

Stirrings



A Basilian Peace & Justice Newsletter

Winter 2018

Clifford Harper

Out on a Limb

*Well, let me address a sacred cow,
a great open social wound that no one talks about.*

By Ray Paramo CSB

*Another shooting just happened
[14 February 2018 - Ash Wednesday]*

Seventeen were killed at a Florida high school by an ex-student with an AR15. This sort of thing happens so often that we lose count and prefer not to know what the count really is.

There were 345 mass shootings in America in 2017

alone. 2018 is proceeding apace. Most were done by young white males. A recent statistic says there is a mass shooting – defined as four or more people shot in one incident, not including the shooter – every nine out of 10 days on average. This sounds incredible. If the statistic is even half right, there are more such incidents than we have ever had from foreign terrorists. We are truly looking into a pit in front of us that we must not ignore.

Whenever something unthinkable happens we always look for motives and try to find reasons, but this many incidents cannot be blamed on a series of poor, unusual, rare, crazy persons. If we look at what are called terrorist attacks, we identify clear motives and reasons to perpetrators who are from outside our country. But here we have as many killings by citizens of our country and we don't even consider it a problem.

We think they must be random, causeless happenings. We certainly refuse to

consider even the title of “domestic terrorism,” yet that is what it is. It doesn't have to be consolidated or ruled by a single group. It merely has to be a continuing phenomenon which needs to be addressed.

A lady in *Time* magazine wrote that American males are raised to hide their emotions and are taught that asking for help is a sign of weakness. She pointed to the explosions this can lead to. And it isn't the poor and colored who may find themselves without hope. It seems to include mostly white young men who see no other option for their problems than to kill indiscriminately. And guns make that easy.

Our death rates by guns are so much greater than those of other ‘civilized’ countries that we have to understand that we are seeing a cultural phenomenon that must be addressed. It may be that in certain parts of the Islamic world, boys are being raised to want to kill us as a solution to what is wrong with the world. But just as truly, boys are being raised in our culture to see killing as a solution to their problems. Both problems have to be noticed and addressed.



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Who would not slap a soldier after years of trauma and direct assaults?

An interview with Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb

Lynn Gottlieb is a congregational rabbi for 45 years and an advocate for Palestinian human rights since 1966. In this interview with Yoav Litvin, Gottlieb shares her impressions as a Rabbi, woman and activist.



What is your impression of the reaction to Ahed Tamimi’s slapping of an Israeli soldier?

Gottlieb: The response to Ahed Tamimi’s slap by many Jewish people reveals the sexist and racist attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that impact a large portion of the Jewish community. The vile accusations against this child are stunning. Their purpose is to flip the script on Palestinian suffering and blame the victim instead of assuming responsibility.

I wonder: who would not slap a soldier after years of trauma as a result of recurring night invasions, administrative detentions with no possibility for justice or a fair hearing, daily destruction of village houses, and direct assaults, one of which targets your cousin in the head?



Israeli soldiers invade and scream in a strange language, push and shove with an assault rifle, destroy personal objects in homes, and kidnap and hurt friends and loved ones. And some people complain about Ahed’s slap?!

No one in her family had to teach her about Israeli behavior. But they did teach her how to resist with steadfastness for her own dignity. I recognize the reason for that steadfastness. It is the only way to resist victimhood, the only way to counter the assault and demand change.

The militarism that has become deeply embedded in Israeli society does not serve the future health of either Israelis or Palestinians. Human rights must supersede militarism. There is no other way forward.

What is your perspective on human rights as a Jewish activist and leader? Does sexism play a role in the oppressive narrative you confront?

Gottlieb: My witness is forged from values I absorbed as a young Jewish woman in relationship to what I saw with my eyes and heard with my ears while living and traveling in the land with two names: Palestine-Israel. As one of the first female-bodied people to inhabit a role exclusively held by men, the role of rabbi, I never felt comfortable with conventional attitudes about anything. I knew I had to question the contentions of those enjoying top dog privilege in the world’s racial, religious and gender hierarchies because their description of reality did not match my experience of sexism or racism.

