

AFTER GANDHI

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE



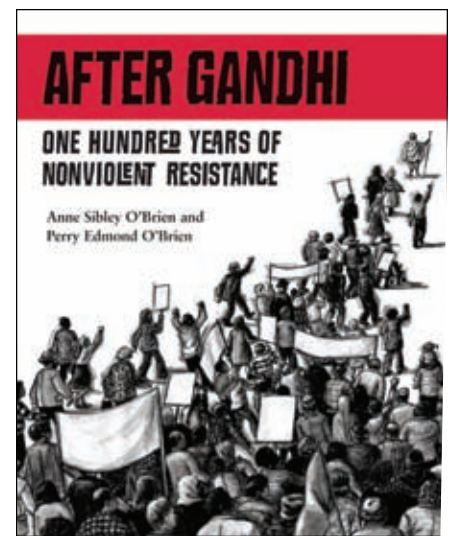
DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

On August 16th, 1908, in Johannesburg, South Africa, a lawyer from India named Mohandas Gandhi spoke to a crowd of more than three thousand. These Indian men he had helped organize were protesting a recent South African law that would force them to register as foreigners in the country. Two years of mass meetings and rallies led up to this event at which Gandhi and his followers broke the law by burning their registration papers. No one had any idea that these actions marked the beginning of a movement that would change the world. In South Africa, Gandhi defined the philosophy and developed the tactics he would use over the next forty years to lead the unarmed people of India in a nonviolent uprising against the British Empire. Using nothing but their bodies, their intelligence, and their wills, these Indian laborers, housewives, shopkeepers, and students challenged a well-armed military force that had occupied their country for three hundred years. The world had never seen anything like it.

Gandhi was not the first leader to use nonviolent methods to challenge injustice, but he developed new strategies involving tens of thousands of people in mass actions and demonstrated the power of nonviolence on a scale never seen before. Gandhi became the father of modern nonviolent resistance, which combined truth, love, and the refusal to cause harm into a force that could overcome the most brutal violence and oppression.

The Indian Independence Movement inspired similar actions all over the world. From sunny grape fields in California to the chilly streets of Prague, on buses and in prisons, in groups of thousands or standing alone, struggling people all over the world have chosen to follow the way of Gandhi. Some were directly inspired by his words and deeds, others came to embrace nonviolent resistance on a different path. All made the same commitment: to fight injustice without sacrificing their own humanity.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Gandhi and those who followed his example practiced nonviolent resistance. Why do you think so many leaders have been successful with this form of protest, even when violence is used to counteract them? How has the media played a role in their success?

2. Gandhi did not like the term “passive resistance,” and instead used the phrase “nonviolent resistance.” Why did he feel that the latter was a better choice? How is it different from the first term?

3. Explain the following quotation and relate it to situations today: “An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind.”

4. During his twenty-seven-year imprisonment, Nelson Mandela campaigned to improve conditions in the Robben Island prison. Why was his campaign in prison important to his larger struggle to abolish apartheid?

5. Nonviolent resistance can take many forms: peaceful protest, strike, petition, or letter writing. What are some other means of nonviolent resistance? Which do you think have been the most effective in the past? Would they still work today? How has technology changed these tactics?

6. Muhammad Ali refused to fight in the Vietnam War, yet he earned a living by fighting in the boxing ring. Do you see his refusal to go to war as hypocritical? Why or why not? How is fighting in a war different from fighting in a boxing ring?

7. Instead of imprisoning all who had suppressed blacks during apartheid, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission under Desmond Tutu gave them a chance to admit wrongdoing in exchange for amnesty. Tutu saw this as a new form of justice. Do you think that confessing wrongdoing to the public was a strong enough punishment, or should further steps have been taken?

8. Gandhi stressed that it was the people’s responsibility to question and resist unjust laws. The founding fathers of the United States also emphasized civil disobedience, and broke many English laws that they felt were unfair. How can it be determined if a law is unjust? What conditions should be applied to judge the fairness of laws, and who should decide?

9. In 1955 Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of a bus so that a white man could have her seat. Her simple act of defiance helped lead to the abolishment of segregation laws in the United States. Can you find other instances in history where one person made a significant difference to policy and attitude?

