COMMUNITY RESOURCE AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Force More Powerful, a new public television documentary series, shows how nonviolent power overcame oppression and authoritarian rule in conflict after conflict during the last 100 years. Two 90-minute programs — to be broadcast on September 18 and 25 at 9:00 p.m. ET (check local listings) — show how popular movements using nonviolent sanctions toppled tyrants, shook governments, thwarted occupying armies, and shattered ruling parties.

The series recounts Mohandas Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign against the British in India, the sit-ins and boycott that desegregated downtown Nashville, Tennessee; the nonviolent campaign against apartheid in South Africa; Danish resistance to the Nazis in World War II; the rise of Solidarity in Poland; and the momentum for victory for democracy in Chile. A Force More Powerful also introduces several extraordinary, but largely unknown individuals who drove these great events forward, and lets them tell what happened.

The phrase "a force more powerful" actually comes from Mohandas Gandhi, notes series producer/director/writer Steve York. Echoing these words in the series, Bernard Lafayette, one of the student leaders who participated in the sit-ins in Nashville, described their nonviolent strategy: "We believed that it was a power more forceful than their dogs, their hilly clubs, or their jails."

At a time when violence is still too often used by those who seek power, A Force More Powerful dramatizes how ordinary people throughout the world, working against all kinds of opponents, have taken up nonviolent weapons — and prevailed.

Mohandas Gandhi meets with vigilantes during the Salt March, asking for volunteers to break the law and go to jail.

How difficult is it to show history? York: One of the problems with historical documentaries is that when it's all over and you are watching it on TV or at the movies, it has a tendency to appear foreordained. Things click along from one event to the next, as if somebody had written it as a script. You have to remember that Gandhi in India really didn't know what kind of an effect he was going to have when he set out on the Salt March. Certainly the people involved in the resistance movements in places like Poland or Chile or Denmark had no way of knowing in advance how the story was going to end. There was no guarantee that they were going to succeed, and yet they did. That takes something extraordinary. People had to make it happen. That quality that you find in individual people shows on film.

The other problem I encounter when making historical documentaries is finding footage of things that are important. The most important moments from nonviolent struggles are seldom photographed. The real problem here is that nonviolent campaigns begin with people sitting around a kitchen table late at night in a remote township in South Africa, or in an attic room in Warsaw, or in a church basement in Nashville. It's a few people having ideas and exercising what is not very dramatic, i.e., discipline, clear thinking, and all the mundane nuts and bolts of making phone calls, printing flyers, going door-to-door, and so on. What you find in the video record is a deluge of footage of people marching in the streets, demonstrating, or continued on page 8

IN BRIEF

Premiere PBS Broadcast: 9 p.m. ET, September 18 and 25, 2002 (check local listings)
Program 1: Nashville (1960), India (1930), South Africa (1984)
Program 2: Denmark (1940), Poland (1980), Chile (1988)
Educational Off-Air Recording Rights: one year from initial broadcast
Narrator: Ben Kingsley
Written, produced, and directed by: Steve York
Series Editor and Principal Consultant: Peter Ackerman
Managing Producer: Miriam A. Zimmerman
Original music composed and conducted by: John D. Keltonic
Executive Producer: Jack DuVall
WETA Executive-in-charge of Production: Dalton Delan
Book: A Force More Powerful — A Century of Nonviolent Conflict by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall (St. Martin's Press)
Funders: Major funding for this project was provided by Susan and Perry Lerner. Additional funding was provided by The Albert Einstein Institution; Elizabeth and John H. van Merkenstein, III; Abby and Alan Levy; and The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations
Video Distributor: For information about ordering videocassettes of the two 90-minute programs for home use or the six 30-minute modules for educational/institutional use, please contact: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, PO Box 2053, Princeton, New Jersey 08543-2053. Telephone toll-free: 1-800-257-5126; Fax: 1-609-275-3767; Web site: http://www.films.com
BEHIND THE HEADLINES

The Possible Dream

Often lost amid the cacophony of the 20th century's cannon roar and bomb explosions are the stories of people and movements that used nonviolent resistance against all odds to defeat ferocious opponents — to oust a tyrant in Chile, to thwart the Nazi's design on Denmark, or to transform a South African political system that had denied rights to people of color. Entire societies from the Philippines to Poland have been radically transformed, suddenly or gradually, by those who refused to submit to arbitrary rule.

