

Non-violence during the civil rights movement assignment



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South Africans Nelson Mandela; Czechoslovakian Václav Havel, leader of that country's "Velvet Revolution"; and countless workers for peace and justice around the world (444). His teachings on nonviolence were greatly used in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The African-American Civil Rights Movement was a time of great struggle and suffering for most Americans. The Civil Rights Movement's main goal in the United States was to end the racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans and to achieve legal recognition and federal protection of the citizenship rights shown in the Constitutional

Amendments adopted after the Civil War. The movement spanned from 1954 to 1968 and consisted of major campaigns of civil resistance. Acts of nonviolent protests and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Some people during the movement thought that being violent and using brute force would achieve more than what nonviolent actions would achieve. Gandhi says in his writings that brute force is a behavior for beasts and that killing people requires no intelligence. In "The Doctrine of the Sword II" he says: "Sword-force is brute force.

Killing people requires no intelligence. We may, indeed, by misdirecting our intelligence employ it in the service of brute force but, though aided by intelligence, brute force remains brute force and the law of the sword remains the law of the beast. In the latter, the self is in a state of nascence and can have no knowledge of itself. That is why we know the animal world as enveloped in darkness." (457). When he says this he describes how violent actions are pretty much brute force and still remain senseless even if they were planned out with the most intelligent mind.

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During the Civil Rights Movement, people used violent actions to try to get their point across which did not work all of the time. For example, many people had race riots which caused millions of dollars' worth of damage to property and caused the death of many people. Even though these violent riots were a success in the sense of getting the information around the world, Gandhi might have thought that they were a huge failure because they created more harm than they needed to.

Gandhi states in "The Law of Suffering", "No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of suffering. Mother suffers so that her child may live. The condition of wheat-growing is that the seed grain should perish. Life comes out of Death" (451). What he says makes sense for the Civil Rights Movement because of all the suffering people had to go through to finally obtain their rights that they deserved since the Civil War. Many people do not like violence because of the horrible things that it brings to innocent people.

One neighbor of a black family moving into Elevation, Bucks County, responded to protests by whites on August 15, 1957 by saying "They have a right to live the same as any other American. The violence last night was horrible. I hope it ends." (Civil). If Gandhi were to look at the Civil Rights Movement in his point of view, he might have thought it was a success but with a few failures along the way. He might have thought that the people who were actually acting violent, were more successful than the people who were nonviolent.

In "The Doctrine of the Sword I" he says: "I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he would have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer War [1899-1901], the so-called Zulu rebellion and the late War.

Hence also do advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honor than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonor." (454). With Gandhi saying his one would assume that he was actually for violence but he actually meant that he would rather see someone resort to violence than run away, hide and wait for the problem to solve itself. He did not like people being cowards.

Even though he said that he would take violence over cowardice that does not mean that he was for violence. In fact, in The Doctrine of the Sword I he says "But I believe that nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. 'Forgiveness adorns a soldier.' But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her. (454).

Since most of the Civil Rights Movement was nonviolent, believe that Gandhi might have thought the movement was a success even though there were <https://assignbuster.com/non-violence-during-the-civil-rights-movement-assignment/>

some violent acts that caused many deaths and injuries and caused millions of dollars' worth of damage to personal property. With the outcome of the movement being a great achievement to the United States I believe that nonviolence can be used in today's world to solve disputes between people. Humanity has two choices before it.