10. Have you ever had to decide whether or not to respond to violence directed at you or someone you know? What was your decision? What was the result? Did you learn anything from this experience?

11. Are there issues we face today in the United States that you think need changing? Can you think of a nonviolent way to make a difference?

12. Vaclav Havel said, “Politics can be not only the art of the possible . . . it can be the art of the impossible.” What did Havel mean when he said this? Do you think this is true today?



ACTIVITIES & RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Design a poster that the students in Tiananmen Square may have used to protest for democracy. Think about the power of slogans, symbols, and particular words when creating the poster.
2. Mohandas Gandhi was deeply affected by Indian poetry, especially by the verse “If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return, that is nothing. / Real beauty consists in doing good against evil.” Write a poem describing an event in the book and the impact of this event.
3. Read Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” found online at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf>. Research the reaction that his letter had on politicians, church leaders, and the media. Write three letters in response to Dr. King that embody the reactions of these three different groups.
4. The city of Greensboro, North Carolina, was the first organization in the U.S. to adopt the model of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, which they used to help heal racial divisions. Can you think of a conflict in your own life or in the larger world that could be helped by forming a Truth & Reconciliation Commission? Write a short paper discussing how you would set it up and what the benefits might be.
5. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to “the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.”¹ Each year people are nominated for the prize and then chosen by a committee. Research current activists who use nonviolent action as a means for change. Choose a list of five to nominate for the prize and give reasons for your choice. Present your nominations to the class as if they are the committee. Then have the class vote on who they think should be awarded the prize.



6. Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Brainstorm what changes you would like to see in your own world. Describe the change and provide action steps that people can take to implement this change.
7. Set up a classroom government with a president and vice president, congress, and judicial branch. One group should caucus to discuss possible classroom laws, present them to the next group for discussion, and submit them to the president for approval. Afterward, discuss the perceived fairness of this process and how citizens could try to change bills that they deem unjust.
8. Charlesbridge Publishing began the “Pass the Peace” campaign, inspired by *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance*. We distributed posters to local companies, started a blog chain with a Pass the Peace widget, and donated money to Wangari Maathai’s organization, The Greenbelt Movement, in an effort to spread the messages of the peacemakers profiled in the book. What can your class do to pass the peace?

¹ Documented in the will of Swedish industrialist and inventor Alfred Nobel, who bequeathed the Nobel Peace Prize in 1896.

READING COMPREHENSION CHECK

VOCABULARY²

Match the words below with their appropriate definitions.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. empire _____ | A. a military dictatorship |
| 2. regime _____ | B. a form of government based on the ideal of common ownership, where everyone shares everything |
| 3. communism _____ | C. a statement signed by many people to show support for a cause |
| 4. NAACP _____ | D. a contract between two or more states, relating to peace, truce, or alliance |
| 5. apartheid _____ | E. a practice by which people are murdered by being hung from trees |
| 6. strike _____ | F. a country that takes over and controls other countries |
| 7. unions _____ | G. a long period of violence between Catholic and Protestant paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland |
| 8. lynching _____ | H. the process of trying to absorb one culture into another |
| 9. “the Troubles” _____ | I. a particular government or set of rules |
| 10. paramilitary group _____ | J. refusal to buy and support certain goods or services as a form of protest |
| 11. treaty _____ | K. organizations that protect workers’ rights and guarantee fair pay and benefits |
| 12. reconciliation _____ | L. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People |
| 14. boycott _____ | M. the act of bringing (a person) into friendly relations <i>to</i> or <i>with</i> (oneself or another) after an estrangement |
| 15. assimilation _____ | N. armed forces that do not have a legitimate status within the government |
| 16. petition _____ | O. to refuse to work |
| 17. junta _____ | P. the name given in South Africa to the segregation of the inhabitants of European descent from the non-European |

SHORT ANSWER

- How did Gandhi protest the Asiatic Registration Act in South Africa?
- In what way did Desmond Tutu try to help victims heal from conflict and violence in South Africa?
- Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white person on a bus, thereby breaking the law. What is this type of nonviolent protest called?
- How did Cesar Chavez protest the low wages and ill treatment of farm workers?
- What religion, followed by Thich Nhat Hanh, focuses on living a balanced life, avoiding extremes in all things, and showing respect for all forms of life?

