Imam Khomeini's Approach to Political Struggle

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Abstract

The developments in the contemporary world, particularly the revolutions, coups and wars, have led to development of many theories about social movements. One of the methods used in social movements to bring about sociopolitical change is nonviolence. Nonviolent method of struggle was theorized by Gene Sharp, who collected and introduced 198 methods of nonviolent actions, protest and persuasion. The present paper is an attempt to study Imam Khomeini's approach to political struggle against the Shah's regime. The focus of this paper is analysis of methods used by Imam Khomeini in his struggles until the victory of the Islamic Revolution. The main question of this paper is: What was Imam Khomeini's approach to violence and nonviolence in his political struggles against the Shah's regime? The hypothesis formulated based on the above question is as follows: In Imam Khomeini's approach, ends do not justify the means, hence, he used many nonviolent methods and did not preach or use violence in the course of his struggles. Documental method has been employed for the purpose of this research. The Findings of this paper indicate that Imam Khomeini's approach to political struggle was nonviolent and based on Islamic teachings, mainly employing "persuasion" and "nonviolent protests." The findings also indicate that these techniques are among the 198 techniques collected by Gene Sharp.

Key Words: Imam Khomeini, Political Struggle, Islamic Revolution, Gene Sharp, Iran.

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Introduction

Iran's Islamic Revolution is among the greatest events of the twentieth century, which achieved victory through nonviolence. Imam Khomeini played a crucial role in these movements. Today, violence, particularly religious violence, has engulfed the Middle East and some parts of Africa. Hence, it is pertinent to revisit Imam Khomeini's thoughts and ideas to shed light on different aspects of nonviolence. Despite the fact that many movements in the Middle East commit violence in the name of religion, there are strong debates that religion is opposed to violence. Cavanaugh in two articles has discussed the relationship between religion and violence (Cavanaugh 2004; Cavanaugh 2007). Hence, it is important to introduce Imam Khomeini's method of nonviolent movement to shed light on genuine teachings of Islam, for most of the violent movements in the Middle East and Africa claim to be religious. Despite leading a nonviolent revolution to victory, Imam Khomeini, is not very well known for his nonviolent method of struggle. Hence it would be practically useful to explain his political behavior and struggles based on the techniques introduced by Gene Sharp as a renowned theoretician of nonviolence to lay the foundation for further studies to theorize Imam Khomeini's nonviolent theory of social movement.

Nonviolent method of struggle against colonial powers was practiced by Mahatma Gandhi in India and also was promoted by Henry David Thoreau (Thoreau: 2016) in the United States against slavery. Sharp was influenced by both Thoreau and Gandhi. However, Imam Khomeini developed his techniques based on Islamic teachings.

The main question of this paper is: What was Imam Khomeini's approach to violence and nonviolence in his political struggles against the Shah's regime? The hypothesis formulated based on the above question is as follows: In Imam Khomeini's approach, 'ends do not justify the means', hence, he used many nonviolent methods and did not preach or use violence in the course of his struggles. Documental method has been used for the purpose of this research.

1. Theoretical Framework

Henry David Thoreau and Gene Sharp are among the thinkers who have explained civil disobedience and nonviolent methods of struggle. Mahatma Gandhi and Imam Khomeini are among the activists who practiced nonviolence. Gandhi's concern was struggle against colonialism and Imam Khomeini's concern was struggle against dictatorship and neocolonialism.

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Thoreau's concern was struggle against slavery; Sharp was concerned about dictatorship and was influenced by Thoreau. Sharp was born in 1928 and studied sociology at Ohio State University. In 1968 he received his Doctor of Philosophy in political theory from Oxford University and has taught political science at the University of Massachusetts since 1972. He has held research appointments at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs since 1965. In 1973, Gene Sharp published his main work, "The Politics of Nonviolent Action," which was at the same time declared a classic of civil disobedience. Inspired by Henry D. Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi, Sharp developed his theory of power and nonviolent action in three volumes of his famous book.

In his three-volume book, "The Politics of Nonviolent Action," Sharp has collected 198 methods of nonviolent action from his reading of history.

He argues that nonviolent action is an active technique of struggle. Some of the methods explained by Sharp are: the methods of nonviolent protest and persuasion, social noncooperation, economic noncooperation, economic boycotts, the strike, political noncooperation, nonviolent intervention, laying the groundwork for nonviolent action, solidarity and discipline to fight repression (Sharp, 1973).