Each of these campaigns used nonviolent sanctions — strikes, boycotts, sit-ins, walk-outs, demonstrations — active measures that punished opponents and produced political change. Their ultimate goals were to overturn brutal regimes (South Africa), obstruct invaders (Denmark), or compel rights to be honored (Nashville). All had fewer guns than their opponents. But their cause, in many cases, won the day.

Irrevocably altered were basic ideas about the nature of power. Brutality and violence may enable a corrupt or pernicious regime to intimidate people for a time, but its very existence would not be possible without the acquiescence of the population. When people unite and decide that they want to be free, then the opportunity comes for real change, and when they withdraw their active cooperation from a government, it cannot long stay in power.

Standing Tall

Nonviolent resistance is not for the impatient. Self-discipline was essential to the black college students whose persistent defiance of local laws and customs effectively paralyzed the city of Nashville. Boycotts may inflict economic pain on an oppressor, but they ask as much of those who launch them. This was never more true than in South Africa, where already desperately poor black citizens opted for self-reliance rather than subsidize an unjust system that depended on their buying power.

If sacrifice and perseverance are the bricks of nonviolent resistance, courage may very well be the mortar. In Argentina in the 1970s, courage was personified by mothers who stood in the central plaza of Buenos Aires demanding to know who was responsible for their children's disappearance at the hands of the state. During World War II, gentle wives of Jewish men being rounded up for the Holocaust sat down in front of a city detention center in Berlin and demanded their husbands' release. Incredibly, they succeeded. In the skewed standoff between storm troopers using terror and women with no weapons, the rewards of history were with the women.

For some, nonviolence is a personal choice borne of religious belief or moral conviction. For many who have challenged oppression but had no access to the instruments of war, it was the only practical alternative. Drones forced to submit to Nazi occupation during World War II, for example, could never hope to meet the military might of Hitler's henchmen.

Not only is using violence to seek power a high-risk strategy, it also forgives opportunities that past conflicts have taught us are created through the use of nonviolent sanctions. Underdogs who take up arms risk losing world sympathy. In a booming effect, regimes that might otherwise lose credibility can survive by rallying support for quelling violence.

Movers and Shakers

From the graspings and decisive (Lech Walesa), to the slight and unassuming (Mohandas Gandhi), to the relatively youthful and inexperienced (Michaelis Jack), those in the vanguard of popular uprisings may differ in personality and stature, but almost all lead perilous lives, forced to stay one step ahead of the enemy. What Gandhi lacked in physical size, he made up for in an relentless organization, calm intelligence, and highly tuned political skills. Jack worked to rein in volatile supporters of the anti-apartheid effort and make the struggle pay off for thousands of his countrymen.

Conversely, impulsive leadership can prove lethal to promising nonviolent campaigns. The 1999 student democracy movement in China that simultaneously amazed and inspired the world collapsed because its leaders acted rashly. They were slow to recognize just how threatening their demands (freedom of the press, anti-corruption, etc.) were to Communist Party officials. The failure of the democracy movement to fully recover from the Tiananmen Square massacre may say less about the viability of nonviolent action in China than it does about the invisibility of concentrating people power at a vulnerable point and expecting repressive governments to look the other way.

As Gandhi discovered in India, knowing when to consolidate gains and save the fight for better times is as crucial as knowing when the last reserves of power can be kicked over. Action without strategy may be sensatio nal, but it is rarely successful.

The Road Less Traveled

The record of the 20th century disproves the myth that violence facilitates political change. In fact, outside of the context of war, no major 20th-century struggle that intentionally used violence to unseat an authoritarian or unpopular regime has paved the way for a government that delivered equal justice and honored civil rights.