² Definitions taken from the Oxford English Dictionary Online (<http://dictionary.oed.com>) accessed in 2008, and from *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* by Anne Sibley O’Brien and Perry Edmond O’Brien, © 2009.

6. The Plastic People of the Universe was a band, around which dissidents rallied in what country?
7. What solution did Wangari Maathai come up with to help women in the countryside of Kenya?
8. What were some ways that Nelson Mandela improved his and other prisoners' conditions in prison?
9. From what city was Sherriff "Bull" O'Connor, the mayor that ordered officers to stop peaceful protesters with fire hoses and police dogs?
10. What were Charles Perkins and the Students for Aboriginal Action protesting at the Moree town pool in 1965?
12. In what war did Muhammad Ali refuse to fight when he was drafted in 1967?
13. How did the Argentinean government silence people in "The Dirty War?"
14. What was the name of the activist group formed by Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams in Northern Ireland?
15. How has the Burmese government punished Aung San Suu Kyi for protesting against the military dictatorship?
16. In what country did government forces repress a protest by using tear gas and firearms?

QUOTATIONS

Match the quotation with the appropriate person

Wangari Maathai _____

Vaclav Havel _____

Mohandas Gandhi _____

Charles Perkins _____

Rosa Parks _____

Thich Nhat Hanh _____

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. _____

Aung San Suu Kyi _____

Desmond Tutu _____

Nelson Mandela _____

Madres de Plaza de Mayo _____

Mairead Corrigan _____

Cesar Chavez _____

Student Activists of Tiananmen Square _____

Muhammad Ali _____

- A. "I had no idea that history was being made. I was just tired of giving in."
- B. "Today we struggle for the soul of our country."
- C. "You should never let your fears prevent you from doing what you know is right."
- D. "Islam means peace."
- E. "Nonviolence is an intensely active force when properly understood."
- F. "We knew this was a war between love and hatred, not between force and force."
- G. "I really do inhabit a system in which words are capable of shaking the entire structure of government."
- H. "Our common humanity is more important than all the things that divide us."
- I. "We must not only speak about forgiveness and reconciliation—we must act on these principles."
- J. "We need to meet in a public place to make it more difficult for them to kidnap us."
- K. "We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own."
- L. "If we're full of hatred, we can't really do our work. Hatred saps all that strength and energy we need to plan."
- M. "In our daily life we can smile and be peaceful and happy. This is the most basic kind of peace work."
- N. "We shall meet your physical force with soul force."
- O. "To make peace with an enemy one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes one's partners."

ANSWER KEY

<u>Vocabulary</u>	<u>Matching</u>	<u>Short Answer</u>
1. F	1. K	1. He organized the mass burning of registration papers.
2. I	2. G	2. He led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
3. B	3. E	3. civil disobedience
4. L	4. B	4. He helped form unions and organized strikes.
5. P	5. A	5. Buddhism
6. O	6. M	6. Czechoslovakia
7. K	7. N	7. She planted trees to help restore the soil so that women could farm and garden.
8. E	8. C	8. He won long pants for the prisoners, better food, more blankets, the chance to have more visitors, and the ability to write letters, study, and receive books.
9. G	9. I	9. Birmingham, Alabama
10. N	10. O	10. They were protesting the rule that black
11. D	11. J	Aborigine children weren't allowed to use the pool.
12. M	12. H	11. the Vietnam War
13. J	13. L	12. They silenced them by "disappearing" them, or kidnapping and murdering them.
14. H	14. F	13. The Community of Peace People
15. C	15. D	14. They have put her on house arrest.
16. A		15. the Republic of China



INTERNET RESOURCES

The Albert Einstein Institution

www.aeinstein.org

The Albert Einstein Institution is a nonprofit organization advancing the study and use of strategic nonviolent action in conflicts throughout the world.

A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict

www.aforcemorepowerful.org/

Filmmakers Steve York and Miriam Zimmerman and nonviolent conflict experts Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall make up the creative team behind *A Force More Powerful*, which has turned into a book, film, and computer game.

Gandhi Serve Foundation

www.gandhiserve.org

GandhiServe, a charitable foundation registered in Germany, aims to spread the ethics of nonviolence by disseminating information about and popularizing Mahatma Gandhi's life and works.

