



It strikes this writer after reading and watching the news concerning the utter insanity of the violence being perpetrated in our name here in the U.S. at our Southern border, that it might be time for a flier on good old fashioned "non violence" and what it takes for us to try and live that way. As civil resistance is happening in our streets all across America in support of those seeking asylum at our borders, celebrating our independence is, more likely than not, a good place to start. In two days we celebrate **INDEPENDENCE DAY.**

Independence Day in the United States is often wrapped up with the Revolutionary War, or even other past military campaigns like World War II. "But it's usually forgotten that nonviolent struggle played an important role in the founding of the US. During the

colonial era, between 1765 and 1775, there were three major campaigns of nonviolent resistance before armed conflict broke out at Lexington and Concord in 1775.

"The result of those campaigns was the achievement of default political independence in the British colonies in North America," says **Walter Conser**, a history professor at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

Conser says the campaigns took three distinct forms:

- 1) **Non-importation campaigns:** "People would boycott British goods and thereby put economic pressure on British merchants, who would put pressure on British politicians," he says.
- 2) **Non-consumption:** "Americans would buy American made goods. If there were British goods available, they would purposely not buy them."
- 3) **Non-exportation:** "Americans decided to send no raw materials from America to England and thereby continuing to put pressure through methods of protest and persuasion on British officials."

Nonviolent resistance also took the form of new American institutions of government, Conser notes, like the Stamp Act Congress or the Committees of Correspondence, and most importantly the First Continental Congress.

Even though some of America's first leaders were Quakers, a pacifist religion, Conser says neither theology nor morality were the driving force behind these early nonviolent campaigns. Rather, it was self-preservation. "They knew that to take up the gun was simply suicidal, and so they looked at other, nonviolent, forms of resistance," he says. (Please see over for continued "***Civil Resistance, Power to the People.***")

However, there was little appetite to continue a nonviolent movement once the Second Continental Congress authorized the Continental Army, with George Washington as commander, in May 1775.

The outbreak of war had one little-discussed side effect, according to Conser. While a broad spectrum of society, including women and children, were able to participate in nonviolent campaigns, that changed once the first shots were fired.”

“When you move to a military strategy, you effectively narrow that to men, basically, and not old men, but they have to be young men who have to be in good shape,” Conser says. “That represented a restriction on participation and I think many of those restrictions continued into the political arena.”

*Source: [Civil Resistance: The Power of the People | America Abroad Media](http://www.americaabroadmedia.org/radio/civil-resistance-power-people) www.americaabroadmedia.org/radio/civil-resistance-power-people For more on the history of nonviolent resistance in the US and elsewhere, see America Abroad’s full episode on the subject, [“Civil Resistance, Power to the People.”](#) Please note **Brene Brown** quote: top, side one. Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. She has spent the past ten years studying vulnerability, courage, authenticity, and shame. “Principled Nonviolence” addressed below:*

Principled Nonviolence: *The Lokashakti Encyclopedia of Nonviolence, Peace, & Social Justice*

“A form of nonviolence in which practitioners (a) explicitly state their intention to conduct and resolve conflict without violence, (b) adopt many precautions to demonstrate and carry out that intention, and (c) are prepared to suffer, even sacrifice their lives, if need be, rather than inflict suffering on others while holding fast to the truths they believe. As such it characteristically develops out of religious or ethical rather than political or practical considerations and is expressed in witness for ideals.

“Principled advocates of nonviolence are not first concerned about the likely success of their witness but rather wish to express moral rejection of a governmental or societal practice. In challenging such institutions as slavery, gender discrimination, war, and racial discrimination their witness has initiated many social change movements. They differ from practitioners of tactical nonviolence in that the latter may abandon either nonviolence or their objective in the face of an inadequate response or violent repression. Principled activists also differ from advocates of violence who seek to make others change their objectives through inflicting suffering and the loss of life. Advocates of principled nonviolence distinguish between the person and the evil they may do, seeking to draw out the moral capacity of each person.



“To the extent that they participate in efforts to achieve social change, principled advocates face profound political, moral, and tactical issues. Perhaps all would agree that [Mohandas K. Gandhi](#) and [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) successfully extended principled nonviolence into societal conflict, achieving fundamental change without violence. ...” (Excerpted.) **Please note:** A good example for the reader is today's revival of the **Poor People's Campaign**, led by **Rev. William Barber** and **Rev. Liz Theoharis** in a call for: “**A National Call to Moral Revival**”. <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>; <https://www.facebook.com/wisconsinppc/>.

“Because violence can only breed more violence and suffering our struggle must remain nonviolent and free of hatred.” [Tenzin Gyatso](#)

