

Did Gandhi Never Exist? Or : Can You Defend Yourself to Death?

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ABSTRACT

War has become acceptable again. People are talking about it as a different form of politics, as if the wars of the past decades had not brought death and misery to many populations. And as if a nuclear war would not mean the annihilation of entire peoples. This is based on a friend-enemy mentality. Alongside Jesus the Christ, it was above all Mahatma Gandhi who contradicted this. He not only called for non-violent resistance, but was also successful in South Africa and India. Passive social resistance can checkmate an aggressor or dominator, as this implies cultural superiority. If we want to maintain our civilizational status, we urgently need to return to Gandhi.

INTRODUCTION

Defended to death? "Never again war!" was the slogan in Germany in 1945. It is a noble intention - but the time to put it into practice never seems to come.

"Do not resist evil", it is written in the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament. (1) If Jesus the Christ were to say this on a talk show today, he would immediately receive a verbal rebuke: impossible! He would be labeled an illusionist. Perhaps the founder of Christianity simply could not have imagined the extent of evil that we are confronted with today. But there is a surprising reason why it is wrong to defend ourselves against attackers. It doesn't have to have anything to do with love and mercy, but rather with self-preservation. After all, let's take a look at what the countries at war recent decades have achieved by fighting back. Only devastated landscapes, strife and many thousands of deaths. If what is supposed to be defended is destroyed as a result of this resistance, shouldn't we even think about the principle of "defense" Let's use an overarching logic: the Old Testament principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" leads to an endless spiral of violence. So-called evil can never be finally defeated or forced to give up. The spiral of violence can only be broken if at least one side renounces violence and forgives the opponent.

Nowadays, a country cannot be defended militarily. You have to read that sentence twice. Of course it is not true that a country cannot be defended. It is quite possible, possibly even successfully. But the difference between a defense and a military defense is a fundamental one that cannot be glossed over, no matter how many embellishments. Strictly speaking, it is no longer possible to defend a country militarily, at least not in the 21st century.

Let us first look at what is actually to be defended. The landscapes, towns, villages, forests, lakes and floodplains, rivers, meadows, heaths? Of course, but if you defend them militarily, they will be devastated afterwards, and a defense that destroys what is supposed to be defended is nonsense. Defending the population of a state territory militarily is just as nonsensical, because according to current plans, military defense of the population would consist of killing the

population, if necessary by bombing them with nuclear bombs. If the enemy is in the country, it can also be nuclear bombs from the Allies.

One could argue that they want to defend the population against subjugation and enslavement and thus their freedom. Can you be free when you are dead? Hardly. The very fact that military conscription is one of the oldest and most effective forms of subjugation and enslavement makes the matter illogical. There are currently two world powers whose governments are actively working to eliminate the infiltration of the "Deep State": Russia and the USA under President Trump. These two "Christian" states of all countries are waging a proxy war in Ukraine. Russia claims that during the years of American rule over Ukraine, a Wild West system has taken root there, in which everything conceivably evil has been able to spread, including "Nazis" ("Azov troops"). (2)

It will take a generation of historians, sociologists, political scientists and psychologists to find out why a certain group of self-appointed leaders, in a kind of transgenerational repetition compulsion, eighty years after the Soviet flag was raised on the Reichstag in Berlin, have once again come up with the idea of finally closing the bag. Perhaps this is really due to the subliminal fear that has been fermenting and smouldering over the centuries that the mythical Russian bear will one day finally take revenge for what the Germans have put him through all this time.

GANDHI HAS GIVEN IT

Mahatma Gandhi (* October 2, 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat; † January 30, 1948 in New Delhi), was an Indian lawyer, publicist, moral teacher, ascetic and pacifist who became the spiritual and political leader of the Indian independence movement (Figure 1). The independence movement, which took up Gandhi's ideas of non-violent action and civil disobedience, brought about the end of British colonial rule over India in August 1947. Without military defense? From today's perspective, this seems impossible.



Fig 1: Gandhi, portrait from 1931

He set out his basic attitude of *Satyagraha*, the persistent adherence to the truth, in numerous writings and continued to develop it further. In addition to *ahimsa*, non-violence, it also

includes other ethical demands such as *swaraj*, which means both individual and political self-control and self-determination. In London, Gandhi studied a lot of religious literature. In India, he had developed reservations about Christianity, partly due to the presence of the British military and Christian missionaries. Now he began to engage with the content of this religion. The Old Testament repelled him, but he felt addressed by the Sermon on the Mount. He declared: *"I will tell the Hindus that their lives are incomplete if they do not reverently study the teachings of Jesus."* (3) During this time, he also read the verses of the Hindu holy scripture Bhagavad Gītā ("the song of God"), which was to become the most important book for him throughout his life. He also studied Buddha and Mohammed, the founder of Islam. He was of the opinion that the true faith unites the members of the different faiths. (4)

