

HISTORICAL BRUSHSTROKES: WHAT WORKS IN NONVIOLENCE AND WHAT DOESN'T

'Let's see, when we talk about nonviolence, what comes to mind?'

Yeah, '**Mohandas Gandhi**, an Indian leader who started a nonviolent process to achieve India's independence. Also, **Martin Luther King**, an evangelical pastor who fought for the Afro-Americans' rights in the United States. Good! **Nelson Mandela**, a South African politician who, after spending 27 years in prison, forgave his jailers in order to transform the racism in the country.'

'Nothing else? It's okay, but do you know that people around the world have studied a lot of nonviolent movements like these? By analysing them thoroughly, we humans have been able to learn their strategy and know what does and does not work in each case. For example, Gene Sharp, after having studied many of these movements, concluded that the powerful are sustained by 6 sources of power:

- (1) their **authority** over the others
- (2) the **people** at their disposal and who they influence
- (3) their **skills and knowledge**
- (4) their people's **feelings, thoughts and beliefs**
- (5) the **material resources** that maintain them self-sufficient
- (6) the **sanctions** that they can impose on dissidents

These 6 sources sustain the violent system, and weakening them will mean weakening their power.

Regarding essential needs such as clothes, food, or services, we all depend on one another. Full **non-cooperation** with the tyrant is a strategy that will cause you consequences, but it will erode these sources of power that sustain the tyrant. **Organised resistance** will get major groups to agree in the same direction. Apart from **denying the legitimacy** of the violent government, it is important to **maintain in parallel the legitimate structures** that worked before. Intensive **nonviolent** education of the people and a good **dissemination** will empower everybody to act.'

