

Mexico's PAN, Panama's Crusade follow KGB manual from Harvard

by D.E. Pettingell

Gene Sharp, the author of one of the most sophisticated KGB-style low-intensity warfare manuals, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, has become a household name among militants of both Mexico's neo-fascist National Action Party (PAN) and Panama's impotent opposition organization, the National Civic Crusade. Both the PAN and the Civic Crusade have taken Sharp's work, prepared under the auspices of Harvard University's Center for International Affairs, as the "bible" in their efforts to disrupt and overthrow the constitutional governments of Mexico and Panama.

Between January and April of this year, about 200,000 PAN fanatics have attended intensive 15-hour seminars on weekends in approximately 35 cities in 19 Mexican states. "The war we are getting ready for could be waged after the July 6 elections," stated Hector Valenzuela recently. He is one of the PAN instructors who uses Sharp's manual. On that date, Mexico will be holding the most hotly contested presidential elections in over half a century. The PAN has threatened to use every form of "nonviolent" method proposed in Sharp's book to fight the Mexican government's alleged "vote fraud."

With Sharp's approval, PAN leader Jaime González Bernal, published *La Lucha Política No Violenta: Criterios y Técnicas (The Nonviolent Political Fight: Criteria and Techniques)* which adapts Sharp's methods to Mexican political "realities."

The training sessions are aimed at brainwashing "nonviolent activists" into provoking the "brutal repression" by the "opponent" or "regime," in Sharp's terms; and learning to suffer and develop "lack of fear" by resisting violence. "It is important . . . to maintain nonviolent discipline even in the face of brutal repression," Sharp recommends. "The opponent's own citizens, agents, and troops, disturbed by brutalities against nonviolent people, may begin to doubt the justice of this policy. Their initial uneasiness may grow into internal dissent."

The PAN instructors have stated that street riots and demonstrations will break out after the elections, leading the Mexican government to use force to restore order. "We want to give the government the opportunity to use violence," said Rodrigo Amerlinck, a Sharp pupil. "This would progressively weaken it."

The fundamental thesis of Sharp's work is that the "power" of the "governments and hierarchical systems depend on the obedience, assistance, and cooperation of the people which they rule." If these people decide to "limit or withhold" their contributions and obedience to the system, then the "regime will have to come to terms or it will be collapsed."

On May 29, PAN presidential candidate Manuel Clouthier proved that Sharp's "nonviolent" recommendations can blow up the country if applied nationwide, as they intend to do in July. Clouthier led thousands of PAN "nonviolent activists" in blocking 70 of Mexico's 75 major highways and the Laredo, Texas international bridge on the U.S.-Mexico border in protest against the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) for robbing the PAN of local elections in Monclova, south of the Texas border.

The PAN has gone so far as to suggest that, as Sharp's manual recommends, they might decide to "boycott the elections" (p. 291). "Where there is reason to believe that an election will not be conducted fairly or where there is refusal to recognize the authority of the regime conducting the election, an opposition movement may refuse to put up candidates and may urge people to refuse to vote." An alternative to this, according to Sharp, is to "boycott legislative bodies" by refusing to be sworn in or participate. "This would remove the facade of democracy," Sharp argues. On a number of occasions, PAN local congressmen have resigned elected posts in northern states to show their "noncooperation" with the "opponent" and seek media attention.

The apostle of chaos

Sharp spent most of the 1950s in Oslo, Norway writing, lecturing, and doing research at both the Institute for Philosophy of the University of Oslo and the Institute for Social Research, the grandfather of all "peace research" worldwide. The first version of Sharp's manual, titled *The Methods of Nonviolent Resistance and Direct Action*, was published by the Institute for Social Research in 1960. Both institutes have been penetrated by East bloc intelligence for decades.

During the late 1950s, Sharp contributed to creating the "pacifist" movement with such East bloc agents as Arne Naess and Johan Galtung (see article, page 55), whose works on "nonviolence" and "economic sanctions" represent an

important part of Sharp's bibliography.

In 1953, Sharp was imprisoned as a "conscientious objector" serving nine months of a two-year sentence. He was supported in his position by Albert Einstein. A year later, 1954, Sharp served as "personal secretary" to A.J. Muste, America's leading pacifist.

