

Random Thoughts 7

Protest & Demonstrate

These are two verbs. The first means “a statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something” and the second means “to show and explain something”. Today we see many examples of the noun form of these words used: protests and demonstrations. Too often these are loud, emotional, and violent, which to me defeats their purpose.

I admire the peaceful protests and demonstrations first made popular by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and then later by Martin Luther King, Jr. They were non-violent. The demonstrators did not hide their faces no resort to acts of violence. Nowadays we see the opposite: demonstrators hiding their faces, assaulting the police, whose duty it is to maintain public order, and vandalizing property such as buy burning cars, breaking into shops, and stealing from them. I do not recognize these people as legitimate protestors or demonstrators but as anti-social agitators and petty criminals. An agitator is someone who urges other people to rebel or cause trouble. Criminals are people who break the law and commit crimes. It only takes a few of these types in a protest demonstration to give everyone in it a bad reputation. The Yellow Vest movement in France and the Antifa antics in Portland, Oregon first come to mind. As the old saying goes, “one bad apple spoils the barrel.”

Not only are violent protests and demonstrations destructive to property as well as responsible for causing injury and sometimes death, they exacerbate the division between the opposing points of view and this further causes rifts in society.

But when we consider this problem of violent protest and demonstration we are forced to ask ourselves whether it ever is justified and if so under what conditions. The United States of America came about as a result of violent protest and demonstration which led to revolution – the overthrow of the government at the time, which was England. France has also experienced changes in its form of government through revolution. That’s a question probably best left for philosophers to decide.