I grew up mentored by rabbis who in the sixties actively resisted American apartheid. They often linked African American civil rights as a Jewish ethical responsibility in light of the world’s silence during the Holocaust. I absorbed a clear message: ‘Never again’ is intersectional. ‘Never again’ covers all people across all boundaries who suffer state sanctioned and community collaboration with violations of human rights.

Many Jews do not want to confront a reality that challenges them in the ways that the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter campaigns challenge male and white America, respectively. People in privileged positions don’t want to surrender their status, even if it means allowing horrible abuses of human rights to continue with impunity.

The reality of Jewish pro-active ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Greater Israel exists.

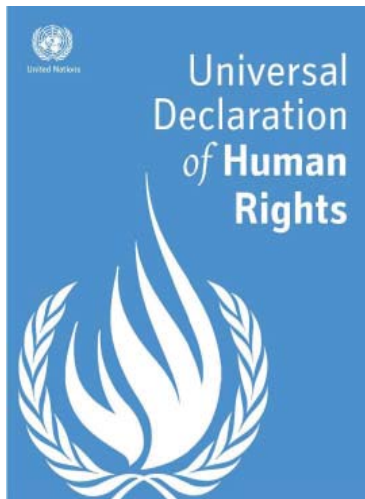
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A project of the Basilian Centre for Peace & Justice
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How do you view Israeli society and its link to Jewishness? Does Israel represent you?

Gottlieb: The idea that the value of Jewishness depends upon an exclusive association with a specific geographical space is for me, a troubling outcome of the establishment of the State of Israel. This notion has resulted in the forced expulsion and continuing disenfranchisement and ghettoization of Palestinians.

Traditionally, various expressions of rabbinic Judaism were based on ethical ideas and ritual practices, not geography. Love your neighbor as yourself and the value of human dignity are the greatest principles of Torah.

In the contemporary period, all nation states, including Israel, must be held accountable to an adherence to human rights. This is the outcome of the tragedy of the Holocaust: states must observe human rights as defined by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights along with the treaties that have arisen from the Declaration. If states violate human rights, they should be made to pay a price by their citizens and by the International Court of Law.



Indeed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is also a measure for Jewish tradition itself. In this regard, Israel as a nation state is failing miserably. A state that claims to be a democracy, but offers rights and privileges to one group of people living under its rule on the basis of religious/ethnic identity, while

denying those same rights and privileges to another group of people living under its rule practices a form of apartheid as defined by the UN ESCWA report (2017). This is exactly the situation for Palestinians living under Israeli rule.

The majority of Jewish Israelis are perfectly happy with this arrangement. They agree to send their children to the military to enforce this arrangement. This is not a reality I can identify with as a human being or as someone who identifies as a Jewish person. Rather, this is a reality I must resist.



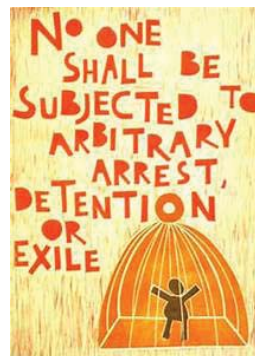
Where do you find hope? What is the method of resistance to Israeli oppression and apartheid that you choose to engage in?

Gottlieb: The majority of Palestinians support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) as the most effective nonviolent tactic to exert international economic pressure on Israeli policies. BDS should not be criminalized and neither should activists who support similar campaigns. There is no better way for activists to non-violently struggle for policy and institutional changes that result in an end to illegal annexation of Palestinian homes and land.

Palestinians who struggle every day to remain on their land and in their homes deserve our passionate and unrelenting support. Everyone who cares about Palestinian survival needs to find a way to support specific villages and projects. The best way is to join an organization already engaged in solidarity work. These days I support Holy Land Trust, a Palestinian-led organization based in Bethlehem, which is committed to forging a future grounded in equity and justice, as well as coexistence.