In a critical study of Sharp's theory, Brian Martin argues that Sharp is the foremost writer in the world on the subject of nonviolent action. The essence of Sharp's theory of power is that the power of rulers derives from consent of the subjects; nonviolent action is a process of withdrawing consent, a refusal by subjects to obey. At the same time, Martin also argues that Sharp's approach leaves out much of the complexity of political life, such as the structures of capitalism, patriarchy and bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, Martin concludes that while it is easy to criticize Sharp's theory of power, it is immensely more difficult to propose an alternative theory which is more suited for effective practical application. Sharp's approach, through its simplicity and immediate relevance, throws the spotlight on apparently more sophisticated approaches by suggesting the simple question, 'What can you do with them?' (Martin, 1989; Wills 2017).

Many techniques used by Imam Khomeini in his struggle are similar to those introduced by Sharp, only some of them have been picked up for the present study. It should be borne in mind that Imam Khomeini's techniques are based on Islamic teachings.

2. Definition of Concepts

2.1. Violence

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Violence has many forms and is one of the most difficult terms to be given a generic definition. This is why it has been disused from different angles such as sociological, legal, and moral aspects. Some experts have tried to define it for sociological application. For instance, Holmes defines violence as follows:

"Physical violence, which is what we most often have in mind when we speak about violence, is the use of physical force to cause harm, death, or destruction, as in rape, murder, or warfare. But some forms of mental or psychological harm are so severe as to warrant being called violence as well. People can be harmed mentally and emotionally in ways that are as bad as by physical violence…Although physical violence often attends the infliction of psychological violence, it need not do so … [People] can also be terrorized without being harmed physically …. An unlimited commitment to nonviolence will renounce psychological as well as physical violence" (Holmes, 1990: 1-2, in Jackman, 2001: 391).

Violence has also been defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Policy Council on Violence Prevention as: "Violence is the threatened or actual use of physical force or power against another person, against oneself, or against a group or community that either result in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, or deprivation" (Final Report, August 1995 in Jackman, 2001: 391).

Jackman introduced a systematic, comprehensive analysis of violence, which can be considered a generic definition which focuses unequivocally on the injuriousness of actions, detached from their social, moral, or legal standing. In this definition, violence is a genus of behaviors made up of diverse class of injurious actions, involving a variety of behaviors, injuries, motivations, agent, victims, and observers. The sole thread connecting them is the thread of outcome of injury (Jackman, 2001: 404).

For practical purpose of this research violence is defined based on Jackman's definition, i.e., "Actions that inflict, threaten, or cause injury. Actions may be corporal, written, or verbal. Injuries may be corporal, psychological, material, or social" (Jackman, 2001: 405). This definition includes all actions that directly inflict injury as well as those that either threaten or result in injury.

2.2. Political Violence

Political violence is a kind of violence whose subject is struggle for power, either to gain power, or protest against an established power, destroy a power, or preserve a power. Hence in order to distinguish violent act from nonviolent act one has to offers some indexes. On the basis of such indexes one can conclude whether a political act is violent or not. There are two

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kinds of violent acts: violence from above; and violence from below. In fact, the attitudes of governments to power as well as the structures for transfer of power prepare the grounds for violence or nonviolence. The state-sponsored violence includes physical suppression, torture, execution, terror, genocide, and war (Fakuhi, 1999: 137). Regarding violence from below one may mention armed struggle and revolution that prepare the grounds for violence. For instance, clandestine armed struggles by small militia groups are one of the methods for using violence against the ruling system. There is also huge capacity in revolutions for violence, because revolutions take place after long years of accumulated frustration, suppression and oppression. When the economic, social and political conditions are ripe, they will lead to a public explosion (Fakuhi, 1999: 168). Other forms are terror, bombing, vandalism, suicide, etc. (Fakuhi, 1999: 157).

2.3. Political Behavior

Political behavior is typically concerned with individual behavior in the society. According to Eldersveld and Katz, political behavior or behavioral approach to the study of politics "identifies the behavior of individuals or group of individuals as the primary unit of analysis". It "seeks to examine the behavior, actions and acts of individuals, rather than characteristics of institutions such as legislature, executive and judiciary" (Eldersveld and Katz, 1961: 5). Political behavior refers to political activities of people and the consequences of these behaviors for political institutions (Hafeznia and Pirdashti, 2002).

