

[Back to table of content](#)

In 1942, radical pacifists formed the Nonviolent Action Committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which trained teams to provide leadership in antiracist and antimilitarist work. Out of that grew the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which in 1945 became the first organisation to develop nonviolence trainings in preparation for involvement in the civil rights movement.

For 10 years, beginning in 1947, CORE ran month-long training workshops in Washington, DC. Participants learned theories and skills in nonviolence and organising, with the goal of ending segregation in the capital area.

Early in the civil rights movement, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference based its preparation for nonviolent action campaigns (such as the 1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott) on African-American religious traditions. At mass meetings held in local churches, Martin Luther King Jr. and others lectured on nonviolence. Singing and prayer strengthened community spirit and the nonviolent discipline. As civil disobedience became a crucial part of the civil rights movement, training included role plays and signing a pledge to remain nonviolent.

It took extensive trainings to prepare civil rights workers for the violence they would encounter in the South. Participants in the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964 began with a two-week training. The Poor People's Campaign of 1968 held training programs for marchers, marshals, and support people.

Excerpted from 'Decades of Nonviolence Training: Practicing Nonviolence' by Joanne Sheehan from the Nonviolent Activist, July-August 1998. <http://www.warresisters.org/nva0798-4.htm>

Related content

[en](#)
[es](#)
[fr](#)
[de](#)

- [Nonviolence Training: Role of Trainers; Potential Topics for Nonviolence Training](#)
- [Role playing](#)
- [Case Study: Otpor: People's Power in Serbia](#)
- [Historical Uses of Nonviolence: What Works Where; The Role of Pacifists; Organising](#)

[Contribute](#) [Buy](#)

Comments

There are no comments on this article. Have you got something related to this topic, you'd like to say? Please feel free to be the first person to make a comment.

Add new comment