Civil Rights: Civil Wrongs The Role of Violence and Non-Violence in Protest

Malcolm X

I'm nonviolent with those who are nonviolent with me. But when you drop that violence on me, then you've made me go insane, and I'm not responsible for what I do. And that's the way every Negro should get. Any time you know you're within the law, within your legal rights, within your moral rights, in accord with justice, then die for what you believe in. But don't die alone. Let your dying be reciprocal. This is what is meant by equality. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Martin Luther King

I say to you today that I still stand by nonviolence. And I am still convinced that it is the most potent weapon available to the Negro in his struggle for justice in this country. And the other thing is that I am concerned about a better world. I'm concerned about justice. I'm concerned about brotherhood. I'm concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about these, he can never advocate violence. For through violence you may murder a murderer but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar but you can't establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that.

Martin Luther King

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

John Hulett (leading member of the Black Panthers)

This black panther is a vicious animal as you know. He never bothers anyone, but when you start pushing him, he moves backwards, backwards and backwards into his corner, and then he comes out to destroy everything that’s before him.

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Name: _____ Date: _____ **Civil Rights Movement**

Directions: Take on the role of a group involved in a civil rights protest with some advocating non-violence and some believing that violence may become necessary. What kind of arguments would each side use in their discussions? Are there some protests where non-violence would simply not work?

Violence	Non-Violence

2. What do you think would have happened in the United States if Martin Luther King had advocated violence in certain circumstances?

3. What do your pupils think might have taken place if, instead of US Presidents sympathetic to their cause, there was a President who opposed them?

The **Occupy movement** is an international protest movement against social and economic inequality, its primary goal being to make the economic structure and power relations in society fairer. Different local groups have different foci, but among the prime concerns is the claim that large corporations and the global financial system control the world in a way that disproportionately benefits a minority, undermines democracy and is unstable.

Directions: Think about the 'Occupy' movement. What do you think could happen if the protestors start using more physical tactics such as attacking buildings or fighting with the authorities?

Would the protestors still have the substantial public support that they have?

How would the opponents of the 'Occupy' movement use these tactics to their advantage?

The full range of impacts and social consequences or ramifications of this fledgling global movement may be impossible to gauge at this time; however, some known impacts to date include the following:

Social impact

In the United States, the protests have helped shift the national dialogue from the deficit to economic problems many ordinary Americans face, such as unemployment, the large amount of student and other personal debt that burdens middle class and working class Americans, and other major issues of social inequality, such as homelessness. The movement appears to have generated a national conversation about income inequality, as evidenced by the fact that print and broadcast news mentioned the term “income inequality” more than five times more often during the last week of October 2011 than during the week before the occupation began. The Occupy movement raised awareness regarding undeserved wealth and lack of fairness in American society.

Labor unions have become bolder in the tactics they employ and have been using digital social media more effectively because of the Occupy movement. In New York City, the Occupy Wall Street protest has also provided hundreds of protesters to help in picket actions conducted by labor unions.

On November 10, 2011, *The Daily Telegraph* reported that the word "occupy" had been the "most commonly used English word on the internet and in print" over the past 12 months according to a top ten list published by media analysis company Global Language Monitor.In January 2012, members of the American Dialect Society voted with an overwhelming majority for "Occupy" as the word of the year for 2011.

Political impact

On 27 December 2011, the *Financial Times* argued that the movement had had a global impact, altering "the terms of the political debate." Other commentators have taken a more critical view, suggesting the occupy movement has been a disruptive waste of time. Even some sympathetic commentators such as Anthony Barnett, have suggested that in Spain, where the movement once had the support of well over 70% of the population with millions taking part, the popularity of *Occupy* is now past its peak and has achieved no consequences of any significance. However there were numerous successes at local levels, and *The Economist* has reported that Spanish protestors caused their government to pass various laws including new limits on the amounts banks can claw back from defaulting borrowers.

In November 2011, U.S. Congressman Ted Deutch, member of the House Judiciary Committee, introduced the "Outlawing Corporate Cash Undermining the Public Interest in our Elections and Democracy (OCCUPIED) Constitutional Amendment," which would overturn the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision recognizing corporate constitutionally-protected free speech rights and would ban corporate money from the electoral process. In March 2012, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore called on activists to "occupy democracy," explaining that "Our democracy has been hacked. It no longer works to serve the best interests of the people of this country."

Also in November 2011, Paul Mason said that the occupy movement had started to dynamically shape the global policy response to the Late-2000s financial crisis, being mentioned so often at the 2011 G20 summit that if occupy had been a brand "it would have a profile to die for among the super-elite".

Various journalists along with Jared Bernstein former chief economist and economic adviser to Vice President Joe Biden, have suggested that Occupy influenced the President's January 2012 State of the Union address , with the movement creating the political space for Obama to shift to the economic left and speak about the desirability of the rich paying a greater share of the tax burden. Inequality has remained a central theme of President Obama's re-election campaign, yet he no longer mentions the Occupy movement by name, which analysts say reflects the fact that by early 2012 Occupy had become a divisive issue, unpopular with much of the public.