003), 23, 34–38.

15. Coy, "Shared Risks and Ethical Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," 577.

16. Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy: Third-Party Nonviolent Intervention Training Curriculum*, 23, 34–38.

17. York Zimmerman Inc. and WETA-TV, *Bringing Down a Dictator* (Washington, D.C.: York Zimmerman Inc. in association with WETA, 2003), video.

18. Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy: Third-Party Nonviolent Intervention Training Curriculum*, 23, 34–38.

19. Christian Peacemaker Teams, "1996 Annual Report" (Chicago: Christian Peacemaker Teams, 1997).

20. Leslie Paul Thiele, "Making Democracy Safe for the World: Social Movements and Global Politics," *Alternatives* 18/3 (1993): 278.

21. Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential*, 27.

22. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

23. Ibid., xii.

24. Ibid., 11.

25. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 14.

26. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

27. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 58.

28. Nonviolent Peaceforce, *Mission Statement* (2006 [cited April 22, 2006]); available from http://nvpf.org/np/english/mission/statement.asp.html.

29. Coy, "Shared Risks and Ethical Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," 597; Liam Mahony, "Side by Side: Protecting and Encouraging Threatened Activists with Unarmed International Accompaniment," in *Tactical Notebook Series of the New Tactics Project* (Minneapolis, MN: Center for Victims of Torture, 2004).

30. Coy, "Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," 87.

31. Mahony, "Side by Side: Protecting and Encouraging Threatened Activists with Unarmed International Accompaniment," 6.

32. Coy, "Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," 82.

33. Patrick G. Coy, "Protecting Human Rights: The Dynamics of International Nonviolent Accompaniment by Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka" (Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1997), 244.

34. Ibid., 247.

35. Ibid., 269.

36. Coy, "Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," 93.

37. Arnold Mindell, *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity* (Portland, OR: Lao Tse Press, 1995), 42.

38. George Lakey, *Be the Change: Direct Education for Justice and Peace, Reflections for Teachers and Trainers* (unpublished manuscript).

39. Coy, "Protecting Human Rights: The Dynamics of International Nonviolent Accompaniment by Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," 282.

40. See http://www.trainingforchange.org/.

41. Daniel Hunter, *Exploration, Imagination, and Defeating Dependency: A West African Training Report* (Philadelphia: Training for Change, 2004), 2.

42. Steve York, Ben Kingsley, and Films for the Humanities, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2002).

43. Ian Traynor, "U.S. Campaign Behind the Turmoil in Kiev," *The Guardian*, November 26, 2004.

44. Howard, Schweitzer, and Stieren, "Strategies, Tactics and Activities in Intervention," 172–73.

45. Susan A Lyke and Joseph G Bock, "Reflecting on the Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron," in *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project* (Cambridge, MA: Collaborative for Development Action, 2000), 16.

46. Ibid., 13.

47. Micah White, *Empathy in the Middle East: A Journal of Personal Experience* (2002 [cited April 22, 2006]); available from http://why-war.com/features/empathy_in_the_middle_east_micah.pdf; cf. Coy, "Shared Risks and Ethical Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," 593.

48. Souad Dajani, "Nonviolent Resistance in the Occupied Territories: A Critical Reevaluation," in *Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective*, eds. Stephen Zunes, Lester R. Kurtz, and Sarah Beth Asher (Oxford:

Blackwell Publishers, 1999). Transnational social movement organizations like the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict and the Albert Einstein Institute do not intervene in the modes featured in this article, but they seek to educate resistance movements in the basic principles of nonviolent action.

49. Hunter cautions, however, that intervention that simply joins the ranks of local nonviolent activists—rather than focusing on "opening the space" for them to operate and then staying out of the way—could polarize a society into new prejudice and violence. Daniel Hunter, interview, December 14, 2004.

50. Coy, "Negotiating Safety and Identity under the Gun: Consensus Decision Making on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," 100.

51. Lakey, *Be the Change: Direct Education for Justice and Peace, Reflections for Teachers and Trainers*.

52. Mindell, *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity*.

53. Coy explains how his awareness of the power differential between Western interventionists and local activists influenced the way he approached his work and the difficulty of predicting how that awareness influences intervention in real terms: "In any event, they were in a vulnerable and low power position relative to this Western researcher who was also wearing the Peace Brigade Internation (PBI) hat of international observer/escort. My awareness of this delicate dynamic probably did little to change its fundamental nature. All I know for certain is that awareness did nurture carefulness and an attitude of humility on my part." Coy, "Shared Risks and Ethical Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka," 586.

54. Daniel Hunter, interview, December 14, 2004.

55. Lyke and Bock, "Reflecting on the Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron," 4.

56. Micah White, interview, March 13, 2005.

57. Mark Schneider, "International Direct Action: The Spanish Revolution to the Palestinian Intifada," in *Live from Palestine: International and Palestinian Direct Action against the Israeli Occupation*, eds. Nancy Stohlman and Laurieann Aladin (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003), 81.

58. Anonymous interview. Nonviolent Peaceforce also maintains a field office in Sri Lanka, where they are engaged in third-party intervention.

59. Lakey, *Be the Change: Direct Education for Justice and Peace, Reflections for Teachers and Trainers*.

60. Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger, *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict through Empowerment and Recognition* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994).

61. Edward Mast, "From 'Stepping Off the Sidewalk,'" in *Live from Palestine: International and Palestinian Direct Action against the Israeli Occupation*, ed. Nancy Stohlman and Laurieann Aladin (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003), 93.

62. Clifford Bob, "Political Process Theory and Transnational Movements: Dialectics of Protest among Nigeria's Ogoni Minority," *Social Problems* 49/3 (2002): 407.

63. David Grant, "Large Scale Unarmed Peacekeeping" (paper presented at the Bund für Sociale Verteidigung, Bonn, Germany, March 3, 2000).

64. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 5.

65. Daniel Hunter, interview, December 14, 2004.

66. Huwaida Arraf and Adam Shapiro, "The Uprising for Freedom Is an International Struggle," in *Live from Palestine: International and Palestinian Direct Action against the Israeli Occupation*, eds. Nancy Stohlman and Laurieann Aladin (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003), 74.

67. Coy, "Negotiating Safety and Identity Under the Gun: Consensus Decision Making on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka."

68. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [1st American] ed., *World of Man* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

69. Bell, "Alternative Theories of Power"; Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential.*

70. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniversary edn. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 45.