Fortunately, victories without violence in Chile, South Africa, and other places correct the misconception that only violence can overcome violence, or that the crucial struggles in history have to be settled by force of arms. When people refuse
numerous strategies were used to encourage blacks in South Africa's Port Elizabeth to support the boycott of white-owned businesses. (Program 1)

After five long years of courageous and often dangerous resistance, Danzig citizens rejoice at the news of Nazi Germany's surrender. (Program 2)

to obey unjust laws, when industry grinds to a halt because people stop working, when armies are no longer feared, the violence that governments use ceases to matter — their power to make people comply disappears. Just as the Russians could not shoot every railway worker who went out on strike in 1905, the Burmese junta today cannot murder every dissident who communicates over the Internet.

Tomorrow
In 1905, challenging absolute rulers like Russia's Tsar Nicholas II without brandishing firearms was regarded as either futile or foolish. But as the 21st century dawns, a new global economic and information system may hand opposition movements an advantage. Within a state, opportunities for nonviolent disruption and non-cooperation increase as information resources, communications, and economic leverage become more accessible.

Similarly, because nongovernmental organizations and the international media have become more pervasive and focused in rallying sympathy for many opposition movements, and because governments cannot afford to lose international legitimacy and the economic privileges that come with it (loans, credits, access to foreign markets), authoritarian regimes may be less inclined to use repressive measures against their own people. Further, as leading nonviolent strategists do their part by providing direct assistance to people in conflicts, nonviolent movements are no longer confined to their own native resources.

If the 20th century has taught us anything, however, it is that developing and applying nonviolent skills stand little chance of success without knowing how they have been used before. Those who struggle for justice and human rights in the 21st century will have A Force More Powerful and other written and audiovisual materials and resources to confirm the value of nonviolent sanctions.

Discussion Guide
If you are the Facilitator
If you are the group facilitator, prepare by watching the programs yourself. Decide whether the members of your discussion group should see the programs before coming together or if they will screen the programs as a group and then discuss them. The series has two programs. Each program is 90 minutes long and has three segments, the beginnings of which are easily identified.

Among the choices you might consider are the following:

Schedule two discussions — one for each of the two programs.
Schedule six discussions — one for each of the six segments.
Schedule one discussion — for the entire series.

If you screen and discuss a complete program on the same evening, you will want to schedule a session of at least two-and-a-half hours for each film. Before starting the program, it is helpful to give group members an idea of what to look for. You might, for example, ask each group member to track the actions or opinions of a specific person in the program.

The decision about whether to screen separately or together will affect when and how you schedule the discussion groups. If you choose to screen and discuss together, confirm the broadcast time (and repeats) with your local public television station and schedule your group accordingly, or arrange to tape the programs off the air at the time of broadcast.

Before the group meets, you might want to assign “experts” for each segment. Before the discussion, ask the chosen “expert” to present a brief factual synopsis of the incidents depicted. Other prediscussion assignments might be to read the background information in this guide, to select and read some of the related readings identified below and with each segment profile, or to research current news stories that offer support and implications for the discussion.

The Discussion
You may find that your group is stimulated enough by the program that a discussion will take off on its own. You do not need to set many ground rules, but you should make sure that only one person speaks at a time so that everyone who wants to speak is heard. A good way to get people involved in the discussion is to ask them if they agree or disagree with others’ statements. Also ask “Why?” As group members react to various comments, make sure they are reacting to the ideas and not to the person in the group.

To lead a more structured discussion, select from among the key themes those that you think might particularly interest the group. Then select a few from among the questions that follow those that you think would most stimulate members of the group to a good discussion. Feel free to rephrase the questions in your own words. Note that additional questions that are more pertinent to specific situations appear with each segment profile.