Thus, currently, discourses in political behavior are devoted to provide a sound understanding of the relationship between the political actions of citizens and the political process in a democracy, and this is why the subject now covers issues such as political attitudes, extra electoral forms of political participation such a protest, resistance, social movement, apathy, and extremism, as well as consequences for political representation and political systems (Eldersveld and Katz, 1961: 5). The nature of political behavior differs depending on the nature of political systems. For instance, in democracies, political behaviors are usually political participation in election, practices of interest groups, competition between political parties, etc. However, in illegitimate systems, political actions aim to topple the government through different kinds of political struggles.

2.4. Political Defiance

According to Robert Helvey political defiance is nonviolent struggle (protest, noncooperation, and intervention) applied defiantly and actively for political purposes (Sharp, 2003: 1). The term originated in response to

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the confusion and distortion created by equating nonviolent struggle with pacifism and moral or religious nonviolence. Defiance denotes a deliberate challenge to authority by disobedience, allowing no room for submission. Political defiance describes the environment in which the action is employed (political) as well as the objective (political power). The term is used principally to describe action by populations to regain from dictatorships control over governmental institutions by relentlessly attacking their sources of power and deliberately using strategic planning and operations to do so. In this paper, political defiance, nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent struggle will be used interchangeably, although the latter two terms generally refer to struggles with a broader range of objectives (social, economic, psychological, etc.) (Sharp, 2003: 1).

2.5. Nonviolence

Nonviolence is a longstanding method of political struggle. Nonviolence means people's pressure on government by avoiding violence. Nonviolent action includes taking or discarding of an action. Nonviolent action aims to defy the political legitimacy of an established dictatorship. Like military capabilities, political defiance can be employed for a variety of purposes, ranging from efforts to influence the opponents to take different actions, to create conditions for a peaceful resolution of conflict, or to disintegrate the opponents' regime. However, political defiance operates in quite different ways from violence. Although both techniques are means to wage struggle, they do so with very different means and with different consequences. The ways and results of violent conflict are well known. Physical weapons are used to intimidate, injure, kill, and destroy. Nonviolent struggle is a much more complex and varied means of struggle than is violence. Instead, the struggle is fought by psychological, social, economic, and political weapons applied by the population and the institutions of the society. These have been known under various names of protests, strikes, noncooperation, boycotts, disaffection, and people power. As noted earlier, all governments can rule only as long as they receive replenishment of the needed sources of their power from the cooperation, submission, and obedience of the population and the institutions of the society. Political defiance, unlike violence, is uniquely suited to severing those sources of power (Sharp, 2010: 30).

In recent times, Mahatma Gandhi followed nonviolence as a strategy and method for political struggle. After Gandhi too many freedom fighters and thinkers, including Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela followed a similar method. Imam Khomeini too followed nonviolence in his struggles against the monarchical dictatorship. Nonviolence is not a

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passive action, rather it is a planned and strategic struggle based on people's power and consent. Sharp, at the end of his book, "From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation" mentions 198 methods of nonviolent action (Sharp, 2010: 79-86). Because of shortage of space only some of these methods have been picked up for the purpose of this research.

3. Discussion

Imam Khomeini throughout the course of his struggle laid emphasis on nonviolence and prevented popular action from becoming violent. As mentioned above, political behavior deals with political activities of individuals and groups and the consequences of their actions for political institutions and organizations (Hafeznia and Pirdashti, 2002: 72). Hence, some actions of Imam Khomeini which aimed to protest against the ruling system have been discussed here on the basis of classification of the concept of Political Defiance or Nonviolent Action by Gene Sharp.

3.1. Imam Khomeini's Nonviolent Methods

Imam Khomeini used several nonviolent methods in the course of his political struggle against the Shah's regime. Many of these methods are mentioned among the 189 methods in Sharp's book as methods of nonviolent protest and persuasion (Sharp, 2010: 79-86). Only some of these methods are discussed below.

