Gene Sharp: More Anarchist than Neoliberal[1]

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Abstract

In the wake of the so-called Arab Spring, early efforts to explain the events in European and US media focused on the influence of the ideas of nonviolence scholar Gene Sharp. Irrespective of the accuracy of these efforts, this led to greater engagement with his contributions to the field of nonviolent resistance. However, Marcie Smith's (2019a) appraisal of Sharp has levelled the serious accusation that he willingly contributed to US hegemony and economic neoliberalism. Alternatively, this paper presents the complex, context-specific circumstances of nonviolence in Eastern Europe, as well as the emergence of neoliberalism from Poland's Solidarity movement—a heavily working-class resistance struggle against state socialism—to show that reducing nonviolent revolution to being responsible for reinforcing repressive systems, and reducing nonviolent revolution to Sharp's pragmatic turn, is a severe oversimplification. Moreover, Gene Sharp's writings are contextualised in relation to his more Anarchistic influences, in addition to Sharp's concerted engagement with and replication of Hannah Arendt's analysis of revolution and violence. It is argued that these largely overlooked elements of Sharp's work should be drawn on to transcend the dominant 'pragmatic nonviolence' association of his work, while informing our understanding of constructive resistance during campaigns for dignity, equality, freedom and alternatives to the capitalist system.

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Introduction

Marcie Smith's (2019a;2019b) recent research into Gene Sharp's life and work has levelled the serious accusation that he supported and advocated for neoliberalism through his work. Despite Smith's suggestion that this should not necessarily preclude Sharp's work from adoption by activists or practitioners, the implications of these accusations are clear in this period where resistance strategies are being urgently sought against neoliberalism and late capitalism, to avert the worst outcomes of man-made global warming, the marginalisation and precariousness of huge numbers of people around the world, as well as the host of social problems emerging in countries globally.

It is not immediately clear that Marcie Smith is necessarily denouncing nonviolence, although she launches a broader denunciation of nonviolent revolution in her second article on Sharp (Smith, 2019b), which requires the defence of nonviolent resistance more broadly in this essay, while offering an alternative take on Sharp's work. Neoliberalism has evidently been one of the most urgent problems requiring resistance for a significant period of time. In responding to broader criticisms of nonviolence that arise in Smith's work, I believe there is effective research in the nonviolence field noting the insufficient challenge to neoliberal structures and covering the potential of nonviolent social revolution (Johansen, 2007; Johansen, 2012), nonviolence's effectiveness in opposing US imperialism (Johansen, Martin & Meyer, 2012), as well as challenging some of the misrepresentations of nonviolence (Martin, 2008), all drawing on nonviolence's anarchistic-pacifistic tendencies. However, it is the more 'principled' basis in Sharp's work that I wish to return to here, because I think this is much more illuminating in revealing Sharp's position and indeed personal philosophy. My PhD thesis and other research over a seven-year period (see Brown, 2018;2019) in substantial part presented the far more diverse picture of nonviolent (and violent methods) used in Tunisia and the broader so-called Arab Spring, beyond a mere lazy replication of news reports concerning Sharp's dominant influence—although an engagement with his broader body of research presented me with a far more complex picture of the philosophy underpinning his theory of nonviolent action.

The discussion below will have five main parts. The first provides an introductory overview of Sharp's work, followed by the second section of a brief introduction to Marcie Smith's criticisms of Sharp. In dealing

with Smith's broader misrepresentations, the third section deals with the complexities of Communism's collapse in Eastern Europe, to which Smith does a significant disservice. the emergence of neoliberalism from Poland's Solidarity movement—a heavily working-class resistance struggle against state socialism—to show that reducing nonviolent revolution to being responsible for reinforcing repressive systems, and reducing nonviolent revolution to Sharp's pragmatic turn, is a severe oversimplification. Having noted the relevance of Arendt's ideas of revolution to resistance to Communism, the fourth section considers Sharp's *Social Power and Political Freedom*, given that Smith uses this text to support her position that Sharp was an advocate of neoliberalism. However, I consider this text to be most illuminating in terms of the continuation and development of his actual Anarchist adherence. In this regard, the fifth part focuses on Sharp's assessment and approval of Arendt's thought as expressed in *Social Power and Political Freedom*, particularly in relation to her analysis of the French and American revolutions. This actually situates Sharp's work far closer with the engagement with Arendt's thought in critical political theory of late. The sixth part draws on the events of the so-called Arab Spring to indicate the significance of Sharp's position via Arendt, rejecting unlike Smith his wholesale contribution but recovering the radical nature of Sharp's work for the present period.

Introductory Overview of Sharp's Work

Irrespective of one's perspective on Gene Sharp's work, the late academic's body of theory and research has left a profound legacy within the peace and nonviolence field. Very broadly, Sharp's work may be broken down into several rough phases. Sharp initially focused on analysing Gandhi's conceptualisation and practice of nonviolence in the 1950s and 1960s (Sharp, 1960). Sharp's anarchist leanings are apparent in some of his earlier writings (Sharp, 1964), which is explored further below. As a second phase, Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent* Action was published in 1973, which emphasised the pragmatic elements in the nonviolent action of Gandhi and others. He elaborated on this in further texts in the 1970s (Sharp, 1979;1980). The third phase relates to his concerted effort to have civilian-based defence (CBD) introduced as a serious policy in the West during the later Cold War era (Sharp, 1985), although his work on this stretched back to the mid-1960s (Sharp, 1965). A fourth phase broadly relates to Sharp's (1973) work being used as the basis of development of strategic nonviolence

since the 1990s (see Ackerman and Kruegler, 1994), with *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (Sharp, 2008**)** as more of an accessible handbook of Sharp's ideas seeing prominence in the academic field. A fifth although related phase is the considerable interest Sharp's work received in the wake of the 2010/11 WANA revolutions, given the misplaced emphasis particularly in minority world media of his purported influence on events (See Brown, 2019).

I anticipate that this provides an objective sense of the broad trends of Sharp's work for an unfamiliar reader, without entering into discussion about his affiliations and associations. Inevitably, this is quite a simplification and reduction of Sharp's varied focuses and concerns; this may be somewhat conveyed by contrasting his broad bibliographic work *Nonviolent Action: A Research Guide* (McCarthy & Sharp, 1997) and his rather obscure contribution to the field in a pamphlet on nonviolent resistance and Welsh independence (Sharp, 1958).

Smith's Criticisms of Sharp

Marcie Smith's (2019a) critical biographical analysis of Gene Sharp and his work deserves to be read closely, particularly for its emphasis on the need to tackle neoliberalism and ensure the capacity to introduce alternatives to it through the means of social change, something she believes has been lacking in nonviolent revolutions in the 'Sharpian' model. In the second part of Smith's (2019b) analysis, her critique is broadened and deepened against 'nonviolent revolution'. Although part of my response here is focused on some of the omissions that Smith in dealing with Sharp's *Social Power and Political Freedom*—the book where she states Sharp offers 'his critique of the "centralised state" most candidly and thoroughly' (Smith, 2019a)—by broadening her criticism to nonviolent revolution generally, this creates further problems for her argument that need challenging.

Ultimately, in addition to the aspects of nonviolence research outlined above concerning established connections to anarchist theory and practice and challenges to imperialism, there is also established criticism in the critical nonviolence field and among advocates of nonviolent revolution of the neoliberal outcomes and enduring structural violence following the revolutions that Marcie Smith mentions. This is specifically the case during the USSR's collapse and coloured revolutions, with Johansen (2007) advocating deeper nonviolent social revolution in this regard (157-158). Moreover, in relation to Eastern European resistance to the USSR, as well

as the concept of CBD, Smith (2019b) engages in over-simplifications that enable Sharp's influence to be misconstrued and overstated.