1. In the Politics of Nonviolent Action, Gene Sharp, Senior Scholar, The Albert Einstein Institution, categorizes 195 methods of nonviolent action under six main headings: nonviolent protest and persuasion, social non-cooperation, economic non-cooperation, and civic lifestyle (e.g., boycotts and strikes), political non-cooperation, and nonviolent intervention. As you view A Force More Powerful, take note of the various sanctions depicted and try to categorize them using this system. Discuss which seem to be most effective and under what circumstances each works best.

2. A Force More Powerful profiles several seemingly ordinary individuals who by their courage, sense of strategy, and determination in conflict, produced significant changes in their societies that affected millions of people. What characteristics did these people have in common? What propelled them out of their everyday lives to become activists?

3. The six stories told in the series reflect change in both democracies and military dictatorships. Which form of government is harder to change? Why?

4. Each of the movements profiled in A Force More Powerful was galvanized by strongly felt injustices or an outrageous act of repression. What circumstances do you think would propel you to disobey the law and resist the government?

5. What parallels do you find among the six stories featured in A Force More Powerful? What major differences do you find?

6. What role should the United States play in supporting and encouraging nonviolent citizen movements for human rights or democracy?

7. Every movement has both costs and benefits. Identify several stories featured in A Force More Powerful, and analyze them from the perspective of the costs and benefits of nonviolent action and violent repression. Factor in the differences between short-term gains and long-term gains, and discuss which movements seem to be most successful.

8. What conflicts are going on today in which nonviolent methods could be effective?

Additional Reading


NASHVILLE: WE WERE WARRIORS (1960)

In 1960, young black college students face a dilemma. While their schools teach the constitutional right of equality under the law, their off-campus surroundings in the heavily segregated city of Nashville starkly refute that promise. State-sponsored "Jim Crow" law governs many aspects of life, and Nashville's black and white communities are kept apart.

Enter James Lawson, a young black minister from Ohio who understands Gandhi's nonviolent legacy and gives the students the organization, discipline, and strategies they sorely need. Very few people take Gandhi as seriously as Lawson does. Growing up in the 1930s and 1940s, he follows the work of Gandhi in the newspapers. After spending several years in India studying with Gandhi’s disciples, he returns to the United States in 1956, determined to share Gandhi's methods with African Americans.

Echoing Gandhi's attack on the salt tax as an emotional rallying point, Lawson turns his attention to Nashville’s segregated lunch counters, typically situated in department stores and five-and-dimes that sell goods to black patrons but leave the line at serving them a cup of coffee. After months of rigorous training to help students identify and confront acts of discrimination, Lawson's students descend on the lunch counters, prompting white businesspeople to shut down rather than serve them.

At first, the townpeople dismiss the sit-ins as a passing fad. When it becomes apparent that the students are in for the long haul, they begin to secure the wrath of racist vigilantes. Outraged by the city’s heavy-handed treatment and incarceration of peaceable, well-dressed young men and women, Nashville’s black-and-white citizenry boycotts the city’s white-owned businesses, delivering a profound economic blow. White customers, repulsed by the atmosphere generated by segregation extremites, also stay away, adding to the mounting losses.

Coming to grips with the facility of mass arrests, a deluge of negative national publicity, and a shocking attempt on the life of a prominent black attorney, Nashville Mayor Ben West relents, asking the city's department stores to desegregate the lunch counters immediately.

To Discuss

1. One of the students seen in the film remarks that nonviolence is a form of fighting back. What does this mean?
2. Television as a mass medium was in its infancy during this period and played an important role in this story. Given today's range of public media and instantaneous reporting, do you think it would be easier or more difficult to rally public opinion to a particular cause? Why?
3. Economic costs may have tried more whites away from segregation than appeals to conscience. How did the students' actions trigger this?

Additional Reading


In 1960, Nashville college students confront the city's segregated society with civil disobedience, leading to the desegregation of lunch counters and other venues of public accommodation. (Program 1)
In 1930, Gandhi takes his first step in attacking the legitimacy of the British rule. As a dietary protest, salt is a patent symbol that cuts across class lines. (Program 1)

In 1984, a wave of unrest against apartheid begins to sweep across the black townships of South Africa. Security forces try to control the unrest via a provocative containment policy that incites dangerous confrontations. Impatient youths and others initiate sporadic violence. Black leaders are routinely harassed and imprisoned.

