**Position paper**

**The Handmaid’s tale**

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*Is the use of violence justifiable in the context of revolutions, and if so, to what extent and towards whom?*

The use of violence in the context of revolutions is often not justifiable and has dehumanizing effects. Using force infringes on the rights of all those who do not wish to be involved in conflicts, and reveals our inability to reach a peaceful agreement through pacifist methods. Future generations, born into a climate of violence, will have a hard time negating the resultant damage and instilling values that are independent of previous “immoral” actions. The truth is, all these arguments are good grounds for rejecting the use of weapons, however I fail to see any other alternative that could effectively rid Gilead of its totalitarian oppressive theocracy and restore a democracy.

The use of violence is said to thwart human dignity, but it can sometimes become the last appeal to human rights. I am not denying that it destroys communities, terminates any sense of unity or harmony and transgresses fundamental laws. However, compared to the mistreatment of women, disabled and African-American individuals, violence is the lesser of the two evils. Saying that violence is never justified, is a respectful and moral judgement, but there are cases that rightfully call for the use of violence. For instance, many say that the Kurds should not be using violence against ISIS, but is there actually any other way to control this extremist religious group on Syrian grounds? The secret police, the eyes of god, keep a watchful eye over the population and eliminate any dissenters of the regime, making it hard for the organization to meet regularly and concoct a long complicated plan as this could lead to their exposure. The only way to overthrow this despotic regime would be through an impactful and drastic action that in and of itself suffices to bring about some sort of change. Violence is the most qualified strategy to remove from power “The Sons of Jacob,” and would not uselessly reveal Mayday’s existence. Violence is justifiable if the resultant impacts eliminate a greater evil

Due to the inexorable pull exerted by the Gilead political leaders on most of the population, it is much harder for Mayday to thrive and carry out successful sabotage missions. Fear reigns in everyone’s daily lives, and few would risk their life in an attempt at overthrowing the tyrannical government. As many of Gilead’s citizens are falling for the government’s propaganda, Mayday has very few options other than resorting to violence. The end justifies the means, especially if the “end” involves women finally securing basic human rights such as education and freedom of choice that should have been theirs all along.

In conclusion, violence may encroach on rights meant to be enshrined by the constitution, but when all else seems to fail, we must do whatever it takes to achieve justice. In Gilead, women’s rights are usurped, their dignity forfeited and they are thwarted from ever reaching their full potential. A pacifist approach would unnecessarily expose Mayday members and most probably not find support amongst the rest of the citizens, much of whom are either too scared to act or unfortunately brainwashed. Resorting to violence against “The Sons of Jacob” or “The Eyes of God” would weaken the dictator’s influence and serve as an appeal for international help. As for our fear that the use of force could become the norm or wrongly leave a legacy of violence behind, we must trust that every generation can independently chose their values and tell right from wrong, as long as there is a democracy. We were once able to imagine a world without slavery, and I believe we can live in a democratic world where violence will not often be needed. We should be ready to do whatever it takes to make this dystopia a utopia.