3.1.1. Letters to Rulers to Pressure Them

This method is used to put pressure on rulers to force them withdraw from their decisions. Imam Khomeini sent private or open letters and sent telegrams to the Shah and Prime Minister to protest some of their decision or policies and made his telegrams public to increase the pressure on decision makers (See: Rouhani, 2010: vol. 1; Zakeri, 2012: 153-5). In a telegram to the Shah on November 6, 1962, Imam Khomeini, protesting a Bill on the establishment of Local Councils, said: "The people expect [the King] to make Mr. Alam [the then Prime Minister] committed to the Constitution … otherwise, I will inevitably mention some other points to His Majesty in an open letter" (Khomeini, 2006a: 88-90). There was a law in place requiring a person being sworn into public office to take his oath on the Muslim holy book, the Quran. Prime Minister, Asadullah Alam, in his bill, asked the parliament to provide for taking oath on any religious book.

Imam Khomeini sent a telegram to Alam warning him of consequences of his decision to change the holy book during the swearing in ceremonies for taking the oath of office: "Once again I would like to advise you to

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obey the Almighty God and the Constitution and fear the dire consequences of violation of the Quran, the decrees of the Ulama of the nation and the leaders of Muslims and violation of the law and don't unnecessarily put the country in danger, otherwise, the Muslim Ulama would not stop announcing their viewpoints about you" (Khomeini, 2006a: 88-90).

In a telegram to religious authorities on May 7, 1963, Imam Khomeini called on them not to keep silent vis-à-vis the decisions made by the Shah's cabinet and parliament. The telegram partly reads as follows:

"There are some evidences at hand indicating that the tyrannical system, due to its essential nastiness, is trying to demolition of foundation (of Islam).

Armed attack on the Center of Jurisprudence (seminary) and disrespect to religious authorities and Muslim jurisprudents as well as imprisonment and torture of the disciples of the school of Islam and affront to the Holy Quran and other religious sanctities are some clear examples. The declaration of equality of man and women in all respects, abolition of Islam and masculinity from the qualifications of electors and candidates and abolition of Islam and masculinity from judgment are other clear examples.

Today, Muslims, particularly the honorable Ulama, shoulder a great responsibility towards the Almighty God. With our silence, the future generations will be eternally exposed to darkness and infidelity" (Khomeini, 2006b: 200, 220-222). In another telegram to the Ulama and clerics of Kerman on May 8, 1963, Imam Khomeini, while mentioning some of the points of the previous telegram, announced that he was determined to prevent the anti-Islam measures of the tyrannical system and mentioned: "With the slightest neglect and indolence, Islam and the Islamic state would be gone; and through unity among Muslims, particularly among the honorable Ulama, the threat will be removed" (Khomeini, 2006b: 220-222).

Imam on different occasions sent letters to the Pahlavi regime's officials. For instance on April 15, 1967, he sent an open letter to the then Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveida, warning him of the consequences of the Capitulation law, the unbalanced reforms, corruption, violation of Islamic rules, suppression of the seminaries and many other issues (Khomeini, 2006b: 123-127). There are many other letters and telegrams that are not reproduced here due to shortage of space.

3.1.2. Negotiations

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Imam Khomeini had some negotiations with the officials on certain cases, including the negotiations on the regime's decision to change the swearing in on the Quran to any holy book. The officials came to know that Imam was going to protest and sent their representatives to negotiate the issue.

Imam promised not to protest if the regime stopped the decision and announced the change of mind through radio announcement (Khomeini, 2006a: 388; Zakeri, 2012: 272).

3.1.3. Increasing Public Awareness

Imam Khomeini used different methods to increase public awareness about the policies of the dictatorial regime. These methods included delivering speeches, interviews, issuing statements and sending messaging. Since the Iranian society was a politically close society, Imam Khomeini sent his messages through audiocassettes and his followers prepared their transcripts and clandestinely distributed them among the people. In the messages Imam Khomeini never asked his followers to resort to violent means, rather he always tried to increase their awareness about the regime's wrong policies.

For instance, in 1964 he sent a number of clerics and preachers to different parts of Iran asking them to explain the consequences of the Capitulation bill or law for the people (See: Rouhani, 2010: vol. 1; Zakeri, 2012: 10-11).