In the city of Port Elizabeth, Mikhubi Jack, a charismatic 27- year-old youth leader, understands that violence is no match for the state’s awesome arsenal. Jack stresses the primacy of cohesion and coordination, forming street committees and recruiting neighborhood leaders to represent their interests and struggle politically. Additionally, a fledgling umbrella organization, the United Democratic Front (UDF), asserts itself through a series of low-key acts of defiance, such as rent boycotts, labor strikes, and school boycotts.

As authentic opposition appeals to black parents who are tired of chronic misgovernment.

In South Africa: Freedom in Our Lifetime (1984-86)

To Discuss
1. Gandhi used several complementary sanctions in this campaign. How did they work together and how might the outcome have been different if any one had been omitted?
2. What role did women play in this movement and how was their role critical to its success?

3. In today’s consumer-driven society, how easy would it be to boycott a particular product for any length of time? What consequences might a political or social issue arise from this?

4. Gandhi’s unorthodox strategy of announcing its intentions to the enemy removed the element of surprise and dared the authorities to crack down on a peaceful procession. What other advantages does this tactic offer?

Additional Reading

Argentina (1977-83)
On March 24, 1976, a military coup unleashes a multiyear wave of terror. The junta browbeats press the judiciary, the Church, and trade unions. As kidnappings of civilians mount, mothers of “the disappeared” join together. In April 1977, 14 mothers — Las Madres — begin a vigil in front of the presidential palace in Buenos Aires. Their numbers growing, the women continue to gather despite beatings, arrests, and the disappearances of none of their members. Las Madres also circulate petitions, take out newspaper advertisements, and hold prayer services for the missing. A severe economic crisis in the early 1980s and the disastrous invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982 further discredit the junta, ending the timidity of religious, business, and labor leaders.

Demonstrations that begin in 1982 eventually succeed in forcing the junta to hold elections and cede power to a civilian government.

Philippines (1986)
After the assassination of Benigno Aquino, his widow, Corazon Aquino, is elected president. She is an opponent of President Ferdinand Marcos who has held power via rigged elections for over a decade, a new coalition

South African activist leader Mikhubi Jack inspires his peers at a 1988 memorial service. Jack’s presence and campaign bolsters his relative youth and away thousands to join the anti-apartheid fight. (Program 1)

In 1986, after the assassination of Benigno Aquino, his widow, Corazon Aquino, is elected president. She is an opponent of President Ferdinand Marcos who has held power via rigged elections for over a decade, a new coalition

outcome should be extended to white reformists such as F.W. de Klerk, who chose conciliation over the hard-liners’ bunker mentality? Do you think he simply realized that refusal to give ground was unsustainable or did he truly think the time for change had come? What factors do you think led to his decision?

Additional Reading

Argentina
1977-83
- Military coup
- Multiyear wave of terror
- Mothers of "the disappeared" join together
- Las Madres vigil
- Disappearances of none
- Las Madres circulate petitions
- Newspaper advertisements
- Prayer services for the missing

Philippines
1986
- Assassination of Benigno Aquino
- Corazon Aquino elected president
- Opponent of Ferdinand Marcos
- Rigged elections

Argentina
- Las Madres vigil
- The junta browbeats press
- Trade unions
- Mothers of "the disappeared"
- Mothers' vigil
- Falkland Islands invasion
- Economic crisis

Philippines
- Assassination of Benigno Aquino
- Corazon Aquino elected
- Ferdinand Marcos in power
- Rigged elections
DENMARK: LIVING WITH THE ENEMY (1940-45)

In 1940, during the earliest stages of World War II, A.A. Munch, Danish minister of agriculture and industry, declared a "cross-country" strategy that is designed to protect Danish lives and salvage cultural identity. Operation Danmark, a subterfuge for the war effort, is a major failure for the Danes. More than 3,000 Danes are lost or captured, as Germany's military forces advance. The Danes' determination to resist forces them to adopt "inert resistance," a strategy that involves collaboration with the enemy. The resistance movement is composed of a small group of individuals who remain loyal to the Danish cause.