Smith's fundamental argument made about Sharp's theory of state transformation is that it was 'easily compatible, philosophically and practically, with neoliberal free market fantasies and programs of vast privatisation—as demonstrated by the course of the USSR's collapse and the Colour Revolutions, where Sharp's ideas were pivotal' (Smith, 2019a). The neoliberal turn was 'aided by Sharp's politics of nonviolent action [and] has produced the "State decentralisation" Sharp favoured. In practice, this has meant deregulation of industry, privatization of public assets, deep tax cuts for the wealthiest, austerity for the rest'. Smith states that Sharp 'was an undercover idealist, like many of his compatriots from the high Cold War era, and he believed that liberalism could deliver a world without violence'. Yet essentially and quite simply, the issue with Smith's portrayal of Sharp's position is that it glaringly omits certain crucial details about: resistance to communism in Eastern Europe and its collapse; commentary (albeit brief) by Sharp on economics; Sharp's more substantial engagement with Hannah Arendt's work An *Social Power and Political Freedom*.

Clearly, I cannot cover everything in Smith's (2019a;2019b) two-part article comprising nearly 50,000 words, so I have forfeited any thorough comments on Sharp's influence on the Movement for a New Society (MNS). However, notably Smith's criticisms borrow heavily from what she calls the 'sympathetic' analysis of MNS provided by Cornell (2011), while severely underplaying the robust self-criticism by the MNS relating to their neglection of class (44-45), emphasis on consensus decision making (47-49,173) and how this hindered the response to Reaganite neoliberalism (48-49). Many activists acknowledge the shortcomings of consensus decision making; I discussed this with former and present members of War Resisters' International, whose training manuals are cognisant of class-based socialist politics, and advocate for grassroots, decentralised action in the form of constructive work (Hedemann, 1986). Training in nonviolence is by no means a homogeneous field—neither is 'nonviolent revolution' comprehensively orientated around Sharp—the shortcomings Smith identifies in the MNS have been applied to the post-1968 "New Left" more broadly, too immersed in identity politics and 'lifestyle over strategic organising' (see Cornell, 2011:39-42; Fremion, 2002:207-208), thus a form of individualising 'self-improvement' amenable to easy to commodification and marketisation (Curtis, 2016).

Resistance to Communism in Eastern Europe

The Baltic States' Independence

Smith (2019c) situates Sharp at the heart of the US Cold War defence establishment, suggesting his 'nonviolent weapons system was in fact used to help achieve the ultimate Cold War goal: collapsing the Soviet Union'. Working through the CfIA at Harvard and the Albert Einstein Institute (AEI), 'Sharp and colleagues […] provided nonviolent action training directly to secessionist leadership in the Baltics and Russia, making several in-person trips to the region to provide on-the-ground consultation' (Smith, 2019c). Smith uses George Lakey's (2019) acknowledgement of Sharp's influence against him, positing elsewhere that 'Sharp offered up the art of protest to the US government for anti-communist purposes abroad' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). Even if the latter was convincing, the actual significance of this collaboration and the use of nonviolent action for 'anti-communist purposes' must be contextualised within the legacy of resistance in Eastern Europe.

It is difficult not to see Smith's emphasis on Sharp's physical proximity to the USSR's collapse as playing fast and loose with history, overlooking broader complexities in order to emphasise Sharp's contribution. Notably, there is a well-established criticism of the Sharp-Ackerman axis of nonviolent action within the critical resistance/ nonviolent revolution literature (Jackson, 2015; Chabot, 2015; Brown, 2018), although Smith's relation of this axis' relevance to events in the Baltics is somewhat problematic:

> AEI's first dramatic success came at the end of the 1980s, when Sharp and Ackerman met and began corresponding with the leadership of nationalist separatist movements in the Soviet Union, namely those of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Here, the NED was also at work […] In March of 1990, riding on the momentum of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Lithuania became the first soviet to assert its independence from the USSR. In mid-1990, Sajudis member and director-general of the Lithuanian Department of National Defense Audrius Butkevicius "had Gene Sharp's *Civilian-based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System* translated into Lithuanian for use by government officials." In January 1991, in effort to quell the Lithuanian rebellion, Gorbachev

> deployed tanks to Vilnius. The plan backfired, per Sharp's political jiu-jitsu. Eleven civilians ended up dead, and by April 1991, Estonia, Latvia, and Georgia, had also announced their secession from the Union. At the end of April, in the midst of the power struggle, Sharp and Ackerman made a personal visit to the Baltics (Smith, 2019a).

First, the Baltics' separatist and secessionist movements should be considered in historical context—as well as their country-specific circumstances and diversity of resistance (see Eglitis, 1993:2,4; Miniotaite, 2002:1-9,15-16,25-26). Importantly, in 1991, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were not newly independent, instead seeking to re-establish their inter-war independence (Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:x-xi; Miniotaite, 2002:11-24,36); Smith may rightly emphasise the more problematic nationalist elements, yet Soviet imperialism is hardly the noble counterweight.

Concerning nonviolent resistance, Eglitis (1993) suggested a prominent reason for this was the futility and devastation of World War Two and subsequent guerrilla warfare (42; see Lowe, 2012).[2] While Smith (2019a) focuses on the late 1980s, it was from the mid-1980s that a renewed impetus was provided to resistance in the Baltics following Gorbachev's announcement of *perestroika* and *glasnost* (Eglitis, 1998:8; Miniotaite, 2002:25)—itself potentially informed by events such as Solidarity in Poland (Schell, 2002:211; Roberts, 1991:10; Bunce, 1999:67)—with strong resistance elements including but not limited to struggles around ecological issues (Eglitis, 1993:8-9; Miniotaite, 2002:25). Revelations in the late 80s about the Secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact led to further anger, and in Lithuania on November 16, 1989, it was the communists who told Moscow they intended to form their own party (Roberts, 1991:27; Petersen, 2001:257). Thus, as with the so-called Arab Spring, any impact of Sharp's work must be seen in the context of far longer running resistance.

Sharp and Jenkins' (1992) booklet published the year after the USSR's collapse is insightful, raising significant questions concerning the degree of Sharp's influence. While some of his CBD ideas were evidently incorporated into the Baltic states' defence planning in 1991 (60-62), this was in urgent circumstances where three states making significant moves towards re-establishing independence confronted Soviet troop occupations (Eglitis

2 This is also pertinent to Poland's 'rejection of political violence' (Smola, 2009:129,131-132; Michnik, 1985; Miłosz, 1985:iv; Schell, 1985:xxxvi).

1993:31-35; Miniotaite, 2002:58), a genuine prospect of large-scale Soviet invasion, coups d'état and slim if any chance of military resistance (Roberts, 1991:28). The details of the January 1991 civilian resistance to Soviet occupation of important infrastructure in Vilnius is of further importance in showing limited practical application of Sharp's ideas; Petersen (2001) noted that Lithuanians had forlornly armed themselves with 'shotguns and hunting rifles' in the parliament building, awaiting a possible assault by Soviet troops, with one guard reporting: 'The intention is not to win, because we all know that is impossible; the intention is to die, but by doing so to make sure that Moscow can't tell any lies as they did in 1940' (276-277). Even with weapons aside, Sharp's CBD is not simply an unarmed formula, but one which seeks to enable victory.

