

## The Current State of Conflict

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Conflict occurs often throughout history. Conflict shapes the world around us. Without them, we wouldn't have the same countries we do now, the same technology, or be governed by the same set of rules. Each of these aspects of life was forged by war and unrest. What makes us fight? Why have we stopped fighting? Throughout history, conflict has been prevalent due to the creation and rise of aggression within society; yet aggression has been extinguished by the media and government during the Present Age.

Aggression stems from misfortune. For example, the rise of foreign aggression occurred in Germany after the Treaty of Versailles plummeted the German economy. As people were forced into poverty, they felt betrayed by other countries. This created a mix of hyper-nationalists and hyper-aggression which took part in creating the Nazi Party.<sup>1</sup> Another example of this is the Boston Tea Party, which occurred directly after the Tea Act came into effect, giving colonists less freedom of trade. This factor is known as a perceived social injustice, and it is required in conflict.

We, the people of the US, haven't completely stopped committing violent acts, but we haven't been creating revolutions either. Instead, violence has been replaced by mass protests and activism, where violence can still occur (though it wouldn't be as widespread). For example, riots during the BLM protests and the January 6th riot caused lots of property damage and injuries. But, public outrage has still declined throughout the modern era due to the dissipation of violence. However, not much change occurred after these protests.

I believe the reason for this is the speed at which media, corporations, and the government act to prevent further damage from occurring. This is not to say we are controlled by these groups, they simply play a large role, when working as a group, in quelling mass hysteria. For example, in January 2021, a group of Redditors decided to mass purchase GameStop stock and agreed not to sell it. The goal of this

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<sup>1</sup>United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The Nazi Rise To Power." Holocaust Encyclopedia. <https://https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nazi-rise-to-power>. Accessed on November 20, 2022.

was to increase the stock price to cause a financial crisis for those in hedge funds and short sellers. The problem arose when a variety of brokerage companies changed their software to prevent investors from purchasing the stock. This led to a variety of class-action lawsuits that were unsuccessful due to the terms and conditions of Robinhood.<sup>2</sup> Rather than further publicizing the issue and taking legislative action, the issue was forgotten and the media decided to publicize other stories. The government remained inactive on the issue, with empty promises to those affected. This concept was first brought to attention by Soren Kierkegaard, who wrote *The Present Age: On the Death of the Rebellion*, a political philosophy book that described how in the future, the media, government, and large companies would quell rebellions. This book was published in 1846, yet it still relates to current events. We used to fight wars for change, yet it seems as if we have come to terms with serious attacks on our democracy. Regardless of the context, each person deserves the right to make their own decisions. No company, media outlet, or government organization should have the ability to overwrite our inalienable rights. I fear an age where protests and outrage never occur as we are silenced before we can respond.

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<sup>2</sup> Misra, Shubhangi. "The GameStop Story — How a Group of Investors on Reddit Gave Wall Street a Wild Week." ThePrint, 30 Jan. 2021, <https://theprint.in/theprint-essential/the-gamestop-story-how-a-group-of-investors-on-reddit-gave-wall-street-a-wild-week/595181/>.