I am inspired by the generations of Palestinians who have never given up on their dream to remain in the land as a free people. Freedom, equality and justice for Palestinians are the only paths to peace for both peoples.

Yoav Litvin is a doctor of psychology/behavioral neuroscience, a documentary photographer and writer living in New York City. You can find him at yoavlitvin.com.



In the trial of Gerald Stanley an all-white jury runs from justice

On 9 February 2018 a crowded Saskatchewan courtroom heard the verdict of the 12-person jury in the trial of 56-year-old Gerald Stanley, the white farmer charged in the 2016 shooting death of Red Pheasant First Nation member 22-year-old Colten Boushie. The decision to find Stanley 'not guilty' of the second-degree murder set off a firestorm of reaction across social media, on both sides of the case. Here, Robert Jago shares his perspective on what we should take away from the verdict.

By Robert Jago

There is a video from outside the courthouse in Battleford, Saskatchewan last night. It shows a screen which is split in four and displaying the courtroom, the jury box, the judge, and the accused in the Gerald Stanley case.

As the verdict is announced, there are gasps and shouts; Colten Boushie's mother cries out. Bailiffs grab Gerald Stanley and run out of the frame, and to a waiting truck under heavy RCMP protection.

In the jury box, a dark-haired woman in a short dress, and long hooded sweater jumps up as Stanley passes, and runs off camera herself—getting away from the family and the assembled Indians in the courtroom.

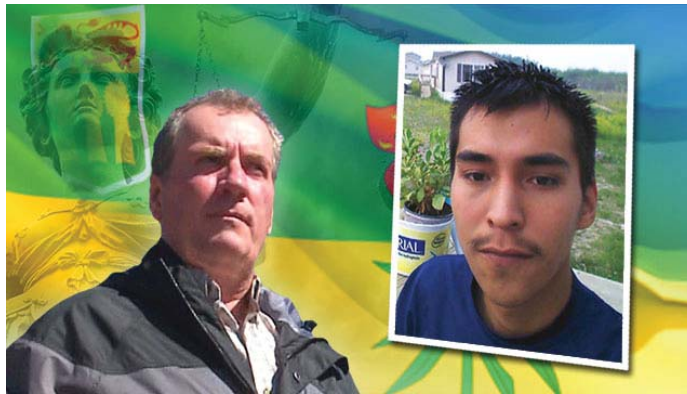
I would like to think that she ran because she was ashamed of what she had just done. But the likelier answer is that she ran for the same reason that she and her fellow members of the all-white jury found Gerald Stanley not guilty of killing 22-year-old Colten Boushie. They were afraid of Indians, especially angry Indians.

And let's dispense, for a moment, with those words "First Nations" and "Indigenous," because those imply respect, and progress. Today, it is clear that we're still "Indians."

"Fights with Native kids were a too-common part of [my friend's childhood] experience ... It's no overstatement to point out that such kids

were, on average, rougher than the white kids, or that they were touchier..."

That is a quote from the best-selling non-fiction book in Canada this week, Jordan Peterson's *12 Rules*



for Life. Natives are rougher, touchier. The Indians are restless—run.

Some people in this country are worried about schools engaging in social engineering to manipulate children into holding certain political views. They're right to be worried. It is school that taught that woman when to run. It was newspapers, TV, films, it was books. It was every comment and joke that taught her to run; it was the Premier of her province urging "calm" after the verdict. It was what her boss told her at her part-time job – "Watch that Indian over there, I think he's stealing." She was taught to run, and to think that Indians, especially young male Indians, are scary – subconsciously, it sunk in, that they're wild and dangerous animals.

If a fox is stealing chickens, it's not enough to chase it away, you need

to put it down. Gerald Stanley put Colten Boushie down at point-blank range, and because these jurors were raised to see us as scary animals, to think of us as wild "wagon burners"—a slur you hear on the Prairies – it was easy for them to see why he was justified. "It could have been me and my family," they undoubtedly thought – and who wouldn't do anything to protect their families?