When the Islamic movement gained momentum, Imam Khomeini tried to inform the international public opinion about his goals. In a message to the Christians of the world on the eve of 1979 Chrisman Imam congratulated the Christians on that occasion and tried to give some information about the Pahlavi regime to the people: "I request the great nations to acquaint the heads of some Christian countries with the teachings of Jesus Christ and give awareness to them who through their diabolic power support the oppressive Shah and crash a nation under pressure" (Khomeini, 2006d: 272). When in France, Imam Khomeini held meetings, gave interviews to reporters and issued many statements (Khomeini, 2006d: 272).

3.1.4. Symbolic Use of Signs and Customs

In this method some signs are used to impart the message and put forth the demands of the opposition in the course of their struggle. These signs may include kind of clothes, hats, bracelets, color or any other signifier referring to struggle. On the other hand, using symbolic religious rites such as memorials, mourning ceremonies, funerals, public mourning and prayers are also used for reproduction of the goals of nonviolent struggle. The outcome of such measures in the first place was to influence public

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opinion and then create solidarity among opposition groups. Imam Khomeini also asked the clerics to use religious rituals such as marking fortieth day of the martyrdom of people who were martyred by the regime during the demonstrations, to narrate and recall the uprising of Imam Hussain who was martyred in a fight against the tyrant of the day to simulate historical events.

Overall, relying on Islamic-Shia culture and symbols, Imam Khomeini tried to give awareness to the people regarding the oppressive nature of the regime. Imam Khomeini even announced the New Year Festival (which began in March 1963 according to Iranian calendar) a public mourning to protest the policies of the regime: "I announce this New Year Festival as public mourning…so that the Muslim people come to know about the calamities inflicted on Islam and Muslims" (Khomeini, 2006a: 156).

Another instance of using national events to protest was announcing the birth anniversary of Mohammad Reza Shah on October26, 1978 as a public mourning; people on that day mourned the birth anniversary (Zakeri, 2012: 512; Rouhani, 2010: vol. 1). Month of Muharram marks the anniversary of Imam Hussain, the third Shia Imam's martyrdom, which is mourned nationwide. Imam Khomeini used this occasion to spread protest, mobilize the people and strengthen solidarity against the regime. He said in a message: "The Month of Muharram is the month of the defeat of followers of Yazid and diabolic ploys. The sessions to commemorate the master of oppressed and leader of freedom fighters which is the victory of the army of reason over that of ignorance and justice over oppression and trust over treachery and Islamic government over illegal regime should be held as glorious as possible and the blood-spattered flags of Ashura (the day of martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his companions) should be hoisted as much as possible as a sign of the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor" (Khomeini, 2006d: 76). There are several other instances that cannot be discussed here due to shortage of space.

3.1.5. Non-Cooperation, Boycott and Strikes

One of the nonviolent methods to fight dictatorial regimes is non-cooperation. In this method the people without resorting to force disobey the rulers. The wider the scope of disobedience, the higher will be the costs imposed on the rulers. The costs imposed on economic and commercial enterprises puts heavy pressure on the ruling system.

Disobedience in its social aspects spreads the struggle among different classes and on international level draws the attention of public opinion and governments and puts the legitimacy of the ruling system to question. Non-cooperation includes economic boycott, nonpayment of taxes, workers'

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strikes, syndicate strikes, employees' strikes, and any disobedience of the government rules. During the years leading to the victory of the revolution, Imam Khomeini tried to use many of these nonviolent methods. In March 1974, Imam Khomeini announced that the membership to the Rastakhiz Political Party, the Government-backed party, is religiously impermissible (haram) and announced that opposition to this party is an instance of "Prohibiting the Evil" (one of the principles of Islamic faith) (Imam Khomeini, 2006c: 71).

He also called on the people to go on strike and hold demonstrations nationwide. He asked the people to extend financial support to the families of the workers and employees who went on strike. When a general was appointed as head of the Cabinet in 1978, Imam in a statement said: "The martial law is a rebel government, is illegal and illegitimate; it is the duty of the public to oppose it, stop paying taxes and avoid any assistance that may help this oppressive, rebellious system. It is a duty of the employees and staff of the National Iranian Oil Company to stop the exports of this life-giving wealth" (Imam Khomeini, 2006d: 76).On January 4, 1979, Imam Khomeini announced that any cooperation with the regime is impermissible (haram), announcing the monarchical regime illegitimate, the two chambers of the Parliament non-national and the government a usurper (Imam Khomeini, 2006d: 350).

This announcement by a religious authority who was leading a nationwide movement undermined the legitimacy of the regime and within about 40 days after the announcement the regime collapsed.