While elements of Sharp's broader nonviolence corpus may have been known to Baltic activists in the late 1980s, significantly, it was only at the end of 1990, following the declaration of independence, that Lithuania's government translated *Civilian-Based Defence* (Miniotaite, 2002:58)—within a context of interest in broader nonviolent literature (Miniotaite, 2002:59)—and in 1992 that Eastern language versions were produced (vi). For a system apparently backed and funded by the US Defence establishment, this seems a severe oversight. Such retrospectivity suggests no concerted policy existed around Sharp's CBD in the late 1980s, and nonviolent resistance in Sharp's conceptualisation—and still-nascent organised forms of CBD—were actually being informed by Eastern-European resistance generally, rather than the other way round. As Sharp and Jenkins acknowledge:

> Tis type of defence has its roots in several improvised defence struggles in Europe, as well as in much of the resistance and liberation struggles waged in Communist-ruled nations during the decades of totalitarian domination. However, in civilian-based defence this resistance is utilised in refined and strengthened forms (1992:vi,12).

Nevertheless, any effort at a formal CBD policy in the Baltics seems like a flash in the pan by 1992, with a turn away from non-military defence already being apparent (62; Roberts, 1991:36).

Collapse of the USSR

It is not my intention to replicate here the discussion and lack of consensus over the causes and complexities of the USSR's collapse, although it does not do to

overlook this. Beissinger (2002) effectively summed up the tension between 'agency' and 'structure' explanations (7-8) alongside his own suggestion that 'tidal influences of one nationalism on another' (36) and mobilisation around this played a substantial role (34-35,40,83; Roberts, 1991:32-34). One may also consider Beissinger's (2002) suggestion regarding a period of '"thickened history"' (36) from 1987-1991, where popular perceptions of the feasibility of the USSR's ongoing existence shifted incredibly rapidly. Based on everyday resistance in the realm of daily and cultural life through the 1970s and 1980s, longer arcs of resistance around diverse issues and manifestation of violent and nonviolent resistance (42,54,72-73,88; Petersen, 2001:236; Roberts, 1991:7)—including violent interethnic conflicts in the late 1980s (Beissinger, 2002:88-89)—the emerging field of resistance studies has much of relevance to offer here; whether in assessing the contribution of everyday resistance (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2020), constructive resistance (Sørensen, 2016**),** nonviolence interplay with violence (Brown, 2019), or specific dynamics such as overcoming 'the barrier of fear' (Brown, 2019).

Therefore, concerning events in Russia, Smith's (2019a) narrative of one man's impact or even Western influence—indeed narratives solely focused on the role of nonviolent action (see Roberts, 1991:3-5)—will not suffice. Far bigger processes were in motion than Smith's (2019a) emphasis on Yeltsin's team meeting with Sharp at the end of 1991. In June 1990 there had been the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian SFSR, which Beissinger (2002:404) noted 'borrowed heavily from the language of prior declarations about sovereignty' made by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Armenia and Georgia (Burbulis & Berdy, 2011:72). Even Smith's (2019a) pointing to a March 1991 referendum where over 75% of Soviet citizens supported the Union's continuance is a far more complex picture of question ambiguity, rigging and abstaining republics (Beissinger, 2002:405-406,420-421). Furthermore, Gorbachev's impending signing of the Novo-Ogareo treaty would have been the death knell (Beissinger, 2002:425) and indeed directly triggered the August 20th, 1991 coup by USSR government members, which Smith fails to mention (see Schell, 2002:215; Beissinger, 2002:428). Its failure ultimately sealed the fate of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)—its Central Committee being dissolved by Gorbachev—and the USSR, with Ukraine declaring independence, both on 24th August, and other republics following suit (Beissinger, 2002:428). Smith's (2019a) emphasis on Sharp, Ackerman and AEI wrapping up their Russia trip the day before the 8th December signing of the Belavezha Accords, 'formally

dissolving the USSR', smacks of historical negationism. Rather than guilt by proximity, it seems more likely to have been another vain attempt at promoting CBD, which makes greater sense in the context of the coup.

While the USSR's collapse can be extricated from any significant influence of Sharp's, regarding Marcie Smith's characterisation of Sharp as sympathetic to neoliberalism, the connections that she notes during the 1989-1991 period are ominous, and the milieu he and the AEI were working in should not be dismissed lightly. As Smith (2019a) states, a fundamental role in Russia's economic 'shock therapy' was played by Harvard University and the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID), described by Eun-jung (2015:130) as 'associated with the CFIA but structurally independent'. However, the HIID (formerly the Development Advisory Services), actually split from the CfIA at Harvard back in the 1960s. Again, the HIID, US government, World Bank, right-wing think tanks and Russian economists had well-established connections, including those in Yeltsin's team (Desai & Chubais, 2006:88-90; Gaidar, 1997; Eun-jung, 2015:126-128; Randle, 1991:79). At least from the mid-1980s, negotiations were ongoing between Gorbachev and Yeltsin around economic liberalisation and marketisation (Beissinger, 2002:413-414), far in advance of Sharp's visits. Ultimately, the issue I have with Sharp's supposed central position in this is not that he necessarily could not have supported neoliberalism, but rather that he, the AEI and nonviolent action are entirely extraneous to the economic processes that occurred.

There is an outstanding question of Sharp's affiliation as an intellectual, which should actually be a broader question for academics. Sharp could be considered to have made token protestation when pointing to the problem of continued 'elite rule' (Sharp & Jenkins, 1992:1)—which is inextricable from post-Soviet neoliberalism's entrenchment—believing that CBD would 'contribute to a more decentralised, less elitist, demilitarised Europe' (66). In an interview with Flintoff (2013) which raised his funding from the US Defense Department, Sharp stated: 'Governments–and other groups–should finance and conduct research into alternatives to violence'. So there is a question of engagement and complicity here, sins of omission and commission, and naivety. However, if Smith's suggestion is that mere engagement and discussion with opponents or people you disagree with may be later considered complicity, this seems like the worst case of "echo chambers" and some manner of joint enterprise principle. Moreover, does occupation of an academic position within a faculty automatically make

you complicit? Noam Chomsky's research at a department receiving military funding (Knight, 2018); Slavoj Žižek or Henry Giroux's participation in the neoliberal university system; Marcie Smith's affiliation with the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (2020), proud of its training programmes for 'law enforcement agencies'. This should also be born in mind as we turn to discuss CBD.

Civilian-Based Defence

Smith (2019b) seeks to create guilt by association for Sharp by pointing to his attendance with George Lakey at a 1964 conference on CBD, emphasising the co-attendees—renowned British military strategist B.H. Liddell Hart and Thomas Schelling—thus insinuating Sharp's and CBD's long-standing connection to the Western defence establishment. This is eminently unreasonable. First, numerous respected nonviolence theorists and practitioners attended (Roberts, 1967:14; see Mahadevan et al., 1967:255-256 for a more comprehensive list). Second, discussing a potential shift in state-based defence policy necessitates engagement with establishment figures who understand military defence (Roberts, 1967:14). Liddell-Hart's (1969) engagement was highly warranted given his insights into nonviolent resistance's effectiveness against Nazi Germany, gleaned from interrogating Wehrmacht generals (240,236-237). Schelling's (1969) offering does include a problematic suggestion of weaponizing civilian defence against Communist regimes through supporting 'civilian offence' (354); even if this was pursued and Sharp contributed to its exploration, as explained above the practical effect seems minimal.