Gerald Stanley had a family, and one that looked like those of the all-white jury. Colten Boushie didn't have a family. Indians don't have "families." They have braves and squaws, chiefs and papooses, bitches and thugs—but not a mother and father like the Stanleys are.

When you hear the mother of a deceased child wail in agony for the verdict you've brought down, you hang your head, and quietly and respectfully leave. On the other hand, when you get between a wild animal and its mother, you run. That woman in the jury reacted like Colten Boushie's mother was a charging bear,

not a grieving mother.

Don't say that this is about Saskatchewan, or the defence, or those racists over there. And don't say that Canada failed Indigenous people – Canada just failed. It wasn't a mob of racists that released a killer onto the streets – it was 12 regular Canadians.

These are Canadians who have lived their entire lives hearing excuses for why they don't need to care about Indians. Why care about tainted drinking water on reserves? *'Those greedy chiefs are probably taking the money, those Indians need to sort themselves out first.'* Why care about the crisis in Thunder Bay? *'It's Indians killing Indians, Indians drinking too much and falling in the water, what are we supposed to do?'* For every problem that Indians face in this country, there is a ready excuse, a fig leaf, to shield Canada from blame.

If you don't know how it is that so many reserves live in poverty, or why the prisons are full of our people, or why there are so many suicides, boil-water advisories, why there are so many Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, why any of the dysfunction and failure and tragedy that is the "Indian Problem" in this country exists, look for your answer in the Gerald Stanley verdict.

To find Gerald Stanley guilty, would be to find him responsible for his actions—actions which resulted in the death of Colten Boushie, an Indian. But we don't do that in this country. White Canada is not to be held responsible for what has happened to Indians.

The school that teaches you to run, also teaches you that you're the good guys in this story, and that everything that has befallen our Indian race was inevitable, it came on us like a force of nature. Who can blame you for a flood or an ice storm? Who can blame you for tainted water, or blame Gerald Stanley for just doing what any of you would do in the same situation? The jury decided that blame, as always, belonged to the Indian, for trespassing on this farm and putting himself in harm's way. The best of you will shake your head and pity him, the poor animal, for not knowing better—but what can you do?

I feared that the jury would come down with a manslaughter conviction instead of the murder conviction that was due. No part of me thought they would let him go and believe this story. I honestly thought it was hyperbole to think that Stanley could get away with what he did, because as bad as some people say it all is, people claim to have good intentions, and things are better, aren't they?

But they're not. That's what the verdict shows. That's why she's running.

Robert Jago is an Indigenous commentator and this article was originally published on MEDIA INDIGENA.

Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights - Succeeds!

By Esther Townshend

In June 2017 I joined a group walking from Kitchener-Waterloo to Ottawa, called the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights. Organized by Menonite Church Canada – Indigenous-Settler Relations and Christian Peacemaker Teams – Indigenous Peoples Solidarity, the pilgrimage had two primary goals: to visit churches to foster conversations about the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)* and its role as a framework for reconciliation; and to call on the Canadian government to fulfill its promise to implement UNDRIP. In particular, we walked in support of Bill C-262, a private member's bill by MP Romeo Saganash that provides a legislative framework for UNDRIP's implementation.

The most common question we were asked, by our church hosts, by reporters, and others, was simply, "Why are you walking?" Walking 600 km is not something normal in our society. My initial answer was that Indigenous communities have devoted their time and energy to rights advocacy, land defense, and water protection for decades, and that settlers also have a responsibility to participate in this work. I wanted to take some time out of my routine intentionally to

reflect on my responsibilities as a settler on Turtle Island. It seemed right to do this in community, at a walking pace.

