

Recently, I have had the opportunity to study in the field of Economics, and have found that there is a branch of economic study that looks at history and culture in explaining how the economy works. Political economists believe that history matters. This is the context in which I would like to begin my discussion of this year's topic: "Non-violent Resolution in Today's World". Historically there have been and will continue to be non-violent resolution to world problems. Such historic figures as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and many, many more have successfully perpetuated change in the world without fighting. Other examples are all around the world, from former Soviet bloc nations; to civil and women's rights movements; to labor disputes; to student protests at colleges and universities, the list is infinite. We all know that history matters and only by acknowledging this can we look at possible solutions to the problems of the world today, which will enable us to follow in the footsteps of the heroic figures mentioned above.

From my personal standpoint the most probable solution to conflict would be to put the world to work. Many third world and developing countries, along with parts of the populations of developed nations, show a major problem with unemployment. Men and women are unable to find jobs that pay a living wage, perpetuating a cycle of unemployment and poverty. When people are unable to provide for their families, they ultimately begin fighting either with each other or are recruited into some organization offering better circumstances. Such organizations are seldom out to help the recruits, but rather, furthering their own cause. If workers around the world had jobs, which provided enough to care for their families, there would be little time for conflict, not to mention the sense of pride that comes with independence and freedom from poverty.

Regardless of the huge impact on workers themselves, organized labor has been engaged in a variety of strategies to limit the agenda of globalization and to promote labor regulations in an international context. There have been many agreements and treaties to help ensure free trade in the recent past, but none has contained a sort of bill of rights for workers. NAFTA and DR-CAFTA were both protested by labor unions because of they lacked this basic standards for workers verbage.

Globalization is one of the current trends that minimize the effectiveness of the promotion of international labor regulations. To slow globalization and begin non-violent resolution of world conflict I firmly believe we must begin at home. Limiting outsourcing and layoffs in the United States and promoting Made in America products is a first step to putting American Workers back in the labor force. This will in turn lower our trade deficits and have a positive effect on the unemployment rate. Government programs similar to those that brought us out of the Great Depression are a positive step in the right direction.

Many of the workers returning to the labor force will need education and training to keep up with advances and new technologies. This too should be seen as an opportunity to increase our productivity at home rather than outsourcing or removing workers. In the US, labor education programs such as the Harvard Trade Union Program created in 1942 sought to educate union members to deal with important contemporary workplace and labor law issues of the day. The Harvard Trade Union Program is currently part of a broader initiative at The Harvard Law School called the Labor and Worklife Program that deals with a wide variety of labor and employment issues from union pension investment funds to the effects of advances in technology on labor markets

and the workplace. Programs such as these are key to balancing productivity issues with technology all the while keeping Americans working.

My Grandfather, much like many wise individuals, was fond of saying that you get what you pay for in this world and cheap labor tends to produce mass quantities of lower quality products. Outsourcing of labor from the US to developing countries in other parts of the world is not the answer many companies had hoped it would be. The workers are often exploited and not given the opportunity better their own situations while in the employ of these faceless, foreign corporations. This exploitation again perpetuates the cycle of poverty and keeps the developing world from sustaining the prosperity of their own populations, once again creating conflict. Personally, I would rather pay a few dollars more for high quality and Made in America labeling, to have the product last well beyond any inferior product. Outsourcing is a tool used to line the pockets of multinational corporations that have removed jobs from the American labor force in the first place.

In my humble opinion, 1500 words is a mere scratch on the surface of such issues involved in solving world conflict, but I also believe that to put the world to work is a firm step in the right direction. Hopefully, someday in the near future, people will realize that the business of peace and prosperity can be just as profitable as war, conflict and strife.