# CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

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**Category:** Opinions

**A. Touman**, Montreal, 21 August 2013

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"A force More Powerful", the highly-topical documentary, focused on how to achieve political change through peaceful means, particularly through civil disobedience. Two cases were selected for review and discussion: Gandhi's strategy against British colonial rule in India and that of the Polish trade union "Solidarnosc" against Communist Poland's one-party rule.

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On behalf of the organizers, Antranig Bedrossian, MA (international relations, UQAM), explained the three characteristics of civil disobedience: public action; committed group of citizens; and non-violent actions.

In the two cases under discussion, the objective and subjective conditions of each case was identified. In India, the weakening of the British colonial power after WWII, the awakening of the peoples of Asia and their determination to struggle for independence and their rights, and the immense population of India, were all conditions that led to the success of Gandhi's strategy of civil disobedience. In Poland the position of Gorbatchev and Soviet non-intervention, the role of the Catholic Church, US-Soviet negotiations, the general tendency in Eastern Europe for change, were all elements contributing to the success of Solidarnosc.

The discussion period continued with special focus on recent civil disobedience actions by young activists in Yerevan against the hike in the price of that city's public transport tickets. The action forced the mayor to suspend the decision. The session stressed the organized, determined and goal-targeted actions of the protesting youth. The activists pointed at the profit-making aims of the partly-privatized system as reason for the city authorities' decision to raise ticket prices. Young activists demanded a well-coordinated transit system for Yerevan under PUBLIC CONTROL, ITS

REMOVAL FROM PRIVATE HANDS and the UNIONIZATION of drivers.

Future sessions of the film series will include developments in Armenia.

A. Touman