

# Topic 8.7: Global Resistance to Established Power Structures After 1900

## Standards Table

| Theme  | Learning Objective   | Key Concept(s)   | Education Standards Met  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Cultural Developments and Interactions (CDI) | <b>Unit 8: Learning Objective I</b> — Explain various reactions to existing power structures in the period after 1900. | <b>KC-6.2.V</b> Resistance movements challenged or intensified conflict.<br><b>KC-6.2.V.A</b> Nonviolent resistance. <b>KC-6.2.V.C</b> Militarized responses.<br><b>KC-6.2.V.D</b> Violence against civilians. | AP World History: Modern—causation, comparison, sourcing, and argumentation (SAQ focus). |

## Learning Objectives

- Explain different forms of resistance to political and social power structures.
- Compare nonviolent, violent, and revolutionary resistance methods.
- Analyze how governments responded to resistance movements.
- Evaluate how resistance movements shaped political change.
- Practice AP-style SAQ responses using primary sources.

## Lesson Overview

In the 20th century, individuals and groups around the world challenged established power structures in a variety of ways. Some leaders promoted nonviolent resistance as a moral and effective method for achieving political change, while others turned to violence when peaceful efforts failed. At the same time, governments often responded with repression, militarization, or legal action, which sometimes intensified conflicts rather than resolving them. This lesson examines these different forms of resistance and prepares students to analyze and compare them using AP-style short-answer questions.

## Essential Vocabulary

- **nonviolent resistance** — efforts to achieve change without using physical force
- **civil disobedience** — refusal to obey laws as a form of protest
- **militarization** — the use of military force in governance or conflict
- **terrorism** — the use of violence against civilians to achieve political goals
- **repression** — the use of force to suppress opposition

## Background Reading

Resistance to established power structures after 1900 took many forms depending on political conditions, leadership, and ideology. One major approach was nonviolent resistance, which sought to achieve change through peaceful protest, civil disobedience, and moral persuasion. Leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi argued that nonviolence was not weakness, but a powerful force capable of undermining unjust systems. These movements often relied on mass participation and aimed to gain both domestic and international support.

In contrast, some movements turned to violence, especially when peaceful methods failed or when governments responded with repression. Leaders such as Nelson Mandela initially supported nonviolent protest but later justified armed resistance when the South African government refused to reform. In these cases, violence was often presented as a necessary response to injustice rather than an initial strategy.

Other groups embraced violence as a primary method from the beginning. Revolutionary movements, such as those in Latin America, sometimes viewed armed struggle as the only way to overthrow existing political systems. These movements often targeted both government forces and, in some cases, civilians, which increased the intensity of conflict and led to long-term instability.

Governments frequently responded to resistance with force, which could escalate tensions further. Repression, imprisonment, and military action often strengthened resistance movements by increasing support among the population. As a result, resistance and state power often interacted in ways that intensified rather than reduced conflict. Understanding these different approaches helps explain the wide range of political and social outcomes in the modern world.

## Primary Sources

### **Primary Source 1: Mohandas Gandhi, Writings on Nonviolence**

**Document:** Gandhi on Nonviolent Resistance

**Link:** <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1919gandhi.asp>

Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him.

The principle of nonviolence involves complete abstention from physical violence and also from internal violence of spirit. A man who is nonviolent must not be angry, must not harbor ill-will, and must not bear malice towards anyone.

Nonviolence is a weapon of the strong. It presupposes the ability to strike. It is a conscious restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance and is not a weapon of the weak or the cowardly.

### **Guided Analysis Questions**

1. What argument does Gandhi make about the nature of nonviolence?
2. How does Gandhi define true nonviolent behavior?
3. What is Gandhi's purpose in describing nonviolence as a "weapon"?
4. Who is the intended audience?
5. How does this reflect resistance to power structures?

### **Primary Source 2: Nelson Mandela, "I Am Prepared to Die," 1964**

**Document:** Rivonia Trial Statement

**Link:** <https://www.anc1912.org.za/i-am-prepared-to-die/>

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.

I do not deny that I planned sabotage. I planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation after many years of tyranny, exploitation, and oppression of my people.

The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. We shall not submit, and we have no choice but to resist by all means in our power.

### **Guided Analysis Questions**

1. What justification does Mandela give for using violence?
2. How does Mandela frame his goals?
3. What is his purpose in acknowledging sabotage?
4. How does this show a shift from nonviolence?
5. How might the government respond?

### **Primary Source 3: Shining Path Statement, Peru**

**Document:** Shining Path Ideological Statement

**Link:** <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121270>

We initiate the armed struggle as the highest form of struggle because only through people's war can power be seized. The countryside will be the principal theater of operations, and from there the cities will be surrounded.

The reactionary state must be destroyed completely. There is no other way. We must sweep away the old order and replace it with a revolutionary system led by the people.

Violence is the midwife of history. Without armed struggle, there can be no revolution and no transformation of society.

### Guided Analysis Questions

1. What method of resistance is promoted?
2. How is violence justified?
3. What is the goal of the movement?
4. Who is the intended audience?
5. How does this differ from Gandhi?

## Key Tables

### Types of Resistance

| Type                   | Example      |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Nonviolent             | Gandhi       |
| Conditional violence   | Mandela      |
| Revolutionary violence | Shining Path |

### Government Responses

| Response       | Effect                |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Repression     | Increased resistance  |
| Militarization | Escalated conflict    |
| Legal action   | Controlled opposition |

## Change / Continuity / Comparison

### Change over time:

Resistance movements evolved from primarily nonviolent strategies to include armed and revolutionary approaches. This reflects increasing frustration with ineffective peaceful methods and stronger state resistance.

### Continuity over time:

Groups continued to challenge authority throughout the century, and governments consistently responded with efforts to maintain control. Conflict between authority and opposition remained constant.

### Comparison:

Nonviolent movements relied on moral pressure and mass participation, while violent

movements relied on force. Both aimed to challenge power structures, but they differed in methods and consequences.

## Key Takeaways

- Resistance movements took many forms across the 20th century
- Nonviolence and violence were both used as strategies
- Governments often responded with repression
- Some resistance intensified conflict rather than resolving it
- Methods and outcomes varied widely

## SAQ Practice Section

### **SAQ Set 1 (Gandhi vs Mandela)**

- A. Identify ONE similarity in how Gandhi and Mandela justify resistance.
- B. Explain ONE difference in their methods.
- C. Explain ONE reason movements shift from nonviolence to violence.

### **SAQ Set 2 (Mandela vs Shining Path)**

- A. Identify ONE similarity in how they justify violence.
- B. Explain ONE difference in their goals.
- C. Explain ONE way governments respond.

### **SAQ Set 3 (No Stimulus)**

- A. Identify ONE example of nonviolent resistance.
- B. Explain ONE reason some movements rejected it.
- C. Explain ONE effect of violent resistance.