Importantly, CBD theorists derived far more lessons from the historical grassroots and 'spontaneous' cases of civil resistance against Communist regimes in Easter Europe than they ever taught, including the 1956 Hungarian revolution and 1968 Prague Spring that were central to a long arc of resistance to Communist regimes (Roberts, 1969:7-16; 1991:18-19,34; Sharp, 1985:4-5,78,181). This recalls the relationship of Sharp's ideas to the 2010/11 WANA events. The edited texts that were an outcome of the 1964 conference (Roberts, 1967:13; 1969) repeatedly stressed the nascent stage of CBD's development as policy, something reiterated by Sharp in 1985 (viii-ix,xi,4-5). Although Smith (2019b) is quick to dismiss Lakey's (2019) suggestion that Sharp was driven by his pacifist concerns, abolishing war was a clear priority and something Sharp (1965) linked to early socialist doctrine's anti-militarism, 'to abolish capitalism and tyranny as well as the

state itself' (63,5,61-63; Sharp, 1985:178-179). Combined with a Gandhian decentralisation of society and 'active participating democracy' (Sharp, 1967:44-45), this anti-militarism is important because it informed and fed into Sharp's (1965:43-45) clear position that it is Western states, specifically Europe, that should adopt civilian defence—with the emphasis clearly on self-defence (66; Sharp, 1969:119; Sharp, 1985:vii,1-2), thus removing US influence (Sharp, 1985:vii). Unless Sharp was engaging in some cunning on the part of the defence establishment, the kindest thing we can say is that he was both naïve in terms of his belief in influence, and largely overtaken by events in Eastern Europe.

It is also somewhat ironic that Smith, having emphasised the common nonviolent weapon of class struggle as being the strike, finds a mirror in most of the examples compiled by Sharp and others of civil resistance that could inform CBD being strike actions (Roberts, 1967:9; Sharp, 1969:110,116-117). Indeed, Sharp (1965:53; 1985:113-115) goes so far as to call the strategy of a general strike (in self-defence) a 'nonviolent blitzkrieg'. Of Sharp's (1969) 84 examples of nonviolent action listen, at least a quarter involved some manner of strike or general strike action; of the ten specifically listed as strikes and boycotts, he suggests 'many other cases of strikes and boycotts could be included' (122-124). Drawing on Ebert's (1969a) analysis, Roberts (1969) stresses that the 1953 East German uprising, 1956 Hungarian revolution and 1968 in Czechoslovakia used 'a means of action which effectively communicates to a Communist opponent *the genuinely proletarian nature* of the opposition he faces', catching them 'ideologically off balance' (16-17; Arendt, 1969:218-219). Acknowledgement of workers' militant action and economic activities such as strikes underpins understanding of nonviolent action in what proved a significant coagulation of research into the nascent nonviolence field (see Carter, Hoggett & Adams, 1970).

A further aspect of the discussion in Roberts' (1967;1969) edited volume also relates to the establishment of citizens' councils and workers' councils during civil resistance and revolution (Ebert, 1969; Carter, 1969:323-324), as a form of direct democracy with potential relevance to CBD. This is actually a further link to Sharp's (1980:141-159) replication of Arendt's (1969) work around this—explored in greater detail later, yet significant here as a strand of research in nonviolent revolution. Mindful of Smith's scepticism, Carter's (1969) contribution is notable in clearly acknowledging the potential problems of decentralisation of political and economic power not leading to 'the diffusion of power and responsibility'

(327), yet she clearly situates nonviolence as concerned with: 'opposition to economic inequality, discrimination and political oppression, and favours personal freedom and democratic forms of organisation in industry as well as politics' (331). This concerted bottom-up approach to CBD has continued in the form of 'social defence' (see Martin, 1993; Johansen & Martin, 2019).

Indeed, for Smith's critique of Sharp to stand up, one must accept that he was lying and deceiving in his stated position during the 1980s. He placed a clear onus on Western Europe to deescalate through CBD and thus encourage Eastern European Resistance, rather than some form of CBD being directly supported there (Sharp, 1985:8,83-84). Sharp (1985) points specifically to long-running resistance against Communist rule (93-94), suggesting that Solidarity in Poland 'and later resistance have done more to dismantle dictatorial Communist rule than anything the Pentagon has accomplished' (94,166). If one was splitting hairs, the Pentagon is not synonymous with the CIA.[3] Yet ultimately, although Smith tries to identify a clear 'Sharpian model' in the form of CBD, its significance is entirely misrepresented in the history of Eastern European resistance.

Resistance in Poland and the Emergence of Neo-Liberalism

Through considering Poland's Solidarity movement, significant evidence can be provided relating to how class struggle, or workers' struggle—as Smith (2019) rightly advocates reintroducing into resistance—does not guarantee an avoidance of neoliberalism. The vanguardism of political party elites seems to have been significantly responsible for the economic and political shift to the right. It is further apparent that with the critical resistance field's emerging focus on everyday resistance and constructive resistance, opposition to state socialism takes on an even more diverse and complex form.

Assessing the influences informing resistance to communism in Poland, no substantial detail can be replicated here, although context is obviously necessary to avoid gross simplifications (see Sørensen, 2017; Brown, 2018). Ultimately, nonviolent resistance and workers' struggle was

[3] Concerning the CIA's financial and material support for Solidarity, Jones (2018) suggests it was highly obfuscated and indirect (164-165), requires contextualisation within broader support and notably, one-third was given only in 1989 (309).

intimately connected (Osa, 2003:171-172; Michnik, 1985:45-51; Randle, 1991:48; Cirtautas, 1997:155). Both were fundamental to the principles of the Workers' Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników–KOR), founded in 1976 by dissident intellectuals and worker-intellectuals, rooted in strike action and workers' councils and whose members contributed prominently to Solidarity (Roberts, 1991:15; Cirtautas, 1997:172,180; Miłosz, 1985:xiii; Jones, 2018:17-18,29-31,48). The endogenous roots of nonviolence should also be emphasised. The Catholic Church's role in resistance was considerable, being intimately connected with the formation of the Polish state and a historical symbol of unity (Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:xiii; Milewski et al., 1985:348-349; Monticone, 1986:1,7-8,119-200). Polish Pope John Paul II's June 1979 visit to Poland provided spiritual and moral championing and galvanisation of existing discontent during the 1980-81 events (Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:29,196,205-207,213-214,221; Michnik, 1985:168). The KOR and Catholic Church both informed and continued to reaffirm the principles around nonviolence, as well as 'dignity, freedom, tolerance and inclusiveness' that shaped Solidarity from 1980-81 (Cirtautas, 1997:164,168,172,180; Michnik, 1985:168; Miłosz, 1985:ix,xi; Schell, 1985:xxvii-xxix; Smola, 2009:129).

Turning to the complexities of the class conflict and workers' struggle encapsulated in Solidarity, Solidarity's programme was very inclusive and its breadth of societal support considerable—a manifestation of 'anger, solidarity and democracy' (Ost, 2005:1)—leading Ash (1999) to suggest 'class struggle' is too simplistic to describe events (297,320). However, Cirtautas (1997) termed it fundamentally a 'class-based revolt from below', ironically a 'largely working-class revolt against a workers state' (7). This was 'very unskilled and poorly educated workers and peasants' against the party members and *nomenklatura*, the 'small "economic other"' (163; Ost, 2005:1). However, crucially the KOR also manifested a "new middle class", 'young, self-confident, educated, skilled workers who were demanding greater control over production processes' (Cirtautas, 1997:8; Ost, 2005:1; Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:181). Cirtautas (1997) observes that since 1989, 'the class that made the revolution' became: 'embattled as free market reforms and changes in property relations designed to produce a capitalist middle class threaten its socioeconomic standing'. Moreover, they were seen to threaten 'the viability of liberal capitalist socioeconomic and political transformation' (8). Nevertheless, one may perceive the seeds of an opposition elite that were able to easily shift away from socialism during the 1980s to embody the

capitalist class themselves, thus entrenching neoliberalism from 1989 (Ost, 2005:38).

