**Source 1: CESAR CHAVEZ: IN HIS OWN WORDS**  
**On Starting a Union for Farmworkers**  
"I had a dream that the only reason the employers were so powerful was not because they in fact had that much power, in terms of dealing with the lives of their workers at will, but what made them truly powerful was that we were weak. And if we could somehow begin to develop some strength among ourselves, I felt that we could begin to equal that, balancing their power in agriculture."  
  
**What the Union Means***From the film* Bitter Harvest  
"The whole idea of the union, it’s not only the union, but it represents, together with you and me, all our brothers, Chicano and white and black and everything, represents an idea that poor people can get together and win. Because they, if we build a union in agriculture today, the balance of power is going to turn around, because, in the rural areas, the growers have undisputed power, and the fight is to keep the workers from organizing so they could equal that. If we could organize the workers, without interruptions from the Teamsters Union, I bet you in 5, 6 years, we will be electing state legislators from the rural area, we’ll be electing judges, we’ll be electing city councilmen, and those workers will be taking hold of governmental agencies through their organization. That’s the fight. Because the moment the worker gets a union and feels secure with his job and his income, what is the next step that he thinks of? Automatically he thinks about politics."  
  
**On Nonviolence**  
"We maintain that you cannot really be effective in anything you are doing if you are so loaded with violence that you cannot think rationally about what you have to do. We know that violence works. I’m not going to say it doesn’t work. Total violence still works and is working many places. I disagree that it has long-lasting good results. I disagree with that. But violence works only when it’s total violence, and non-violence works only when it’s total non-violence. And you can’t have anything in between."

**Source 2: Excerpt of Interview with Malcolm X from American Experience**

**Dr. Kenneth Clark:** It has been suggested also that this movement preaches a gospel of violence, that --

**Malcolm X:** No, the black people in this country have been the victims of violence at the hands of the white man for 400 years. And following the ignorant Negro preachers, we have thought that it was godlike to turn the other cheek to the brute that was brutalizing us. And today, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is showing black people in this country that just as the white man and every other person on this earth has god-given rights, natural rights, civil rights, any kind of rights that you can think of, when it comes to defending himself, black people should have -- we should have the right to defend ourselves also. And, because the Honorable Elijah Muhammad makes black people brave enough, men enough, to defend ourselves no matter what the odds are, the white man runs around here with the philo-- with the doctrine that we are -- Mr. Muhammad is advocating violence when he's actually telling Negroes to defend themselves against violent people.

**Clark:** I see. Well, Reverend Martin Luther King preaches a doctrine of non-violent insistence upon the rights of the American Negro. What is your attitude toward this philosophy?

**Malcolm X:** The white man pays Reverend Martin Luther King, subsidizes Reverend Martin Luther King, so that Reverend Martin Luther King can continue to teach the Negroes to be defenseless. That's what you mean by non-violent: be defenseless. Be defenseless in the face of one of the most cruel beasts that has ever taken a people into captivity. That's this American white man. And they have proved it throughout the country by the police dogs and the police clubs.

A hundred years ago they used to put on a white sheet and use a bloodhound against Negroes. Today they've taken off the white sheet and put on police uniforms, they've traded in the bloodhounds for police dogs, and they're still doing the same thing. And just as [Uncle Tom](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/foster/peopleevents/e_cabin.html" \t "new), back during slavery, used to keep the Negroes from resisting the bloodhound, or resisting the [Ku Klux Klan](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/grant/peopleevents/e_klan.html" \t "new), by teaching them to love their enemy, or pray for those who use them spitefully, today Martin Luther King is just a 20th century or modern Uncle Tom, or a religious Uncle Tom, who is doing the same thing today, to keep Negroes defenseless in the face of an attack, that Uncle Tom did on the [plantation](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/plantation/index.html" \t "new) to keep *those* Negroes defenseless in the face of the attacks of the Klan in that day.

**Source 3: Excerpt of Interview with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from American Experience**

**Dr. Kenneth Clark:** Malcolm X,… has said of your movement and your philosophy that it plays into the hands of the white oppressors. That they are happy to hear you talk about love for the oppressor because this disarms the Negro and fits in to the stereotype of the Negro as a meek, turning-the-other-cheek sort of creature. Would you care to comment on Mr. X's beliefs?

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr:** Well, I don't think of love as, in this context, as emotional bosh. I don't think of it as a weak force. But I think of love as something strong, and that organizes itself into powerful direct action. This is what I try to teach in the struggle in the South. That we are not engaged in a struggle that means we sit down and do nothing.

There's a great deal of difference between non-resistance to evil and non-violent resistance. Non-resistance leaves you in a state of stagnant passivity and dead-end complacency. Wherein non-violent resistance means you do resist in a very strong and determined manner. And I think some of the criticisms of non-violence, or some of the critics, fail to realize that we are talking about something very strong, and they confuse non-resistance with non-violent resistance…. If anyone has ever lived with a non-violent movement in the South, [from Montgomery on](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/mlk/maps/index.html" \t "new) through the Freedom Rides and through the sit-in movement and the recent Birmingham movement, and seen the reactions of many of the extremists and reactionaries in the white community, he wouldn't say that this movement makes, this philosophy makes them comfortable. I think it arouses a sense of shame within them often, in many instances, I think it does something to touch the conscience and establish a sense of guilt. Now so often people respond to guilt by engaging more in the guilt-evoking act in an attempt to drown the sense of guilt. But this approach certainly doesn't make the white man feel comfortable. I think it does the other thing. It disturbs this conscience and it disturbs this sense of contentment he's had.

**Clark:** James Baldwin raises still another point of the whole non-violent position and approach. He does not reject it in the way that Malcolm X does, but he raises the question of whether it will be possible to contain the Negro people within this framework of non-violence if we continue to have more of the kinds of demonstrations that we had in Birmingham.

**King:** Well I think these brutal methods used by the Birmingham police force and other police forces will naturally arouse the ire of Negroes, and I think there is the danger that some will be so aroused that they will retaliate with violence.

I think though that we can be sure that the vast majority of Negroes who engage in the demonstrations and who understand the non-violent philosophy will be able to face dogs, and all of the other brutal methods that are used, without retaliating with violence, because they understand that one of the first principles of non-violence is a willingness to be the recipient of violence while never inflicting violence upon another. And none of the demonstrators in Birmingham engaged in aggressive or retaliatory violence. It was always someone on the sideline, who had never been in the demonstrations and probably not in the mass meetings, and had never been in a non-violent workshop. So I think it will depend on the extent to which we can extend the teaching of the philosophy of non-violence to the larger community, rather than those who are engaged in the demonstrations.