**Non-Violent Action: A Force for Change**

**Glossary of Non-Violence**

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| **Term** | **Meaning** |
| Banner drop | Hanging a banner with a message in a public/visible space. |
| Blockade | A human chain or physical barrier that shuts down something unwanted (e.g. a coal mine or meeting), protects something wanted (e.g. a forest or home) or makes a symbolic statement (e.g. encircling a government building). |
| Boycott | Non-cooperation either socially, economically or politically (e.g. boycotting purchase of goods from a particular country; sports boycotts; arts boycotts). |
| Civil disobedience | The public and ethically motivated breaking of a law, decree, regulations etc. in order to challenge either the legitimacy of the specific law you’re breaking or a greater injustice committed by the state. |
| Civil resistance | Collective action for political or social ends without any systematic recourse to violence. |
| Clowning | E.g. the ‘Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army’ CIRCA which merges the ancient art of clowning (being rather than pretending to be clowns) with contemporary tactics of non-violent direct action developed in early 2000s. CIRCA believes that mocking and utterly confusing the enemy can be more powerful than direct confrontation. |
| Craftivism | “Craftivism is the practice of engaged creativity, especially regarding political or social causes. By using their creative energy to help make the world a better place, craftivists help bring about positive change via personalized activism. Craftivism allows practitioners to customize their particular skills (e.g. knitting, sewing etc.) to address particular causes.” <https://craftivism.com/definition/> |
| Die-in | A form of protest where participants lie down on the ground and pretend to be dead usually to symbolise the loss of life caused by the actions they are protesting against. |
| Direct action | Any action where individuals or groups act to bring about change themselves, rather than asking or expecting others to act on their behalf. |
| Distributed action | A decentralised mass protest where large numbers of people express their support by taking many small, simple, coordinated actions e.g. banging pots, turning lights off, wearing same colour of clothing, etc. |
| Divestment | Withdrawing funds (investment) to apply economic pressure on an industry or state that is profiting from injustice and destruction. |
| Fasting | For Ghandi fasting was both a political pressure tactic and a spiritual part of his Satyagraha philosophy of non-violence. (See hunger strike) |
| Flash mob | A spontaneous, contagious, and often celebratory protest that uses social media and word of mouth to gather people at short notice in a particular place at a particular time. |
| Google bombing | The practise of causing a website to rank highly in web search engine results for irrelevant, un-related, or off-topic search terms by linking heavily. E.g. English Disco Lovers (instead of English Defence League). |
| Guerrilla gardening | The act of gardening (planting and raising food plants or flowers) on land that the gardeners do not have legal rights to cultivate, such as abandoned sites, areas not being cared for or private property. |
| Guerrilla projection | Pioneered by artists and advertisers – using a high-powered projector to project huge images or messages onto a building. |
| Hash tag activism | By choosing a strategic hash tag and curating the ensuing conversation, people use Twitter and other social media platforms to shift the debate and expand support e.g. #BlackLivesMatter. |
| Hunger strike | The deliberate and public refusal of food, and sometimes water, as a moral protest against injustice or abuse of power. (See ‘fast’) |
| Laughtivism | Using mischief and humour to bring attention to a cause, disarm the seriousness of an enemy and bring about change (e.g. Otpor in Serbia). |
| Mock funeral | Protesting against the human rights abuses, deaths at the hands of unjust regimes or loss of people/biodiversity in the case of climate breakdown etc. using a funeral procession and other elements of a funeral (e.g. eulogies, poetry, readings, music etc.) |
| Noise-making protest (cacerolazo) | Thousands of people joining together to bang pots and pans, blow whistles, honk horns, set of mobile phone ring tones or any other way they can easily make lots of noise. |
| Non-cooperation | Refusal through civil disobedience to cooperate with an undemocratic government, unjust law etc. |
| Non-violence | Active non-violence involves resistance to existing injustice together with action to build a constructive alternative. ‘The aim is both dialogue and resistance – dialogue with the power-holders to communicate with them, and resistance to the structures that block progressive change.’ Turning the Tide, turningtide.org.uk |
| Non-violent action | A form of political action based on the decision not to physically harm or destroy human life (this may be extended to all life forms and to psychological harm). |
| Occupation | Taking over and holding a space for example sit-ins, factory occupations, housing squats, occupations of public spaces and protest camps. |
| Peace walk | Or ‘trek’, ‘peace march’, ‘peace pilgrimage’: a long journey (often on foot, though sometimes by bicycle, bus or boat) towards a centre of power or other key point of intervention, that rallies geographically dispersed people to a common cause (e.g. to COP26 climate talks in Glasgow in 2021). |
| Picketing | When protestors gather outside a place of work or location where an event is taking place. Often this is to dissuade others from going in but it can also be done to draw public attention to a cause. |
| Pillars of support | Using the analogy of a building being held up by pillars, the pillars of support are the institution and factors that support a problem and keep it going (e.g. the military, corporations, religious organisations, media etc.). |
| Political Ju-Jitsu | A term from Gene Sharp to describe how non-violent confrontation creates a type of asymmetrical conflict that throws authorities off balance |
| Power | The ability to have an impact on the world. Power may take different forms: power with, power to, power within, power over. |
| Pragmatic non-violence | The decision to use non-violence based upon practical, strategic considerations for example its efficacy. |
| Principled non-violence | Non-violence that is based on a moral stand, an ethical code which disallows the practice of violence. |
| Reluctant and slow compliance | A form of non-violent resistance where people do as they are asked but slowly or reluctantly e.g. during the Danish Resistance factory workers went on a go-slow so the armaments that the Nazis needed were late in coming. |
| Resistance movement | A widespread and usually informally interrelated network of individuals, informal groups, institutions and resistance groups engaged in planned or spontaneous resistance against an established government, political system, regime or military occupation. |
| Sanction | An action that is taken or an order that is given to force a country to obey international laws by limiting or stopping trade with that country, by not allowing economic aid etc. |
| Satyagraha | A Sanskrit word meaning “truth force” or “holding firmly to truth” coined and developed by Mahatma Gandhi. ‘Truth (satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement Satyagraha, that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence, and gave up the use of the phrase “passive resistance”’ M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1111, pp. 109–10. |
| Sit-down/Sit-in | A mass obstruction of an activity by sitting down to demonstrate a grievance or to get the activity modified or stopped. |
| Solidarity | A feeling of unity between people who have the same interests, goals etc. People can act in solidarity with other people experiencing similar situations in different places across the world. |
| Spectrum of allies | A tool which enables a group to identify who their allies are in trying to make change. |
| Strategy and tactic | A strategy is a long-term plan which aims to achieve certain objectives. A tactic is a specific action which contributes to the implementation of the strategy. |
| Strike | Stopping work. A ‘general strike’ is a widespread work stoppage by workers across many industries in a city, region, or country. |
| Symbols | Protest movements use symbols to get attention and spread their message. These can be pictures (e.g. peace signs, pink triangles), hand signs (e.g. a raised fist), objects (e.g. shoes). |
| Theatre | Different forms of theatre are used by non-violent protestors to draw attention to a cause or undermine opponents etc. |
| Trespass | To enter property or land without permission of the owner. Used as a form of protest where land that is private is seen by the protestors as belonging to the Commons (e.g. Kinder Scout mass trespass, Greenham Common). |
| Vigil | A gathering held after sunset (often with candles or other lights) to protest the suffering of a marginalised group of people or in memory of the dead. They are used to raise awareness of a cause and unite people attending the vigil. |
| Violence | “… the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.” World Health Organisation World Report on violence and health, 2002. NB definitions of violence are contestable e.g. could extend to harm of other living beings. |
| Walk-out | Leaving a workplace, for example, to protest against conditions. |