

Option 1: Continue Nonviolent Struggle With Multiracial Support

Nonviolence is a core principle of our beliefs in the struggle against the government. Only strong people can look threats in the eye and not retaliate violently. Nonviolence takes more courage than violence, and we have been demonstrating to the world our courage and our resolve. To abandon that principle at this crucial point would be to show the world and our people that we have given up, that we no longer have the courage to stand up for our beliefs. Nonviolence has not failed us, and we must continue to use it as a most powerful weapon in our fight for freedom.

We must take up the banner with renewed energy and unity. Only nonviolent resistance can unite the people against the state. We have seen the positive effects of passive resistance in India, and we can have the same effect here in South Africa. Gandhi's influence here and in India shows that his principles of *satyagraha* work. When people are united against a common enemy and when they support one another, change happens. It is the people who defeat the armies.

We have many forms of protest at our disposal under the umbrella of nonviolent resistance. Economic boycotts of South African goods, both here and abroad, may yet work to bring down the government. We can boycott shops here. Look what we gained from the Alexandra bus boycott! Our numbers and our strength enabled us to get what we wanted. By using only passive resistance we will retain support from other groups, including whites, and will benefit from their financial support and their numbers. The eventual reconciliation with whites and the establishment of democracy requires that we use only passive means to resist. Any other method is sure to invoke bitterness and hatred.

Resorting to violence has many problems. To launch a violent campaign will surely open us to further reprisals from the government and will only result in more deaths. Violence breeds violence; we would only be adding to the cycle.

We must stay the course and remember that it is the stronger man who makes his beliefs known through nonviolent means. We are stronger than the government. We will prevail.

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 1

1. Nonviolence has been the guiding principle of our fight against apartheid. It is a central element of our struggle.

2. Nonviolence is the only morally acceptable way to respond to oppression. Vengeful action only breeds more violence.

3. Nonviolent protest is supported by outsiders who champion our cause in other nations; violence is not.

Supporting Arguments for Option 1

1. Resorting to violence will lead to future racial tensions and bitterness. We want to create a peaceful, multiracial society.

2. Chief Luthuli's position of nonviolence is well respected outside of South Africa. Our

success depends on support from the UN and member states.

3. Nonviolence has proven its effectiveness in other situations, such as the independence of India from Great Britain.

From the Historical Record

Mohandas Gandhi, 1928

“My point is that I can definitely assert that in planning the Indian movement there never was the slightest thought given to the possibility or otherwise of offering armed resistance. *Satyagraha* is soul force pure and simple, and whenever and to whatever extent there is room for the use of arms or physical force or brute force, there and to that extent is there so much less possibility for soul force. These are purely antagonistic forces in my view, and I had full realisation of this antagonism even at the time of the advent of *Satyagraha*.”

Chief Luthuli, Presidential Address to annual conference of ANC, December 1959

“It is unfortunate for the government to incite people to violence. This could be the effect of pronouncements like the one recently made by the Minister of Defence, Mr. Erasmus, when he said that preparations are in progress to place units of the defence force at several strategic areas in order ‘to have the army ready to assist the civil authorities in case of internal uprisings.’ Notwithstanding all this, I counsel the oppressed to brace up and prepare themselves to meet this threat to our existence as a people by exploring to the full the possibilities of non-violent methods of struggle. This is the suggestion in our interest. One is not guided by pacifist considerations, but by practical considerations that led [the African National] Congress in 1949 to decide to prosecute on this basis its militant struggle for liberty. Protest demonstrations, defiance campaigns, stay-at-homes of limited duration are very necessary warming up process to train people

for more exacting forms of non-violence.... We are a giant that does not know its strength. When white oppressors impress people with their military might and knowledge we should show the people that it is because the white men fear us that they have curbed our advance by apartheid laws.”

Chief Luthuli, June 1959

“We are not without power. Along the non-violent path, we can effectively harness our buying strength and our labour potential to defeat our enemy if we do so in the spirit of unity and determination.”

Robert Sobukwe, March 20, 1960

“I say quite POSITIVELY, without fear of contradiction, that the only people who will benefit from violence are the government and the police.... We are not leading corpses to the new Africa.”

ANC statement, April 1, 1960

“We wish to make it very clear that we have chosen the path of non-violent struggle not out of weakness and cowardice but because we are confident of the victory of our cause, and do not wish to see the country dragged through bloody upheavals which may leave a legacy of bitterness for generations to come.”

M.B. Yengwa, ANC leader, 1960

“The point is that we cannot exclude a bloody revolution in South Africa, but it would never be the African National Congress that would embark on a bloody revolution.”

Molvi Cachalia, SAIC leader, June 1960

“As far as the policy of the Congresses is concerned we believe that the method which we employ is more important than the aim itself... We have specifically accepted and abided by the policy of non-violence, so that whatever we achieve through negotiation—altering the laws through Parliament, through the Government and so on—will be based on the democratic system. Violence would certainly destroy all that and that is not permissible at all as far as our organisation is concerned.”

Molvi Cachalia, June 1960

“As far as the people who are engaging in the struggle and people who follow the struggle, they will never use violence, and will never approve any violence whatsoever.”

Molvi Cachalia, Treason Trial testimony, June 1960

“Q: Is it always possible in your view, as happened in this case, as a result of the action of the authorities, that a purely peaceful demonstration can turn into violence? In your view, does the possibility always exist that as a result of the action of the police authorities, a peaceful demonstration can turn into violence or can turn into a bloodbath?”

A: If the demonstrations are organised by the organisation which is leading the movement, their volunteers or their followers will not indulge in violence, but there is always a possibility that something might go wrong, police might shoot, or some other elements would come and do things. There is always the possibility of violence.

Q: What would the duties of passive resistors be under these circumstances?

A: Even if they are attacked or even if violence occurred from any other side, their duty will be not to fight back, and not to take part in the violence.”

President of the Indian Natal Congress, March 1961

“We believe in peaceful and non-violent solutions both to international problems and to problems within the border of one's own country.... We believe in a democratic South Africa for all South Africans—white and non-white—and we believe it is possible to achieve that objective by peaceful and non-violent means.”

Chief Luthuli

“There is still enough goodwill among non-whites to avoid a bloody struggle being a *sine qua non* [an essential part of the struggle] to Freedom. “