Clearly, this elite did not hold entirely uniform perspectives advocating capitalism and forsaking workers (Ost, 2005:57)—as evidenced by the substantial volume of underground publications expressing myriad perspectives—although the post-martial law period and discussion over underground Solidarity's direction illuminates the coalescence of ideas around a market economy, criticism of labour and active discouragement of underground and grassroots labour activities (Ost, 2005:44-46). Ost (2005) explains that there was a 'wave of pro-Solidarity writing embracing property rights and the move to a market economy' as underpinning democracy, engaging with the ideas of neoliberal economists such as Hayek (42,57). The complexity of the discussion is emphasised by, for example, Michnik (1985) rejecting the need to establish a parallel state (54), while emphasising the contribution of an intellectual movement and organised labour action rooted in factories, 'not merely in an apparatus made up of professional conspirators […while remaining attached to] those who are living the everyday life of martial law' (54; Milewski et al., 1985:346). Yet Gebert's (1990) experience was that this was undermined by resistance practices being elitist and losing their mass character: 'underground publishing, education, and culture—very gratifying for immediate participants but more and more inaccessible for the rest' (363-364,370-371).

The notion of "elite pacting" (Marzouki & Meddeb, 2015; Brown, 2019:295) sums up the relationship between certain Solidarity leaders and the Communist party particularly from 1987, when both the Communist party and the USSR increasingly acknowledged the need for reform and liberalisation and Lech Wałesa's team within that, culminating in the 1989 Polish round table talks agreeing 'a four-year transition to liberal democracy' (Bunce, 1999:67; Gebert, 1990:370; Roberts, 1991:16). Ost (2005) characterised this as the coalescence of class interest (43), suggesting 'Solidarity was not just a labour movement. It also served as the vehicle for the technical intelligentsia in its drive to become the new dominant class', with the labour movement 'totally separate from those emerging new elites' (16). While Wałesa established the Civic Committee in 1988, with Solidarity's 1989 election campaign supported by 'reemerging union cells and particularly by nascent local Civic Committee part structures, that actually organised the campaign and triumphed' (35), subsequently the Committees were disbanded at the provincial level (Cirtautas, 1997:214).

Political parties emerged 'that proudly boasted a middle-class, pro-business orientation' (Ost, 2005:35; Cirtautas, 1997:219), with labour being recast as an enemy of national renewal along 'politically liberal capitalis[t]' lines (Ost, 2005:10,38).

It seems pertinent to note that even if nonviolence was one aspect of the elite's ideology, it was neither exclusively so nor *exclusive to them*, with the major issue being their foregoing and abandonment of working-class struggle. Thus, the political developments are important to understanding neoliberalism's emergence in Poland, particularly in light of the direct coalescence of the Solidarity elite and state/party elite's thinking on Poland's 'Western-style market economic reforms' (Ash, 1999:376-377). This did not suddenly emerge; the Communist regime in 1980 was already indebted to Western governments for billions of dollars, and severe austerity was a policy 'Solidarity was increasingly pressured by the government to back […] while the corrupt and inefficient Communist ruling class [were] unwilling to give up their perks' (Ash, 1999:306-307). Through the 1980s, this is something Solidarity leaders increasingly acknowledged, concurring with the necessity of market reforms and IMF assistance (Milewski, 1985:337,344,357; Ash, 1990:340-344). These already established economic problems and ties, after a decade of Reagan's neoliberal economic policies and general move in the West towards this model, would have had an impact on a newly independent Poland and the conditions on assistance.

When the Solidarity-led coalition government from 1989 introduced the 'shock therapy' of the Balcerowicz Plan (Ash, 1999:373), lack of opposition among the working classes was perhaps due to the sense that 'to rise up against a government so clearly born of Solidarity would be to rise against themselves' (Ash, 1999:373; Ost, 2005:192-193). Moreover, as Luxmoore and Babiuch (1999) observed, while national renewal was tied up with Catholic nationalism, the Catholic Church's position was ambivalent on the market economy (237,302,309-310,311), although more significantly the Pope's encyclicals emphasised work as providing dignity, fundamental to human liberation and control of one's destiny (237-238,287). Evidently, in post-1989 circumstances, this religious dogma reminiscent of the 'Protestant work ethic' could have enforced the capitalist system as national renewal (See Cirtautas, 1996:111,167), while 'anger of the economic "losers" [was organised] along non-economic lines' (Ost, 2005:2,35-36,53). Meanwhile, the former communist *nomenklatura* exploited 'the unclear legal conditions

of privatisation to take over as capitalists the enterprises they had formerly commanded as communists' (Ash, 1999:373), with many new bosses including former Solidarity workers prohibiting the formation of unions (Ash, 1999:379-380). Thus, Ost's (2005) conclusion that class must be reintroduced 'as a cleavage around which social conflicts can be organised and economic anger mobilised' (185) predates Smith by some way.

While class conflict and struggle—nor nonviolent action—did not itself negate the emergence of neoliberalism, both these elements were present in Solidarity; it is precisely the decentralised structures that Marcie Smith rejects which seem to hold prospects for nonviolence in the pursuit of socialist aims to come to the fore. Solidarity's 1980-81 commitment to dignity, collective freedom, the 'all-encompassing nature of citizenship [… and] form of community-based self-government in which a plurality of different organisations and groupings can participate' (Cirtautas, 1997:211), was entirely abandoned through implementation of the Balcerowicz Plan (Cirtautas, 1997:213-214). Much has been made of Solidarity's civil society character, its 'self-limiting' nature and rejection of the capture of political power in the state and the state's own mechanisms of violence (Ash, 1999:288; Schell, 2002:191). However, the breadth, depth and significance of this alternative approach should be emphasised.

In this regard, Solidarity marked the pursuit of a comprehensive social revolution (Schell 1985:xviii; Gebert, 1990:355), which including under martial law saw efforts to effectively remove and then defend an entire society from the communist state's control (Schell, 2002:194). Sharp and Jenkins (1992) noted the evocative description of this 'as the Communist military dictatorship bobbing around on the surface of the society, able to thrust damaging blows on occasion down into it, but never able to change or control the society fundamentally' (27; Gebert, 1990:355; Sharman, 2003:138-139). Rather than strategic nonviolence, it is far more fruitful to perceive such dynamics feeding into and informing Solidarity in relation to emerging work on everyday resistance and dispersed resistance, comprising of 'counter-repressive resistance' which challenges sovereign power and 'productive' resistance, challenging disciplinary power and biopower (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). Prior to 1980, Schell (1985) describes the KOR as tapping into 'certain realms of life' which:

> Might be considered social [but] was considered by the government definitely political, for in a totalitarian system every aspect of collective

> existence is supposed to originate with the government and be under its management […] daily life becomes a vast terrain on which totalitarianism can be opposed (xxvii).