Through his role as an independent socialist in the 1930s, Muste was associated with, and trained many of the leading figures of today's Project Democracy. Muste and his associates drew upon the sociological theories of James Burnham, who advocated the destruction of the nation state. The echoes of this outlook are heard today in the ideas of "right-wing" social democratic spokesmen like Jeane Kirkpatrick. Also prominent in these circles are people like the RAND Corporation's Albert Wohlstetter, former Pentagon official Richard Perle, and their disciple, the State Department's Elliott Abrams.

Sharp's "nonviolent" tactics were put into practice during the 1960s anti-war mobilizations throughout the West. The counterculture of drugs, free sex, and "peace" that took over American youth in the 1960s is, in part, a by-product of Sharp's teachings. In his manual, Sharp states that "rock music" is a way of "nonviolent protest" and "persuasion." American rock music of the 1960s, he writes, conveyed "dissent and dissatisfaction," as did Bob Dylan's song, "Blowin' in the Wind."

In 1965, Sharp moved to Massachusetts where he is currently lecturing at Harvard University. He has become a "guru." "Nonviolent activists" from the United States and other parts of the world visit him in his Boston home to hear his advice.

In the fall of 1987, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) set up a meeting between Sharp and leading members of Panama's Civic Crusade. According to sources close to the Crusade, Sharp presented them with a "broad range" of options to overthrow Gen. Manuel A. Noriega, most of which have been adopted by both the Crusade and the U.S. government.

Panama: a case study

Elliott Abrams, in his capacity as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, sold the Reagan administration the idea of giving diplomatic recognition to Eric Delvalle as the "legitimate" President of Panama after Delvalle had been constitutionally removed. Abrams was borrowing a page from Sharp's manual. On page 423, Sharp writes that one of the "methods of nonviolent political intervention" involves the "creation of a new government, or continued loyalty to an existent rival government to that of the opponent. If the parallel government receives overwhelming support from the populace, it may replace the opponent's established government." The U.S. recognition of a Panamanian "parallel" government turned out to be the Reagan administration's biggest foreign policy embarrassment.

Sharp also recommends that the "parallel government," in this case Delvalle's, seek "diplomatic recognition" from

other states. To date, the U.S. government continues to "recognize" Delvalle's "ambassador," refusing to accept credentials from anyone representing the constitutional government of Panama.

The economically unprecedented measures taken by the administration against Panama can be found in Sharp's work. Among the "methods of economic intervention," Sharp recommends "impounding or confiscating of assets," including "blocking the use of bank accounts, or of securities in brokerage accounts; preventing the payment of interest or dividends to enemy countries." (p. 410). Panama has been subjected to every one of these "nonviolent" actions by the administration.

In addition, Sharp points out that the "economy can be disrupted by monetary means" just as the Reagan administration did in preventing U.S. dollars from being sent to Panama, where dollars are the national currency.

The idea of setting up "alternative communications" (p. 400) such as the clandestine radio station recently approved by the CIA to be set up by the Crusade in Panama, comes from Sharp as well. The project folded after Delvalle disclosed the "secret" to a U.S. publication.

"One sanction sometimes used by international bodies against States . . . is expulsion from membership" (p. 346). Whether they know it or not, the other member nations of the Contadora and Contadora support Group of Eight—Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay—were shamefully following Sharp's recommendations when they "temporarily suspended" Panama last March to show the Group's "disappointment" with internal events in Panama.

According to sources close to the Panamanian opposition, there were a number of additional recommendations Sharp made to Crusade leaders, but which they refused to follow, such as carrying out "rude gestures" like "lowering their trousers" in front of the U.S. Embassy in Panama, voluntary "destruction of own property," and fasting in order to "demonstrate the intensity of one's feelings of opposition." The Crusade argued that such "tactics," although they may prove effective in practice, "contradict" their "lifestyle." They refused to burn their BMWs.

Sharp's methods have not succeeded in overthrowing the Panamanian government due to the rather cosmetic nature of the so-called "opposition."

In Mexico, however, the government is confronted with a much more dangerous problem. The PAN has taken advantage of the population's dissatisfaction with the Mexican government's capitulation to foreign creditors and plans to channel the discontent to create chaos. Since the ruling PRI party has largely lost its ability to win an election fairly, some sections of the PRI will likely resort to fraud. For national security reasons, it would be advisable for the Mexican government to divorce itself from the type of foreign-imposed genocidal policies which have already taken a very high toll in weakening its political and electoral clout.