The resistance movement is fighting a losing battle, as Germany's military forces advance. The Danes' determination to resist forces them to adopt "inert resistance," a strategy that involves collaboration with the enemy. The resistance movement is composed of a small group of individuals who remain loyal to the Danish cause.

POLAND: WE'VE CAUGHT GOD BY THE ARM (1880-81)

The Soviet forces that liberated Poland from the Nazis at the end of World War II have installed a client communist regime, under which workers cannot organize or represent themselves before the state-owned enterprises that employ them. By the late 1970s, the Polish economy is in the brink of collapse. Prime Minister Edward Gierek impose sharply increased prices and export surpluses, and open a dialogue with the Catholic Church. A visit by Pope John Paul II in 1979 — highlighted by an extraordinary meeting between three million people — draws Poles together on a scale fairer than anything workers and dissidents had hoped for. Workers realize that they can escape repressals by taking their own shipyards and factories hostage.

Many workers are bought off with higher wages, striking employees at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk remain adamant in their demands.

Lech Walesa receives a hero's welcome when Solidarity triumphs in its quest for free trade unions. (Program 2)

OTHER RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Burma (1988-99)
In 1987, a pro-democracy movement against Burma's military regime is sparked when police brutally crack down on student protests. By early August 1988, nearly a million people have marched in opposition to the ruling military junta. The brutal crackdowns continue, leaving at least 1,500 people dead. Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of the man who led Burma's 1948 liberation from British rule, defies martial law and helps establish the National League for Democracy (NLD). In 1990, despite Suu Kyi's lengthy house arrest, NLD wins a landslide victory.

China (1989)
When Hu Yaobang, a former Communist Party (CCP) leader sympathetic to reform, dies in April 1989, thousands of college students pour into the streets of Beijing in a spontaneous act of mourning that evolves into an organized protest. Spearheaded by a democratically elected student representative committee, the demonstration is a response to weeks of demands, including an end to corruption, recognition of its organizations, and freedom of the press. Students seek to preserve the CCP through hunger strikes, sit-ins, boycotts of classes, and, eventually, the fateful occupation of Tiananmen Square. But the student leaders antagonize top party officials and miss an opportunity to compromise and consolidate their gains. When CCP hardliners round up demonstrators and declare martial law on May 20, calls by some student leaders to adopt a more defensive stance go unheeded. On the night of June 3, the government orders the 27th Army to clear Tiananmen Square, and the ensuing confrontation leaves more than 1,000 dead.

In 1989, Chinese college students occupy Beijing's Tiananmen Square and demand democratic reform.
The regime threatens to smother the strike by sealing off Gdansk. Shipyard workers fan out across the city, and sympathetic students and professionals spread the word through radio and newspapers, threatening a strike against the strike to other regions. Visting ultimate authority in the Gdansk Workers' Committee (MKS), the workers elect Lech Walesa, a shipyard electrician, as its head. By late August, the MKS represents 400,000 workers. Bulked by a wave of support from foreign trade unions and intensified media coverage, the MKS soon presents 21 demands, with free trade unions the highest priority. But the committee union's does not threaten the regime politically by asking for free elections. Ignoring rumblings from the Soviets and cowed by growing economic pressure, the regime bow to expediency and agrees to free unions, wage increases, and limits on censorship. Calling itself "Solidarity," the movement decides to expand its charter. As its first national congress in the fall of 1981, it agrees to promote "self-management" in all areas of society including the establishment of local government, independent judges, and equal protection under the law. Against Solidarity's demands, the government calls for a national day of protest, coupled with an inflammatory referendum amounting to a vote of "no confidence" in General Jaruzelski and the Party. Under Soviet pressure, the state imposes martial law, arrests most of Solidarity's national commission, and java the media. A nation of striking workers accelerates the final breakdown. After several years of underground resistance by Solidarity, the communists are forced to invite Solidarity to help them reconstruct the Polish nation on the basis of a different, multiparty democratic model.