This gives such resistance in daily life tremendous resonance, and the same may be said following martial law, although with Solidarity being an umbrella under which multiple forms of underground resistance were pursued (Gebert, 1990:360,361-362,368-369; Michnik, 1985:39-41).

Constructive resistance elements also require analysis, overlapping with 'everyday' resistance elements to a certain extent. Polish workers' councils and indeed peasants' rural self-defence committees that formed Solidarity's 'organisational precedent' (Cirtautas, 1997:155,162; Schell, 2002:194-195) also appeared to inform the October 1981 first Solidarity Congress's programme emphasising worker self-management (Cirtautas, 1997:183; Schell, 1985:xxx). Concerning the relationship to nonviolent means, Schell (2002) is most explicit in drawing a parallel between the philosophy and action of Havel, Konrad and Michnik and Gandhi's conceptualisation of constructive work; in the Eastern European context as the notion of 'parallel structures' and alternative culture; spontaneous strikes combined with workers' committees (192-193,199-200). The only connection to Sharp's work of such an approach would be highly abstruse, via his approving comments on Arendt (explored below)—who Michnik does acknowledge (quoted in Schell, 2002:202; also Miłosz, 1985).

Nevertheless, there is a substantial over-simplification in Schell's (2002) suggestion this was in pursuit of 'the kind of parliamentary democracies and free-market economies already functioning in much of the world' (202). If Schell was correct, Smith's (2019a) criticism of decentralisation would stand, in leading to libertarianism. Yet with the constructive elements of Solidarity's programme recalling Arendt's (1969) characterisation of such initiatives as the authentic extension of revolutions (124), Ash (1999) notes the 'paucity of small-scale, constructive economic initiatives in individual work-places or towns', largely due to structural constraints, and which should be considered a missed opportunity for 'organic work' (310-311). During 1980-81 there were those workers embodying a significant radical element in continuing the 'demand for free trade unions' (364-365). Thus the tension in the movement between an emerging elite and the bottom-up pressures seems little to do with nonviolence.

Sharp's Anarchist Affinities

The lack of economic analysis in Sharp's work is rightly emphasised by Marcie Smith, as well as being acknowledged by Sharp himself in *Social Power and Political Freedom* (1980:401). While this may have left Sharp's work vulnerable to co-optation if read superficially, his own position is clearer than Smith suggests. Appendix F 'Economics and Technology' is a brief but illuminating exploration of his own position. Avoiding centralisation in the process of resolving—or as a direct solution to—economic problems is rejected by Sharp (401), in accordance with his political analysis, with a need to avoid 'the disempowerment of the population' (401). Sharp advocates economic sanctions to replace 'State takeovers, State regulation, and dependence on legal prosecutions and court-imposed fines and imprisonments for violations of laws and regulations' (402). Alone this indicates libertarian and indeed neoliberal ambitions, yet the steps Sharp envisages as 'both ends and means' reveals something else:

> Expansion of both consumers' and workers' ownership and control; establishment of new firms to provide alternatives to existing ones whose size and practices are viewed as undesirable; maintenance of the independence of small privately-owned firms from takeovers by massive corporations; changing specific practices and products of existing firms when they are deemed to be of poor quality or otherwise harmful; and promotion of economic decentralisation to enhance the population's economic well-being, independence, and ability to withstand crises. To the degree that a society transarms from military means of defence to civilian-based defence, the freeing from military use of resources, production capacity, labour, and expertise for civilian needs could have highly beneficial economic results (402).

This is distinctly anti-neoliberal—including opposition to the military-industrial complex that has perpetuated US neo-imperialism—and is more reminiscent of the anarchist tradition from which Sharp (1964) actually emerged, in terms of bottom-up economic organisation. Smith acknowledges the 'long anarchist tradition in the US with compelling critiques of the state' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). Given the evidence posited by Smith for Sharp' neoliberal mentality, it is worth quoting Sharp (1980) at length again:

> People need to have a sense of participation and control in the running of their own economic lives, that they will not be determined by some distant board of directors, government decision, or impersonal forces perceived variously as beneficient or malevolent. This requires explorations of new very different ways to structure and own our economic institutions. We need to bypass both the models of massive investor-owned corporations and of State ownership, and instead explore seriously and experiment with different forms of ownership and management. These include ownership and management by consumers, workers, and technicians, and by small-scale private incorporated groups or individuals (402).

The dismantlement of the state is a means of increasing popular, organised and communal economic control, not distant and obscurantist control by a detached elite. Moreover, it is essential for those critiquing neoliberalism to understand that the contracting out of (economic, political and social) power by states to corporations leaves the state's role intact, in that the state retains its position as enforcer and retainer of 'legitimate' violence in supporting neoliberal practices, arguably giving renewed resonance to the urgency of Sharp's denunciation of the state on a political level. This is of further importance in discussing Sharp's engagement with Arendt's work.

A further significant aspect of this brief appendix is Sharp's comments regarding ecologically sustainable economic practices. Smith (2019a) makes a point of pinning the growth in neoliberal economic thought in the USA in the 70s and 80s to the rise of Sharp's influence, yet at the turn of the two decades here is Sharp (1980) arguing in terms of communal ownership and management:

> Could not some combination of consumers, workers, technicians, and perhaps others, establish jointly-owned democratically-operated non-profit companies to build newly designed quality vehicles developed from the first conception to be safe, lasting and fuel efficient, and do so on a smaller scale than present companies, and with internal democracy and social responsibility? The impact of success with such a venture might exceed all of the government regulations ever issued in that field. Unless alternative means of ownership and control are developed in most fields of production and distribution, we are likely to face continued

> massive growth of uncontrolled huge corporations, and, in response, State ownership (403).

Thus, at the turn of the two decades Sharp was arguing along ecological lines that one would still struggle to find espoused in mainstream thought in terms of coupling ecological sustainability with a challenge to the fundamental tenets of modern capitalism—for profit, continued growth, market expansion and Fordism in his questioning of large-scale technology (Sharp, 1980: 403). When one looks to these ideas in accompanying Sharp's focus on avoiding state regulation, ownership and centralisation, it is puzzling what makes his position one to 'Echo [Friedrich] Hayek's' (Smith, 2019), rather than a more radical tradition. Indeed, the only economist Sharp (1980) directly references in this appendix is Schumacher's (2010) *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.* Originally an economist of Keynesian persuasion, this text was influenced by Gandhian economics and Buddhist economics; Sharp's drawing on Schumacher's text at this point in US history aligns him with President Carter's condemnation of materialism and incessant growth, rather than Reaganism (see McKibben, 2010:xiii-xiv). Roszak (2010) observed that Schumacher's work aligns with that of Peter Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Gandhi and Murray Bookchin among others from the anarchist tradition (4)—one may also note the influence of Arendt on Bookchin's work (Leezenberg, 2016:675). It is unfortunate then that Sharp did not elaborate on the links between nonviolent action and decentralised nonviolent systems.

Sharp and Arendt

Perhaps Sharp's economic commentary is too slight to rebut the practical outcomes of his ideas' application, according to the evidence Marcie Smith poses. However, there are further aspects to Sharp's political analysis—again in *Social Power and Political Freedom*—that Smith problematically omits, yet these aspects reveal more about the alternatives to state centralisation posited by Sharp than a mere advocating of deregulated liberal democratic states. These omitted aspects concern Sharp's (1980) engagement with Hannah Arendt's work dealing with the nature of power, revolution and action, which the entirety of chapter 6 is concerned with. I believe that Sharp's further excavation of the relationship of Arendt's work with nonviolent theory and practice could have been more ground-breaking had he pursued it onwards, indicated further by Schell's (2005) suggestion that the 'commonalities

between Arendt and Gandhi' in terms of the nature of violence, the importance of action and the potential of revolutionary nonviolence are shared, 'as far as I'm aware, by them alone among twentieth-century analysts of political power' (223)—thus overlooking Sharp's work.

