

Globalization and Society in India (GSI) Working Group  
invite you to a talk by  
**Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar and Ms. Melanie P. Kumar**

## Non-Violent Resistance Today - Issues, Strategies and Challenges

When: 12:00 noon, Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Where: Mason Hall Edwin Meese III Conf. Rm.

Lunch will be served

The essential argument of non-violent resistance is not simply the abstention from using physical force to achieve the objective, but a full engagement in resisting oppression, domination and other forms of injustice. It can thus be applied to oppose both direct and indirect/structural violence.

The overall field of non-violent theory is generally divided between two sub-schools of thought. 'Principled Non-Violence' refers to the approach which advocates the recourse to non-violent resistance for religious, moral or philosophical reasons; in other words by conviction rather than by expediency. The key elements of principled non-violence were most clearly formulated by Mahatma Gandhi. Contemporary approaches to principled non-violence have clarified the linkage between Gandhian theory and the integrative goals of conflict transformation.

If Mahatma Gandhi was the philosopher of non-violence, Gene Sharp embodies the pragmatic, strategic approach to non-violent resistance. He justifies the recourse to civil resistance on strategic grounds. Empirical evidence reveals that in most cases of non-violent resistance in recent history, leaders were not motivated by a principled commitment to the avoidance of bloodshed. Instead, they selected the strategy to defeat a particular opponent with the most effective and least costly means at hand.

Strategic non-violent scholars overstress the role of agency in promoting political change. They put primary emphasis on internal and organizational factors of effectiveness, as opposed to the external conditions in which the activists operate. The role of external factors in influencing the outcome of non-violent struggles has recently been reasserted by scholars. Despite the dissimilarities and tensions between the Gandhian and 'Sharpian' approaches, it appears that the principled and pragmatic arguments do not exclude each other. In the end, both unite in practice and in most situations.

The need of the hour is the identification of structures of oppression and power asymmetry around the world, and the integration of non-violent resistance and local self-empowerment strategies into conflict-intervention scenarios, so as to promote indigenous, sustainable conflict resolution and peace-building processes.

Dr. Kumar is Professor of Political Science, and Director, Centre for Gandhian Studies at Bangalore University and Ms. Melanie P. Kumar is an independent writer. They both live in Bangalore, India.

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