To Discuss

1. By refusing to play a "zero-sum" game with the authorities or present grandiose demands, Solidarity was initially able to win concessions without creating the impression of a serious threat to the state. Why should "incremental" strategies be used against a repressive regime?
2. Poles were greatly inspired when one of their own, Pope John Paul II, assumed leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in the late 1970s. Though not a part of the everyday activities of Solidarity, how did he influence the movement?
3. In the 1970s, dissident intellectuals paved the way for Solidarity by organizing help for workers' families and teaching and publishing underground. In what way would such activities prepare the way for a more overt movement?

Additional Reading

CHILE: DEFEAT OF A Dictator (1983-88)

On May 11, 1983, the capital city of the South American nation of Chile explodes in protest. Santiago women march in the streets, blare their car horns, and hang pots and pans from apartment windows. The day marks an end to the decade-long acquiescence to the rule of General Augusto Pinochet, who had seized power in 1973 from the elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. The junta had declared the entire nation to be an emergency zone, imposed a state of siege that limited the rights of citizens, and augmented the military's powers. The government had closed three of the country's newspapers, placed universities under military administration, and prohibited singing in public.

In the ten years prior to the national protest, Pinochet's anti-communism and free-market economic policies won him the support of some moderate politicians and middle-class Chileans, while his use of terror (3,000 suspects who fled the regime were killed or missing) managed to all but silence his opponents. In the early 1980s, however, a recession — spurred by declining copper prices — sapped the country's prosperity. Working-class and middle-class citizens, in concert with leftist and moderate leaders, rallied behind a strike by the powerful copper miners' union and projected dissent into the promenades and avenues of Santiago. For the next three years, an ecletic mix of opposition groups joined to organize monthly "days of protest" and demand a return to democracy. Human rights organizations, unions, student groups, women's groups, and traditional political parties all took part, using a range of tactics that included strikes, work slowdowns, and school boycotts. By 1986, however, the radical left added violence to the anti-Pinochet protest, disrupting middle-class participation and justifying the dictator's continued repression.

When Pinochet decided to go ahead with a plebiscite (endorsed by his own constitution) on whether he should remain in office, the opposition decided to challenge him at the polls. It defiantly organized a determined and sophisticated campaign to defeat Pinochet. Led by Manuel Rodriguez Amrigo, the "Command for No" movement coordinates an army of volunteers to register voters and persuade fearful citizens to participate. Also crucial is an influx of foreign funds that pays for opinion polls, media consultants, poll watchers, and computer software to allow the opposition to conduct its own vote count and circulate electoral fraud by the regime.

Despite relentless harassment against "No" campaign operatives, on October 5, 1988, 55 percent of voters cast ballots to end Pinochet's reign of terror. Victorious, the "Command for No" movement

In 1988, Chileans of all ages rally to unseat President Augusto Pinochet after the general proceeds with a plebiscite that will determine the fate of his regime. (Program 2)

...evolves into a multiparty coalition, that wins parliamentary elections the next year, completing the restoration of democracy in Chile after 17 authoritarian years.

To Discuss

1. Pinochet's initial appeal, which stemmed from his restoration of stability to Chile, was negated by his ensuing reign of terror. What other 20th-century examples can you think of where the use of terror destroyed a regime's ability to retain or rally popular support?
2. Had Pinochet not gone ahead with a national plebiscite, the elderly general might still be in power today. Why do you think the general — unlike most dictators — felt the need to "retire" his government?
3. Series producer Steve York contends that domestic or international "sympathy" for downed-under dogs is not typically sufficient to bring down a particularly ruthless or entrenched regime. Instead, the opposition has to find ways to apply real pressure. Besides economic measures such as boycotts, how might his advice be accomplished?