Drawing heavily on Arendt's (1963) criticism of liberal democratic structures originating within the French and American revolutions, Sharp (1980) advocates constructive programmes, as well as parallel and alternative forms of government in the shape of council systems as the spontaneous tendency emerging from revolutions as a 'system of direct popular political participation' (156,152,369; Sharp, 1973:5,430-431). Given that Sharp reiterates and reflects Arendt's views so closely, this offers an overlooked dynamic to Sharp's emphasis on action, situating it emphatically as a manner of reinsertion of the individual into the political sphere, in opposition to the people's disempowerment that Arendt saw inherent in the North Atlantic and European conception of liberal democratic systems (Arendt, 1963:239,247-248,272; Sharp, 1979:78-79; 1980:146-147,152-154,220).

One of the main threats to such council systems has been identified as the actions of revolutionary parties, as in the context of the French revolutionary Terror as a form of counter-revolution (Arendt, 1963; Sharp, 1980:150,154; Agamben, 1998:100-101; Wahnich, 2012). In Sharp's (1980) consideration of Arendt's four main reasons for violence (terror) arising in revolution and thus a revolution's 'doom', the fundamental point he reiterates is that it is due to, 'the introduction of the "social question" (especially poverty) into the attempt to establish political freedom' (147,148), for the very reason that its resolution is usually considered as demanding violent action. The only real divergence Sharp expresses is his belief that nonviolent action is the only means to defend a council system—although Arendt does not overlook the detrimental potential of collective violence (Arendt, 1969:166,176-177)—as 'the strong centralising tendencies of such violence would weaken or destroy the council system itself' (Sharp, 1980:158).

What I relate above in terms of the implications of Sharp's engagement with Arendt's assessment of power and violence I have dealt with elsewhere (Brown, 2019). What is important to note based on the Arendt-Sharp connection is that a substantial radical critique has emerged out of this element of Arendt's work, in the form of a biopolitical analysis (see Agamben, 1998:101; Wahnich, 2012:10-13; Arendt, 1969:172; 1990:79), while Arendt's work has substantially informed critical inquiry into violence

(see Evans & Lennard, 2018). Sharp did not reiterate or expand on his engagement with Arendt's work, although this does help to situate his theory of practical nonviolent action as relevant to the 'principled' concerns of the critical theory and critical resistance fields. There have been robust criticisms of Sharp's work from within the critical nonviolence/resistance field already, particularly in terms of its inability to transcend the pragmatic/principled, reformist/revolutionary binaries in nonviolent theory (if not practice) (Chabot & Vinthagen, 2007:96; Chabot, 2015:230; Vinthagen, 2015b:260-261). This criticism also includes the suggestion that the 'instrumentalist and strategic nonviolence' stemming from Sharp's work leaves 'global neoliberal capitalism' unchallenged (Chabot & Sharifi, 2013:4).

Given that Sharp reiterated his claim that nonviolence can be used for good and bad ends (Sharp, 1980:367; 2005:11), while never directly qualifying or questioning the rigidly strategic-pragmatic literature and organisations such as the ICNC invoking his texts, perhaps this criticism suffices. However, it is notable that Sharp (1979) suggested the 'pragmatic-principled' split in nonviolence is overstated, seeing the dynamics of both being mutually reinforcing (222,252-253) and advocating a 'mixed motivation' of 'practical considerations' and '*relative* moral preference [original emphasis]' (Sharp, 1973:68; 1979:267,269-270). This is not a case of principled and pragmatic nonviolence being compatible, but actually conflated (Sharp, 1979:269). Thus, Sharp (1979) was not so much shunning the 'moral imperative to nonviolence' (257), but the inaction moral positions sometimes imply (253; Schell, 2005:223). The extreme pragmatic-strategic and indeed quantitative research approach has misplaced this criticism over the ensuing five decades. Of course, the priority now should be 'to find ways of moving beyond the [pragmatic/technique approach's] limitations inherent in its assumptions on nonviolent action' (Vinthagen, 2015b:262).

The So-called Arab Spring

The 2010/11 West Asia North Africa (WANA) revolutions saw a significant focus on Sharp's apparent influence on the events (Brown, 2019:42-48), an influence that Marcie Smith (2019a) has suggested points to a continuation of US-backed Sharpian overthrow of dictators, followed by installation of neoliberal regimes. The first counter point here concerns the USA's well-established preference for stability (authoritarianism) in the region, which essentially continued during the 2010/11 revolutions; while the Obama

administration ultimately accepted the need for Egypt's President Mubarak to step down (Lynch, 2012:93-95), this was done with considerable reluctance (Migdal, 2014:12-13,291-292), while leverage over the Egyptian military continued to be a significant focus (Atlas, 2012:365-366). It has been suggested that this might have been because of the appreciation that any overt statements of support could have undermined the protests given the USA's less-than-favourable reputation (Lynch, 2012: 26). Even if this is the case, the Obama administration's tacit approval of Saudi Arabia's intervention in Bahrain (Atlas, 2012:376-377; Lynch, 2012:140; Migdal, 2014:13) is further support for the stability over 'democracy' thesis.

Regardless of the complexities and divergences in the USA's interests, in directly appraising Sharp's impact, my research, which included interviews with activists in Tunisia over a five-year period, has shown that Sharp's purported influence was overblown and overstated. This was particularly so in the quest for early explanations of the events within the media (Brown, 2019:42-44), to promote the pragmatic/strategic nonviolence approach (Brown, 2019:44-46) or indeed being invoked to actually reject this Sharpian narrative as flawed (Chabot & Sharifi, 2013:251). The picture those actually involved on the ground paint is a far more bottom-up, indigenously inspired series of events (Brown, 2019:313), with a complex interplay of nonviolent and violent dynamics (Brown, 2019:310-313) that warrants further investigation for a comprehensive picture.

Nevertheless, Sharp's research has relevance to exploring the 2010/11 WANA events, more so through the Arendtian strand that Marcie Smith overlooks in Sharp's work. One of the most prominent resurfacings in the past decade of Arendt's advocating of decentralised council systems has in fact been directly in relation to the 2010/11 WANA revolutions, via Dabashi's (2012) seminal appraisal of those events. The regulation and control of power—more helpfully perhaps, 'power over' (Holloway, 2002:42)—through political freedom as engagement and action, counters processes of sovereign power and biopower, perceived as ultimately undermining politics as liberty: 'a reality of the world that existed in a common space that men inserted themselves into by action and speech' (Arendt, 1998, quoted in Wahnich, 2012:12; Bilgic, 2015:277). Similarly, Dabashi (2012a) invoked Arendt as positing, 'the public domain as the *nexus classicus* of the political—a space in which freedom from fear and the liberty to exercise democratic rights is realised' (246), with politics 'a domain that protects the citizen against state violence' (246; Arendt, 1969:179-180). Rightly I think,

Dabashi perceived the 2010/11 WANA revolutions as also being a challenge to "the West's" 'predatory capitalism' (Dabashi, 2012:245), a challenge that was realised through nonviolent action and may be fulfilled through a new cosmopolitanism (216,246). Thus, through Arendt we come full circle between nonviolence and some of the deeper implications of the change sought during the 2010/11 WANA revolution.