If I'm truly honest, part of my answer is also that the pilgrimage promised to be exciting. And it was. We had the opportunity to walk alongside and learn from Indigenous leaders including Romeo Saganash, Leah Gazan, Pat Makokis, Myeengun Henry, James Bartleman, and Sylvia McAdam. We were welcomed by Shabot Obadiwan First Nation, whose Chief Doreen Davis sat with us for hours sharing heart-stopping stories of her community's successful resistance to uranium mining and military tests on their land. We arrived in Ottawa to the sound of church bells and applause, and marched through the streets near Parliament. We were photographed, filmed, and interviewed.

Walking along the shoulder of Highway 7 for ten days, past forests, fields, rivers, houses, strip malls, and far too much windblown garbage, I could see that what settler society has done to this land cannot be undone. We don't fully know what is needed to make things right. Seeking to walk with Indigenous peoples, we are working for a justice that is beyond our vision that we will only discover in conversation, over generations.

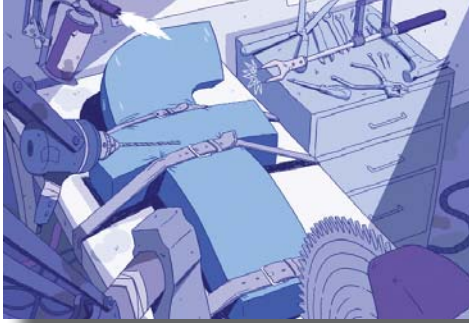
May the Creator open our hearts to listen, and to act when we are called upon.

Esther is a member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams and lives in Toronto.



February 7, 2018 the Canadian House of Commons voted in favour of Bill C-262, An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

How to Fix Facebook – Before It Fixes Us



By Roger McNamee
published in Washington Monthly
Jan/Feb/Mar 2018

Review by Leo Reilly CSB

Roger McNamee, was an important early investor in Facebook. who began to notice strange and unexpected results appearing on important public issues.

He is now working with American legislators to force the big-data medium to make the changes needed to protect the public from predatory practices. He has developed a list of changes that must be made to ensure fairness in the use of the medium. If such an important medium can be so easily abused, think of what a positive effect it might have if used without prejudice and deceit.

It shows how the big-data Facebook and Google medium was sabotaged by the Russians in favour of Trump and Brexit.

The Maginot Line of USA Defence, costing fifty-seven percent of the American budget, was subverted for the cost of one F-35 plane, a tiny, tiny fraction of the trillion dollars Lockheed-Martin received to develop the aircraft.

We condemn the Russians for this subversion of values and sewing of discord, but we must recognize their success in having a few experts manipulate social media, especially Facebook, to exert control of American politics and to break up the European Union through Brexit. The success illustrates the fact observed by McLuhan that academics are moving from the ivory tower to the control tower of society and that information is the only commodity of any value.

The conspirators appealed to the worst instincts of those they exploited, the area furthest down on the brainstem, where racism, prejudice, and greed are strongest. They took on multiple false identities and sowed millions of highly unlikely messages in Britain to targeted individuals and groups claiming that Brexit would improve the National Health Service and increase job security.

The same tactics in the United States succeeded in puffing Trump's chances of election and undermining the candidacy of Hilary Clinton not on matters of substance but on issues of her appearance and likability.

Quotes from the Article

"Facebook, Google, and other social media platforms make their money from advertising. As with all ad-supported businesses, that means advertisers are the true customers, while audience members are the product."

"Facebook and Google with their vast reservoirs of real-time data on two billion individuals, can personalize the content seen by every user. The key to their business model is the use of algorithms, driven by individual user data, to show you stuff you're more likely to react to."

"The most important tool used by Facebook and Google to hold user attention is filter bubbles. Internet platforms on smartphones self-segregate people into like-minded filter bubbles, reducing the risk of exposure to challenging ideas. The use of algorithms to give consumers "what they want," leads to an unending stream of posts that confirm each user's existing beliefs."

"We theorized that the Russians had identified a set of users who favored Trump's crude message and anti-Clinton conspiracy theories. They used Facebook's advertising tools to identify users with similar profiles, and used ads to persuade those people to join groups of Trump supporters."