Being aware of the role of the Army as the mainstay of the regime's power and strength, Imam Khomeini several times addressed the Army officers and soldiers and advised them to distance themselves from the regime and take the side of the people. In other words, Imam tried to convert the strong point of the regime into its weak point. Knowing that the main body of the Army (except some top-brass officers) belonged to the lower and middle classes, he called on the soldiers and commanders to desert and join the people. At the same time Imam Khomeini called on the people to refrain from violence in their struggles against the regime to prepare the grounds for the Army soldiers and commanders to join the people. Imam in his statements and messages on January 22, 1978; September 6, 1978; October 8, 1978; November. 5, 1978 and November. 7, 1978, addressing the Army, asked it to join the nationwide movement, asking the soldiers to desert the barracks. On November 20, 1978, Imam said: "Our nation is not opposed to the Army; not opposed to the commanders, officers and soldiers. They are all our brothers. We are not

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opposed to them. We are opposed to blood sucking [regime]. The Law Enforcement Forces must be there and we hug and kiss them" (Khomeini, 2006d: 461).

3.1.6. Rallies and Demonstrations

Rallies and demonstrations are among the most usual protest methods. They were frequently used in the course of the Islamic Revolution. Imam Khomeini considered this method as one of the most effective ones to fight the regime. When millions of Iranians poured into the streets in November 1978 on the occasion of Tasua and Ashura (marking the martyrdom of the Third Shia Imam Hussain ibn Ali), Imam announced that the event was a referendum and a proof to the illegitimacy of the Shah (Khomeini, 2006d: 211; Rouhani, 2010: vols. 2 and 3). In another speech in October 1978, Imam Khomeini said: "We must carry out our activities through possible means including writing, giving speeches, negotiating and demonstration. This is what we say" (Khomeini, 2006c: 510).

3.1.7. Defiance and Establishment of a Parallel Government

Establishment of a parallel government is a nonviolent method of defiance of the ruling system, which, through defiance and non-cooperation, can undermine the authority of the ruling regime and by appointment of popular opposition ministers and officials it can lead to the collapse of the ruling system. Obviously this requires high profile support of the masses. Imam Khomeini, being aware of the increasing pace of popular movement, ordered the establishment of the Revolution Council in November 1978, which was the first step towards setting up a parallel government (Zakeri, 2012: 587; Rouhani, 2010: vol. 2). On January 19, 1978, Imam Khomeini appointed an envoy to run the oil industries (Rouhani, 2011; Zakeri, 2012: 587) and on February 4, 1979 appointed Mahdi Bazargan as Prime Minister (Rouhani, 2011; Zakeri, 2012: 587).

Conclusion

Although some Orientalists have tried to introduce Islam as a religion of jihad and sword, Imam Khomeini's approach to violence and nonviolence in the course of his political struggles against the Shah's regime showed that 'ends do not justify the means' in his school of thought. Imam Khomeini derived his struggle methods and techniques from the teachings of Shia School of Thought, but when compared to the Gene Sharp's theory of nonviolent methods of struggle (as mentioned in this article), many techniques employed by Imam Khomeini matched those introduced by Gene Sharp. Imam Khomeini's methods showed that it is possible to

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topple a dictatorial regime through nonviolent methods. Almost all methods used by Imam Khomeini in his struggles have been classified in Gene Sharp's books as nonviolent methods of protest and persuasion. Imam Khomeini used both protest and persuasion in his political behavior. He wrote letters and also delivered speeches to persuade the regime to stop some of the bills and laws in the early stages of his political struggles. He used the same method when his struggles reached its peak in 1977-79. He persuaded the regime's top officials, including the Army officers and soldiers to join the revolutionary movement. He also persuaded the nationalist and other opposition leaders to join the Islamic movement. At the same time, when persuasion failed to convince the regime to change its policies, Imam Khomeini encouraged people to launch peaceful protests, both in the early and later stages of his struggles. Imam Khomeini did not approve of violence during his struggles against the Shah's regime. Although Imam Khomeini's methods are similar to those collected and introduced by Sharp, it should be borne in mind that his techniques were based on the teachings of Shia School of Thought. Therefore, it is possible to develop a theory of nonviolent struggle based on the example of Imam Khomeini in modern era.

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