Another important basic concept in Gandhi's ethics was his neologism *satyagraha* ("adherence to truth"), a term he coined to avoid speaking of passive resistance. (5) He thus pursued an active strategy of non-cooperation, i.e. transgression of unjust laws and orders, strikes, including hunger strikes, boycotts and provocation of arrests. For him, *satyagraha* was closely linked to non-violence: *"Truth excludes the use of violence, since man is not capable of recognizing the absolute truth and is therefore not entitled to punish."* (6)

During his time in prison, Gandhi read an essay by the American Henry David Thoreau from 1849, in which the strategy of civil disobedience is discussed. (7) In it, Gandhi found his philosophy again. Gandhi had also studied the trial of Socrates, discovered Socrates as a kindred thinker and translated his defense speech into the Indian language Gujarati. (8)

Gandhi also encouraged his fellow countrymen in South Africa to engage in passive, non-violent resistance. He formulated eleven self-commitments for life in his ashram: *"Love of truth, non-violence, chastity, disinterest in material things, fearlessness, vegetarian diet, non-stealing, physical labor, equality of religions, commitment to the "untouchables" and exclusive use of domestic products (Swadeshi)"*. (9) In order to force the British to leave the Indian subcontinent, Gandhi established the concept of non-cooperation: all Indian employees and sub-officials should no longer work for the colonial rulers, any cooperation should be refused without violence in order to disempower the British. In August 1920, Gandhi officially proclaimed the campaign of non-cooperation. He believed that non-violence was far superior to violence.

HIS IDEAS

Gandhi also developed his own idea of democracy: democracy must mobilize the entire physical, economic and spiritual sources of all the different areas of people's life in the service of the common good of all. (10) The country should be organized in a decentralized manner, with the village at the center, with local self-sufficiency and self-government. These villages and other communities were to elect their own representatives by consensus and thus form the state as a "community of communities", which Gandhi saw less as a nation state than as a social and cultural unit. Whether Gandhi's methods could be successful in any liberation struggle is debatable. Matthias Eberling (2006) assesses Gandhi's role in India's independence from the British Empire:

"A totalitarian dictatorship would have simply broken and obliterated a tender figure in a loincloth like him (Gandhi). But in a democracy with a critical press -

even if it was a racist, imperialist class society like the British Empire - this steady drip of nonviolent resistance could ultimately break the yoke of British colonial rule." (11)

Johan Galtung (1987) takes a different view. He cites the Rosenstrasse protest as evidence of the possible success of non-violent resistance even under National Socialism, when in 1943 in Berlin, after several days of massive non-violent protest, "Aryan" wives succeeded in ensuring that their Jewish spouses, who had already been arrested, were not deported but released. (12) Curt Ullerich emphasizes that Gandhi was aware that in the British colonial empire, despite the sometimes violent suppression of resistance, he was relatively free to work for change in accordance with his conscience. He later considered his methods to be effective even when power was exercised without restraint. (13)

According to Martin Luther King, Gandhi was the first person in history to elevate the love ethic of Jesus Christ to a powerful and effective social force, (14) and according to Albert Schweitzer, Gandhi continued what Buddha began. (15)

TODAY

How can we imagine a non-military defense, a non-violent resistance today? You let the enemy into your country without fighting. The enemy occupies the country. The population turns to passive, social resistance, refusing to cooperate without violence. The enemy's troops find no starting points to intervene or even fight. As the complete domination of a country requires enormous resources and incurs costs without any significant advantage, the enemy's troops leave the country after a while.

On the other hand, there would be a war with hundreds of thousands or millions of victims who would limp through a makeshift reconstruction afterwards, physically, psychologically and mentally traumatized and unable to sleep for fear of their nightmares. Today, the cancer of military madness and its metastases has penetrated deep into all organs of the once tentatively "open society". People want to defend freedom, the basic democratic order, which is unfortunately being increasingly eroded from within.

The undesirable developments, especially in European societies, such as gender mania, repression, manipulation of the population, e.g. by a press that is brought into line, the creation of enemy stereotypes, huge expenditure and debt for armaments, etc., mean that there is hardly anything left that is supposedly worth fighting and dying for. Not to mention the fact that Western countries have either lost their wars in recent decades or left behind a huge mess.

CONCLUSION

The time for wars is over, the legacy of Gandhi should be taken up. The avatars of all the great religions agreed on this. There is no such thing as a "just war". An aggressor can be defeated through social, passive, non-violent resistance. Since two world wars started in Germany and a third world war is likely to start in Central Europe again, let us conclude by saying it a little differently, not just: "No war may ever again start from German soil", but: "No military "defense" may ever again take place on German soil." (16)

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