"Trolls and bots impersonating Americans created the illusion of greater support for radical ideas than actually existed. Real users then shared them on their own news feeds, so that small investments in advertising and memes posted to Facebook groups would reach tens of millions of people."

"We need regulatory fixes.
Here are a few ideas.

- It's essential to ban digital bots that impersonate humans.
- Platforms must be transparent about who is behind political and issues-based communication.
- Users deserve to know why they see what they see in their news feeds
- Platforms must be more transparent about their algorithms and search results.
- There must be limits on the commercial exploitation of consumer data
- Consumers, not the platforms, should own their own data"

Roger McNamee is the managing director and a cofounder of Elevation Partners, an investment partnership focused on media and consumer technology.

Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity

Justice after an 11-Year Battle

Canada finally acts to protect human rights in the mining industry by creating an Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE).

By Luke Stocking

“Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart” (Luke 18:1). So begins the parable of the widow and the unjust judge.

Since the day I began working at Development and Peace more than 11 years ago I have felt like that widow time and time again, seeking justice. Our members and supporters all across Canada have felt like that widow. We send postcard after postcard, literally hundreds of thousands of them, to people in government — people with power. We ask them for justice for the poorest of our brothers and sisters in the world.

About 500,000 of those postcards, the first sent in 2006, called specifically for mining justice, including the establishment of an independent ombudsperson. An ombudsperson, we said, would have the power to investigate claims of human rights violations carried out overseas by Canadian extractive companies and to make its findings and recommendations public.

On Jan. 17, more than 11 years after that first postcard was sent, the widow was given justice. In a press conference on Parliament Hill, Federal Trade Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne announced the creation of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE).

This office will help to ensure that the voices of people in the global South who allege their human rights are violated by Canadian companies are heard. It will investigate allegations of abuse and make its findings public. In response to a request from the mining industry, the mandate will expand beyond extractives like mining, oil and gas to include the garment industry.

Eventually it is expected to cover all business sectors operating internationally. Even better.

As a Development and Peace rookie many years ago, I had no idea there were issues involving Canadian mining companies. But I learned there were many and, of all the stories, the story of Pedro Landa’s ring finger had the biggest impact on me.

Pedro is from Honduras. I met him in 2008 while he was on a Canadian speaking tour to tell people how De-



velopment and Peace donations were being used to help Hondurans affected by our mining companies. We heard stories of rivers being sucked dry for open-pit mining operations, displaced communities and, most horrifically, people being allowed to drink from wells that a company knew had been poisoned by a mine.

We got to know each other, spending many hours on the road during the tour. I learned about his wife and children. Pedro was happily married and yet I noticed that he did not wear a wedding ring. I asked him about it. He told me that because of what gold min-

ing had done to Honduras, he and his wife could no longer see in their rings a symbol worthy of the sacrament of marriage. It was a greater sign of their marriage, they decided, to melt down the rings and use the money to further their work for mining justice.

When Development and Peace first launched our mining campaign, few Canadians understood what was going on. Eleven years later a veritable movement from across Canadian civil society has led to a wide awareness about the issue.

With the Jan. 17 announcement, it has also resulted in a big part of a solution. And the Church was a part of it.

Through Development and Peace, the Church exercises her voice for justice. No other body in Canada has the ability to gather 500,000 signed postcards from every corner of the country and deliver them to Parliament Hill.

There are so many stories and images that flood my mind as I recall all the work to arrive here. From teaching kids about the issue through our cookie mining activity to organizing our voice for justice rally on Parliament Hill, one realizes there is a complex beauty to the length of time that social change involves. It is worthwhile to reflect on that in our hyper-speed world where everybody wants everything by yesterday. Social media is an instant. Social change is 11 years.

Ask the widow. She knows. And today we celebrate with her.