Additional Reading


Czechoslovakia (1989)

In the Soviet bloc state of Czechoslovakia, two organizations — Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted — demanded that the government begin to respect the human rights guarantees in its own constitution. These small groups faced steady police harassment and struggled to expand their membership beyond disinterested intellectuals. By the mid-1980s, resurgent Catholicism combined with pervasive disaffection toward the Communist Party to provide the impetus for more large-scale demonstrations of social solidarity.

On November 17, 1989, 30,000 demonstrators in Prague, sparking the "Velvet Revolution." Motivated students fan out across the country to persuade industrial workers to join a general strike, showing them videotapes of the beatings. Enormous crowds convene for demonstrations in Prague's Wenceslas Square, and a two-hour strike draws widespread participation. By early December, overthrown by the united front that the working class and intellectuals exerted, the ruling communists step down, and a noncommunist coalition government takes power — as other communist governments in Europe fall to similar popular movements.

For more information, visit the series Web site at: www.pbs.org/forcemorepowerful

A FORCE MORE POWERFUL

CENTURY
sufficing with cops. Even though some of that action is quite dramatic, if you see too much of it, it just becomes monotonous and boring. So the challenge really is to find ways to get inside the heads of people like this thinking they were thinking this up, who were planning and hitting and organizing and operating, without having any actual footage of it. The way we ultimately did it was to find people who could talk to us and say, "Here is what we were thinking, and here is why we did it."

What did you learn about the connections among various nonviolent movements? You know, James Lawson spent time in India and studied Gandhi helped us, and we've tried to point out here and there that these movements do tend to know about each other and do tend to learn about each other. When I was in Chile, I was floored when many Chileans approached me and said, "You know, just as our democratic opposition movement was emerging publicly, a movie started showing in the theatre here in Chile. The movie was about Gandhi. All of us in the opposition went to see that movie, were inspired, and not just once, and we drew enormous inspiration from it." Similarly, in Chile, people will tell you that one of the reasons they were attempting to defeat Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite — which was a very risky thing to do — was that they knew about and were able to point to the example of what had happened in the Philippines just a year and a half earlier. "Marcos was rejected in an election much like our own," they say, "and if that can happen in the Philippines, then maybe it can happen here."

There is a lot to be said for the free flow of information as a major weapon, i.e., knowing what has gone on before. Poles in the Solidarity movement referred to Gandhi, as well as to Martin Luther King and the American civil rights movement. Gandhi, in 1905, was living in Johannesburg, reading in the daily newspaper about the strikes in Russia, drawing inspiration from them and writing in his own weekly newspaper in South Africa about how this was the same that the Indians could do to achieve their own freedom. Today, people's ability to communicate information to each other has been magnified far beyond that level.

What is the difference between nonviolent conflict and conflict resolution? York: Most any university of any significance these days has a department or part of an academic department that deals with conflict resolution, prevention, or mediation. But this documentary is not about resolving conflict, it's about carrying on conflict. There are conflicts that are caused by people that are unable to resolve just by sitting down and talking to one another. And it's not just a question of having us opposed to shedding blood in principle, because I think in South Africa, had more blacks had access to weapons, they probably would have used them. There was no principled attachment to the nonviolent methods used there. The nonviolent methods were chosen partly for a pragmatist reason — they didn't have other options — but also because they realized that nonviolence would probably get them further.

An interesting person who exemplifies the difference between nonviolen
cence and conflict resolution is James Lawson, an American preacher, who in the 1960s Nashville lunch counter sit-ins profiled in Program 1, Lawson, who is a Protestant minister, served a year and a half in prison for his nonconformist views. He has given up on the Vietnam War. Here is a man who, after a long personal and moral struggle, has come to believe that nonviolent action is a moral, necessary, and justifiable thing to do. He was among the first to make this argument, in spite of the fact that he comes to it by a principle of "force discipline," he says, "is absolutely necessary." Lawson is steeped in the logic of strategic nonviolence completely, in spite of the fact that he comes to it by a principle of "force discipline."