

Cesar chavez as an ideologist of nonviolent resistance

[Politics](#), [Civil Rights](#)



Cesar Chavez, a prominent civil rights activist, drew upon the nonviolent tactics of the civil rights movement to strengthen his fight regarding justice for farmworkers. On the tenth anniversary of Martin Luther King's death, Chavez published an article in a religious magazine, urging for nonviolent resistance. In order to demonstrate the ability nonviolence has to create change, Chavez alludes to well-respected civil rights leaders as a way to offer proof of the power of nonviolence, contrasts the effects of nonviolence compared to violence in order to show the futility of resorting to violence, and purposefully appeals to his readers' religious values as a way to heighten his point of nonviolence being the only acceptable solution.

In order to strengthen his argument for nonviolence, Chavez alludes to past civil rights leaders in order to remind his readers of how powerful and effective nonviolence can be in creating change. Chavez begins his article with the mention of how Martin Luther King and his accomplishments serve as an " example of the power that nonviolence brings to bear in the real world," and how King has established the " principles," that should be followed in order to achieve change. Chavez's reference to King evokes a feeling of respect and admiration in his readers due to King's profound impact on civil rights, making them more susceptible to follow in his example of nonviolence. Chavez's reminder of King's success, allows him to connect the nonviolent principles left behind by King as the solution to create meaningful change in his readers' current situation.

Chavez continues to build upon this tactic by then alluding to Gandhi.

Chavez references Gandhi's " boycott" as a " perfect instrument of

nonviolent change” that allowed, “ masses of people to participate actively in a cause.” Chavez’s allusion to Gandhi serves as another example of the influential power nonviolence can have. Gandhi’s ability to employ nonviolent resistance as a way to achieve long-term success serves as a convincing example to Chavez’s readers of how they should proceed in their resistance if they hope to achieve the same goal. By specifically mentioning the boycott, Chavez offers his readers proof of the effectiveness a nonviolent tactic can have in creating change and unifying people towards their cause. Chavez’s reference to these influential leaders allows him to demonstrate not only the effectiveness of nonviolence but also the powerful effect it can have on creating long-term success and unification.

Chavez continues to establish his argument by contrasting the effects of nonviolence compared to violence, in order to illustrate how ineffective resorting to violence will be. Chavez explains that if violent means are taken, “ either the violence will be escalated...or there will be total demoralization of the workers.” By stating the negative effects of violence, Chavez hopes to demonstrate how pointless violence is since it will only intensify the problems and weaken their cause. Establishing the ineffectiveness of violence, allows Chavez to guide his readers into seeking another solution. Chavez is then able to offer nonviolence as a superior tactic, which he explains is the best way to support, “ a just and moral cause,” while attracting, “ people’s support.” Chavez’s mention of how nonviolence is the best way to support a moral cause directly contrasts how violence will result in demoralization, which forces his readers to view nonviolence as the only

acceptable solution for a just cause. Chavez's comparison allows his readers to realize that violent tactics will set them further back and prevent them from achieving the change they have been striving for. Chavez succeeds in superiorizing nonviolence, by establishing it as the perfect tactic to gain support from the people, which will continue to strengthen their cause.

Throughout Chavez's argument for nonviolence, he appeals to his readers' religious values by aligning nonviolence with the ways of God, which allows him to prove that nonviolence will ultimately overpower violent means. Chavez reminds his readers that, " human life is a very special possession given by God ...and that no one has the right to take it...for any cause." By Chavez saying that violence would directly violate God's will, his readers understand that violence would be an inexcusable tactic that would fail to grant them the result they hope to achieve. Chavez forces his readers to understand the implications of resorting to violence by connecting violent resistance to disobedience to God. Chavez is then able to emphasize his point against violence by convincing his readers that it will never be justified in the eyes of God. Through this realization, Chavez's readers understand that unless they wish to defy their God, nonviolence will be the only viable solution to achieve their goal. Chavez continues to build upon this understanding by addressing his readers' frustrations by saying that although he is aware of the " misery, poverty, and exploitation," that is happening, " it cannot be more important than one human life." He then reminds his readers that they must use, " nonviolence," as their " means of achieving justice." Chavez makes sure to acknowledge his readers' feelings

of frustration but reminds them that in God's eyes, the use of violent means will never be justified. He then shifts his readers' frustrations by promising that they will continue to aspire for justice and that these problems will be tackled with nonviolent resistance. Chavez is now able to use nonviolence as a way to empower his readers by aligning this solution with the ways of God. Chavez hopes to convince his readers that nonviolence will both allow them to follow God's will and allow them to succeed in acquiring justice.

With his article, Chavez illustrates the superiority non-violence has over violence and strives to unite his readers with the respected leaders of the past and reinforce the religious impact of non-violence. Chavez hopes to not only gain support for his plan of nonviolent resistance but also aspires to have nonviolence be viewed as a powerful tactic to create substantial change. Chavez discredits the notion that nonviolence is the weaker tactic, and instead uses it to empower his audience. Chavez leaves his readers ready to embark on a movement of nonviolent resistance that will grant them the way to victory.