The Green Belt Movement

www.greenbeltmovement.org

Started by Wangari Maathai, the Green Belt Movement began as a grassroots tree-planting program to address the challenges of deforestation, soil erosion, and lack of water, and is now a vehicle for empowering women and communities worldwide.

International Center on Nonviolent Conflict

www.nonviolent-conflict.org

The ICNC is an independent, nonprofit, educational foundation that develops and encourages the study and use of civilian-based, nonmilitary strategies to establish and defend human rights, democracy, and justice worldwide.

The King Center

www.thekingcenter.org

Established in 1968 by Coretta Scott King, The King Center is the official living memorial dedicated to the advancement of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of America's greatest nonviolent movement for justice, equality, and peace.

The Nobel Prize

www.nobelprize.org

This site gives information about past and present Nobel Prize winners.

Peace-Out.com

www.peace-out.com

Started by *After Gandhi* author Perry Edmond O'Brien in 2004, Peace-Out.com provides information about how to obtain conscientious objector status to exit the military with honor.

Radio Prague's History Online Virtual Exhibit

<http://archiv.radio.cz/history/history15.html>

This website gives a brief history of the Velvet Revolution that occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1989.

The United States Institute of Peace

www.usip.org

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent international conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase conflict management capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Anne Sibley O'Brien is a children's book creator who has illustrated twenty-five picture books, including *Jamaica's Find* and five other Jamaica books by Juanita Havill (Houghton Mifflin). She has collaborated with Margy Burns Knight on five books: *Talking Walls*; *Who Belongs Here? An American Story*; *Welcoming Babies* and *Talking Walls: The Stories Continue* (all Tilbury House, Publishers); and *Africa Is Not A Country* (Millbrook Press). In 1997 they received the National Education Association Author-Illustrator Human & Civil Rights Award for their body of work.

O'Brien has also written and illustrated several books, including two retellings of Korean tales, *The Princess and the Beggar* (Scholastic), *The Legend of Hong Kil Dong: The Robin Hood of Korea* (Charlesbridge), and *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* (Charlesbridge).

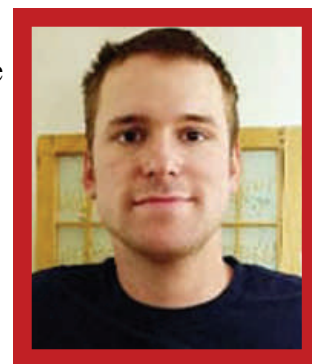
O'Brien was raised by medical missionaries in South Korea, becoming both bilingual and bicultural, which sparked her passion for multiracial, multicultural, and global subjects. She attended Mount Holyoke College where she majored in Studio Art, and spent her junior year abroad at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, Korea. In addition to creating books, she has been involved for many years in diversity education and leadership training.

She is also a writer and performer, and has created a one-woman show entitled "*White Lies: one woman's quest for release from the enchantment of whiteness*" (<http://www.WhiteLies.ws>).

She lives with her husband on an island in Maine, and is the mother of two grown children. Visit her website at www.annesibleyobrien.com.



Three years into a four-year enlistment in Afghanistan, **Perry Edmond O'Brien** came to the conclusion that war had never, and would never, solve conflicts. "I started to think you could trace the current conflict in Afghanistan all the way back to World War I. War clearly wasn't solving our problems and hadn't over the last two to three thousand centuries of civilization. And if it wasn't working, it wasn't right." After talking with his unit's chaplain and intensely studying philosophy and Eastern religion, Perry decided that he could no longer participate in active duty. At the age of twenty-one, Perry was one of thirty-one servicemen granted conscientious objector status in 2004.



Upon his return to the U.S., Perry continued to campaign for peace. His mother, renowned children's author Anne Sibley O'Brien, suggested that they combine her artistic ability with his knowledge of philosophy and history. Their collaboration resulted in the book for young readers, *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance*, which highlights fifteen activists who chose nonviolent resistance as the path to change.

In 2008 Perry earned his B.A. in political theory at Cornell University. Today he continues to promote nonviolent paths to change through his work as a labor organizer in New York City, and through his website, www.peace-out.com, where he provides information about how to obtain conscientious objector status to leave the military with honor.