If we return to the idea that parallel structures of organisation such as the council systems are, as Arendt (1969) posited, the 'authentic extension' of revolutionary processes (124), it is significant that such councils also emerged in various countries during the 2010/11 WANA revolutions. This includes the early Councils for the Protection of the Revolution that I researched in the Tunisian context (Brown, 2019:194-199). As Sharp (1980:194) stated about nonviolent action itself, council systems may not be a panacea—particularly as fixed and unchanging entities or 'loci of power' in Sharp's parlance (Sharp, 1980:359)—with significant research still required into such structures and organisations' effectiveness and resilience as nonviolent entities. Sharp tied parallel structures' endurance directly to nonviolent action (Sharp, 1980:32-33,58,153; Sharp, 1973:423,433,800-801,805; Naess, 1974:146; Martin, 1993:125-126), although how local committees could cooperate at higher levels of decision making (see Gandhi, 1949:379-381; Sharp, 1980:156; Arendt, 1963:291; Martin, 1993:125), while avoiding problems of concentration of greater political influence therein (Martin, 1993:125-126), invokes the internal and external tensions that emerged during the Tunisian revolution (Brown, 2019:232-238). Ultimately, this indicates the significance of investigating further the means of greater direct participation of people for 'deliberation, joint decision, and action' (Sharp, 1980:149-150,165,369) in 'nonhierarchical systems' in the political, economic and social sphere (Martin, 1993:130-131,135-140; Sharp, 1980:156), mindful of the potential appropriateness of different means in varied contexts (Vinthagen, 2015a:73).

Finally, it is worth mentioning some of the other recent manifestations of direct democracy that reflect the significance Arendt placed upon them. Akçalı (2018) has analysed the shortcomings yet potential of Popular Assemblies in Turkey following the June Uprising 2013, suggesting that to be effective 'direct democracy models […] need to be spread to the neighbourhoods and workplaces' (336). A foremost contemporary case of bottom-up political structures and direct democracy in practice has been the implementation of Democratic Confederalism by the Kurdistan Worker's

Party (PKK) in Turkey (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:3), a case that has been explored within the nonviolent resistance field in relation to the pursuit of 'democratic autonomy' (Koefoed, 2018) through 'constructive resistance' (Sørensen, 2016). Democratic Confederalism's implementation in Western Kurdistan or Rojava has been suggested as being to an even greater extent and effectiveness, including a move to broad-based engagement away from the PKK (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:9,14; Cemgil, 2016; Knapp et al., 2016). Fadaee and Brancolini (2019) related PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's conceptualisation of Democratic Confederalism as having three pillars, namely direct democracy, women's liberation and ecologically oriented human–environment interactions (3; Daudén, 2016:243). Democratic Confederalism has been significantly influenced by Murray Bookchin's (1993) libertarian municipalism, 'building a network of administrative councils whose members are elected from democratic assemblies, in the villages, towns, and neighbourhoods' (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:8). Central to this system is anti-capitalism and anti-neoliberalism, with the centralised state considered as playing a key role in the capitalist economic system and hence rejected (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:8).

The Rojava project should not be romanticised or idealised; the cult of personality around Öcalan may be perceived as problematic (Leezenberg, 2016:673,683)—perhaps not as much of an issue for Marcie Smith anyway who does not seem to reject top-down change through the state—as well as accusations of breaches of international humanitarian law (Leezenberg, 2016:682). Furthermore, for proponents of nonviolence there needs to be an acknowledgement of statements from Rojava emphatically defending the right to defend the territory with arms (Daudén, 2016; although see Leezenberg, 2016:678). However, rather than diminishing in relevance, Sharp's advocating of constructive programmes and council systems defended through nonviolence as a means of avoiding abuse and centralisation of power may have greater pertinence to the long-term durability of inclusive direct democratic structures, especially if Leezenberg's (2016) concerns over Rojava are taken seriously (685-686).

Conclusion

It is not my intention to claim that Sharp or indeed Arendt's work has directly and practically influenced the examples broadly pointed to above. Nevertheless, through Sharp's connection and engagement with the work

of Arendt, E.F. Schumacher and its invocation by others such as Murray Bookchin, it seems eminently reasonable to situate Sharp's nonviolence within more anarchistic thought, which after all was where Sharp's formative sympathies lay. Moreover, Sharp's advocating of constructive resistance efforts is an underexplored connection to Gandhi's conceptualisation of nonviolence. Marcie Smith suggests that Sharp's work must be added to that of 'other key intellectuals' to avoid the simplistic equation that 'dictators in the centralized state are bad; we want to get rid of those and protest helps us do that; and if we do that, then nonviolence, peace, harmony, justice will prevail', which results in 'very moralistic categories that don't offer much in the way of specifics about what kind of world we want, what kinds of productive relations we want, and what would it actually take to achieve them' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). Quite simply, I would suggest that Sharp's (1980) *Social Power and Political Freedom* does point to some key intellectuals and the kind of world we want which—even if he did not pursue his line of inquiry into Arendt or Schumacher's work—is aligned with some of the most radical alternatives to neoliberalism modern humanity has yet been able to devise. Moreover, the development of Solidarity in Poland shows that, while class is crucial to resistance, the structures that emerge, capturing of state power and revolutionary vanguardism are serious concerns beyond the means adopted.

Alternatively, based on Marcie Smith's investigation of Gene Sharp's affiliations, he was intellectually dishonest and disingenuous. Aside from the debate between Lakey (2019) and Smith (2019c), I do think the extent and impact of Sharp's influence must be contextualised in certain instances, as my research (Brown, 2019) has sought to do in the case of the WANA revolutions. Indeed, in terms of understanding nonviolent resistance and resistance broadly, including the 'constructive' elements, the multifarious influences and inspirations behind manifestations in their specific context are important to consider (Chabot & Vinthagen, 2007:94; Vinthagen, 2015a:111-112; Leezenberg, 2016:678). An emphasis on Sharp does nothing for understanding bottom-up processes of change and people's agency, while risking Orientalising perspectives of white saviours. A further notable point is that Sharp's ideas were not necessary for installing neoliberal economic systems in Eastern Europe during the Soviet collapse, following the 'colour revolutions' or in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring; the US, UK, other European countries and international financial institutions support for dictators and ruling elites was and has been premised on their

continued adoption of neoliberal reforms anyway (Honwana, 2013:22; Murphy, 2013:36-37).

One aspect of Marcie Smith's (2019a;2019b) analysis that should be emphasised is the problem of 'instrumentalization of protests', whereby they get 'elevated way above other skills, like organising, political education, intellectual labour, debate, the skills of alliance building, i.e. diplomacy, etc' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). The 'pragmatic' strand of nonviolence research that has developed particularly around Ackerman and the ICNC suffers from this instrumentalization and simplification of resistance dynamics, something that is increasingly challenged in the critical nonviolent resistance literature (Jackson, 2015:31-37; Sørensen, 2017). Arguments in the literature for, say, strict nonviolent discipline (Bamyeh, 2012:56; Ettang, 2014:418) on a practical rather than moral ground leaves less room for solidarity and support for activists and movements incorporating violent elements, for example in Rojava, yet which are clearly in the strain of projects for dignity, equality, freedom and alternatives to the capitalist system. This is unfortunate if they are then overlooked in terms of the elements of direct democracy, 'constructive resistance' and the potential of nonviolence.

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