

## Speakers corner

Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. (Mahatma Gandhi)

This is the quotation of Mahatma Gandhi, but who was this man and why did he say that non violence is the best opportunity for humans to fight with?

He was born in **1869 in India**. In this period of time, India was a part of the **British empire**. After he **studied law**, he went to South-Africa.

He went back to **India in 1915** and became an important symbol of the **fight for the independence from GB**. The living conditions of the people were bad and they wanted to be independent and no longer under Britain's control. The men of India had **no equal rights** comparing with the British people and were controlled by the British king. To reach this, he used his favourite method: **the method of resistance without violence.**

Summarizing and simplifying his main actions, he used **peaceful protest** such as the **hunger strike** and the **salt march** to show that they **won't accept the colonial exploitation** anymore. He wanted to reach this with **civil disobedience**, the **civil resistance without violence**. Believing that the **pure power of the people and the power of humanity is bigger, stronger and mightier than weapons**. During the salt march people marched to the **sea** and walked 385km to **protest against the high salt taxes** from the GB because the Indians **needed their salt**, which came from the own land, for rice production and as an important supplement for the food. **Thousands of the Indian people really supported this action**. From this day on, they got their salt on their own way, they took sea water, let the water vaporize and **had their own salt and dealt with it**. They sold it from Indians to Indians without any taxes... 50,000 Indians became arrested but the people were angry now and **resisted even more**.

They resisted with the **pure power of majority** and the **wish for equality**. And in the end **India became independent from GB in 1947**. Gandhi was **killed in 1948** by a **mentally ill person**. In my opinion, Gandhis method worked well because of two reasons: **The Britains feared the crowd** because they have done **real protest that was bad for GB self**, like I mentioned in the salt story. And the Indians were such a large crowd that they cannot be controlled with violence anymore. So the Indians reached their goals without a war, or something like that, which seems to be an argument for Gandhis theory. **(5s break)**

In this example, non violence worked well. But is non-violence **more powerful than nuclear weapons**? Is non-violence the best **answer against violence**? It is actually hard to say, because we probably will never know how things would have happened with or without violence.

When we look at **Hans and Sophie Scholl**, when we look at **Navalny**, when we look at all the other people who have **fought peacefully against inhuman oppression** throughout history, we **cannot say that their way of doing things has led to good results** for them. But the **statement** they made is a clear statement that is supported by thousands.

Being part of the regim (such as the Nazis) that uses violence and support the political idea of it is always the easier way. **As a Russian, you have definitely a better life by supporting Putin, than by doing not.**

The Germans did the same! Being instrumentalized by the propaganda, the most people followed Hitler although the methods of the Nazis were so brutal and cruel. What I want to say with this: **As a single person, you might not have a chance to reach anything with a non-violent protest** but if you can **mobilise a majority or a large large crowd**, like Gandhi did it, **the power of the crowd can be incredibly high without any weapons.**

I give you an example: Imagine one of you is going to your teacher and is saying: Oh Mr Weidauer or Mr Jarzina, that are to many homework they will usually react like: you can do it, and it is important, so do it please BUT when 20 of you say, hey, it is too hard for us, please give us a bit less of homework, the teacher would **at least think** about the homework. Majorities can make differences.

Putting this quote in an other context... **The humans all fear having less power**, according to **Hobbes** state of nature or according to the arms race in the so called "kalter Krieg". The people want to be **safe** and **having weapons** helps you definitely to feel safe. **In Hobbes idea of a state of nature, you as a person want to have the most power, or you want to be at least as powerful as the others.** So if some of you would a knife with, the others might want to have a knife too, to feel safe. And the same with nuclear bombs or military ships. **Arms races** are a big part of history. But these weapons can be used also just as a method of threat. So they **can** be used but they **don't have to be used in fights. The fear that someone else is stronger than you usually leads to the recognition that you will not try to fight against him.** That is one of the reasons why some countries having nuclear weapons: **Other countries should fear them!**

So as a conclusion: Is Non-violence the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. Is it mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man?

I personally think it's a **question of interpretation!** Of course, by dropping 100 **nuclear bombs, you can eliminate the whole earth!** And of course, if I go to one of you with a pistol in my hand and say: Hey give me all your money, you would give it to me rather than if I just go to you without a weapon and say: give me your money, please...

But that's clear for sure. Maybe that is not what Gandhi really means... It is a question of **how we define strength**. Is strength the pure physical and material power, like your biceps (and I know, than it would be horrible for me) or your weapons? Or is strength something in your brain.

Is the real definition of strength and power **intelligence, unity, freedom and peace**?

Helmut Schmidt said once: It's better to **negotiate without a result for 100 hours, than to shoot for 1 minute**. Non-violence is always the best option **in a perfect world**, so no one kills or hurts anyone with weapons, **but that is sadly not how the system works**.

Again, according to Hobbes humans have the **general wish to have more power than the others**, so **as long as weapons can destroy so many things**, they are feared very much. So in our modern world you can reach good things without violence and it's the most human method, **but sadly in the end, the weapons are at least as powerful than non-violence**.

I really admire the people who risked their life for a peaceful protest, but the violence is often stronger than the humanity. But nevertheless we should not stop the fight against injustice or violence because peace might be one of the most important things for all of us.

(Gewaltlosigkeit ist die größte Kraft, die der Menschheit zur Verfügung steht. Sie ist mächtiger als die mächtigste Zerstörungswaffe, die sich der menschliche Einfallsreichtum ausgedacht hat.)