Luke is Central Ontario animator with the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

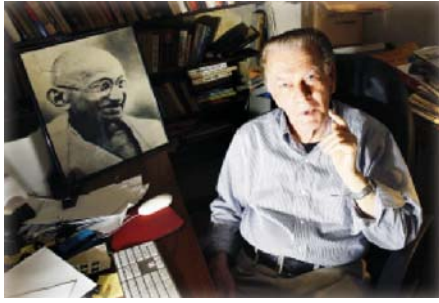


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Gene Sharp, an obscure American political scientist whose writing on non-violent political resistance ended up being an inspiring influence on the Arab Spring, has died peacefully at home at the age of 90.

Sharp distilled the wisdom of icons of non-violent struggle against oppression down the ages, put his own spin on it and disseminated the philosophy around the world, most famously in his seminal work *From Dictatorship to Democracy* which became in effect a handbook for non-violent revolt.

It has been translated, often by activists themselves, into dozens of languages and cited directly in many grassroots uprisings and protests.

The retired professor believed fervently in the power of ordinary people to disempower dictators, motivating resistance leaders in the face of fear and violence with the idea that bullies ultimately could not rule if the masses withheld their support.

Jamila Raqib, the executive director of the Albert Einstein Institution he founded in 1983, said Sharp was

Gene Sharp Wrote the Manual for Nonviolent Tactics in the Struggle Against Political Oppression

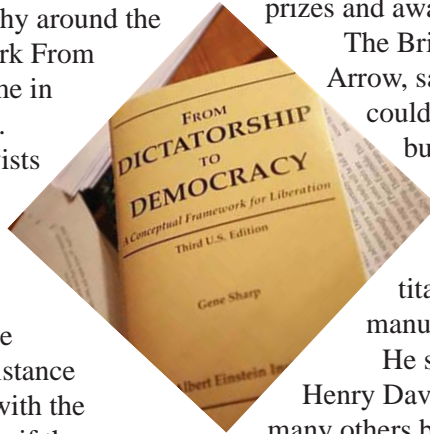
(The Guardian – 11 Feb 2018)

less an activist than an intellectual and an advocate. But his passion in empowering the grassroots with the belief that people could rebel successfully using non-violent means enraged dictators.

Sharp was nominated for the Nobel peace prize multiple times. He never won it but received many other prizes and awards for his work.

The British journalist and film-maker Ruaridh Arrow, said Sharp was painfully aware that resistance could cost lives. “You will sustain casualties, but fewer casualties than if you resort to violence. And non-violent action can make the transition to democracy easier. Sharp examined the models and strategies of titans of non-violence and basically put it in a manual,”

He said that Sharp admired icons such as Gandhi, Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King Jr and many others but he did not so much argue for the moral values of non-violent resistance as the sheer pragmatism and effectiveness of it. Sharp argued that that could mean the masses all staying at home, refusing to participate in a society’s everyday functioning.



Blessed are the Peacemakers
for they will be called children of God
(Matthew 5:9)

By John Dear

This one verse throws out thousands of years of belief in a violent god and every reference to a war-making god in the Hebrew Scriptures. It does away with any spiritual justification for warfare.

With this Beatitude, Jesus announces that God is a peacemaker. Everyone who becomes a peacemaker is therefore a son or daughter of the God of peace. With this teaching, Jesus describes the nature of God as nonviolent and peaceful.

It opens vast new vistas in our imaginations about what the living God is actually like, and what God’s reign might be like. With this Beatitude, we glimpse the nonviolence of heaven and join the global struggle to abolish war and



pursue a new world of nonviolence here on earth. . . .

As peacemakers, we are nonviolent to ourselves, nonviolent to all others, all creatures, and all creation, and we work publicly for a new world of nonviolence. . . .

[We are called to] speak out against every aspect of violence—poverty, war, racism, police brutality, gun violence, nuclear weapons, and environmental destruction—and at the same time call for a new culture of peace.

From The Beatitudes of Peace: Meditations on the Beatitudes, Peacemaking and the Spiritual Life.

Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity