Asian Studies

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of the Asian Studies is devoted entirely to essays on Mahatma Gandhi in commemoration of his birth Centenary. Under a special proclamation issued by President Ferdinand E. Marcos, the Year 1969 was declared as Gandhi Centenary year in the Philippines. The Philippine Committee for Gandhi Centenary was organized under the Chairmanship of General Carlos P. Romulo, then President of the University of the Philippines and concurrently Secretary of Education and now Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Other members of the committee included representatives of various educational, civic, and cultural organizations, government officials and representative of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines. It may be pointed out that the world wide celebration of Gandhi's Birth Centenary was celebrated under the auspices of the UNESCO and through the various national commissions of the member countries of the United Nations.

Highlights of the year-long celebration in the Philippines included a number of photo exhibitions on the life and works of Gandhi, seminars, symposia, a nation-wide essay contest and publication of articles on Gandhi. The most notable publication was the translation of Gandhi's world-renown book *All Men Are Brothers* into Pilipino by the famous Filipino writer-poet Andres Cristobal Cruz, Assistant Director of the National Library.

The Asian Center was designated to coordinate the observance of the centennial program in the University of the Philippines. The Center organized a number of lecturers and discussions in which Filipino, Indian and other Asian scholars and students of Gandhi's life and thought participated. This special number of the *Asian Studies* is a part of Asian Center's contribution towards the successful culmination of the year-long observation of Gandhi Centenary in the Philippines.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the contributors to this number. Our special thanks are due to Dr. Indira Ruthermund who besides contributing an essay offered assistance in contacting a number of scholars in the preparation of this issue. We are equally grateful to the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom for allowing the publication of four articles—two by Sri Jayaprakash Narayan and two others by Sri Devadutta Dabholkar and Sri Amritananda Das.

AJIT SINGH RYE

THE POLITICAL THEORY OF GANDHI'S HIND SWARAJ

A. PAREL

WHENEVER WE ATTEMPT TO RE-EVALUATE THE THOUGHT OF A GREAT man we naturally tend to go back to his seminal work. This law of taking the short-cut to a man's thought brings us to Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*.[1] What the *Prince* is to Machiavelli's writings, and the *Social Contract* to the writings of Rousseau, the *HS* is to the vast corpus of Gandhian literature. It sets forth in a brief compass what its author developed in detail in later writings. John Middleton Murry, one of Gandhi's earlier critics, called it "one of the spiritual classics of the world"[2] and Sir Penderel Moon, "the first comprehensive, coherent expression of certain basic ideas that Gandhi never lost sight of throughout all his subsequent political career."[3] George Catlin compared it to *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola.[4] Roy Walker

[1] A brief account of the book's early history: It was written in Gujarati, in November, 1909, during Gandhi's return voyage from England to South Africa. Of the 20 chapters of the book, the first 12 appeared in *Indian Opinion* (a newspaper which Gandhi founded in 1903, in South Africa) on December 11, 1909, and the last 8 chapters on December 18, 1909. In January 1910 the book was translated into English by Gandhi and published by the International Printing Press, Phoenix, South Africa. The first Indian edition (English) appeared in 1919, published by Natesan of Madras, and the first Indian (Gujarati) edition appeared in 1923, published by Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. An American edition published in Chicago by H. T. Mazumdar under the title of *The Sermon on the Sea,* appeared in 1924. A revised English edition appeared in 1939, also published by the Navajivan Press. This is the accepted standard text now, and citations in this article are from the 1958 printing of this edition.

In citing from *Hind Swaraj* (hereafter *HS*) we have not indicated the page, mainly for the reason of the shortness of the chapters.

In 1910 the Bombay government put the *HS* 'on the index,' for containing "seditious" materials. Other tracts, also by Gandhi, included in the list of prohibited books were, *Universal Dawn,* a rendering of Ruskin's *Unto This Last; Mustafa Kamel Pasha's Speech,* a Gujarati translation of the Egyptian patriot's speech just before his death; *Defense of Socrates or the Story of a True Warrior,* a Gujarati rendering of Plato's *Phaedo.* The ban on *HS* was renewed in 1919.

The immediate reason for the writing of the book was Gandhi's fear that the idea of political violence—assassination, guerrilla war, armed rebellion—was gaining the upper hand in the Indian nationalist movement. This immediate concern led him to a general inquiry into the nature and origin of political violence, the cure for it, and to the argument why India should not adopt violence as a means to obtaining *swaraj,* or independence.

Interest in the *HS* grew in proportion to the intensity of the Indian nationalist movement. Selling of the copies of *HS,* in defiance of government ban, became a part of *satyagraha* campaigns. The interest in the *HS* waned by 1930 (as the personality of Gandhi himself emerged as the centre of attention), but it resuscitated after Gandhi's assassination in 1948. But as Professor Devanesan remarked in 1961, "So far as it can be ascertained, no student has yet subjected this little volume to a thorough and careful scrutiny." C.D.S. Devanesan, "The Making of the Mahatma," (an unpublished Harvard University doctoral dissertation, 1961), p. 571. It is hoped that this article will partially fill a need and that it will be a reliable introduction to *HS.*

[2] Murry, "A Spiritual Classic," in *Aryan Path,* (September, 1938), pp. 437-8.

[3] Sir Penderel Moon, *Gandhi and Modern India,* (London, 1968), p. 52.

[4] George Catlin, *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi* (Chicago, 1950), p. 215.

stated that there has been nothing essentially new in Gandhi's thought after he wrote the *HS*.[5]

While there appears to be general agreement as to the importance of the book, there is not the same agreement as to where the importance lies. Those who praise it for its originality often ultimately reject what is original in it.[6] W. Norman Brown states that "in his own major purpose Gandhi may be considered to have failed."[7] K. M. Panikkar has made what is now a common criticism of Gandhi's thought: "with the growth of an industrialized society it is difficult to be certain whether his influence will continue." [8] Sir Penderel Moon implies that only in a medieval society could Gandhi have succeeded.[9] Cole puts it more startlingly: "The Gandhi of this book could not be, in the West, a leader, but only a martyr at most."[10] Similarly Hannah Arendt speaks for many when she asks whether Gandhi would have succeeded against a Hitler or a Stalin or even against the prewar Japanese.[11]

One thing appears common to the majority of Gandhian critics: his ideas, though noble and elevating, are too medieval, too impractical to be relevant to the politics of a secular, industrialized society. His ideas are criticized mainly on pragmatic grounds.

I shall argue in this article that this is not the most intelligent way of criticizing the *HS*, that it is more sensible to consider the *HS* as an informal treatise on political theory, and only secondarily as a guide to pragmatic action. Its becoming a political guide depends on its being accepted as a theoretical work. Secondly, I shall suggest here that the *HS* expounds the non-violent theory of politics, a theory radically different from any to which we are accustomed. Thirdly, I shall contend that the *HS* presents a vision of India that is meant, above all, to be an ethical standard of evaluation and criticism of the real India, and of the actual process of her modernization and political evolution. And finally, I shall argue that the *HS*, far from being a denial of Western civilization and an exaltation of Indian civilization (as is generally supposed), is rather a framework for the deeper spiritual synthesis of what is best in the civilization of Europe and India, which synthesis in turn is the appropriate sociological matrix of the new politics that Gandhi envisions.

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[5] Cited in Devanesan, *op. cit.*, p. 571.

[6] This seems to be the case, for example, with G. D. Cole, "A Disturbing Book: Thoughts on Reading *'Hind Swaraj,' Aryan Path*, (September, 1938), pp. 429-433.

[7] Brown, "An American View of Gandhi," in M. D. Lewis (ed.), *Gandhi, Maker of Modern India?* (Boston, 1965), p. 102.

[8] K. M. Panikkar, "Gandhi's Legacy to India," in Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

[9] *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

[10] *Op. cit.*, p. 432.

[11] Arendt, "Reflections on Violence," in *Journal of International Affairs*, XXIII (1969), p. 20.

I

THE GANDHI OF THE HIND SWARAJ—A POLITICAL THEORIST [12]

It has been said on Rousseau's *Social Contract* that it was not "an apology for democracy as a method of government, but a statement of why and how democracy is right."[13] If one may adapt this dictum to the *HS,* one is permitted to say that it does not so much tell us how a modern government based on non-violence is run as why non-violence is the only ethically acceptable doctrine of politics. Of course the *HS* does not deal with political theory in a formal manner. Its literary genre is Dialogue, deliberately chosen by the author because of the difficulty of the subjects treated.[14] The literary genre does not diminish its character as a book on theory any more than do the *Dialogues* of Plato.

Literary genre apart, the question arises whether it is legitimate for a thinker to propose certain theories without for the moment worrying about their pragmatic value, paying attention, in the first instance at any rate, only to their truth and coherence. A stand on this question must be taken if we are to appreciate the contention that the *HS* is a work of political theory.

This raises the question of what we consider political theory to be.[15] Briefly, it may be looked upon as a body of coherent ideas and moral imperatives indicating the direction of how men ought to live and how they ought to pursue their public goals—based partly on the historical experience of the human species and partly on the philosophic speculation on human nature. Though, in part speculative, it has a congruence to action. The speculative truths and the moral ideals it proposes are congruent to being realized by

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[12] I would like to emphasize that this article deals essentially with the ideas of the *HS* only. It does not pretend to be a general treatment of Gandhi's political theory, although, it is hoped, as stated in Note 1, that it would serve as a reliable introduction to it. For general treatment of Gandhian political thought, see J. V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence, The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict,* (1957, 1965); G. Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (1951); H. J. N. Horsburgh, *Non-Violence and Aggression, A Study of Gandhi's Moral Equivalent of War* (1968); K.P. Karunakaran, *Continuity and Change in Indian Politics* (1964); N. H. Morris-Jones, "Mahatma Gandhi: Political Philosopher?" *Political Studies,* 8 (1960), pp. 16-37; S. Panter-Brick, *Gandhi Against Machiavellism, Non-Violence in Politics* (1966); Paul F. Power, *Gandhi on World Affairs* (1960), and "A Gandhian Model for World Politics" in *Gandhi: His Relevance for Our Times* (1964).

[13] Hilaire Belloc, *The French Revolution* (London, 1911, 1948), p. 19.

[14] "To make it easy reading, the chapters are written in the form of a dialogue between the reader and the editor." Preface to the first Gujarati edition. This literary genre came for immediate criticism, and so Gandhi wrote in 1910 in the Preface to the first English edition; "I have no answer to offer to this objection except that the Gujarati language readily lends itself to such treatment and that it is considered the best method of treating difficult subjects. Had I written for English readers in the first instance, the subject would have been handled in a different manner. Moreover, the dialogue as it has been given, actually took place between several friends, mostly readers of *Indian Opinion,* and myself."

[15] For two brief, excellent recent discussions of this topic see John Plamenatz, "The Use of Political Theory," in Anthony Quinton, *Political Philosophy* (London, 1967); and George Kateb, *Political Theory: Its Nature and Uses* (New York, 1968).

individuals and groups. This congruence with action (note, we do not say that a political theory, to be valid must be realized here and now, but only that it must, by its mode, be congruent with action) makes political theory a *practical* theory. Thus a political theory can inspire a nation or a group, endow them with a political vision, justify their actions and policies, in short, endow men's public actions with the categories of the moral ought, the just, the good and the true. Political theory, as we understand it then, does not have to propose concrete lines of action on specific issues in time and place, but only to indicate the general outlines of public action in terms of goals and means, motives and justifications. They do not have to provide detailed blueprints, like the annual budget or even the party manifesto. And as Plamenatz observes, "The fact that they (political theories) have not served as blueprints for the reconstruction of society is no evidence that they have not been important. They have powerfully affected men's images of themselves and of society, and have profoundly influenced their behaviour." [16]

Political theory, then, is not so much a study of particular political facts in their concrete aspects, but rather a judgment and evaluation of them in their general or more universal relations. Its congruity to action shows itself in relating universal standards of truth and ethics to particular events. It helps to realize what is possible—what is responsibly possible—in an ethical context. Thus, unlike pure metaphysics, the man who adopts his own political theory, must search for ways of approximating the actual to the ideal. Mere knowledge of the just, the true and the good is not sufficient for a political actor. Having ascertained such knowledge, he must proceed to act accordingly. Also, political theory brings about an awareness of the need for these things in public conduct and action. The first and proper test of a political theory is the coherent statement of the moral imperatives. Its second test is the congruence of these imperatives to action. And the third, but only the extrinsic test, is the realization of goals in the light of the abstract imperatives. The realization of goals only extrinsically validates a theory. From empirical realization we do not argue to the abstract validity of a political theory.

If the above view—briefly stated—of what a political theory is, is correct, it is obvious that in approaching the *HS*, we must distinguish between what it states as "ought" and what is capable of actual realization. We must ask whether Gandhi put forward certain political imperatives, whether he was consistent in doing so, whether he inspired and continues to inspire certain types of political vision, whether he provides criteria for evaluation and judgment of concrete political behaviour. Gandhi himself, though not a formal theorist in his own estimation, nevertheless wrote as if he were a theorist. He assumed a didactic role by proposing what he thought to be right in a context of universal relationships. Plamenatz makes the interesting

[16] Plamenatz, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

suggestion that every political theorist is in some respects a political propagandist.[17] This fits in well with Gandhi. As he himself wrote in the first Gujarati edition of the *HS* his purpose was didactic or propagandistic: to serve his motherland by proposing Truth and persuading the motherland to follow it. "The only motive is to serve my country, to find out the Truth and to follow it. If, therefore, my views are proved to be wrong, I shall have no hesitation in rejecting them. If they are proved to be right, I would naturally wish, for the sake of the motherland, that others should adopt them." [18] He reiterates the point in the very first exchange between the Editor (Gandhi) and the Reader. His purpose is to inspire the nation, to correct popular defects, and to propose new ideas. In answer to the question of the Reader, the Editor answers: "One of the purposes of a newspaper is to understand popular feelings and to give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects. The exercise of all these three functions is involved in answering your questions." [19]

As for the congruity of his theory to action, there can be no better illustration of it than the life and achievements of Gandhi himself. Setting about with visions of non-violence, of an idealized India, he realized in actual fact what was only responsibly possible. He never pressed an ethical idea beyond what it could bear in an actual context. He would not demand of his political adversaries—viceroys or governors, or countrymen or others—to conform to his standards perfectly. If a partial advance towards justice, truth and love were possible, he would be satisfied. This method of procedure was possible because Gandhi's theory of political action conformed to what we have tried to describe here as political theory.

II

(a) The Theory of Non-violence in HS

The most original contribution of the *HS* is its theory of non-violence. Now one of the better ways to understand how Gandhi tries to legitimize non-violence is to compare it to the theory of natural law in Western classical and medieval political thought. For Gandhi, it seems to me, attributes to the twin-foundations of non-violence—Love and Truth—a role Western political thought attributes to *recta ratio*. Truth and Love are laws of Nature. They supply the moral basis of human society and organization. Conformity to these laws of Nature constitutes moral legitimacy. The aim of personal conduct as well as of national life must be conformity with Nature. Harmony among men and among nations is possible only through Love and Truth. Harmony through Love and Truth is non-violence, disharmony,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[18] Gandhi, *Collected Works*, (hereafter *CW*), X, p. 7.
[19] *HS*, c. 1.

violence. The latter is political pathology, or in Gandhi's phrase, "an interruption of the course of nature." [20]

Gandhi recognizes the existence of both violence and non-violence in human affairs. He is even prepared to concede that of the two, violence (or brute-force, body-force; Gandhi used these terms interchangeably) is historically the more dominant. Non-violence (or soul-force, or passive resistance, or *satyagraha;* Gandhi uses these terms interchangeably) has not been politically successful. "Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called truth-force?" the Reader asks.[21] The answer will depend, the Editor replies, on one's view of history, and how one reads history. If history is understood as "the doings of kings and emperors" soul-force has not succeeded. But then Gandhi denies that history is a record of human violence: it is a record of actions of Love and Truth "interrupted" by violence. He emphatically denies that "the story of the universe had commenced with wars." The original principle of history is not violence. Had it been so, "not a man would have been found alive today." "The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth and love." [22]

Gandhi gives no explanation of the origin of violence in metaphysical or theological terms. There is no doctrine of original sin or class war in the *HS*. There are, however, explanations of violence in political and psychological terms. The root of violence is "fear";[23] "unlimited ambition" for wealth and political control;[24] and the concern for "immediate gain" at the expense of "ultimate" gain.[25] There is also what may be called, for want of a better term, sociological explanations of violence: it originates in materialistic civilizations.

It is interesting to note the almost Augustinian style of contrast that Gandhi employs in describing the objects of soul-force and body-force. Body-force is self-regarding, i.e. devoid of any genuine social purpose. It seeks the welfare of the self, or of one's own nation to the exclusion of the welfare of other nations. That is, it lacks universal standards. It does not recognize the legitimacy of the other wills, but uses others for its own ends. Violence is tyrannical, imperialistic, immoral. Soul-force on the other hand is benevolent, i.e. it seeks to influence other wills, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the well-being of others. It seeks to secure the well-being of individuals and nations in a manner consistent with the well-being of all—(*sarvodaya*).[26] Its purposes, being directed by Love, are social; its stand-

[20] *HS*, c. 17.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *HS*, c. 16.
[24] *HS*, c. 13.
[25] *HS*, c. 7.
[26] *HS*, c. 16.

ards, being illumined by Truth, are universal. Thus, though brute-force may be historically prevalent, soul-force alone is legitimate.

Gandhi's political theory, as noted earlier, has a congruence to action. Gandhi, as a theorist, is a propagandist and reformer. We must now turn to the theory of moral reform inherent in Gandhi's political theory. Ultimately only a religious force can restore man to his original nature, and effect the prevalence of soul-force in social and political life. If politics is to lose its viciousness, if fear, ambition, and concern for immediate gain are to be controlled, man must conquer his inner self. There must be the "control of the Mind," brought about by the spirit of chastity, of poverty, by honesty and fearlessness.[27] A person so transformed would at once experience the moral evil of violence and see the necessity of employing only non-violent means to gain political ends.

This means, that voluntary suffering is an inevitable condition of non-violent politics. Gandhi himself has described passive resistance as a "method of securing rights by personal suffering." [28] Speaking of India he said, "we shall become free only through suffering." [29] How does Gandhi legitimize voluntary suffering as a means of politics? First, voluntary suffering thus employed is morally superior to the application of violence for the same purpose: "sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others." [30] Here Gandhi echoes the Socratic doctrine that it is better to suffer injustice than to inflict it on others. Secondly, it assures an economy of suffering. In trying to rectify an unjust situation through voluntary suffering, one hopes that others can be spared of suffering. Thirdly, voluntary suffering is the only morally consistent way of vindicating political truths. For political truths are relative truths. "No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong because he thinks so . . ." [31] Since one cannot be absolutely sure of one's truth, one lacks the moral basis to compel the other in the name of Truth. When relative truths clash, the alternative is to obey one's own conscience, as enlightened by relative truth, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. "This is the key to the use of soul-force." [32]

Gandhi's doctrine of suffering places his political theory in radical opposition to most contemporary theories of politics, particularly those which regard the state as the monopoly of legitimate force, and which defend the theory of reason of state.[33] Max Weber's famous statement on violence as

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[27] *HS*, c. 17.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *HS*, c. 20.
[30] *HS*, c. 17.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] See F. Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and Its Place in History*, English Translation, (New Haven 1957); For a judicious criticism of the Macht theory of state see, A. P. d'Entreves, *The Notion of the State* (Oxford, 1967).

the specific means of politics may be recalled. "He who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence. The genius or demon of politics lives in an inner tension with the god of love, as well as with the Christian God as expressed by the church. This tension can at any time lead to an irreconcilable conflict." [34] This is a direct challenge to Gandhi's doctrine of Love and Truth. He would dismiss it as nothing but the formalization of political pathology. Equally challenging is the statement of another German, von Clausewitz: "A nation cannot buy freedom from slavery of alien rule by artifices and stratagems. It must throw itself recklessly into battle, it must pit a thousand lives against a thousandfold gain of life. Only in this manner can the nation arise from the sickbed to which it was fastened by foreign chains. . . In our times, struggle and, specifically, an audacious conduct of war are practically the only means to develop a people's spirit of daring." [35] And questions like 'Would Gandhi have succeeded against Hitler or Stalin?' are only polite ways of expressing the same belief in the doctrine of state as 'the monopolist of legitimate force.'

The above considerations bring us to the question of what according to Gandhi is the state, and when may it apply force legitimately. The question is not raised formally in the *HS,* but there are sufficient indications for an answer, particularly in chapters 16 and 17. Gandhi conceives the state as a relationship, or a form of 'cooperation,' based on 'duty,' between those who govern and those who are governed. Governing, then, is a duty, demanded by Love and Truth. And cooperation must last as long as Truth and Love are dutifully respected. The duty to be governed ceases when the ruler violates Truth and Love. And one such violation takes place when the ruler fails to concede the just demands of the ruled. Then the ruled 'non-cooperate.' "If you do not concede our demand, we shall be no longer your petitioners. You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed; we shall no longer have any dealings with you. The force implied in this way may be described as love-force, soul-force, or more popularly but less accurately, passive resistance." [36]

Gandhi is now able to distinguish between a "good" state and a "bad" state: the former is one which embodies duties publicly; the latter is one which departs from duties publicly. As Morris-Jones has remarked, for Gandhi "the relevance and the justification of politics is an expression of

[34] H. H. Gerth, and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber, Essay in Sociology,* (New York, 1946), p. 126. On the discussion of the question of power (Macht) and violence (Gewalt) as the specific means of politics, see Weber's famous essay "Politics as a Vocation," *Ibid.,* pp. 77-129. For the original German see Max Weber, *Soziologie, Weltgeschichtliche Analysen, Politik,* (Stuttgart, 1956), "Der Beruf zur Politik," p. 167-186. The apparent lack of clarity or consistency in the use of *Macht* and *Gewalt* in this essay was pointed out to me by my colleague Dr. Karl Friedmann.

[35] Karl von Clausewitz, *War, Politics and Power,* Edward Collins, (ed.), (Chicago), pp. 302-303.

[36] *HS,* c. 16.

the moral life. The state is to be judged by the qualities of its citizens whose moral development it can help or hinder." [37]

Gandhi, it has been correctly observed, has a clear theory of "resistance politics." [38] But does he have a theory of "positive" politics, a theory of governing? To answer this question it may be helpful to ask the following questions. According to Gandhi, may the individual use violence against other individuals for political ends? May the individual use force against the government when the government is in the moral wrong? May the government use force when it is in the moral right and the ruled is in the moral wrong? The answers to the first two is clearly no. The answer to the third is given by means of a parable: the parable of a child trying to jump into the fire. Use of force, so long as it does not amount to fatal physical injury or serious psychic injury, and so long as the well-being of the child is the sole motive, is justified.[39] Gandhi's idea, as far as I understand it, is that the moral authority of a government depends entirely on its being in the moral right. The moment it departs from its duty it loses the authority to oblige obedience.

Put against this theory of Gandhian state (as found in the *HS*) and the basis of political obligation, we can better appreciate what Gandhi means by voluntary suffering. It is not masochistic nor sentimental surrender to brute-force. Gandhi is aware that some suffering is inevitable in human affairs. His idea is to reduce its volume and to find out a moral basis for it, so that what must be endured can be endured in dignity.

In my view the writer who has grasped the Gandhian doctrine of suffering as an effective political means is Jacques Maritain. Maritain calls *satyagraha,* "spiritual warfare," an order of means, of which our Western civilization is hardly aware, and which offers the human mind an infinite field of discovery—the spiritual means systematically applied to the temporal realm. . . ." [40] Maritain sees that Gandhi's "systematic organization of patience and voluntary suffering as a special method or technique of political activity" can be extended not only to nationalist struggles, but also to "the struggle of the people to maintain or control over the State." [41] According to Maritain, Gandhi's notion of suffering is not different from St. Thomas' doctrine of fortitude. Maritain's commentary of this point is noteworthy:

> . . . there are two different orders of means of warfare (taken in the widest sense of the word), as there are two kinds of fortitude and courage, the courage that attacks and the courage that endures, the force of coercion or aggression and the force of patience, the force that inflicts suffering on others and the force that endures suffering inflicted on oneself. There you have two different key-

[37] Morris-Jones, *loc. cit.,* p. 19.
[38] *Ibid.,* p. 31.
[39] *HS,* c. 17.
[40] Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State,* (Chicago, 1951), p. 68.
[41] *Ibid.,* p. 70.

> boards that stretch along the two sides of our human nature, though the sounds they give are constantly intermingled: opposing evil through attack and coercion—a way which, at the last extremity, leads to the shedding, if need be, of the blood of others; and opposing evil through suffering and enduring—a way which, at the last extremity, leads to the sacrifice of one's own life. To the second keyboard the means of spiritual warfare belongs." [42]

Aquinas discusses fortitude, one of the four cardinal (principal) virtues—the other three being prudence, justice and temperance—in *The Summa Theologica,* IIa-IIae, qq. 123-140. Some interesting similarities between the ideas of Aquinas and Gandhi may be noted. First of all, among the vices opposed to fortitude cited by Aquinas are fear,[43] and ambition [44] which are also vices opposed to non-violence. Secondly, the highest expression of fortitude according to Aquinas is endurance, which corresponds to Gandhi's notion of non-violence. Civic order is the object of this virtue for both. Aquinas defines fortitude as the virtue which strengthens the will in "human justice" [45] and removes the obstacles to the establishment of "rectitude of reason in human affairs,[46] particularly by guarding the will "against being drawn from the 'good of reason' through fear of bodily harm and death." [47] St. Thomas relates fortitude to the fourth Beatitude: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for the sake of justice,"[48] and as we know, Gandhi was profoundly influenced by the Sermon on the Mount.[49] St. Thomas holds that martyrdom, the highest expression of fortitude, cannot be accepted without the grace of God.[50] Gandhi was equally sure that without religious aid non-violence could not succeed.

We may also point out the reasoning of Aquinas by which he supports the view that it requires more courage to endure suffering than to attack, and therefore endurance is morally superior to aggression.

> "For it is more difficult to allay fear than to moderate daring, since the danger which is the object of daring and fear, tends by its very nature to check daring, but to increase fear. Now to attack belongs to fortitude in so far as the latter moderates daring, whereas to endure follows the repression of fear. Therefore the principal act of fortitude is endurance, that is to stand immovable in the midst of dangers rather than to attack them.
>
> . . . Endurance is more difficult than aggression, for three reasons. First, because endurance seemingly implies that one is being attacked by a stronger person, whereas aggression denotes that one is attacking as though one were the stronger party; and it is more difficult to contend with a stronger than with

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[42] *Ibid.,* p. 69.
[43] *Summa Theologica* (First Complete American Edition. New York, 1947), Q. 125.
[44] *Ibid.,* Q. 131.
[45] *Ibid.,* Q. 124, art. 2, ad 1um.
[46] *Ibid.,* Q. 123, art. 1.
[47] *Ibid.,* Q. 123, art. 4.
[48] *Ibid.,* Q. 139, art. 2.
[49] The Sermon on the Mount "went straight to my heart." Gandhi, *Autobiography* (Ahmedabad, 1925), p. 42.
[50] Q. 124, art. 2, ad 1um.

a weaker. Secondly, because he that endures already feels the presence of danger, whereas the aggressor looks upon danger as something to come; and it is more difficult to be unmoved by the present than by the future. Thirdly, because endurance implies length of time, whereas aggression is consistent with sudden movements; and it is more difficult to remain unmoved for a long time, than to be moved suddenly to something arduous." [51]

(b) Non-violence and the Theory of Ends and Means

The theory of non-violence is in effect a theory of political means and ends. Gandhi is one of the major opponents of the doctrine of the separation of the ethics of ends and means. In politics, which is the realm of relative truth, no political end can be absolutely obliging. Since the morality of the political good is not absolutely compelling, one is not free to use *any* means to obtain it. The morality of the means, then, becomes as important as the morality of the end. Gandhi's contention is that, first, the means adopted often determines the moral quality of the outcome or the end, and secondly, the particular issue at hand often determines the nature of the means to be employed. He is arguing against the *a priori* doctrine that the *reason* of state is the political *summum bonum* and therefore any means, including violence, is justifiable. For Gandhi there can be no political end which requires absolute sanction; he in effect denies the *reason of state* doctrine, and its corollary, the end justifies the means.

To explain the relation, "the inviolable connection," between ends and means Gandhi uses the example of the seed and the tree.[52] The tree grows out of the seed, the two constitute a continuum. Similarly ends and means constitute one moral continuum, the means being ends in the process of realization. He takes as another example the various ways one can obtain a watch. The Editor tells the Reader:

> "If I want to deprive you of your watch I shall certainly have to fight for it; if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay you for it; and if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it; and according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property, or a donation. Thus we see three

[51] *Ibid.*, Q. 123, art. 6. It should be noted however that Aquinas' theory of the superiority of endurance over aggression does not make him a pre-Gandhi Gandhian! For, as is well known, he approved of just war under certain conditions. Though war is contrary to Divine precept, and though one must be ready to obey Divine precept and "if necessary refrain from resistance or self-defense," nevertheless, argues St. Thomas, it is necessary "sometimes" for a man to act otherwise for the "common good or for the good of those with whom he is fighting." Q. 30, art. 1, ad 2um. Similarly Maritain: endurance, he seems to say, is the more excellent way; aggression, in certain conditions is pragmatically necessary. See, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74. Although there is some difference between Gandhi on the one hand and Aquinas and Maritain on the other, on the finer point of whether man may use force against force under certain circumstances, both St. Thomas and Maritain would generally agree with Gandhi on the *greater excellence* of endurance, certainly in social relations; and possibly on the impermissibility of war in today's conditions in international relations.

[52] *HS*, c. 16.

different results from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter?" [53]

As to his second contention that the issue at hand would also suggest the morality of the means, Gandhi examines the example of a thief and the ways of dealing with him. The means to be adopted will depend on who the thief is: whether he is your father, or son, or brother, or friend, or an alien, or a bandit, or a starving man. Gandhi's conclusion is: "You will have to adopt the means to fit each case. Hence it follows that your duty is *not* to drive away the thief by any means you like." [54]

'Reason of state,' then, is not the source of political morality for Gandhi. Political morality stems from several sources—the issue at hand, the means employed, to mention two—all of which must be related to duty, Love and Truth. His doctrine of political means emphasizes the dynamic and really positive aspect of his political theory. For him politics is neither a system of punishment nor of competition, it is above all, as was noted already, "spiritual warfare," the incessant, anticipatory and preventive effort to make moral good prevail in human affairs. Thus in the case of the thief, it is not enough to make restitution for the stolen property: politics must adopt such means as would "destroy the man's motive for stealing," and would treat the thief as "an ignorant brother."[55] Voluntary suffering is in a sense concomitant with the passive acceptance of the evils one cannot prevent from occurring. The adoption of voluntary suffering and non-violence as political means involves an *active* concern for the moral well-being of oneself, of one's neighbor, and of the political community.

(c) Non-violence and Swaraj

We now come to the crucial issue of the *HS,* the relation between non-violence and swaraj. Politics, the previous arguments indicate, is the first step in the path of moral regeneration. Only those who are capable of political freedom are morally worthy of it. "Real home-rule is self-rule or self-control." [56] Each individual has to achieve it first, has to experience it, "experience the force of the soul within themselves." Each must then "endeavor to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise." [57] There is an intrinsic connection between personal *swaraj,* and national and universal *swaraj.*[58] The moral perfection, expected of the politically liberated man,

[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] *HS,* c. 20.
[57] *HS,* c. 14.
[58] Cole did not understand Gandhi correctly on this point. He writes: "he (Gandhi) is as near as a man can be to Swaraj in a purely personal sense. But I think he has never solved, to his own satisfaction, the other problems— that of finding terms of collaboration that could span the gulf between man and man, between acting alone *and* helping others to act in accordance with their lights . . ." *loc. cit.,* p. 431. The basis of *swaraj* in Love naturally relates the *swaraj* to others.

is not the moral perfection of an isolated hero. He does not sit in splendid isolation like the philosopher-king. Rather the force that has transformed him is, of its very nature, "other-regarding," social. From each reformed individual moral force flows to the reformed nation. "Real Home Rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people." [59]

To sum up, then, politics of non-violence involves a revolution within the soul. Only on this hypothesis is it a cure of political pathology. Passively it may involve endurance of evil; actively it involves the prevention of evil. This is Gandhi's radical vision of politics, a far cry from politics as competition, as the maximization of interest superintended by the mortal God, the monopolist of legitimate force.

III

GANDHI'S VISION OF NEW INDIA

The vision of India which the *HS* projects corresponds to its theory of non-violence. Consequently we can understand it properly only from the point of view of political theory. One of the functions of political theory, to remind ourselves again, is to state the political ought, to present the political vision, the standard of judgment and evaluation. The India of the *HS* is above all a measuring rod for the actual India.

The ideal India, according to Gandhi, had its nationality in religion. India was accordingly a nation before the British came. Thanks to her religious essence, she has a civilizing mission, to usher in the new politics of non-violence. It followed from this premise that she would reject the adoption of Western political theory which exalted violence.

Gandhi's notion of religion as the basis of nationality may be examined a little more closely. By religion Gandhi here means the syncretist type of religion, "the religion which underlies all religions." What Gandhi really means is 'a religious outlook on life,' according to which "we should be passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits" and which should "set a limit to our worldly ambition." [60] Gandhi does not deny the relevance of worldly pursuits, only he wants a ratio of its importance in relation to godly pursuits.

The foundational religion of Indian nationality, then, is not a confessional religion, Hinduism for example, or any other. Confessional religions, Gandhi considers at best as merely "different roads converging on the same point." [61] But he is aware of the dangers of confessional religion to true nationalism. "If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it," Gandhi hoped, the divisive tendencies of confessional religions could be controlled. Gandhi was very clear on this point: those who

[59] *HS*, c. 17.
[60] *HS*, c. 8.
[61] *HS*, c. 10.

identified confessional religion with the basis of nationality were not true nationalists at all: "those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland." [62]

Paradoxically enough, Gandhi thought it possible to have a nationalism which was religious in outlook but which did not identify itself with any confessional religion. According to him India was singularly suited to develop this type of nationalism, because she possessed the two qualities most needed for such a task, namely the spirit of toleration and the capacity for assimilation. India was religious, tolerant, assimilative. Hence it could adopt what is good in the West without adopting what is evil in it. The achievement of this moral ideal is the task of Indian Home Rule or *Hind Swaraj.*

IV

GANDHI'S THEORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND POLITICS

a) One idea that pervades the entire *HS* is the causal moral relation between civilization and politics. As the civilization of a community, so its politics. Gandhi devotes no less than nine chapters (out of twenty) to this topic. His view of civilization is basically moralistic: "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty." [63] All other aspects of civilization must be subordinated to the performance of duty. It is thus the stable matrix of historically tested values out of which arise political ideas and institutions.

From this point of elevation Gandhi sees nothing but corruption in Modern Civilization, by which he means the civilization that arose in Europe after the Industrial Revolution and which spread throughout the world.[64] The sense of duty that this civilization inculcates is totally unacceptable to Gandhi. It inculcates utilitarian materialism and practical, if not philosophic, secularism. It is "passive" in regard to the things of the Spirit and active in regard to things of material well-being. It is ethically ambiguous, out of which arises the fact that wealth and power dominate European morals. "Western nations are impatient to fall upon one another, and are restrained only by the accumulation of armaments all around," Gandhi wrote in 1908. "When the situation flares up," he continued, almost with prophetic insight, "we will witness a veritable hell, let loose in Europe. All white nations look upon black races as their legitimate prey. This is inevitable when money is the

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[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *HS,* c. 13.

[64] Writing in *Indian Opinion,* in 1908, Gandhi said: "Let it be remembered that western civilization is only a hundred years old, or to be more precise, fifty." ***CW,*** VIII, p. 374.

thing that matters. Wherever they find any territory, they swoop down on it like crows upon carrion. There are reasons to suggest that this is the outcome of their large industrial undertakings." [65]

British civilization and British politics were most familiar to Gandhi—his personal contact with them dating back to 1889. Yet he spoke of them as Augustine did of the Romans and of their politics and civilization. "I bear no enmity towards the English but I do towards their civilization." [66] Again, "The British Government in India constitutes a struggle between the Modern Civilization, which is the Kingdom of Satan, and the Ancient Civilization, which is the Kingdom of God. The one is the God of War, the other is the God of Love." [67] And one of the purposes of the *HS* was to show the Indians "that they were following a suicidal policy" in hoping to drive out the British by adopting modern civilization and modern methods of violence and to exhort the Indians to "revert to their own glorious civilization." [68]

Gandhi selected two pillars, in particular, of modernity: *machinery or technology* and what may be referred to as modern *bureaucracy*. What was fundamentally wrong with them was that they became means of "self-interest" rather than public service, of domination of fellowmen. It must be clearly understood that he was not attacking them *per se,* what he was attacking was their disorientation of purpose, brought about by cultural values. Machinery he called the "chief symbol of modern civilization" and it represented "sin".[69] Interestingly enough he compared the "craze" for machinery and for wealth to the libido. "Money renders a man helpless. The other thing which is equally harmful is sexual vice. Both are poison." [70] What the aphrodisiac is to the body, technology was to society: both tended to intensify potentialities into dangerous proportions.

What Gandhi said of technology was equally applicable, *mutatis mutandis,* to modern bureaucracy, including the professions. They were also infected by disorientation of social purpose. He picked doctors and lawyers (he himself was a Barrister of the Inner Temple). "We become doctors so that we may obtain honors and riches." [71] As for lawyers they are more interested in the "advancement" of quarrels than in their elimination: they "take to that profession not in order to help others out of their miseries, but to enrich themselves." [72] What is condemned is the lack of "bounds" of the bureaucracy;[73] instead of being dependent on people, as in Ancient Civilization, they have become "masters" in Modern Civilization. "Careful reflexion will show," he wrote in 1908, "that what we really desire through

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[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *HS,* c. 20.
[67] *CW,* X, p. 189; in the Preface to the first English edition of the *HS.*
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] *HS,* c. 19.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *HS,* c. 12.
[72] *HS,* c. 11.
[73] *HS,* c. 13.

acquisition of wealth is power over other men—power to acquire for our advantage the labor of a servant, a tradesman, or an artisan. And the power we can thus acquire will be in direct proportion to the poverty of others." [74]

Obviously Gandhi's attack has been virulent, and often misunderstood. G. D. H. Cole, for example, wrote that the *HS* involved a "thorough repudiation of the very basis of Western Civilization, of Western ideals and standards of value, of Western action and of Western thought." [75] In my opinion a criticism of this sort, though understandable, is not justified. I shall try to show why.

b) Gandhi is not attacking Western Civilization as such but Modern Civilization and its ethical ambiguity—its violence, disorientation of the purposes of technology, wealth, power and sex. This in itself would scarcely make him, as Cole suggests, a radical opponent of Western values and thought. For in the West itself there is a strong philosophical and religious tradition which is sceptical of the claims of the civilization built on technology. Apart from the obvious names of Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy (Gandhi's Western mentors), there are others who in varying degree question some of the fundamental "errors" of modern technology. Even a Walt Rostow, after tracing the stages of economic development, is led to discuss whether the 'mass-consumption society' can avoid "secular spiritual stagnation—or boredom," and if so how.[76] A profound student of culture and its social and political relations, Christopher Dawson arrives at the conclusion: "A society which has lost its religion becomes sooner or later a society which has lost its culture." [77] Marx himself led the intellectual revolt against the inhumanity of the early phase of the Industrial Revolution. In brief, there is much in the writings of these men and of many others we cannot, for want of space, mention here, which corroborates what Gandhi says about Modern Civilization.

But a Western writer who comes very close to Gandhi on the subject of technological civilization is Henry Bergson. The similarity between the two deserves scrutiny. In his justly influential book, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion,* Bergson examines the cultural issue posed by technology.[78] Speaking as a philosopher, Bergson raises the question to the abstract level of the essence and the purpose of technology. To evaluate the question rightly, Bergson tells us, we should see "mechanization as it should

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[74] *CW,* VIII, p. 290.

[75] *Loc. cit.,* p. 429.

[76] W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, A Non-Communist Manifesto,* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 92.

[77] Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion,* (Image Book, Paperback, 1960), p. 184. Among Dawson's other books *Religion and Culture, The Making of Europe, Religion and the Modern State, The Movement of World Revolution* also have bearing on our subject.

[78] Henry Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion,* (1932). Citations taken from Doubleday Anchor Book (1956), paperback edition. See especially Chapter IV: "Mechanics and Mysticism."

be, as what it is in essence." [79] What then is its essence? Bergson falls back on his philosophy of *elan vital,* and looks for the clue in the beginning of the evolutionary, vital movement—itself a spiritual phenomenon. Matter and Life need each other, but as Life evolves to the stage of humanity, the role of Matter should become that of the handmaid. But phenomenologically this is not what is happening. There is a deep chasm between the purpose and the phenomenon of technology. Man has a double tendency in him, either to seek bodily comforts, pleasure and luxury, or to seek spiritual development through Love and mysticism. The purpose of the evolutionary movement is to encourage the latter tendency and to produce saints or moral heroes: this is the highest stage of human evolution. But whether humanity will reach that stage is difficult to predict. For man, being free, is capable of choosing the path of luxury or of mysticism, of pleasure or of spiritual joy. Technology, though it has "democratized" physical comforts (and this is its positive contribution), has at the same time tended to increase man's "artificial needs," to foster the spirit of luxury, to complicate Life, and to create social tension between consumer and producer, capital and labor. If technology directs man along the path of luxury, humanity will be "stumbling into absurdity," stagnating spiritually, reaching an evolutionary blind alley, and atrophy itself. The phenomonology of technology is not at all reassuring.[80]

Bergson, like Gandhi, is not rejecting Modern Civilization, but is merely pointing out its disorientation of purpose. To make technology serve human ends, it must become subordinate to man's spiritual destiny, or what Bergson calls *mysticism.* They are not advocating a Manichaean rejection of Matter, but an integration of material values by means of a spiritual synthesis. As Bergson puts it, man "must use matter as a support if he wants to get away from matter. In other words, the mystical summons up the mechanical. This has not been sufficiently realized, because machinery, through a mistake at the points, has been switched off on a track at the end of which lies exaggerated comfort and luxury for the few, rather than liberation for all." [81] To reverse the trend, humanity needs "moral energy." "So let us not merely say . . . that the mystical summons up the mechanical. We must add that the body, now larger, calls for a bigger soul, and that mechanism should mean mysticism. . . . Machinery will find its true vocation again, it will render services in proportion to its power, only if mankind, which it has bowed still lower to earth, can succeed, through it, in standing erect and looking heavenwards." [82]

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[79] *Ibid.,* p. 309. For Bergson's general philosophical system, of which the *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* is a culminating point, see his *Creative Evolution* (1911), *Matter and Memory* (1913), and *Time and Free Will* (1913).

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] *Ibid.,* p. 310.

This moral transformation of technology is to be effected by *mahatmas,* (literally, "great soul",) mystic geniuses: "Let a mystic genius but appear, he will draw after him a humanity already vastly grown in body, and whose soul he has transformed." [83]

The Mahatma would readily agree with Bergson's conclusion, even though the latter arrived at them through the philosophy of *elan vital* [where Gandhi asks for the balance between spiritual activity and material passivity, Bergson asks for the subordination of "mechanism" to mysticism.] Both ask for the same. Both see the relation between the "craze" for machinery (Gandhi) and the "frenzy" for pleasure (Bergson). Both condemn—one in the direct, simple language of a political propagandist, the other in the elegant language of a French Academician—the non-humanistic phenomenology of technology.

Professor Devanesan, towards the end of his excellent thesis on Gandhi, already cited here, makes the suggestion that Gandhi's polarization of Western Civilization and Indian Civilization "made it difficult to create a stable synthesis from Eastern and Western culture from which an adequate conception of freedom and unity could emerge." [84] This skepticism cannot stand critical scrutiny, and does not accord with Professor Devanesan's own earlier (and correct) evaluation only a few pages back. *"Hind Swaraj . . .* shows that Gandhi was not simply a great Indian, but also one of the greatest men of a new era of internationalism." [85] Again, his "universal appeal lay not only in his ability to present the moral elements of Indian culture, but also in his capacity to speak to the heart of a torn and divided world." [86] It is obvious that Gandhi's synthetic ability and achievement is at the basis of his "capacity" to speak to a divided world.

c) Gandhi owed his own ideas to a synthesis of Indian and European ideas. Two characteristics were key to 'the religious outlook' which he proposed as necessary for the cure of Modern Civilization, namely tolerance and assimilation. His own intellectual development was due to an assimilative and tolerant process, and he held out a similar process of cultural synthesis as the key to the success of the politics of non-violence.

Non-violence rests on a spiritual synthesis of East and West. "My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the *Gita, The Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount," he wrote in his Autobiography describing his early mental development.[87] In the Preface to the 1909 Gujarati edition of the *HS* he wrote: "These views are mine, and yet not mine. They are mine because I hope to act according to them. They are almost a part of my being. But, yet, they are not mine, because I lay no claim to originality. They have been formed after reading several books. That which I dimly

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[83] *Ibid.,* p. 311.
[84] Devanesan, *op. cit.,* p. 578.
[85] *Ibid.,* p. 563.
[86] *Ibid.,* p. 564.
[87] *Autobiography,* p. 42.

felt received support from these books." [88] The books referred to, as every reader of the *HS* knows, are the twenty found in the Appendix. Of the twenty, eighteen are by European authors.[89] Similarly in the preface of the first English edition of 1910 Gandhi repeats the European sources but also adds "the masters of Indian philosophy" as the sources of his ideas.[90]

An even more striking proof of Gandhi's synthetic view of cultural values may be found in an advertisement for an Essay Competition which Gandhi had taken in the *Indian Opinion* in 1907. A careful reading of the terms of the Competition—for a prize of ten guineas—would give us an indication of the way the idea of non-violence took shape in Gandhi's mind. The topic of the Essay was "The Ethics of Passive Resistance." Explaining the subject, Gandhi wrote: "The doctrine, religiously constructed, means a fulfillment of Jesus' famous saying, 'Resist not evil.' As such it is of eternal and universal application . . ." As for the terms of competition: The Essay "should contain an examination of Thoreau's classic, 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,' Tolstoy's works—more especially, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is Within You'—(Gandhi meant *The Kingdom of God is Within You*), and it should give Biblical and other religious authorities and illustrations; and also the application of the 'Apology of Socrates' to the question." [91]

Furthermore, Gandhi took sharp issue with Kipling's famous lines, "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." In a public lecture delivered at Hampstead to the Hampstead Peace and Arbitration Society, on October 13, 1909—one month before he wrote the *HS*—he commented on Kipling and characterized his doctrine "to be a doctrine of despair, and inconsistent with the evolution of humanity." He rather supported Tennyson's vision of the union of East and West, and it was because of this vision that he had "cast his lot with the people of South Africa." He went on to attack Modern Civilization for its "worship" and "glorification" of the body more than the spirit, and ruled out the possibility of any cultural synthesis on the basis of Modern Civilization. On that basis "the two nations (India and Britain) would be flaying at each other." [92] The idea is clear: cultural synthesis is possible; evolutionary path lies in that direction; but cultural synthesis on the basis of Modern Civilization will only lead to conflict; true synthesis lies in the harmonization of spiritual values.

Again, internal evidence in the *HS* itself shows that Gandhi was a most discriminating critic of Western and Indian civilizations. The origin of India's

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[88] *CW*, X, p. 7.

[89] Tolstoy (6); Thoreau, (2); Ruskin (2); Mazzini and Plato, one each, and some other contemporary but now obscure writers. The two Indians included were Dadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Dutt. *HS*, Appendix, p. 105.

[90] *CW*, X, p. 189. The *Autobiography* gives a little more detail on the sources of Indian influence on Gandhi. Raychandbhai is given the same importance as Tolstoy and Thoreau, p. 54.

[91] *CW*, VII, p. 510.

[92] *CW*, IX, p. 476.

moral renovation Gandhi traces to "discontent and unrest." [93] He welcomed these. From these arose the movement towards national reform and purification. But they were due to the "reading of the great works of Indians and Englishmen." [94] Moreover, Gandhi defends the Moderates of the Indian nationalist movement, men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Ranade, Budruddin Tyebji, Manomohan Ghose, who were discriminate carriers of Western ideas, against the Extremists, who were carriers of the unwholesome Western idea of political violence as a means of obtaining *swaraj*. Similarly A. O. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn, both ex-British civil servants, are praised for their contributions to Indian nationalism.

Moreover, similarity between certain ideas in the *HS* and in classical and Western political thought shows that Gandhi could not be accused of rejecting Western "ideals" and "thought." To begin with, Gandhi's notion that political good must be in harmony with moral good is equally Platonic, Aristotelian and Thomistic. Secondly, the ethical superiority of voluntary suffering to suffering inflicted on others is Gandhian as well as Socratic and Thomistic. Thirdly, Gandhi's doctrine that positive law is not binding when in conflict with divine law is Christian and Socratic.[95]

Finally, an increasing number of Western activists like Martin Luther King, and intellectuals like Maritain, and critics of modern war like Stratmann seem to find in Gandhi a modern apostle of an ancient Christian doctrine of non-violence. Stratmann writes that Gandhi demonstrated the relevance of the "Command to love" to public policy. His "political ethics were essentially a challenge to ours. Not to Christian ethics which he himself followed, but to the actual ethics of Christians, which are not Christian." [96] Similarly, many other Western students of Gandhi applaud him for rediscovering the genius of early Christianity.[97] In conclusion, we may agree with the great British classicist, John Middleton Murry: "The greatest Christian teacher in the modern world is Gandhi; and *Hind Swaraj* is (I believe) the greatest book that has been written in modern times." [98]

V

THE HIND SWARAJ AND THE MODERNIZATION OF INDIA

It will be a strange omission, I think, if in dealing with the seminal work of the leader of the Indian nationalist movement, a word or two were not added as to its relevance to the process of India's modernization. Only a word or two, and that too by way of conclusion, for the question of the

[93] *HS*, c. 3.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *HS*, c. 17.
[96] Francis Stratmann, O.P., *War and Christianity Today*, (London, 1956), pp. 9-14.
[97] Dom Griffiths, O.S.B., "The Ideal of Non-Violence," in Charles S. Thompson (ed.), *Morals and Missiles*, (London, 1959, 1961), p. 74.
[98] *Op. cit.*, p. 441.

relevance of Gandhian political theory to political development deserves serious treatment.[99]

The prevailing view of political development is positivistic and utilitarian. Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama,* to mention only one book, supplies a massive demonstration of this tendency. Literature on political development seems singularly silent on the relevance of political theory as defined earlier in this paper. Whether it is due to contempt or ignorance is not always easy to say.

It is obvious that if we take political development as secularization, participation in competitive politics (politics conceived as competition and the struggle for the maximization of interest, superintended by an institution thought to possess the monopoly of legitimate violence), the ideas of *Hind Swaraj* must appear as either irrelevant or utopian. We have already noted, how many critics, not understanding Gandhi correctly on the issue of machinery or technology, argue to the incompatibility of technology and Gandhi. Here Gandhians, particularly faddist Gandhians, are more guilty. Gandhi's main point in his criticism of technology was that unless the foundation of Modern Civilization were set straight, technology, like undisciplined sex, could either enervate the species or lead it to the danger of self-destruction. That was why he was asking for the proper balance between spiritual activity and worldly passivity, or a religious outlook on life. Gandhi's fears seem more justified today than in 1909. Gandhi anticipated the spirited problems that technology poses. This he was able to do for he had a profound grasp of the importance of cultural values to political and technological development. A civilization that was indifferent to the idea of moral duty, he felt, could scarcely be secure about an advanced technology.

Now one might say that it is ridiculous to suggest that the technology which is available to the underdeveloped countries poses a moral or physical threat to them. All are agreed, and Gandhi is one of the first to do so, that they need a better technology and a better habit of disciplined labor. But where Gandhi parts company with the positivists and the utilitarians is the moral basis of adopting technology. As he puts it he did not like India to become English without the English, to become a tiger without the tiger's spots.[100] If after agreeing to the need of some technology, Gandhi at the same time expressed apprehension about it, it is because he was seeing things with the eyes of a political theorist. Unlike the positivist, the theorist can foresee the moral, causal relations of things. Today political development is very much the preserve of the behavioralists, the positivists and the utilitarians who are indifferent to political theory as if it were some fairy tale.

But the value of the *HS* lies not only in its power to clarify the moral basis of modernization but, as in India, to get modernization started on a

[99] For a general treatment of this problem see T. K. N. Unnithan, *Some Problems of Social Change in India in Relation to Gandhian Ideas,* (Groningen, 1956).

[100] *HS,* cc. 4 and 5.

truly national scale.[101] The *HS* has been crucial to Indian political development in so far as it reflected Gandhi's basic ideas. He made India conscious of the moral necessity to change, to reform its culture, to adopt nationalism, to acquire the discipline of work, to see the necessity of justice and honesty in public life, and to respect the need for the morality of means. All this belongs to the imponderable sphere of morals. But it is only those who can feel "the force of the soul from within," as Gandhi put it,[102] who are able to produce non-violent political results. For in human affairs force must flow from the interior to the exterior. The many-sided moral fervor is part of the whole process of political development, indeed its beginning, and perhaps its chief part. Unfortunately the impression that the *HS* leaves to the reader in a hurry is that it is anti-developmental. But as one reflects on its theoretical foundations, on why it relates goals to norms, one can see its causal normative relationship to India's modernization.

And for those who worry about the problem of non-violence as a means of political development and of politics, Max Weber, strangely enough, suggests a line of thought to ponder. After suggesting that there is the "inner tension" between what he called the ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*) and the ethics of ultimate ends (*Gesinnungsethik*) he however concludes that the man who has a real calling for politics (*Der Beruf zur Politik*) is he who can combine the two ethics and resolve the tension. Though Gandhi is the proponent *par excellence* of the ethic of ultimate ends, he was never irresponsible or reckless in pressing his ethical stand. As noted earlier, he firmly held the idea that politics moved in the realm of relative truth. Thus, as so many instances of Gandhi's political activity shows—his fasts, his *satyagraha* movements, his negotiations with the Viceroys, and, earlier with authorities in South Africa, Gandhi related the ethically desirable to what was practically realizable, or in Weber's terminology the ethics of responsibility with the ethics of ultimate ends. Gandhi was never reckless, he was responsibly pragmatic.

> "Surely, politics is made with the head, but it is certainly not made with the head alone. In this the proponents of an ethic of ultimate ends are right. One cannot prescribe to anyone whether he should follow an ethic of absolute ends or an ethic of responsibility, or when the one and when the other . . . it is immensely moving when a *mature* man, no matter whether old or young in years, is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul (Recall for example Gandhi's confession of a Himalayan blunder in advocating *satyagraha* when the people were not really ready for it) . . . And everyone of us who is not spiritually dead must realize the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. In so far as this is true, an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility

[101] Erik Erikson writes: "If some say that his ascendance was unfortunate for an India in desperate need of modernization, I cannot see who else in his time could have brought about the vast, backward mass of Indians closer to the tasks of this century." *loc. cit.*, p. 728.

[102] *HS*, c. 20.

> are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison constitute a genuine man—a man who can *have* the 'calling for politics'." [103]

Gandhi was such a genuine man, a man with a 'calling for politics,' notwithstanding non-violence and rejection of "machinery." And the *HS* tells us why.

[103] Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

THE EARLY GANDHI ON NATIONALISM

H. PAUL LE MAIRE, S.J.

IN 1919 ON HIS RETURN TRIP FROM ENGLAND TO SOUTH AFRICA, Gandhi wrote a small book called *Hind Swaraj.* First published in Gujarati, Gandhi's native tongue, and then in English under the title *Indian Home Rule,*[1] it presents his ideas on a wide variety of subjects, the most important of which are his formula for achieving India's independence, the superiority of Indian civilization over its Western counterpart and the meaning of true home rule.

Since there is in general little acquaintance with the fascinating story of the twenty-one years (1892-1914) that Gandhi spent in South Africa from the age of twenty-four to forty-five, we must first of all sketch briefly the history of these years in order to set the stage for a detailed analysis and critique of *Hind Swaraj.* It should also be noted that these early South African years are of overwhelming significance in the development of Gandhi's thought and personality. For when he left South Africa in 1914 shortly before the beginning of World War I, he left as a religiously mature man ready to participate in the massive struggle for Indian independence with the weapon of *satyagraha* that he had developed on a small scale in South Africa. Finally, while it will be obvious that Gandhi's early ideas on nationalism do not allow of wide-scale application to the Philippine scene, still, I believe, an acquaintance with the Gandhian spirit—the spirit of truth, love, freedom and courage—behind these ideas can contribute to the growth of a genuine nationalism in the Philippines.

BACKGROUND

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was admitted to the bar in London on June 10, 1891, at the age of twenty-two. He left immediately for India where he intended to begin his career as a lawyer, but he soon discovered to his severe disappointment that this was more easily imagined than realized. His greatest obstacles were an acute shyness that tended to make him speechless before a crowd and a delicate sense of honesty that made it impossible

[1] "This was originally written in Gujarati during Gandhiji's return journey from England on the *Kildonan Castle* and published in *Indian Opinion,* the first twelve chapters on 11-12-1909 and the rest on 18-12-1909. Issued as a booklet in January 1910, it was proscribed in India by the Government of Bombay on March 24, 1910 . . . This hastened Gandhiji's decision to publish the English translation . . . This was issued by the International Printing Press, Phoenix, with a foreword by Gandhiji dated March 20, 1910 and also the English translation of the Gujarati foreword dated November 22, 1909." The text published in *CW* 10 is that of the Revised New Edition published in 1939 by the Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. *CW* 10, p. 6.

for him to participate in anything that smacked of intrigue.[2] Finally, however, through the services of his older brother, Gandhi was offered a job for a year in South Africa. He was to serve as half-clerk, half-lawyer in the employ of Abdulla and Company, which had an important case pending in the city of Pretoria in the Transvaal.[3] When Gandhi landed in South Africa in April 1893, he had intended to stay only for one year; he was to stay for twenty-one, finally leaving in 1914 at the successful conclusion of the great *satyagraha* struggle that obtained recognition of a few of the basic rights of the South African Indians.

Gandhi had not been in South Africa much over a week when he had a very painful experience of the type of problem his countrymen had to face.[4] On his way from Durban in Natal to Pretoria in the Transvaal, he came face to face with the spectre of race prejudice. He was seated alone in a compartment when a white man boarded the train at Maritzburg, the Natal capital, and entered Gandhi's compartment. As soon as he caught sight of Gandhi the colored man, he called the conductor who informed Gandhi that he would have to ride in the baggage compartment. Gandhi refused to budge. He was then thrown off the train and left shivering with cold and humiliation on the platform of the Maritzburg station. Gandhi was tempted to turn around and start the journey back to his homeland, but he felt that this would be an act of cowardice on his part and no solution to the problem of racial prejudice.[5]

Gandhi was instrumental in bringing to a successful conclusion after a year of hard work the law suit for which he had come to South Africa. He was on the point of beginning the return journey to India in 1894 when the Natal Legislature proposed a bill that, if passed, would deprive the Indians of the very limited franchise right they were enjoying. A group of Natal merchants persuaded him to stay and help them fight for their rights. Gandhi agreed to remain in South Africa and remain he did for another twenty years.[6]

To trace the details of Gandhi's efforts in South Africa during the ensuing twenty years on behalf of the Indian community would carry us be-

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[2] *Aut,* pp. 78 ss.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 85.

[4] Towards the year 1860, Indians had begun to migrate from their homeland to South Africa at the request of the European settlers who lacked the manpower necessary to cultivate their vast holdings of land suitable for the growing of tea, coffee and sugar. According to the agreement with the Indian government, the Indian laborer was to sign up for a period of five years of indentured labor. At the end of that period he was entitled either to free passage home or the right to settle in the new land. By 1890, nearly 40,000 Indians had arrived as "indentured laborers" and in their wake came the Indian merchants to minister to their needs. At the end of the five-year period, a considerable proportion of these laborers decided to remain in this new land of opportunity. Some became farmers; others merchants; and many raised themselves from the status of laborers to that of owners of land and houses. It was especially the new Indian trading class that began to offer stiff competition to the white trader. Thus began the persecution of the Indian in South Africa.

[5] *Aut,* pp. 91 ss.

[6] *Aut,* pp. 115 ss.

yond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that between 1894 and 1906, the Indian situation progressively deteriorated until in 1906 the Transvaal government proposed a bill that the Indian community felt was an insult and an act of gross injustice against them. Contending that there was a large flow of illegal Indian immigrants from Natal into the Transvaal, the government advocated a system of compulsory registration of all Indians including complete finger-printing. This proposal and the subsequent passage of the bill resulted in the birth of the *satyagraha* movement.[7]

The following year, the Transvaal government put the finishing touches on its anti-Indian program by passing another bill which prohibited the entry of any new Indian immigrants into the Transvaal.[8] The life of the Indian had, in Gandhi's own words, become a dog's life.[9]

It was to protest these two actions on the part of the Tranvaal government that Gandhi left for the second time in his South African career for England in 1909 on the occasion of the unification of the four South African colonies into the Union of South Africa. During these four months that Gandhi spent in London, he began to make more explicit reference in his writings to the connection he saw between the *satyagraha* struggle going on in South Africa and the growing movement for India's independence. This impetus to broaden his horizons may have come from Gandhi's contact during these months in London with a group of young Indian patriots who were seeking India's independence by means of the sword and the gun. On his return trip to South Africa, Gandhi penned his answer to these young anarchists in the form of his little book, *Hind Swaraj*. It was Gandhi's first attempt to apply the principles of *satyagraha* that he was developing in South Africa and using to obtain redress for a small handful of Indians to the human and political problems of the teeming millions of India.

HIND SWARAJ

> . . . *Hind Swaraj* is a compendious political manifesto. It ranges over a wide field; it discusses "Home Rule," the mainspring of the British authority in India, of the nationalist discontent, the balance sheet of British rule in India, the nature of parliamentary system of government, the curse of industrial and materialistic civilization of the West, the Hindu-Muslim problem, and the comparative efficacy of 'brute force' and passive resistance.[10]

Hind Swaraj is a small book full of strong feeling and little subtlety that could have been written only by a man like Gandhi. He castigates with a passion, hitherto kept hidden, western civilization and the British rule that

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[7] *Satyagraha* means literally "the force born of truth and love." For Gandhi's own history of this movement see, *Satyagraha in South Africa:* for a full development of Gandhi's thought and action in South Africa, see H. Paul Le Maire, S.J., *Lé développement de la pensée politico-religieuse de Mahatma Gandhi dans le contexte des années 1893-1914 en Afrique du Sud.* (Starasbourg, 1968; unpublished doctorate thesis).

[8] See *Sat,* pp. 96-101; 206-207.

[9] *Aut,* p. 218.

[10] B.R. Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi: A Biography* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1958), p. 124.

brought that civilization to India. As a result of this scathing criticism, the Indian government proscribed the book in March 1910, much to Gandhi's surprise.[11] This only served, however, to hasten his efforts to bring out the English translation.

In its own non-violent way, *Hind Swaraj* is a violent attack not only against British presence in India, but the goals it has sought by that presence. Yet at the same time, it is a compendium of everything that Gandhi had stood for up to that time in his South African enterprise. While he criticizes western civilization and British rule, he blames neither for foreign rule in India. The fault lies with the Indian himself; he has allowed himself to be enslaved.

The book is written in the form of a dialogue between the editor of *Indian Opinion*,[12] Gandhi himself, and an imaginary reader. The greater part of the book is negative in its approach, devoted to exposing the sins of the West, but beneath this critical façade, which risks deceiving the superficial reader, lie the great principles of Gandhi's life, applied now to his beloved home land. Neither violence, the path chosen by the extremists, nor petitioning of the government and continued British presence for the time being, the path chosen by the moderates, will bring independence to India; only the principles of *satyagraha* can unlock the door to true liberty.

THE NEGATIVE PART

CRITICISM OF THE WEST

What does Gandhi find wrong with the civilization developed in the West? Fundamentally, it is a civilization that is amoral and areligious in that it has sought to make bodily comfort the be-all and end-all of life. Because the European today lives in a better house than he did a hundred years ago, he considers himself to be more civilized. When a non-western people adopt European dress, they are thought to have been civilized.

> . . . Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour. Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam engines and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilization. Formerly, only a few men wrote valuable books. Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds. Formerly, men travelled in wagons. Now, they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilization . . . Formerly, men worked in the open air only as much as they liked. Now thousands of workmen meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. . . Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion. Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases

[11] *IO*, 2-4-1910; CW 10, p. 189.

[12] Gandhi took over the newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, in 1903 and used it as a vehicle for his ideas and as a means of promoting unity among the South African Indians until his departure from South Africa in 1914. See also, *Sat*, pp. 141-144; *Aut*, pp. 238-240.

> of which people never dreamt before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. . . . This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion. . . . Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. . . . Civilization seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails miserably even in doing so.[13]

The salient points of Gandhi's criticism of the West are found in this paragraph. What is most to be deplored is that as a result of western civilization, India is fast losing its religious sense.[14] Gandhi then picks up various facets of this civilization and launches into a diatribe against railroads, doctors and lawyers, and finally machinery, all hallmarks of this civilization that is costing India its soul. Railroads have helped to spread plague and famine; the former, by enabling people to move about more easily; the latter by encouraging them to sell their grain and not keep enough for emergencies. Rogues visit the holy places of India by means of the railroads to practice their roguery.

The imaginary reader objects that holy men can also take advantage of the railroads to propagate good. Gandhi retorts:

> Good travels at a snail's pace—it can, therefore, have little to do with the railways. Those who want to do good are not selfish, they are not in a hurry, they know that to impregnate people with good requires a long time. But evil has wings. To build a house takes time. Its destruction takes none. So the railways can become a distributing agency for the evil one only. It may be a debatable matter whether railways spread famines, but it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil.[15]

According to the reader, however, the railroads have helped to awaken a spirit of national unity among the masses of India. No, Gandhi replies, despite what the English say, India was one nation before their arrival.

> . . . One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. . . . I do not wish to suggest that because we were one nation we had no differences, but it is submitted that our leading men travelled throughout India either on foot or in bullock-carts. They learned one another's language and there was no aloofness between them. What do you think could have been the intention of those farseeing ancestors of ours who established Setubandha (Rameshwar) in the South, Jagannah in the East and Hardwar in the North as places of pilgrimage. . . . They knew that worship of God could have been performed just as well at home. . . . But they saw that India was one undivided land so made by nature. Arguing thus, they established holy places in various parts of India, and fired the people with an idea of nationality in a manner unknown in other parts of the world. . . . It was after the advent of the railways that we began to believe in distinctions. . . .[16]

Whether Gandhi's historical point of view regarding the past unity of India is accurate or not is of little importance. History did not much interest

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[13] *IHR, CW* 10, pp. 19-21.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[16] *Loc. cit.*

him. Therefore, this paragraph represents not so much a reflection on the past as a projection for the future. Like the microcosm in South Africa, the macrocosm in India was torn in pieces by religious and regional strife. Religious, linguistic and cultural unity were lacking in India and yet Gandhi dreamed of building one nation out of all this diversity. He could only achieve this by instilling in the millions of India the feeling that they belonged to a nation that had been one and was intended by nature to be one. The obstacles to national unity were formidable; yet the greatness of Gandhi's vision consisted in the fact that he could imagine a truly pluralistic society emerging in India as a result of bringing to the fore all that was best in the Indian culture of the past.

For Gandhi, God in the construction of man's body set a natural limit to his locomotive abilities, but man then proceeded to overstep that limit. God intended that man should serve only his immediate neighbors, but through means such as the railroad man has wrongly come to imagine that he must serve the whole world. As a result, he comes into contact with varying patterns of thought and different religions and ends up in a state of utter confusion.[17]

LAWYERS

Gandhi's own profession next comes under fire from his pen. Lawyers have enslaved India by encouraging quarrels among people for their own profit. They have tightened the English grip on the body politic of India in the sense that England could not rule India without the courts and if it were not for the existence of lawyers, there would be no courts. English rule would disintegrate in a day, if Indian lawyers were to give up their profession.[18]

DOCTORS

The medical profession fares no better at Gandhi's hand than the legal. Its very root is immoral. If I overeat, I become sick. Instead of letting me suffer for my over-indulgence, the doctor gives me some pills. This encourages me to go out and repeat my sin. As a result a man's mind is continually being weakened and he eventually loses control over it. Doctors, moreover, violate Hindu and Islamic religious principles by prescribing medicines that contain animal fat or alcohol.[19]

MACHINERY

One thing above all, however, symbolizes western civilization and that is machinery. Gandhi has in mind here particularly the weaving mills which,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

he feels, have impoverished the masses by destroying Indian handicraft. The mill workers of Bombay have been reduced to a state of virtual slavery. An Indian industrialist, moreover, who has become rich through these factories will find it hard to muster sufficient courage to oppose British rule, since his interests are so intimately bound up with the continuance of that rule.

Gandhi, however, is practical enough to realize that he cannot erase the pages of history and remove existing factories from the landscape of India, but he voices an urgent plea from his heart and suggests a substitute:

> . . . It would be too much to expect them [the millowners] to give up their mills, but we may implore them not to increase them . . . They can establish in thousands of households the ancient and sacred handlooms and they can buy out the cloth that may be thus woven. . . .[20]

This is Gandhi's first mention of *swadeshi*—the exclusive use of goods, especially cloth, made in India. It would become one of the principal goals of his work in India after 1914.

To the objection that the elimination of all machinery from India would necessitate the importing of many products, Gandhi replies that India did without these goods in the past and as long as they cannot be made without machinery, Indians must do without them in the future. Even printing presses should eventually be eliminated, for all ". . . machinery is bad."[21]

POSITIVE DOCTRINE

The apparent naiveté of this booklet may so blind or irritate the occidental reader that he misses Gandhi's positive program for securing genuine independence for India. This is far more significant than his exaggerated criticism of western civilization and its trappings. First of all, Gandhi preaches the same message to the mainland Indians as he has been doing to those of South Africa. The cause of all their difficulties is to be laid at their own doorstep and not at England's ". . . The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They were not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them. . . ."[22] By not being able to resist the temptation of English gold, the Indian has gradually lost his manliness and the ability to solve the problems of his own country. For himself, Gandhi would prefer to suffer violence at Indian hands ". . . than that someone else should protect us from it and thus render us effeminate. . . ."[23]

TRUE HOME RULE

Gandhi's formula for true home rule in India is the same *satyagraha* formula he has been proposing for the development of an Indian community in South Africa: freedom and brotherhood.

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[21] *Cf. Ibid.*, pp. 57-60.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

MORAL FREEDOM

Gandhi is quick to point out that the civilization that has been developed in India over the course of many centuries is second to none since, unlike western civilization, it is based upon religion and morality.

> . . . Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "good conduct." [24]
>
> If this definition be correct, then India . . . has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be. . . .
>
> . . . The tendency of the Indian civilization is to liberate the moral being, that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God . . . .[25]

But what has happened to enslave India under English rule? Some Indians have not lived up to the moral ideals of their civilization and in that manner have enslaved themselves. Fortunately, however, this is true only of a small part of India—that part that has been contaminated by the West. The secret, therefore, for realizing the independence of India is to be found precisely in personal freedom:

> . . . If we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of Swaraj. It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. . . . Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. There is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that, after we have once realized it, we shall endeavor to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced, by each one for himself. One drowning man will never save another. Slave yourselves, it would be mere pretension to think of freeing others. . . .[26]

The formula for Indian independence is a simple one: India will be free once the Indian frees himself from the shackles of the West and lives according to the moral ideal of Indian civilization: a simple, unpretentious life in small villages; faithfulness to the use of the plow; and the elimination of competition and machinery.[27] This is freedom; this is true home rule.

BROTHERHOOD

There still remains, however, a formidable obstacle to the independence of India. How can India ever be one nation when it is divided into people of so many different religions: Hindus and Muslims, Parsis and Christians? To this Gandhi replies that the true spirit of nationalism demands that we show respect and tolerance for other religions

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[24] "Literally, 'This is the meaning of *su,* that is good *dharo* [way of life].'" Footnote, *ibid.,* p. 37.

[25] *Ibid.,* pp. 37-38.

[26] *Ibid.,* p. 39.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 37.

> India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for such assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor was it ever been so in India.
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> . . . Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mahomedans own the same ancestors and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mahomedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? . . . [28]

The spirit of tolerance is characteristic of the Hindu religion and for Gandhi one of its most beautiful aspects. Dogmatic questions regarding the theological truth of various religions interested him not at all. If a man lives according to the moral principles of his religion, he will reach the goal set forth by every religion. The killing of cows, however, had always been a sensitive bone of contention between Hindu and Mahomedan and had caused much shedding of blood in the past. Gandhi is to be admired for his spirit of tolerance, but the reader wants to know how he can expect Hindu and Mahomedan to live amicably together as one nation when the former believes the cow to be sacred and the latter does not.

> . . . just as I respect the cow, so do I respect my fellow-man . . . Am I, then, to fight with or kill a Mahomedan in order to save a cow? In doing so, I become an enemy of the Mahomedan as well as of the cow. Therefore, the only method I know of protecting the cow is that I should approach my Mahomedan brother and urge him for the sake of the country [for India, being an agricultural country, is dependent on the cow] to join me in protecting her. If he would not listen to me I should let the cow go for the simple reason that the matter is beyond my ability. If I were overfull of pity for the cow, I should sacrifice my life to save her but not take my brother's. This, I hold, is the law of our religion.
>
> When men become obstinate, it is a difficult thing. If I pull one way, my Moslem brother will pull another. If I put on superior airs, he will return the compliment. If I bow to him gently, he will do it much more so; and if he does not, I shall not be considered to have done wrong in having bowed. . . .
>
> What am I to do when a blood-brother is on the point of killing a cow? Am I to kill him, or to fall down at his feet and implore him? If you admit that I should adopt the latter course, I must do the same to my Moslem brother.
>
> Lastly, if it be true that the Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

> and the Mahomedans do not, what pray, is the duty of the former? It is not written that a follower of the religion of Ahimsa (non-killing) may kill a fellow-man. . . . In order to save one being, he may not kill another. He can only plead—therein lies his sole duty.
> . . . Am I to dislike a Mahomedan because there are passages in the Koran I do not understand or like? It takes two to make a quarrel. . . . If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling.[29]

It should be clear by this point that *Indian Home Rule* is consistent with Gandhi's over-all pattern of thought. It represents a distillation of fifteen years of experience and writing in South Africa, now brought to bear upon the problem of his homeland. When will the Indians of South Africa achieve the recognition of their rights? When they show themselves worthy of it. When will India be independent? When the Indian assumes the responsibilities of freedom and lives up to the demands of his cultural heritage. Hindu-Mahomedan relations posed a more serious problem in India than it did in South Africa, but Gandhi's answer is substantially the same. Religious quarrels are without any sense at all and contradict the very essence of the reality of religion, since every religion preaches brotherhood and love for one another.

While Gandhi believed with all his heart that both in South Africa and India the personal reform of the individual Indian and the general reform of the Indian community were the most important steps to be taken toward the achievement of their goals, he also realized that these alone were not sufficient. The Indian extremists proposed force of arms to attain independence for India; the moderates, petitioning of the government; and Gandhi, soul force or *satyagraha.*

Soul Force

The reader proposes that India resort to arms to drive out the English. Gandhi retorts that if they do that, they will get precisely what the English got and that they do not want. An Indian government based upon the use of force is not different from an English one based on the same foundation. If the means chosen to attain a particular end are evil, then the end itself participates in the evilness of the means.

> . . . Your belief that there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. . . Your reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed. If I want to cross the ocean, I can do so only by means of a vessel; if I were to use a cart for that purpose, both the cart and I would soon find the bottom. . . If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it; if I want to buy your watch, I shall

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

> have to pay you for it; and, if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it; and, according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property, or a donation. Thus we see three different results from three different means. . . . .[30]

Soul Force and Gandhi's Philosophy of History

The imaginary reader is attracted by Gandhi's doctrine of soul force or *satyagraha,* but he wonders whether it is really capable of securing the liberty of a whole nation. Therefore, he asks whether there is any historical evidence to support Gandhi's claim for the power of soul force. This was an objection that Gandhi had to face continually in the South African *satyagraha* campaign. *Satyagraha* was a new doctrine as far as its application to political conflicts was concerned. Could any historical precedent be found for it? Gandhi admits that none can be found, but he explains this historical lacuna through his own philosophy of history.

> The poet Tulsidas has said: "Of religion, pity, or love, is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive." This appears to me to be a scientific truth. I believe in it as much as I believe in two and two being four. The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. . . . . The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: "It so happened." If that is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence. But, if it means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul-force or passive resistance in such history. . . . .
>
> History . . . is a record of the wars of the world . . . and if this were all that had hapapened in the world, it would have ended long ago. . . . .
>
> The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore, the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.
>
> Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the existence of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. . . . History . . . is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.[31]

Gandhi's insight is brilliant, his goal majestic. "Love is what makes the world go round." Love, Gandhi says, is and has been the guiding norm for millions of individuals in the course of history for determining their personal relations with one another, but this world record of love does not make for very interesting reading. Therefore, historians have not bothered to set it down on paper. But, Gandhi says, despite this lack of historical evidence, what is to prevent mankind from taking this guiding norm of love

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[30] *Ibid.,* pp. 43-44.
[31] *Ibid.,* pp. 47-48.

that has determined personal relations throughout history and making it the determining norm for relations among nations and communities of peoples? The answer is nothing.

Herein lies Gandhi's unique contribution to Christianity. Christianity has developed a double morality in regard to violence. Christ's command to love especially our enemies has not been extended beyond the sphere of private relations. While Christianity has always deplored the use of violence among private individuals, it has countenanced and even encouraged it under certain conditions to settle disputes among nations under the rubric of "the just war." Gandhi, on the other hand, was willing to tolerate, but not countenance violence, since he never lost sight of his goal—the elimination of all violence and the substitution of the force of love. This, he proposed, not merely as a goal for private individuals, but for all peoples and nations. He envisaged a point in history where the force of love would be recognized as the only legitimate means for settling differences on a personal, national and international level. There is no doubt that this is implied in the teaching of Christ, but Gandhi's contribution to Christianity is that he made this ideal explicit and brought it to the attention of the Christian world.

Personal Judgment and the Laws of the State

Unfortunately Gandhi does not give any further development of his philosophy of history. He is side-tracked by his imaginary reader into an exposé of *satyagraha* as the only means of attaining independence for India. In *Indian Home Rule,* he stresses the right of the individual *satyagrahi* to determine the justice of a particular law; this right is based on the fact that, if the *satyagrahi* is wrong in his personal judgment, he causes suffering only to his own person and harms no one else.

> Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. . . . No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgment. It is therefore meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequences whatever it may be. . . .
>
> A man who has realized his manhood, who fears only God, will fear no one else. Man-made laws are not necessarily binding on him. Even the Government does not expect any such thing from us. They do not say: "You must do such and such a thing," but they say: "If you do not do it, we will punish you." We are sunk so low that we fancy that it is our duty and our religion to do what the law lays down. . . .
>
> It is a superstition and ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority. Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong and those of minorities to have been right. All

> reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities. . . . So long as the superstitution that men should obey unjust laws exists, so long will their slavery exist. . . .[32]

SELF-DISCIPLINE

It is not clear whether Gandhi realized how close his politico-religious attitude towards government came to bordering on a philosophy of anarchy. Certainly he believed in a severe curtailment of the power of the State, since for him the only life worthy of a human being must be one founded not on compulsion, but on freedom of decision. Man is deprived of that freedom of decision when he is required to submit his personal judgment to the will of the majority.

Gandhi, however, was far from seeing himself as an anarchist, since anarchy in the final analysis is opposed to the law of love and the freedom of the individual. Therefore, before we accuse him of being an anarchist, as Bose does,[33] we must take into serious consideration what kind of a man he expected the *satyagrahi* to be. He had to be a man of self-control, dedicated to the values of *brahmacharya,*[34] poverty and fearlessness. Only such a man could dare trust his own judgment sufficiently to set himself in opposition to established authority. Gandhi does not hesitate to repeat in *Indian Home Rule,* intended for a wider audience, what he had said in the pages of *Indian Opinion.*

> Chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. A man who is unchaste loses stamina, becomes emasculated and cowardly. He whose mind is given over to animal passions is not capable of any great effort. . . What, then, is a married person to do is the question that arises naturally; and yet it need not. When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, except for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited. But a passive resister has to avoid even that very limited indulgence because he can have no desire for progeny. A married man, therefore, can observe perfect chastity. This subject is not capable of being treated at greater length. Several questions arise: How is one to carry one's wife with one, what are her rights, and other similar questions. Yet those who wish to take part in a great work are bound to solve these puzzles.[35]

Unhappily, Gandhi drops the question of a married man's observance of chastity almost as soon as he picks it up. The married man, who wishes

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[32] *Ibid.,* pp. 48-50.

[33] Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Studies in Gandhism* (Calcutta: D. M. Library, 1940), p. 49.

[34] "*Bramacharya* means literally conduct that leads one to God. Its technical meaning is self-restraint, particularly mastery over the sexual organ." *Aut,* p. 21. Its nearest equivalent in Western terminology would be a vow of chastity. Gandhi married at the age of thirteen; after a long period of reflection, he finally took the *brahmacharya* vow at the age of thirty-seven in order to be able to devote himself more fully to the service of the community and to realize his true self. See *Aut,* pp. 171-177.

[35] *IHR, CW* 10, p. 52.

to dedicate himself as a *satyagrahi* to the cause of Indian freedom, must give up sexual relations with his wife. Gandhi, however, consistently refuses to go into the subject any further. Why he felt no further treatment of the subject was possible he does not explain, thus depriving us of an invaluable insight into his own mind. Perhaps he thought that marital *brahmacharya* was so personal a thing that each man had to work out a practical plan for securing it according to his own notion of truth. For Gandhi no man can regard himself as being in full possession of the truth; the best he can hope for is a small foot-hold on the path of relative truth leading to absolute truth, which is God. Each man's foot-hold is to be found in a different spot on this path and therefore each man's answer to the problem of marital *brahmacharya* is bound to be different.

Then again, perhaps he had a certain hesitancy in pushing his ideas on this subject to their logical conclusion for fear that he would find that he had lost the path of truth. Gandhi's thought is not systematic and any attempt to systematize it results only in distorting it. He was a man of the given moment in time; his answers to questions were based not on a logical system of thought, but on the exigencies of the present moment. Millie Polak, the wife of his dear friend, Henry, recalls a conversation she had with Gandhi about the year 1905.[36] Mrs. Polak accused Gandhi of holding that child-bearing was wrong. Gandhi denied this, but she pressed home her argument.

> "No, you did not say so. But you did say something to the effect that it was pandering to the flesh."
>
> "And is it not?" queried Mr. Gandhi.

Millie denied this and pointed out the very logical conclusion that human life would cease without it.

> "Would that be so terrible? But," persisted Mr. Gandhi, "you do believe that people who have a great mission or work to do should not spend their energy and time in caring for a little family, when they are called to a bigger field of work "

Millie agreed with this and Gandhi therefore asked why they were arguing with one another.

> "Only that you are still making me feel that you think it to be a higher condition of life to be celibate than to be a parent, and I say that the condition may be a difference of kind and not of degree." [37]

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[36] The Polaks lived with Gandhi in Johannesburg in the months immediately preceding his move to the Phoenix Settlement in 1906. Millie Polak says in the preface that her purpose in writing this book is simply to describe what Gandhi was like as a man and what living under the same roof with such an extraordinary person was like. To her, he was not first of all a Mahatma or a saint or a politician, but a great and loving being. Millie Graham Polak, *Mr. Gandhi: The Man* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931), pp. 13-14.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

Millie's comments, following this conversation, on Gandhi's attitude toward parenthood are striking in that they carry to a conclusion his position on celibacy, a conclusion that we do not find expressed in Gandhi's own writings.

> This question of 'to be or not to be' a parent was one frequently discussed. Mr. Gandhi was reaching the point where he began to think that it would be better for the world, and probably for God, if mankind ceased to produce itself. . . .[38]

After discussing the question of *brahmacharya* in *Indian Home Rule,* Gandhi goes on to reiterate his position on poverty. Those who have money are not expected to throw it away, but they must adopt an attitude of indifference towards it.[39] Lastly, the *satyagrahi* must be a man of fearlessness. ". . . Those alone can follow the path of passive resistance who are free from fear, whether as to their possessions, false honor, their relatives, the government, bodily injuries or death." [40]

Thus, it becomes clear that *satyagraha* was much more than a political weapon; it was a religious way of life and only the man who lived that *satyagraha* way of life could wield the *satyagraha* weapon. Those who miss the interiority of Gandhi's movement and limit themselves to using *satyagraha* only in the political arena, will eventually end up at least as partial anarchists. The man of courage, poverty and *brahmacharya* is the only man who can be trusted to handle the power of *satyagraha.* If a man is not willing first to reform his life, he cannot be trusted with *satyagraha.*

Conclusion: Anarchy, Preferred to Foreign Rule

In the course of *Indian Home Rule,* Gandhi has shown that he is neither a member of the extremist nor the moderate party in India. The conclusion, therefore, that the imaginary reader draws is that Gandhi would work for the formation of a third party to bring about Indian independence. Gandhi replies that he is not thinking at all along those lines; he would serve both the moderates and the extremists and point out to both where he thinks they have gone astray. To the extremists he repeats what he had said before: true home rule is unattainable by means of violence. To the moderates: mere petitioning of the English government is inadequate and is a confession of Indian inferiority.[41] He continues his speech to the moderates.

> ". . . To say that British rule is indispensable is almost a denial of the Godhead. We cannot say that anybody or anything is indispensable except God . . .
>
> "If the English vacated India, bag and baggage, it must not be supposed

[38] *Ibid.,* p. 99.
[39] *IHR, CW* 10, p. 52.
[40] *Ibid.,* p. 53.
[41] *Ibid.,* p. 60.

> that she would be widowed. It is possible that those who are forced to observe peace under their pressure would fight after their withdrawal. There can be no advantage in suppressing an eruption; it must have its vent. If, therefore, before we can remain at peace, we must fight amongst ourselves, it is better that we do so. There is no occasion for a third party to protect the weak. It is this so-called protection which has unnerved us. Such protection can only make the weak weaker. Unless we realize this, we cannot have Home Rule. I would paraphrase the thought of an English divine and say that anarchy under Home Rule were better than orderly foreign rule. . . . .[42]

Gandhi says very simply that indigenous violence is preferable to foreign rule if a choice must be made between the two. For a man who had dedicated all of his adult life to the cause of non-violence, this seems to represent a large inconsistency in his thought that not even a change in circumstances can justify. This is not at all true. It would be much more accurate to say that Gandhi's dedication was to the interior development and formation of the Indian in the ways of liberty and brotherhood rather than to the propagation of the doctrine of non-violence. But even this does not do justice to his thought. First of all, *satyagraha* is not a doctrine that can be imposed upon a person from without; it must be accepted through an interior understanding of the values at stake, for the *satyagrahi* is one who appreciates, first of all in his heart and then in his actions, the supreme values of love and brotherhood.

Secondly, a man does not become a *satyagrahi* in the twinkling of an eye, as Gandhi had learned from past personal experience. Like any interior formation, it requires a certain amount of time to imbibe the ways of truth, liberty and love. British presence in India, however, prevents the Indian from achieving the mature responsibility that Gandhi expects from him as a human being and the son of a great civilization. Therefore, English rule must go even if it brings in its wake storms of anarchy and violence, for Gandhi is convinced that they will only be temporary. Once the Indian becomes the master of his own destiny, he will revert to the age-old values inherent in Indian culture and become a man of *satyagraha,* i.e. a man dedicated to liberty, truth and love.

Foreign rule in Gandhi's mind suppresses violence through coercion. This is a mark that the people over whom this foreign rule is being exercised are weak and unmanly. Gandhi wants to suppress violence by instilling in the hearts of the Indian the interior conviction that violence is opposed to truth and love. To achieve this, the Indian must be free of foreign rule.

THE ENGLISH

What then is to become of the English in India? Gandhi proposes a unique solution that must have mystified both the English and the Indians.

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[42] *Loc. cit.*

> To them I would respectfully say: "I admit you are my rulers. . . I have no objection to your remaining in my country, but although you are the rulers, you will have to remain as servants of the people. It is not we who have to do as you wish, but it is you who have to do as we wish . . . Your function will be, if you so wish, to police India; you must abandon the idea of deriving any commercial benefit from us. . . You must not do anything that is contrary to our religions. It is your duty as rulers that for the sake of the Hindus you should eschew beef, and for the sake of Mohamedans you should avoid bacon and ham . . . We consider your schools and law courts to be useless. We want our own ancient schools and courts to be restored. The common language of India is not English but Hindi. You should, therefore, learn it. We can hold communication with you only in our national language.
>
> "We cannot tolerate the idea of your spending money on railways and the military . . . We do not need any European cloth. We shall manage with articles produced and manufactured at home. You may not keep one eye on Manchester and the other on India. We can work together only if our interests are identical." [43]

SUMMARY

On the last page of his booklet, Gandhi repeats his main points in a four sentence summary:

1. Real home-rule is self-rule or self-control.
2. The way to it is passive resistance: that is soul-force or love-force.
3. In order to exert this force, Swadeshi in every sense is necessary.
4. What we want to do should be done, not . . . because we want to retaliate but because it is our duty to do so . . . [44]

CRITIQUE

When Gopal Krishna Gokhale,[45] Gandhi's father and teacher in the field of politics,

> . . . read the book in 1912 he thought it crude and predicted that Gandhi himself would destroy it after spending a year in India. Gandhi did not destroy the book. In 1921 he wrote in Young India that he withdrew nothing except one word and that in deference to a lady friend! . . . [46]

What are we to think of this book? Was Gokhale right? That it lacks subtlety and balance, that it lacks precision of expression gauged to winning others over to Gandhi's point of view seems to be without doubt. This distinguishes it from the twelve volumes of Gandhi's writings that date

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[43] *IHR, CW* 10, p. 61.
[44] *IHR, CW* 10, p. 64.
[45] ". . . Indian statesman: President, Indian National Congress, 1905; founded the Servants of India Society, 1905; member, Bombay Legislature and Viceroy's Legislative Council, 1902-15; member, Indian Public Services Commission, 1912-15." *CW* 11, p. 46. Gandhi says of Gokhale, ". . . In the sphere of politics the place that Gokhale occupied in my heart during his lifetime and occupies even now was and is absolutely unique." *Aut.*, p. 148.
[46] Nanda, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

from the South African period. It almost seems in *Indian Home Rule* as if Gandhi, no longer in control of his pen, is swept along by the swell of his own convictions into a whirlpool of exaggerated expression.

Therefore, we must try to make more precise Gandhi's basic ideas by sweeping away a bit of the passion, especially in the negative part of the book where he criticizes so strongly doctors, lawyers, railroads and machinery. Since a complete assessment of Gandhi's thought on these subjects would carry us beyond the limit of this article and into the Indian period of his life, we must content ourselves with a general approach to Gandhi's indictment of Western civilization.

> . . . Nothing in all Gandhi's teaching has been more misunderstood or more misinterpreted than his attitude to machinery. To say that he is opposed to all machinery is simply not true. What Gandhi regards as anti-social is the type of machinery which by displacing human labor increases unemployment, and in *Hind Swaraj,* written in 1908 [sic], he states this view clearly.[47]

This statement, however, does not represent Gandhi's total thesis. Why in *Indian Home Rule* is Gandhi opposed to lawyers, doctors, railroads and machinery? For the simple reason that *at this particular moment* in time they are destroying India and the Indian way of life. They are destroying the religious and cultural values of what Gandhi considers to be the greatest civilization the world has ever seen. He never says that they are evil in themselves; in fact even to speak in these terms is to impose a non-Gandhian category upon his thought.

The developments of Western civilization are not for India at this particular time. If this is true, it is no distortion of Gandhi's thought to say that he would admit some sort of future reconciliation between modern progress and Indian values. The point, however, is that the time is not ripe for such a reconciliation, because first of all India must get a firm grip on herself and go back to her ancient religious and cultural values. Liberty and brotherhood must first be developed in the hearts of the Indian masses. Once this is accomplished, then Gandhi would be willing to discuss the introduction of carefully chosen segments of modern progress into his homeland. Gandhi never says this explicitly, but it seems to be implied not only in his book, but more especially in his attitude of remarkable tolerance towards everything and everyone with which he came into contact.

Those who interpret Gandhi as being totally opposed to what the West has to offer do not fully appreciate the pragmatic tenor of his thought. Gandhi is a pragmatist; he claims no eternal value for his ideas. He proposes a solution to meet an *ad hoc* need. In the actual circumstances of India, he is opposed to railways and machinery, but it is very much in accord with his thought to say that in other circumstances he would adopt another point of view.

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[47] F. R. Moraes, "Gandhi the Humanist," *Gandhiji: His Life and Work* (Editor: D. G. Tendulkar; Bombay; Karnatak Publishing House, 1944), p. 26.

No matter how we interpret, however, the negative aspects of his book, the lasting value of the positive side remains. Gandhi's outstanding contribution, developed during his years in South Africa, is his attempt to extend to the domain of politics the love that exists in the domain of personal relations. He was convinced that once the Indian was freed of foreign rule, he would learn the ways of true liberty and brotherhood. If this did not happen immediately after the departure of the English and a certain period of anarchy ensued, Gandhi would have tolerated this. His South African experience had taught him the value of time.

It is important to note his position on violence in this book, since it is the first time we see so clearly that freedom to develop oneself as a person is highest in the Gandhian hierarchy of values. Even non-violence is subordinated to that, since a man really cannot be non-violent unless he has the freedom to choose it. Therefore, violence may be temporarily tolerated by a *satyagrahi* for the sake of personal freedom and the development of true non-violence based on love in the hearts of the Indian masses.

CONCLUSION

This is the perspective, I believe, from which Gandhi viewed his little book and it explains why he was so fully convinced that the message contained in those sixty short pages was one of lasting value. If the essential message of *Indian Home Rule*—respect for the person, love, liberty, brotherhood, a return to the culture of India—were followed, then just as day follows night the country he loved so much would rediscover its true self and begin to create its own future.

ABBREVIATIONS

Aut—Gandhi, M. K., *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth.* Translated from the Gujarati by Mahadev Desai. London: Jonathan Cape, 1966. 420 pp.

CW—Gandhi, M. K., *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.* General Editor, Shri Jairamdas Doulatram. Delhi: The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Volumes I to XII contain the writings of Gandhi composed during the years he spent in South Africa. These volumes were published between 1958 and 1964.

IHR—Gandhi, M. K., *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule.* The two editions in Gujarati and in English were published in 1910. *CW* 10, pp. 6-68.

IO—*Indian Opinion:* Gandhi edited and wrote for this newspaper between 1903 and 1914.

Sat—Gandhi, M. K., *Satyagraha in South Africa.* Translated from the Gujarati by Valji Govindhi Desai. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1928. 348 pp.

GANDHI AND MARX: IDEAS ON MAN AND SOCIETY

INDIRA ROTHERMUND

GANDHIAN THOUGHT AND PHILOSOPHY OR HIS METHOD OF ACTION HAVE been a frequent subject for books and articles, but a new impetus has been given to this by the ushering in of the Gandhi year. The relation between man and society was central to Gandhi's thought and this aspect of his philosophy has attracted special attention particularly among Indian Marxists who are themselves interested in this relationship. Recently Gandhi's role as a revolutionary has also been emphasized and there is a tendency to compare his methods with those of Marx or Mao. An Indian Marxist, Mohit Sen, has tried to look at Gandhi's approach to the training of participants in political actions from this point of view, and he equates Gandhi's Satyagrahis with the revolutionary "vanguard." In this context, Sen points out that: "There was no division, in his view, between the public and private selves of those who had pledged themselves to his movement . . . . He was an interventionist at every level of living." [1] Sen finds it easy to base this idea on the premise that: "Satyagraha involved the transformation of the personality of he who would embrace it. It involved the strictest possible discipline, even to the point of the extinction of the individual. Self-control, brahmacharya, vegetarianism, shunning of sophisticated civilisation, the embracing of poverty so as to achieve non-attachment . . . this was what being a Satyagrahi meant. It was this kind of training that Gandhiji visualized for the leadership he wished to create, the vanguard he wished to be able to head to realize the awakening of India." [2] How are statements like these to be reconciled with the fact that Gandhi appealed to individual conviction aimed at self-reform rather than "extinction of the individual?" In contrast to a snowball system of inciting all-out violence which may have been much easier to implement, Gandhi's strategy and style of action demanded self-control, and considering one's life as a yajna (an offering to God) on the part of the participant in Satyagraha. Satyagraha is not only based on Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence) but also on the means of holding on to it such as the purificatory vows of Brahmacharya (celibacy) and fasting which demand self-control. Thus non-violence, voluntary discipline and restraint become the prerequisites of Satyagraha. This resorting to various restraints was aimed at self-purification and not "self-extinction". Gandhi undertook fasting whenever he felt the need for such self-purification,

[1] Sen, Mohit, "Power, Satyagraha and Communism," *Mainstream*, November 30, 1968, p. 30.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

for example his fasts for the untouchables were meant to purge the hearts of all higher castes of the evil of untouchability. He had "faith that it must lead to the purification of (him) self and others and that workers (his co-operators) would know that the true Harijan (untouchable) service was impossible without inward purity." [3] In view of this inner purity and voluntary restraint Gandhi stressed the fact that a Satyagraha campaign can also become a mass movement only to the extent to which every participant is willing to comply with the pre-requisites of Satyagraha.

The idea of self-reform in terms of the individual effort for perfection is explained in a characteristic style by another Indian Marxist, H. Mukherjee, who says: "The value of individual self-reform is a constantly recurring theme in Gandhi's thought, and it is necessary to stress that no social theory worth the name can or does belittle its importance . . . He often described himself as a better socialist or communist than those who wore that label, and basically, he would say, he shared their aims. But he was not primarily interested in any delineable social order that could be called socialist, his prime concern was purification of the means of social transformation in conformity with what he understood by the spirit of love and of human unity . . . Social institutions based on exploitation continue because, in Gandhi's thought, the exploiters and the exploited both cooperate in their maintenance, and if only the exploiters individually could be persuaded to shed their selfishness and the exploited no longer feared the grip on them of the exploiters, everything would be lovely in the garden." [4] Hence Mukherjee suggests that according to Gandhi a supremely moral way of revolution will, in Gandhi's scheme of things, bring about through God's grace and of course in God's good time, a condition of happiness, equality and human dignity on earth. The process may take long, but it is really short because it is sure.[5] Gandhi points out, however, that the moral revolution through individual self-purification as a cure for the ills of the society hinges upon the principle of "developing the will" and "minimizing a habit." He says: "While admitting that man actually lives by habit, I hold that it is better for him to live by the exercise of his will. I also believe that men are capable of developing their will to an extent that will reduce exploitation to a minimum." [6]

This could be achieved through the inner strength acquired by observing certain outward disciplines. This belief has been misconstrued by Mohit Sen, who asserts that Gandhi was an "interventionist at every level of living to the point of liquidating individuality".[7] On the contrary, it may be said

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[3] M. K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1950), p. 109.

[4] H. Mukherjee, *Gandhiji: A Study* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1960), pp. 205-207.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[6] M. K. Gandhi, *Young India,* p. 304.

[7] Mohit Sen, *op. cit.,* p. 30.

that Gandhi's method of Satyagraha presupposes the building up of the fundamental essence in man and letting all the faculties of the soul rise to the highest level. Satyagraha is to him a theory of knowledge. He who uses violence cannot know the truth because he stands in his own way of self-emancipation and gets into bondage.

Satyagraha is an emancipatory process which does not lend itself to the romantic approach of simply hoping for good results emanating from an ideal common action of all men. Gandhi relies on the individual and rather trains a few Satyagrahis instead of trying to wait for a change of the consciousness of all. In doing this Gandhi knew that there would be millions of people in India who would be potentially ready to participate in actions leading to the national emancipation. Keeping in view the importance of individual participation Gandhi tried to do his utmost for the perfection of his strategy and style of action before he let the masses participate in his campaigns.

Individual emancipation was basic to social or national emancipation, and to participate in the latter required discipline of the participants and a clear delineation of the scope of action. Gandhi realized that action can best be controlled the fewer participants there are and the scope of action is the clearest if it is directed towards a definite point. Therefore, Gandhi developed his style of symbolic action ranging from the national campaign for the general issue of national emancipation to an individual Satyagraha for a definite point wherein the symbol of action was the clearest and therefore easily grasped by all. Of course, individual satyagraha, for example, the fast for the untouchables, was a good symbolic action as long as the man offering it commanded nationwide respect, and the definite point stood for greater issues such as awakening the consciousness of the higher castes to the injustice done to the untouchables. If Gandhi had not been known because of his leadership in national campaigns and if he would have been lacking in the charisma of his personality his individual satyagraha may not have been effective. Being conscious of the exemplary nature of such actions Gandhi undertook the training of satyagrahis himself. This emphasis on individual training has been interpreted by Mohit Sen in a peculiar way: ". . . whenever the question of mass action came on the agenda of the Congress, Gandhiji not only assumed control but publicly proclaimed himself 'general' with the power to appoint local 'dictators' as representatives responsible to him and these are the people he wanted to mould in his own image who would function as the vanguard of mass action as well as the mass organization . . . It needs emphasizing that just as his concept of power and of the means to that power were total so was his approach to the individual. To Gandhiji the masses were always the dumb millions whose representative he sought to be and from whose every eye he wished

to wipe every tear. They were not visualized by him to be capable of revolutionary initiative, much less self-emancipation." [8]

In this train Sen goes on asserting that Gandhi could not appreciate the Marxist concern for the emancipation of workers to be accomplished by workers themselves and that Gandhi would insist on leading the masses himself to their goal and that he was an advocate of the trusteeship theory in general . . . towards the masses.[9] Sen seems to contradict himself in saying on the one hand that Gandhi tried to create a vanguard of "genuine satyagrahis" from among the masses and on the other hand accusing Gandhi of insisting on leading the masses himself without enlightening them. Further, Sen suggests that "this was natural for a leader who wanted not advance but resurrection".[10] According to Sen, Marx's way was the true way for self-emancipation because Marx emphasized that "the emancipation of the workers would be accomplished by the workers or it would not be accomplished." [11] In this evaluation Sen has overlooked the fact that for the emancipation of the workers Lenin had to invent the revolutionary-trained vanguard as Gandhi had to train his satyagrahis for voluntaristic action. For Gandhi man must voluntarily act as an individual in accordance with his inner fundamental essence and outwardly through non-cooperation with the society if it acts in contradiction to its swa-dharma (own dharma)[12] which is a totality of the fundamental essence of the individual members of the society. A good deal of preparation on the part of the individual is required in order to reach this goal. Sen rightly draws attention to the strict discipline of Gandhi's Ashram' but he misinterprets it when he equates the ethical preparation for satyagraha with a Maoist type of training of cadres: "If one searches for an analogy the only fitting one will be Mao and the training of cadres at Yenan in the 1940's, indeed, one can say that the two original and unique leaders so far produced by the Asian resurgence are Gandhi and Mao—with obvious differences in outlook, methodology, objective and circumstances. Both grasped the peasant as the central fact of their civilizations, both wished to achieve total power and complete awakening, both sought to create and recreate their vanguard organization." [13] As a matter of fact the only similarity between the concepts of Gandhi and Mao that may be thought of is that both aimed at grass-root revolution, emancipation of the individual to precede political emancipation. But the methods of selection for this purpose were different

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[12] Rothermund, Indira, *The Philosophy of Restraint.* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1963), pp. 46-48. (The term Dharma is explained in several ways by different writers. It may be described as "cosmic law," duty, etc., also as that which gives coherence and direction to the different activities of life.)
[13] Sen, Mohit, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

and the emphasis was on different levels. Gandhi stressed conscious self-control and inner purification while Mao relied on outward emancipation and violent action. For Gandhi, who believed in the concept of "dharma", there was an inherent equilibrium in the relationship between man and society. Man transcending his own separate will and the common moral entity were interdependent. Gandhi thought of a dual process whereby society responds to the act of faith of its constituent members by following its own dharma as a whole. Thus according to Gandhi the development of the society is only possible by means of the improvement of its individual members and he looks for the laws that govern society in the inner economy of the individual rather than relying on the outward social constraints.

In commenting on India's social problems Gandhi was, of course, not free from impressions created on his mind by the work of earlier thinkers as original as he might have been in his political actions. In many instances he fell back on the traditionalist thought of earlier Indian nationalists. The nineteenth century nationalists had tried to filter out certain strands of Indian tradition which were compatible with their views of India's national solidarity.[14] They established a universe of discourse beyond which Gandhi could not go while trying to communicate his ideas to his countrymen. Thus he used the concepts of karmayoga as advocated by Aurobindo and Tilak.[15] He also inherited the ambivalent attitude to the caste system from his nationalist predecessors. He sometimes even defended the original Hindu idea of "varnashramadharma" according to which each caste (varna) would have to follow its prescriptive norm (dharma) at every stage of life (ahsrama). On the other hand Gandhi attacked the iniquitous inequalities of the caste system according to which the untouchables become the most down-trodden strata of the Indian society. Therefore, he started his campaign to awaken the higher castes to this grave injustice done to the untouchables. This he did by calling the untouchables "Harijans" and by fasting for them. The term Harijan, meaning man of God, at once reminded the people of the Indian idea of the identity of all life expressed by the Upanishadic concept of "Tat tvam asi" (that thou art), which expresses the identity of God (the Brahman) and the individual soul.[16]

The fasting undertaken by the charismatic personality of Gandhi and the use of the typical symbolic term Harijan electrified the higher castes into letting open the temple doors in an unprecedented manner. This symbolic action of Gandhi leading to social reform left its mark on the Indian constitution which forbids the practising of untouchability.

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[14] Rothermund, Dietmar, *Die Politische Willensbildung in Indien.* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), p. 36ff.

[15] Tilak, G. *Gita-Rahasya.* Vol. 1 & 2. (Poona. 1935.) also Rothermund, I., *op. cit.*, pp. 47-56.

[16] Rothermund, I., *op. cit.*, p. 45-49.

However, Gandhi's belief in the immanent unity of all human beings was often put to test when he had to face the problem of conflicts arising in the course of events and disturbing the inherent equilibrium of individual action and social order. He still put his faith on the conviction that the spiritual unity did provide a sound foundation for his thought and action and that Satyagraha was the only means of dealing with such problems. Marx also faced the problem of reconciling the idea of man as an individual with the notion of a society. He argued that the society should not be treated as an abstraction which would then appear as a separate entity to be confronted with man as an individual. According to Marx man is a social being and all his activities are a manifestation and confirmation of social life. Man as an individual and man as a species are not distinct, man is not individual man but species-man. The human species and society seem to be coterminous. Being social thus becomes an inherent quality of man—his generic character. The quality of a social being which man has in actuality acquired as a member of the society is treated by Marx as his generic nature. This makes it difficult to account for differences among various societies. As the quality of being social is inherent in every man he just projects it by thinking of himself as a member of the society and thereby reconfirms his social being. This unity of man as a species and society is shaken by death which singles out man as an individual. Marx tries to explain this by asserting that it is only the particular individual, a definite part of the species which is mortal.[17] His reference to death as a harsh victory of the species over the individual shows his uneasiness about explaining this relationship, as he cannot deny that the individual is a distinct part of the species and of society, meeting its singular fate.

This problem does not arise in Gandhian thought since the individual has already transcended the discreteness of individuation as his soul is a part of the transcendant and immanent Brahman. Death is Moksha-salvation, which means according to Indian thought the transfiguration of the whole man into the Supreme Being. Gandhi bases his ideas on the spiritual conviction that those who are striving for the good of others, even after salvation from the worldly life, go on doing good to the world in conjunction with the Divine universal spirit.

Gandhi explained how individual-salvation and social-emancipation can be simultaneous. He says: "Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member . . . if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent." [18] This emphasis on the interdependence of man, transcending his own separate will, and the common moral entity may be com-

[17] E. Fromm, *Das Menschenbild bei Marx* (Frankfurt, 1963), pp. 116-117.
[18] M. K. Gandhi, *My Religion* (Navajivan, 1955), p. 124.

pared with the Marxian idea of man's spiritual development and self-emancipation being inseparable from the development of society. According to Marx the individual is caught up on the material relations of production and he can become a "fully human being" by freeing himself from the bondage of alienation, "by changing and humanizing the existing socio-economic realities through revolutionary action".[19] Marx claims that the alienation of man is rooted in the work process and division of labour which pave the way for private ownership, and that "total man really grows when in the classless society, the life of the individual and the life of society are no longer in opposition to each." [20] Man's self-realization is possible only when he frees himself from all kinds of alienation. Marx deals with the question of alienation thus: ". . . as long as a cleavage exists between the particular and the common interest, as long therefore as activity is not voluntarily but naturally divided, man's own act becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him." [21]

With Marx alienation is not a spiritual phenomenon as in the case of Gandhian philosophy, but has its roots in the concrete conditions of social life; it is the social fate of man. Gandhi holds that man alienates himself from the fundamental essence by losing sight of it due to greed and avarice and because he does not practise self-purification and does not strive for self-reform. Man does not progress by outward emancipation but by inward sublimation. Gandhi, therefore, looks for the source of alienation of man not in the material conditions of life but in man's ignorance about the identity of all life the consciousness about which he can gain through Sarvodaya,[22] and renunciation. This he expressed in the following words: "All that we see in this great universe is pervaded by God. Renounce it and enjoy it or enjoy whatever He gives you, do not covet anybody's wealth or possessions." [23] According to Gandhi the act of renunciation which is stressed here is not a merely physical act but, "represents a second or new birth. It is a deliberate act—not done in ignorance. It is, therefore, a regeneration . . . . Do not covet anybody's possessions. The moment you carry out these precepts you become a wise citizen of the world living at peace with all that lives." [24]

In contrast to this, Marx's man overcomes alienation by changing social life and as pointed out by an Indian Marxist, S. Sarkar, "the alienation of the individual which most concerned Marx was the economic alienation, and his most distinctive thinking refers to this. His famous formulation

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[19] Damodaran, K. "Marxism and Alienation," *Mainstream,* May 4, 1968, p. 12.
[20] Garaudy, R. *Karl Marx—the evolution of his thought* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1964), p. 75.
[21] Sarkar, S. "Marx and Man," *Mainstream,* March 29, 1968, p. 20.
[22] Rothermund, I., *op. cit.,* p. 25, (Sarvodaya means the good of all or the "rise of all.")
[23] *Ibid.,* p. 56.
[24] Gandhi, M. K. Hindu Dharma, *op. cit.,* pp. 41-42.

is about alienation or estranged labour which political economy describes without understanding, and which has to be ended to liberate individual man." [25] Man is thus alienated from the product of his labour and, therefore, Marx suggests: "Man in his work ceases to be a man, i.e., a human being who determines his own ends, and becomes a means, a moment in the objective process of production, a means for producing commodities and surplus value." [26] Man is not only estranged from the product of his labour but also from his generic essence which consists of free, conscious and purposeful activity, and this alienation takes place in all fields of life. The primitive man, according to Marx, was free from any "cleavages" and was not alienated.[27] Thus in primitive society, when man was a part of the herd, without the existence of private property, there was no alienation, man was free and "as much at home as a fish in water". This golden period, one may perhaps compare to the Indian concept of the legendary Satya-yuga when all lived in consciousness of their essential nature, "freely according to the truth of their enlightened self and God-inhabited being and therefore spontaneously according to their divine dharma." [28] In this respect there may be some similarity between the thought of Gandhi and Marx. The difference lies in the way they try to bring man back to his essential nature. Gandhi bases it on man's inward effort at self-purification and on his conviction of the identity of all life, while Marx relies on outward violent revolution. Thus for Marx, "alienation is not only self-alienation but that of social reality, of the reality of classes and their antagonism. Hence, the problem of freedom is not only individual but historic and social—a class problem—closely related to the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat." [29]

Consequently Marxists cannot assess the merits of an individual on its own terms but must assume that every man is moulded by the interests of his class. Individual convictions and spiritual experience are epiphenomena whereas class interest is the prime mover of everybody's actions. For these reasons Indian Marxists have to apply the tools of class analysis to Gandhi's life and mission. They describe him as a bourgeois leader but they find it difficult to explain all his actions in this way. A sensitive Indian Marxist, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, for instance, is at a loss when he has to deal with the frequent incidents in which Gandhi stuck to his individual opinions, and even more so when he has to explain Gandhi's loneliness after independence and partition of India. Namboodiripad can only account for this loneliness of Gandhi by portraying him as a discarded instrument of the bourgeoisie. The spiritual individualism of a man who tries to follow the truth according

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[25] S. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[26] R. Garaudy, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
[27] K. Damodaran, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[28] I. Rothermund, *op. cit.*, p. 47-48.
[29] R. Garaudy, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

to his own light whether others are with him or not is inconceivable in Marxist thought. If the "lone voice" can be admitted at all it must be described as a feature of class behaviour even if that appears to be a contradiction in terms. But this is what Namboodiripad says about Gandhi: ". . . Gandhiji's role in history as the foremost leader of the bourgeoisie should not be taken to mean that he was always and on every issue, at one with the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, it is characteristic of him and the class of which he was the friend, philosopher and guide, that, on several occasions and on several issues, his was a minority voice, if not a lone voice." [30]

This ability to raise a "lone voice" is certainly not characteristic of a class but is the test of spiritual individualism. The emphasis on individual salvation led Gandhi to occupy a minority position voluntarily in as much as he failed to carry the majority with him, though he never gave up his efforts to instruct the masses and to broaden their convictions. He always stressed that he was not a visionary, he said: "I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not merely for the rishis and saints. It is for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute." [31] He made a great impact on some, but eventually he was left alone, yet he braved the storm of communal riots and faced the reality of isolation. This has been described very vividly by one of his biographers: "His higher and main objective was to make his countrymen accept non-violence as the law of life in all their activities and to lay the foundations in India of a non-violent state of village republics . . . In this way he may be said to have failed completely, as his countrymen did not rise to the occasion and carry out his teaching . . . For a time violence stalked the land naked and unashamed, and at last carried off the great Apostle of Non-violence himself. This showed how grievously the Mahatma had miscalculated the forces of evil arrayed against him and how greatly he had exaggerated to himself the capacities of his countrymen. The fact is that Mahatma Gandhi was centuries ahead of common humanity in his moral evolution and was bound to fail in carrying them along with him." [32]

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[30] Namboodiripad, *The Mahatma and the Ism* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1959), p. 115.

[31] M. K. Gandhi, in Lewis, M. D. (Ed.) *Gandhi: The Maker of Modern India* (New York: Heath & Co., 1965), p. 14.

[32] D. S. Sarma, *The Father of the Nation* (Madras, 1956). In Lewis (Ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 14.

ECONOMIC THOUGHT OF GANDHI

DEVDUTTA DABHOLKAR

"I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO THE DILIGENT READER OF MY WRITINGS AND to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the latter of the two on the same subject." [1]

Gandhiji was not a scholar in the sense in which Karl Marx was. He did not try to present a pre-worked-out, complete and self-contained theory of his economic ideas. In that sense he was not the father of a 'systematic body of thought.' He himself did not very much like the term 'Gandhism.' He was seeking his own solutions to the concrete problems as he found them in the Indian situation,[2] and though many may not accept the solutions which he proposed, he must receive credit for being the first to identify some of the basic issues facing the Indian economy with its background of colonial exploitation, underdevelopment, large-scale unemployment and underemployment. He was not content with laying the burden of the blame at the door of the foreign rule. He was seeking to provide an alternative which would give the masses a chance to achieve a higher standard of living, consistent with the maintenance of individual freedom and human dignity.

Since his approach was basically self-consistent, his solutions, worked out, elaborated and modified from time to time, automatically tended to fall within the pattern of a systematic body of thought.

Gandhiji's approach to most of the economic problems was essentially practical. Unfortunately, this is not commonly recognized. The limitations of his solutions were generally due to the limitations of the situation. The only important issue on which his approach was rather rigid and impracticable was in relation to the need for control of population. According to Gandhiji, if every man was prepared to work and if men did not hanker

[1] Harijan 20.4.1933—p. 2.

[2] Gandhiji admitted that he had not read books on economics by well-known authorities such as Mill, Marshall, Adam Smith and host of other authors (Tendulkar Vol. I—p. 236). While interned during the second world war, he read the first volume of Capital and Works by Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Bernard Shaw (D. G. Tendulkar, Mahatma Vol. VI, 1953, p. 293).

after a progressively increasing standard of living, the population problem need not be very acute. Further, even if there was need to control the population, this check should be exercised through moral restraint and not through the use of the means of birth control. It is a pity that Gandhiji should have developed this blind spot. The struggle for population control which India is waging and will have to wage seriously for decades to come would have been greatly helped if Gandhiji had given his moral support to the use of contraceptives. Unfortunately, this was not to be and ignorance and prejudice continue to be the stumbling block in the programme of family planning. In relation to all other problems Gandhiji's approach was very much practical.

Deep insight is many a time needed to observe the obvious. Gandhiji could well see that the economic fate of Indian masses would be mainly decided in the villages. During the British rule these villages had been economically constrained and cornered. The immediate problem was to lift the villages from the depths of despair and decay. Impact of British manufactures had only destroyed the village industries without opening up alternate channels of employment. Consequently, the pressure of population on land increased and this, coupled with progressive growth of population, led to the evils of subdivision and fragmentation of land and to the consequent deterioration of the agrarian economy. We must remember that Gandhiji had to seek a solution within the limits set by the fact of the British rule. Gandhiji's real insight was in realizing that even when the British left and the development of Indian industries took place the essence of the problem would still remain very much unchanged. He was not seeking only a relief-solution to the problem of poverty created by the British rule but was attempting a basic reconstruction of the Indian economy.

We may here quote with complete approval of the comments made by Kenneth Rivett.[3]

> ". . . Gandhi contributed something distinctive. He had to, for no Western, not even Japanese, strategy can cope fully with the frightful poverty of the Indian village. Western radicals might see that industrialization was doing some harm in town and country; but it was enough if they could bring a measure of order into the chaos of new cities, and ensure, through co-operatives or marketing schemes or controlled rail rates, that farmers also gained from the monetary nexus. More than this is needed in India. Because of their poverty most Indians live, and for generations will live, in the villages. It is there that poverty must be chiefly fought, however much the urban sector contributes. And to a considerable extent it can be fought there."

In the words of Colin Clark: "If I were an Indian minister, I would say: Have as much of your development in the form of cottage industry as possible: regard the factory as a necessary evil." [4]

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[3] Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi, 1959.
[4] Address to the Indian Council of World Affairs, Delhi.

Gandhiji had anticipated all this long way back. He had explained his central idea of village production and village self-sufficiency—i.e. Swadeshi—in *Young India* in 1921. He had said: "The central idea is not so much to carry on a commercial war against foreign countries as to utilize the idle hours of the nation and thus by natural processes to help it get rid of her growing pauperism." [5]

Gandhiji had mainly two 'difficulties' in relation to the village industries. His first worry was how the products of the village industries could be qualitatively improved through the development of better and better techniques. His other problem was that apart from Khadi no other industry could be universal. The Charakha was an ideal solution in the sense that it could be plied at any time, any place by any person within any age-group. It provided, therefore, a sort of an answer to the problem of unemployment and underemployment which was also universally present in India. The Charakha had its own limitations in adding to the income of the worker. Gandhiji had no illusions on this score. But he was happy if he could place even some small income into the hands of the poverty-stricken villager. It is amazing how Indians themselves are not often aware of the depths of poverty in their own country. We develop a faculty of not seeing what we do not like to see. But, as Arthur Koestler remarked after his visit to India, "Poverty in India is fathomless. Like the unconscious of the mind the deeper you go the still deeper levels are being endlessly revealed." As for Gandhiji, "He was a man who used to notice such things: he was a man who had an eye for such mysteries."

Through his Khadi economics he was trying to reach some succour to these 'lowliest of the lowly.' His insistence on the Khadi programme arose out of the absence of any other alternative which would achieve even this limited objective.

He has stated this clearly:

> "The entire foundation of the spinning wheel rests on the fact that there are Crores of semi-employed people in India. And I should admit that if there were none such, there would be no room for the spinning wheel." [6]

Elsewhere he says:

> "I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know it is criminal to displace hand-labor by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes." [7]

He goes even further:

> "I would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India's pauperism and resulting idleness could be avoided." [8]

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[5] Young India, 8.12.1921.
[6] UNESCO: *All Men are Brothers* 1959, p. 127.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Gandhiji's insistence on the principle of simple living and high thinking confused quite a few into supposing that he cherished poverty for poverty's sake. There is a world of difference between involuntary abject poverty and a self-chosen way of life of streamlined simplicity. The failure of the upper and even the middle-classes (including the intelligentsia whose 'modernity' consisted in advocating the immediate adoption of whatever was the most modern in mechanical invention) to reach out in sympathy to the lowest classes and to accept responsibility for their minimum well-being was another reason why Gandhiji's ideas on village industries and Khadi met with an open or latent resistance from many quarters. Most of them in India failed to give him the credit which independent foreign economists were ready to give.

According to Gandhiji, a non-violent society, the achievement of which was his final goal, cannot be compatible with the existence of a wide range of economic inequality. In keeping with his spiritual Sarvodaya approach the final goal of his policy would of course have been "from each according to his capacity to each according to his needs." Every man should give his best (of time, talents and work) to the society and the society should provide for his normal needs. He said: "My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution." [9]

The *Young India* on 26th November 1931 records an important conversation in which Gandhiji answered some pointed questions in relation to the position of the privileged classes. The discussion was reported by Mahadev Desai and took place in England when Gandhiji visited it to attend the Second Round Table Conference in 1931. The conversation was as follows:

Q. How exactly do you think the Indian Princes, landlords, millowners and moneylenders and other profiteers are enriched?

A. At the present moment by exploiting the masses.

Q. Can these classes be enriched without the exploitation of the Indian workers and peasants?

A. To a certain extent, yes.

Q. Have these classes any social justification to live more comfortably than the ordinary worker and peasant who does the work which provides their wealth?

A. No justification. My idea of society is that while we are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height, or colour or degree of intelligence, etc.: therefore, in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and others less. People with talents will have more, and they will utilize their talents for this purpose. If they utilize their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the State. Such people exist as trustees, on no other terms. I would allow a man of intellect to earn more, I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father goes to the common family fund.

[9] UNESCO: *All Men are Brothers*, 1959, p. 129.

They would have their earnings only as trustees. It may be that I would fail miserably in this. But that is what I am sailing for.

Q. Don't you think that the peasants and workers are justified in carrying on a class war for economic and social emancipation, so that they can be free once and for all from the burden of supporting parasitic classes in society?

A. No. I myself am carrying on a revolution on their behalf. But it is a non-violent revolution.

Q. How, then, will you bring about the trusteeship? Is it by persuasion?

A. Not merely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on my means. Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary—a non-violent revolutionary. My means are non-cooperation. No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned.

Q. Who constituted the capitalists trustees? Why are they entitled to a commission, and how will you fix the commission?

A. They will be entitled to a commission because money is in their possession. Nobody constituted them trustees. I am inviting them to act as trustees. I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees, i.e., owners, not in their own right, but owners in the right of those whom they have exploited. I will not dictate to them what commission to take. I would ask them to take what is fair e.g., I would ask a man who possesses Rs. 100 to take Rs. 50, and give the other Rs. 50 to the workers, to one who possesses Rs. 10,000,000 I would perhaps say take 1% yourself. So you see that my commission would not be a fixed figure, because that would result in atrocious injustice.

Q. The Maharajas and landlords sided with the British. But, you find your support in the masses. The masses, however, see in them their enemy. What would be your attitude if the masses decided the fate of these classes when they are in power?

A. The masses do not today see in landlords and other profiteers their enemy. But the consciousness of the wrong done to them by these classes has to be created in them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as their enemies, but I teach them that they are their own enemies. Non-cooperators never told the people that the British or Gen. Dyer was bad, but that they were the victims of a system. So that, the system must be destroyed and not the individual.[10]

During Gandhiji's last detention in Poona in 1942, Pyarelal (Gandhiji's Secretary) had the opportunity to discuss at length with Gandhiji various aspects of his ideal of trusteeship, and how it could be realized in our present-day world. Pyarelal has the substance of this conversation on record.

"In the course of our talk one day he remarked:

'The only democratic way of achieving the ideal of trusteeship today is by cultivating opinion in its favour.' Further on he added, 'as long as we have no power, conversion is our weapon by necessity, but after we get power, conversion will be our weapon by choice. Conversion must precede legislation. Legislation in the absence of conversion, remains a dead letter'."

Later on in the course of the same conversation Pyarelal asked:
"Can the masses at all come into power by parliamentary activity?"

[10] *Young India:* November 26, 1931.

Gandhiji replied:

"Not by parliamentary activity *alone*. My reliance ultimately is on the power of non-violent non-cooperation, which I have been trying to build up for the last twenty-two years." [11]

Pyarelalji further gives a trusteeship formula which was formally approved by Gandhiji. He records:

"On our release from prison, we took up the question where we had left it in the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp. Kishorlalbhai and Naraharibhai joined in drawing up a simple, practical trusteeship formula. It was placed before Bapu who made a few changes in it. The final draft read as follows:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a change of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
4. Thus under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.
5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.[12]

It was Gandhiji's fate that he was called upon to lead the struggle for independence during which various and even conflicting interests had to temporarily join together for the achievement of the first basic goals. This came too late in his life (he was 78 when India secured her independence) and even the few more years that he might have lived were denied to him and to the country through his assassination within a period of less than six months after the country's attainment of independence. Gandhiji had, therefore, hardly any time to decide on the next stage of the revolution.

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[11] *Towards New Horizons*, pp. 90-93. Quoted in "Trusteeship" by M. K. Gandhi,
[12] Harijan 25-10-1952. Quoted in "Trusteeship."
[12] Harijan 25-10-1952 Quoted in "Trusteeship." *Ibid.*

The tragedy, therefore, is not that Gandhiji personally failed but that his political heirs failed to complete the unfinished revolution or even to attempt the task. They had lost all faith in mass action or at least in their own ability to lead it. That free India should have depended, not as a matter of strategy for the transition period but as a permanent policy principle, on bureaucracy to implement the radical transformation which India needed shows an utter lack of revolutionary urgency, vigour and vision. What would Gandhiji have done if he had been alive for a decade more and still in the full possession of his faculties? Perhaps a vain question to ask.

Gandhiji's was not a philosophy of poverty. He wanted to provide a basic minimum standard of living to each and every person. In 1935 he had suggested a monthly income of at least Rs. 30 as a basic minimum for a family of five if the minimum necessaries are to be provided. If we broadly assume that the prices have increased ten times since then (they have, in fact, increased more) the minimum for a similar family today will be Rs. 300 per month, giving an average per capita annual income of Rs. 720 at present prices. The per capita which we have at present achieved is hardly Rs. 470 at current prices. The actual lot of the masses is even worse on account of unequal distribution of the national income. This will indicate how far off we are from the minimum on which Gandhiji had set his heart. In the existing context of the reality of the situation it is unfair, therefore, to criticize Gandhiji as an advocate of a depressed poverty level standard of living. We are yet far from achieving the minimum he was aiming at.

Let us conclude with Gandhiji's statement of his conception of a socialistic pattern of society.

"Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or 'panchayat' having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be a free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants, and what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

"In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes

[13] *Harijan*. 13-7-1935.

one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

"Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live for. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think what that machine can be."

These principles are yet to be effective in practice. The true village republic is yet to be created. The appropriate machine—intermediate technology—is yet to be developed. These and such other issues are a challenge to further constructive thinking and action. But Gandhiji has stated the guiding principle:

'Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit'.

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[14] *Harijan*. 28-7-1948.

A REINTRODUCTION TO GANDHIAN ECONOMIC THINKING

AMRITANANDA DAS

AT THE OUTSET I MUST THANK THE INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL Freedom for providing me with this opportunity of laying before you my views on the meaning of Gandhian economic thinking. This highly significant subject has yet to attract its proper share of scholarly attention and as a natural result the importance of the Gandhian contribution to the economics of the colonial areas continues even today to remain almost entirely obscure.

That the meaning of Gandhian economics continues to remain virtually unknown may seem a rather surprising statement to make in view of the vast volume of so-called "explanatory" literature on Gandhian economic thinking. However, as soon as we try to approach the subject in a scientific manner, it becomes painfully obvious that with one or two exceptions the contributors to the discussion have adopted a completely incorrect methodological orientation.

The usual trend of this literature is to treat Gandhi as basically a *philosopher* and to try to derive the Gandhian economic policy-recommendations as logical *deductions* from certain basic axioms of Gandhian philosophy, e.g., the principle of non-violence. As a methodological procedure this is totally wrong.

In the first place, this procedure assumes that economic policy-prescriptions can be logically deduced from non-economic axioms alone. Moreover, it should be obvious that unless non-economic ethical judgments are supplemented by an analysis of how the economic system operates, it is methodologically invalid to expect economic policies to be derived from them. This basic procedural inaccuracy has meant that the basic Gandhian vision of how the economic system in colonial areas operates to create a vast and growing volume of poverty has been pushed into the background. Further, the entirely false and gratuitous impression has been created that as the Gandhian economic programmes allegedly "follow" from immutable philosophical axioms, these policies are historically *non-relative* and that they constitute a programme that is applicable and relevant to all kinds of economic situations. This "scriptural" approach has inevitably led to a situation in which the disciples of Gandhi have been totally unable to reinterpret the Gandhian doctrines in line with changing historical circumstances.

In the second place, this approach has tended to put an exclusive and inappropriate stress on the principle of non-violence. While it is quite true that the Gandhian economic policies cannot be derived *without* assuming the principle of non-violence, the role of this principle continues nevertheless to be misconstrued. Analysis in detail will reveal that the principle of non-violence does not appear as a principle determining the goals of economic policy but simply as a basic *constraint* on the types of policies which might be used to achieve these goals. The simplest proof of this is that non-violent policies may be directed to policy-goals quite different from the typical Gandhian ones.

This simple point has been unnecessarily confused by the prevalent puerile discussions on the ends *versus* means issue. Anti-Gandhian viewpoints stress that Gandhiji failed to grasp the basic praxeological principle that once there is a commitment to a certain end there is automatically also a commitment to the most efficient means towards that end. Gandhians, on the contrary, never tire of emphasizing that bad (i.e., ethically unsatisfactory) means cannot lead to good (i.e., ethically satisfactory) end-results. Even aside from the fact that the two sides here are using incompatible concepts of ends and means (the anti-Gandhians defining "ends" as "end-results"), the discussion is hopelessly irrelevant to the real facts of the situation. The facts are that as a result of this vision of the way in which the economic system of colonial areas operates Gandhiji had arrived at certain ideals for economic policy in such areas. These ideals are such that it is nothing short of absurd to assume that *violent* policies can be used to attain them. The psychosomatic type which would react favourably to the aims of Gandhian economic policy are such that they are exactly antithetical to the types which would tend to resort to violent methods for goal-attainment.

Thus, it becomes clear that the "scriptural" approach to Gandhian economic thinking is a source of very great confusion. It also follows that the only way to cut through this confusion is to go beyond the specific policy-programmes enunciated by Gandhiji and to try and understand the basic analytic vision of the operations of colonial economics that lay behind and give meaning and consistency to these policies. For doing this, it is essential to place the question in the proper context.

Gandhi and Colonial Economics

Let us try to understand what this proper context is. In order to do this we must digress a little and start off from the question of economic theory and policy in the colonial areas.

As is well known, the Smithian brand of liberal economics promulgated the basic principle that the free operations of the market mechanism (to be distinguished from the operations of ideal free markets) were sufficient to

lead to economic progress provided that the State established the basic institutional framework for allowing the market mechanism to function and placed no restraints on its operations. A simple and logical deduction from this was that the process of colonialism must turn out to the benefit of the colonized areas. The western powers were seen to be introducing the rule of law and the basic institutions of capitalism in the place of the arbitrary rule of feudal despots. The consequence of this process could only be the emergence of rapid economic progress in the colonized areas.

However, reality failed to conform to this simple and comfortable model. It soon became obvious that, far from leading to rapid progress towards prosperity, the introduction of Western capitalism into the environment of the Eastern agrarian economies was leading to the creation of a vast mass of poverty. Further, the situation was not such as to allow the hope for a quick transformation so that the claim that these phenomena were merely the transitory problems of readjustment could not continue to be reasonably held.

The experience on the colonial areas, thus, seemed to require a new sort of economics to explain their plight. It was also apparent that some new policies would have to be devised for dealing with the problem of poverty in colonial areas.

Two lines of thought arose to deal with the problem. One school sought to find the explanation in the exploitative relationship of colonialism. This was predominantly a neo-mercantilist line. One branch of it concentrated on the drain of bullion from the colonial areas. A typical Indian representative of this sort of thinking was Dabadhai Naoroji. A slightly more sophisticated neo-mercantilist argument was based on the Listian notion that free trade between developed and underdeveloped areas tended to inhibit the industrial development of the latter. A typical Indian example of this school is R. C. Dutt.

Apart from this neo-mercantilist analysis, another school of thought attempted to find the explanation in the incapacity of the "natives" to take up the capitalist road to prosperity. Race, climate, culture, religion and a host of other factors were brought in to explain why the natives were lazy and improvident according to the standards of Western capitalistic society. A factor which was given the greatest importance was the high birth rate and high rate of population growth in these regions. An Indian example of this kind of analysis was the works of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya.

It was the outstanding merit of Gandhiji to see that none of these lines of approach provided a satisfactory account of the basic economic problem of the colonial areas. It was his pioneering insight that the fundamental problem was to be found in the decay of the domestic handicraft industries in the villages and the resulting loss of occupations and impoverization of the Indian masses who were forced into agriculture as their only means of

support. It was further clear to Gandhiji that in this process of village decay, the city-sector of the colonized areas (and in particular the manufacturing industries of the colonized areas) played the same role as did the manufacturing industries of the colonizing country.

THE BASIC GANDHIAN ECONOMIC PROBLEM

Let us now try to analyze the nature of this problem in detail. Visualizing an initial situation in which the pre-colonial economy was in a state of prosperous *stasis* with a basic division of labour between agriculture village-based handicrafts and city-based luxury handicraft industries, we can trace out the impact of colonizing capitalism on this set-up. The first stage of penetration is one in which the Western trader enters the picture as a *buyer* of the luxury products of the superior city-based handicrafts. As yet the Western trader can contrive to sell relatively little to the future colony. As such the basic division of labour in the future colony is not disturbed and the relatively small economic effect that this trade produces is almost entirely favourable for the future colony.

The second stage comes with the military and political ascendancy of the Western trading interests. This power is exerted to secure two things. First, the Western colonizers acquire mining and plantation interests and operate these on the basis of forced labour in semi-servile conditions. Secondly, they use their political power to destroy the city-based luxury handicraft industries so as to eliminate competition for their industrial exports in the city-markets. Even now, however, the Western penetration does not affect the village sector as such and the traditional division of labour of the village economy remains undisturbed. Thus, the phenomenon of mass poverty remains confined to the mines, plantations and the dispossessed city-handicrafts men.

The third stage ushers in the real problem. This is when, with the development of cheap mass-manufacturers in the Western capitalist countries, the colonial policy changes from one which regards the colonies as the sources of imports to the one which regards them as *markets for exports.* Naturally, the transition is gradual but it marks a definitive stage in the development of colonial relationships.

The effect of the new orientation is to bring about the end of the traditional division of labour in the villages. The opening up of the villages through improved transport system means that the cheaper mass-produced manufactures replace the village-based handicrafts. To the village agriculturist, it appears as if the terms of trade *vis-a-vis* industrial products had changed in favour of the agriculturist. Thus the change-over from village-based handicrafts to mass-produced factory products appears as a simple matter of economic interests. As a matter of fact, this is so only in the

short run as far as the agriculturists are concerned. But in the longer run it lays the foundations of a serious economic problem.

The root of the problem is that the villagers have but one occupation left to them. As population grows faster than before as a result of the introduction of Western techniques in the field of famine prevention and in medicine, the pressure on the available land becomes ever sharper. A natural result of this is the emergence of the phenomenon of disguised unemployment. We have been arguing as if the period in which village handicrafts are destroyed and the period in which there emerges a redundant agricultural population are separated by a fairly long period of time. But this need not be so. The situation might very well be such that the dispossessed handicraftsmen cannot find full employment in agriculture even initially. In that case the emergence of the problem would be even more accelerated.

The fourth stage of the development of the problem is reached with the entry into the scene of the domestic mass-manufacturer. For these domestic capitalists based on the city, the villages appear simply as markets. Thus, they stand in the same relationship to the village economy as do the foreign capitalists. The domestic capitalists with their greater understanding and better connections with the unorganized money-markets complete the economic ruin of the village handicraftsmen.

The fact that agricultural output remains virtually stagnant means that the total consumption of manufactured goods rises little if at all. Thus, the output of the factories only displaces the output of the village manufactures. Since, however, the labour output ratio is distinctly higher, and also the capital-labour ratio, the shift from village handicrafts to factory products implies (a) that a greater number of people are robbed of their occupations than find employment in the factories and (b) that in consequence of the high capital-labour ratios the employed workers get fairly high wages especially as compared to the disguised unemployed villager.

This last fact leads to a further complication. Attracted by the prospects of high wages the underemployed villagers tend to move into the cities. At the same time, however, the aggregate economic conditions are such that they do not infallibly obtain the industrial employment they are seeking. On the contrary, the limitation of the market for factory products implies that most of them do not get any employment so that they are reduced either to sponging on the employed or to swelling the numbers of the disguised unemployed in the cities. Thus, along with mass poverty in the villages there also emerges mass poverty in the cities.

In such a situation, with relatively little employment available in the factories, the chances of independent entrepreneurship being blocked by limited markets and monopolistic conditions and agriculture being no longer a paying proposition, the most enterprising and the more privileged turn

to white-collar employment, primarily government service in clerical capacities. But even this field soon dries up and the emergence of white-collar educated unemployment closes the whole vicious circle.

Cities in a Parasitic Role

In such a set-up the cities tend to play a parasitic role with respect to the non-urban sectors. We have already seen how the situation is such that rapid economic growth in the cities is virtually ruled out by the structural properties of the situation. But this does not mean that the cities do not play a significant negative role.

This negative role is played through three economic mechanisms. In the first place, the visibly higher incomes of the cities (even after allowing for the existence of a vast mass of poverty) as compared to the villages means that there is a continual influx of the more enterprising and progressive elements of the villages into the cities. Thus, the lure of the cities tends to draw away the most promising elements of the village population. In the second place, the existence of the cities as centres of luxury and as sources of luxury products means that the meagre economic surplus of the villages tends to be consumed either in the cities themselves or on city-based consumption goods. Capital formation in the villages is thereby substantially hindered. *In the third place,* since the only alternative to agricultural investments is investment in city-based manufactures and since in the given institutional set-up the latter are much more "productive" than the former, the city also functions as a mechanism draining away the investment capacity of the villages.

It has also to be noticed that the resources which the cities tend to draw away from the villages are absorbed in socially unsuitable forms. The employment that the incoming villagers usually obtain are mostly those assigned to "surplus" populations. Similarly, the inflow of investible capital from the villages is also usually put into the unproductive forms of retail trade and small business which are also merely another manner of supporting the disguised unemployed.

In the ultimate analysis, therefore, the end-result of the colonial process is to destroy the economics of the village sector, to create a mass of unemployed and unemployable industrial and rural proletariat and to set up a number of economically parasitic entities called cities. Notice that by the time the final stage is reached, the significance of purely colonial exploitation has become relatively much smaller. It is rather the colonial economy itself which is engaged in self-cannibalization. It is quite possible to hold that it was Western colonialism which was causally responsible for this tragic situation. This was an undoubted *historical fact.* But it also followed that *the mere removal of colonialism would do little to solve the problem of mass poverty.* And this would be so not because of the perpetuation of

Western colonialism through neo-colonialist practices but because the colonial situation would persist *so long as the city-sector continued to use the village sector as its colony.*

The Quality of the Gandhian Vision

We are now in a position to understand the outstanding importance of the Gandhian vision. Its pioneering role is of course very evident. Most of the vision was worked out even before Gandhiji started writing the *Hind Swaraj* (1921). The basic idea that colonial economies were fundamentally distinct from the developed Western economies had been initiated only a little earlier. But even so it was nearly 1943 by the time Western economies began to take full cognizance of this fact. Further, the idea that the development of domestic national-bourgeoisie and the associated rise of domestic manufacturing industry might give rise to a serious economic problem-situation was a brilliant analytic insight that has even now been only inadequately absorbed into the Western analysis of the colonial economic situation.

A highly significant analytical point was also the idea of the parasitic role of cities in the colonial areas. It is only with the work of Hoselitz that Western thought has become aware of this problem nearly thirty years after Gandhi. A similarly important fact was the Gandhian analysis of the reason why the development of mass-manufactures in the undeveloped countries could not be expected to absorb the entire surplus population of the village sector. It is even now only rarely taken account of by Western economists. The outstanding counter example is of course the work of Gunnar Myrdal but Myrdal himself is outside the mainstream of Western economics as yet.

But the really outstanding merit of the Gandhian analytic vision was the directness and the courage with which it emphasized that the mere removal of Western colonization and the attainment of political independence would not solve the economic problems of colonial areas. The point that the worst features of the heritage of colonialism was the building-up of the colonial relationships into the colonial economy itself and that the solution of this problem required a lot more of insight into the socio-economics of colonial areas than was provided by "swadeshi" neo-mercantilism was the most outstanding contribution of Gandhian economic thought. Most of the difficulties of the economic policy-makers in the colonial areas can be traced to the neglect of this fundamental truth.

Concordance of Gandhian Vision and Policies

We must digress a little at this stage in order to demonstrate the perfect concordance of the Gandhian economic policies with this vision of the operation of colonial economies. The major objectives of this exercise will be to show that the specific Gandhian policies form a coherent whole only in the background of this basic vision and that a sufficient case exists to justify

holding the view that this rather unfamiliar framework is the true basis of Gandhian economic thought.

The logical step from the vision to the specific Gandhian policies involves an intermediary step. This mediating step represents the formation of the ideals of Gandhian economic policy. If we are to follow the logical order of development these ideals have to be investigated first.

Gandhian economics starts from the fundamental proposition that the economic policy of colonial regions must be aimed at dismantling the typical existing economic order prevailing in such areas and erecting the foundations of a new economic order in which the exploitative effect of factory-manufactures and the parasitic effect of the urban-rural relations will be eliminated. Exactly how these aims should be pursued, however, cannot be simply determined from these objectives themselves. Certain further ethical judgments have to be introduced in order that the transition from diagnosis to prescription can be achieved.

Broadly, three routes can be distinguished which lead out of the typical colonial economic set-up. First, there is the capitalist route to economic development which involves the rapid expansion of the organized industrial sector at rates sufficiently high to absorb the entire surplus of the agricultural sector in organized industrial employment. Secondly, there is the typical communist path to industrialization via the collectivization of agriculture, the squeezing out of surplus from the villages and a high rate of forced investment in the basic industries (i.e., the Marxian department—I). These two routes imply that the problems of the colonial structure can be solved through the achievement of a high rate of economic growth. Opposed to this orientation is the Gandhian viewpoint that the true objective of economic policy-making is not the setting up of a *process* of rapid economic *growth,* but the setting up of a way of life which will lead to a static and prosperous *situation.* The distinction is here between the sort of ethics which regards a process of expansion as the *summum bonum* and the sort of ethics that regards the perpetual achievement of limited set of economic ends as the right objective.

It is precisely at this point that we come into contact with Gandhi the philosopher as distinct from Gandhi the economist and this transition is both necessary and logical since the choice between the ethical orientations that is involved here falls outside the sphere of economic analysis.

The process of analysis by which Gandhi arrives at the rejection of the ideologies of unlimited growth is extremely interesting. There are two lines of argument involved. One relates to the abstract question of the objectives of economic activity on the level of social ethics. The other relates to a criticism of the results of *not* accepting the Gandhian ethical orientation in terms of an atypical but very convincing welfare criterion.

As far as the abstract ethical question is concerned, it is argued that the true sphere of economic activity is merely to provide the individuals

in society with the basic minimum requirements of decent living. If this basic minimum is not attained, the individual lacks the physical requirements of the good life. Beyond this point, however, economic activity merely hinders the realization of the non-economic ends which are also essential to the attainment of what Gandhiji called a high standard of *life*. Thus, it evidently follows that the true objective of society is to shape the individual that he reaches a personality pattern in which his economic needs are limited to these ethical minima. In other words, plain living and high thinking should be the type of the highest form of social life.

This ethical position is of course not at all free from ambiguity. It lies essentially in the determination of what should be regarded as the minimum requirements. The difficulty is, however, more logical than practical. For, in practice, it is always possible to set up a conventional standard of what is good enough on the basis of broad-based agreement.

The other part of the Gandhian argument in favour of accepting a static and limited definition of needs is more interesting. This involves a criticism of the practical consequences of the acceptance of the opposite ideology that essentially economic needs are unlimited.

The ethical criterion on the basis of which the consequences are judged in the Gandhian philosophical structure states that economic *progress* is to be defined in terms of a reduction in the absolute number of people who feel that they are living below an acceptable minimum standard of living. As Gandhiji realized, the elimination of poverty in *this* sense is not assured by the mere fact of growing per capita real incomes. In the first place, the process of capitalistic growth (one of the major lines of development which follows the ideology of indefinite expansion and of unlimited needs) tends to create as a by-product of the process a large and growing number of *poor* people. While objectively the standard of these poor people might rise quite rapidly over time, the needs that they feel to be essential rise even faster. As a result the broad mass of economic unhappiness grows rather than diminishes over time.

And all this is on the assumption that the prospects for capitalist growth are highly favourable in the objective sense. This is unlikely to be the general case. The analysis of the colonial set-up has shown that the process of capitalist development involves the exploitation of the villages. In the context of the domestic economy this relationship is a direct and visible one. The only alternative to the exploitation of the domestic rural sector is the exploitation of the rural sector in the colonies. Thus, logically, the domestic village is a "colony" of the city-sector and the under-developed economy is the village-colony of the developed city-economy. A natural result of this is that capitalist development can generate all-round prosperity even in an objective sense only through the exploitation of the colonies. It follows that the current colonial economies cannot be expected to follow the same line

of development successfully, since, as more and more of the colonies turn into predatory city-economies, the ecological balance between predators and preyed upon will be altered and the predatory way of life would become inefficient. The domestic colonization that is now typical of the colonial economies would then become generalized with the same consequences now observable in the colonial economies—mass poverty both in the urban and the rural sectors.

Thus it follows that to accept the ideology of unlimited economic needs is to court ultimate disaster in terms of the reduction of mass poverty criterion. The only alternative to capitalist growth is the communist growth process. Gandhiji had the perception to see that the structural properties of this growth process depended on the squeezing out of a surplus from the agrarian sector by force. Thus the basis of this kind of growth process was also the exploitation of the village in favour of the city-based manufactures. The high rates of investment thus attained may solve the problems of rapid industrialization but they do not solve the problems of rapid industrialization nor do they solve the basic problem of the prevention of mass poverty. As soon as the objective technical conditions of developed industrialism are provided, the society would tend slowly to verge towards that prevailing in the typical developed capitalist economies. The actual events in Russia in fact indicate at least the partial validity of this contention.

Given that the process of unlimited expansion based on the ideology of limited economic needs leads only to unhappiness and given also that the current set-up in the colonial economies is such that the continuance of the present system will mean the continuance of mass poverty, only the Gandhian ideal of reestablishing the economic basis of prosperous *stasis* is seen to be a tenable objective.

This objective has to be realized over a fairly long period of time and this implies a fundamental distinction between the policies directed towards the short, the middle and the long run.

The Short Run Policy Framework

Let us begin by looking at the short run policy-framework. In doing so we must remember that at the time Gandhiji was formulating his policies the end of British rule was still not in sight. Thus, he had to concentrate on organizing the defense of the village sector through means available to the villagers themselves. This provides the essential rationale of the policy of *Khadi*.

There are explicitly only three methods by which the surplus working capacity of the disguised unemployed in the villages can be utilized. First, by organizing labour-intensive public works schemes with the aim of raising the productivity of agriculture. Second, there is the possibility that the disguised unemployed be resettled in any "empty spaces" that may be available

within the country. The third alternative is to revive the village handicrafts. Since the first two processes involve the full commitment of the Government and since the British Government could not be expected to be interested in such processes, the only remaining alternative was *khadi.* As soon as we realize that there was and is an unutilized stock of working capacity inside the rural sector whose present social marginal product is zero, the use of this labour even in low-productivity activities like *khadi* becomes entirely socially rational. Of course, if the availability of capital in the village sector was more free and slightly more capital-intensive, village industries could very well be utilized. But such a situation did not exist.

However, even though the idea of *khadi* was socially rational from the point of view of the village as a *collective,* it was obvious that the change-over from mill-cloth into *khadi* implied some sacrifice in terms of personal consumption for at least the better-off villagers. Thus *khadi* could only succeed as a part of an ethically motivated movement. Gandhiji was himself fairly clear on this. It was his idea that each villager would utilize his surplus labour time in the production of *khadi* cloth and try as far as possible to attain self-sufficiency. A necessary and inescapable part of this process was the boycotting of mill-produced cloth. The rationale of the process did not and could not involve the idea that certain full-time *khadi* workers would be subsidized by the *Government* in an attempt to make *khadi* economically competitive with mill-cloth. On the contrary, this would clearly perpetuate that very other-dependence of the village economy which it was the objective of *khadi* to remove.

The entire short run process of Gandhian economic policy was directed towards reconstituting the villages into a self-sufficient closed system as far as possible and to achieve as great a degree of the full utilization of the working capacity in the rural sector as possible. The ultimate objective of this process was thus to make the colonial economic process of exploiting the village sector an impossibility. A feature of this process was also the breaking off of the cash nexuses between the city and the village. The boycott of city-goods, the refusal to pay land revenues and other cash taxes, etc., all were aimed at the attainment of this basic objective.

The Middle Run and the Idea of Swaraj

Obviously, with the attainment of self-sufficiency of the village economy, the economic basis of colonialism, the usefulness of the village sector as a source of markets will come to an end and a complete breakdown of the colonial structure will automatically follow. But this is equally obviously not the end, for the entire economic structure still remains to be reconstructed. The economy of the exploitative city-sector has been made unworkable and the defense of the village sector has been set up. By this

alone, however, only the foundations of the Gandhian economic structure have been laid.

The fundamental principle of economic reconstruction involves the Gandhian idea of *Swaraj*. This is a semi-metaphysical principle and its intricacies cannot be examined in detail on this occasion. However, in its practical application to the process of economic reorganization *Swaraj* stands for the highest degree of localization and decentralization of production and distribution accompanied by the highest feasible degree of the vesting of the ownership of the means of production in the labourers themselves. This principle is based on the antithesis to the two typical forms of capitalist exploitation, the use of an area as a market and the use of economically dispossessed proletariat on the basis of wage-slavery.

Obviously, there will be certain industries which will have to be centralized and these should remain under collective ownership. But these will only be industries supplying the INPUTS the decentralized industries in the villages need, not those competing with the OUTPUTS produced by the decentralized industries. Thus the closer the product moves towards the final stage of production the greater should be the degree of decentralization and any industries which cannot be made to conform to this structure will have to be rejected.

Once this type of economic organization is attained, the machine as such will lose its exploitative character. This will be so because it will no longer be used to *displace* workers and *overcentralize* production but only to perform jobs which the workers could not have performed and only to centralize production processes that cannot be carried on effectively in a decentralized manner.

Industrial Management and Trusteeship

What will be the typical form that industrial management will take under the new economic set-up? As will be noticed, the new set-up is such that all opportunities for anti-social profit-making will be removed. Thus profit-making as an organizing principle will be perfectly invalid. The question of profit-taking is, however, different. Under the new set-up it will no longer be permissible for the individual owner to appropriate the full amount of profit for his own use. There are two alternatives. Either the property might be nationalized or the former owner may retain control as *manager* but must regard himself as the *trustee* of the enterprise. In either case the result is the same. The latter variant is, however, preferable under the Gandhian concept of voluntary and non-violent change.

Now, just as the transition to *Swaraj* economics will be only achieved gradually and voluntaristically, the processes of training industrial owner-managers in trusteeship should begin even before the attainment of *Swaraj*

economics. However, it is only in the context of *Swaraj* economics that the doctrine of trusteeship will attain its full meaning.

Long Run Operations of the Gandhian Economy

Having understood the economic structure of the Gandhian economic system, let us look at the sort of operational results it can be expected to attain. In the first place, the economy will be a virtually non-growing economy. This will follow from the limited needs postulated as an absolute ethical aim. However, there is no reason to assume that a gentle upward trend in per capita income will not be attained.

In the second place, it is obvious that the operations of this kind of economy will necessarily imply a fair and even sharing out of the national income and the gains from growth. This is basically what is implied in the Gandhian principle of *sarvodaya.*

However, there still remains one essential question. And admittedly this is nowhere discussed thoroughly by Gandhi. This is the question of how much should be allocated to investment and how much to current consumption. Obviously, under the system described above, once the basic minimum standard of living is attained on all hands the net rate of investment should fall to virtual equality with the rate of population growth. And this points the way to two inherent problems. First, there is the question of whether population growth is to be limited and if so how. The second question is the optimum rate of technical progress to be sought by such a society.

The questions are interrelated. Thus, if the rate of technical progress is high and the rate of population growth fairly low, the rate of net investment would in the course of time fall to nearly zero. But if the other values of these two basic parameters prevail and the rate of technical progress falls short of the rate of population growth then the society will be compelled to increase its rate of investment indefinitely over time until an impasse is reached. Thus, it becomes rather evident that population limitation—at least in the modified non-Malthusian form of keeping it below the expected rates of technical progress—will have to be resorted to. Here a Gandhian moral caveat against artificial birth control is likely to pose an important problem.

Conclusions

We are now ready to set out the fundamental principles of Gandhian economic thought in logical order.

First, as far as basic analysis is concerned, Gandhian thought starts off from a characterization of the colonial economic system. The exploitative role of the factory-based industries in the final consumption sectors and the parasitic role of the cities is identified. It is seen that the elimination of

these sources of mass poverty is not realized simply by the removal of foreign colonizers.

Secondly, as an ethical ideal Gandhiji accepts a system in which the economic needs of the individual in society are regarded as limited in principle and the objective of the economic system is seen to be the provision of this basic minimum for all. A critique of alternative ethical positions on the basis of a Gandhian welfare criteria indicates the primacy of the Gandhian ethical orientation.

Thirdly, the short run goal of economic policy is to make the colonial economic progress unworkable. This is the essence of the policy of *khadi*, the non-payment of taxes and the boycott of mass-production goods.

Fourthly, the breakdown of the colonial system must be accompanied by its gradual replacement by *Swaraj* economics. The basic principles of *swaraj* economics are decentralization of industries and localization of markets for goods of final consumption. A relatively greater degree of centralization for the input-providing industries, the management of industrial units on the basis of the doctrine of trusteeship and the setting up of land-owning peasant farming and tool-owning artisan manufacture is the typical form of agricultural and industrial activity.

Finally, the attainment of this economic structure is sufficient to establish an era of economic *sarvodaya* with a complete elimination of economic inequality and of exploitative relations between man and man and between the city and the village.

This summary of the Gandhian doctrine indicates the basic contributions of Gandhian thought. The most important contribution of Gandhian analysis seems to be the analytical rather than the programmatic part. This is so because of two facts. First, the belief in the Gandhian economic analysis of colonial areas is logically separable from the ethical predispositions of Gandhian philosophy. Secondly, great doubts might be held about the workability of the Gandhian *swaraj* economy even while one accepts every word of the Gandhian analysis of the relationship between the city and the village in colonial economies. The important contribution, as far as the economist is concerned, is the identification and analysis of the internal colonial process in underdeveloped economies. This Gandhiji did with superb skill. The solution he provided, however, was not necessarily either the best or even a feasible one. The reason why Gandhian thought would even in this case remain a very important and valuable element in the theory of economic policy of colonial areas is that while Gandhian thought may not have provided a solution it has at least pointed out the need for the solution of the internal-colonialism problem. Unless the formulators of economic policy succeed in providing a workable solution to this problem, effective elimination of mass poverty will be impossible of achievement.

There is thus the need for high-intensity research on the possible range of feasible solutions to the economic problem that Gandhiji identified. Elsewhere I have tried to point out that talking in terms of Gandhian concepts might be a very helpful tool in this process. However, even if all the Gandhian contributions to the solution of the colonial economic problem should turn out to have been false starts, it will still remain true that a satisfactory solution to the problem of mass poverty in the underdeveloped economies will depend on the satisfactory solution to the Gandhian problem.

GANDHI AFTER INDEPENDENCE *

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

A GREAT DEAL IS BEING WRITTEN AND SPOKEN ABOUT GANDHIJI DURING this centenary year, but most of it is about his great spiritual and moral qualities or about his philosophy or about what he did during his lifetime. As far as I know, very little attention has been paid to what Gandhiji was thinking of doing after independence. I do not mean to give offense to anyone when I say that the political followers of Mahatma Gandhi in pre-independence days did not believe in Gandhiji's philosophy, nor in his non-violence as a science of action and change, in short, revolution. They joined Gandhiji's satyagraha movements as a matter of political convenience, for no one before or since — no individual, no organization, no revolutionary, no politician has stirred up the people of India as Gandhiji did. Because of this very superficial interest in the deeper things which Gandhiji stood for, his political followers turned their backs on him after his death. Many people wonder why those who had sat at the feet of Mahatma or by his side, who were his colleagues for decades, suddenly forsook him. Indeed, this had begun to happen during his lifetime, during the few months which were given to him after independence. He was aware of it, and he even wrote in the HARIJAN how he had become a spent bullet. Because of this unconcern with the revolutionary philosophy of Gandhi no attempt was made to give serious thought to what Gandhiji had proposed should be done during his lifetime but certainly after he was gone.

I should like to remind you here of two or three things in this connection:

First, on the 15th August, 1947, Gandhiji was not in Delhi and he was not taking any part in the rejoicings of the day. He happened to be in Calcutta and there he remarked that this was not the swaraj for which he had led the struggle. The swaraj of his conception had yet to come. To bring about this swaraj was going to be the next task or job of his life.

Secondly, it was not as if Gandhiji had left his meaning of swaraj vague when he took the leadership of the Congress and the people of India to take them towards the goal. True, he did not give a picture complete in every detail, but he did give a fairly good idea of what kind of India he wanted to reconstruct. His ultimate goal, as you know, was Sarvodaya. This may have been an ideal society, never to become a reality. Nonetheless it was an ideal towards which Gandhiji wanted to strive—a society of the

* Edited transcript of a talk delivered on February 18, 1969 under the auspices of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, New Delhi.

equal and the free; a society in which there was no State or in which the State had shrunk to very small dimensions so that the people managed their affairs themselves; a society which was at peace within itself and at peace with the world outside; a society which aspired to be an equal member of the world community; a society in which the individual gave more attention to the performance of his duty, and only subsidiary attention to his rights because he understood that his rights flowed from his duties—such a society in which each lived for all and all lived for each was, however, of the future. I mentioned duties and rights, so I must hasten to explain that I do not mean that Gandhiji did not believe in the rights of the individual. Of course, he did. He believed in the rights of the individual, the rights of the worker, the rights of everyone. But in his ideal society the individual would first willingly and voluntarily serve his fellowmen and only then consider himself deserving of rights as a reward for the services rendered.

Although Gandhiji, as you know, was one of the greatest idealists that ever lived, he was at the same time one of the greatest realists that ever lived. He was a practicalist. He therefore knew that there were different stages through which the country, the society, the Indian people would have to pass. The Swaraj for which he was going to work immediately was an intermediate stage in its evolution. Gandhiji described this intermediate stage also fairly well.

He conceived of Swaraj as growing from the individual's own swaraj, that is, self-discipline, self-government spread over the whole society. Even this intermediate stage was not to be imposed from above but was to be created by the people themselves. Gandhiji was enough of a realist to understand that the requirements for a non-violent individual were so difficult and so high that it was not possible for common people to attain them. But he said that as the inventions and discoveries of science had made it possible even for a small boy to get incandescent light by merely pressing a button, so the science of non-violence, when developed by rare individuals capable of rising to great heights, would make it possible for even common people to practice it. He conceded that it might not be possible for all to practise the ultimate programme of non-violence, but contended that if the masses tried to follow the ways of non-violence this would be a revolution, too. He always believed in the individual and the people rather than in institutions and even less in such things as the State. He wanted people themselves to create this kind of swaraj by self-development of the individual and the community.

Now the third point to which I want to draw your attention is this: Gandhiji as a practicalist understood well the value of organization. For example when he needed an instrument to fight for the freedom of India he took the Congress. The Congress was in a very bad state at the time he came upon the scene. You will doubtless remember the struggle between

the moderates and the extremists. The moderates were then in power and the extremists were almost sulking in the background. Gandhiji took over this organization and transformed it into a powerful instrument, which could bend people to its will.

When Gandhiji spoke of people's action, he was already thinking of how to create a new organization out of the old Congress which would be his instrument for the gigantic task which he had placed before himself. He put down his thoughts on the reorganization of the Congress Party in a draft resolution for consideration by the All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.). Judging by the language of the resolution and by the fact that he had struck off some words and put in new words, it seems he was still working on it. [In his own way Gandhiji was a great stylist of the English language. He combined in his style simplicity, lucidity and force.] The final form in which Pyarelal published in the HARIJAN, was given a day before Gandhiji's assassination on January 30, 1948.[1] I would like to read out to you only its first paragraph to refresh your memory. This is how the resolution begins:

"Though split into two, India having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, that is, as a propaganda vehicle and a parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, economic and moral independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages, as distinguished from its cities and towns."[2] India according to him had still to attain "social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages." It was thus a three-fold objective that he placed before himself. I shall take them one by one.

THE SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE MASSES: The most important feature of the social structure of India is the caste system from which stems untouchability. Caste system and untouchability have affected even those religions which do not believe in caste, such as Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. For example, Brahmin Christians marry only Brahmin Christians in the western coast of India; the Muslim community also has its higher castes and lower castes—Sheikhs and Saiyyads and Ansaris and so on; and Sikhs have Sikh Harijans. This is where we are after 21 years of political independence. The legislation against untouchability notwithstanding, untouchability is very much prevalent even in towns but in our villages it is glaring. Social independence, there is no doubt, is yet to come.

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[1] See Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase.* Vol. II, pp. 678-679, where a photo copy of the handwritten draft of Gandhiji appears.

[2] Loc. cit.

NOTE: I think that as a result of discussions with his colleagues he might have been persuaded to change his formulation, because I do not see why the masses of the cities should be left out. I do not think he would have refused to see that it was wrong. JPN

ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OF THE MASSES: This means freedom from exploitation and inequalities. Precious little has so far been achieved in this direction.

MORAL INDEPENDENCE: I think only Gandhiji could have thought of this concept of moral independence. Socialists and Communists, I am sure, think in terms of economic and social independence, of a casteless and classless society. This is common ground between them and Gandhi. But for moral independence and its implications socialists and communists have little concern. As I look around and see how we behave I do not think we of the middle classes of India really are morally independent. During the freedom days we had a phrase: slave mentality. This was the phrase we used in respect of the people who were supporting the foreign power. With independence it was assumed that we had gotten rid of this mentality. But have we? Take the behavior of any *burra sahib* towards his subordinates, towards his peons, his clerks—it is the same mentality at work. The whole question of the ethics of independent, equal, democratic people is a subject to which some of our sociologists should pay their attention.

Then Gandhiji goes on to enunciate the fourth objective: ascendancy of the civil over military power. This is how he put it: "The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies."

In the non-violent future Sarvodaya society there would of course be no army because the State itself might not be there. Even if it was there it would be like the alarm chain in a railway train, to be activated only in cases of emergency. In normal times the State would not be seen. It would be hidden somewhere and the people would carry on without the State. But, for the present, when the State was there and the military was there, the ascendancy of the civil over military power, Gandhi said, must be ensured. Please remember that he said this in January 1948. No Nasser, no Ne Win, no Ayub Khan and no Suharto had appeared so far upon the Asian-African stage and yet Gandhi had the prescience to see that the struggle between the civil and the military power for ascendancy was bound to take place in India's march towards democratic goal. He was firmly of the view that the army must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies.

Now we come to the last part of the resolution: "For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the existing congress organization and flower into (sic)* a Loksevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand." [3] Here Gandhiji

* There is something missing here, for it is grammatically wrong. JPN

[3] This is the famous sentence which some of our socialist friends are fond of using for propaganda purposes, particularly during election time. JPN

was thinking of dividing the Congress organization. He was realistic enough to understand that somebody had to run the people's government. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, and maybe a few others could be left to do that, but what would the thousand upon thousand of workers, freedom fighters, be doing? He was therefore preparing to mobilize them organizationally and place before them a concrete programme of action. What this concrete programme was is not stated in the draft. But you can see that he was trying to take over again the organization which he had taken over earlier from the old Congress leaders and made into a revolutionary weapon. He was now thinking of taking it over in order again to make it a revolutionary weapon to work for another revolution. Pyarelal reports Gandhiji as saying that his first job would be to reform politics. That is why he emphasized that Congress and Congressmen must lay a self-denying ordinance upon themselves and renounce power and devote themselves to building the non-violent power of the masses, not the violent power of the army and the police and the rest of the administration that the British Government had left behind. I may add parenthetically that Mr. Nehru not only took over this administration intact but went on strengthening it. Gandhiji wanted to purify politics and turn it into an instrument of service rather than of domination and self-aggrandizement. You can see what has happened. You can turn your mind to those days and compare the situation then to the present situation.

Pyarelal says that the other two tasks to which Gandhiji wanted to address himself were organization of the youth and mobilization of the masses. The need for these arose from the increasing tendency to officialize nation-building activities and to adopt a policy of development in which the common man had little say and which was largely beyond his comprehension.

Gandhiji's plan was put upon the shelf. And we have not had the intelligence to discover what it was that was put upon the shelf. In spite of the fact that it is there for everyone to see and read and in spite of the fact that some authors of the Sarvodaya movement have often talked about it, I have sometimes found that after I have spent an hour or two speaking about this very question, somebody comes up to the platform and tells me, "This, Jayaprakashji, is all right, but why did you renounce politics?" The only answer I can give to questions like this is: After listening to the whole Ramayana, you want to know whose wife Sita was? [4] This is indicative and a part of our slave mentality. We of the middle class suffer from it because we are a creation of slavery. Many people think that Macaulay did a great service to India by giving us this educational system.[5] I do not think so.

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[4] Refers to an old Indian saying about the people who fail to notice even the most obvious. Sita the wife of Rama is one of the central characters in the Ramayana epic. (Ed.)

[5] Refers to the Lord Macaulay's famous *Minutes on Education*, 1835. He was a member of Governor General's Council and advocated the teaching of English language,

I think nobody did more disservice to India by just one single act. This education cut us completely off from the roots of our civilization, from the roots of our life, from the roots of our history and made us all absolutely rootless, hanging by the coat tail of foreign powers. Hardly any educated Indian today thinks that it is possible to do anything by ourselves. He believes that whatever is possible to be done can be done only by the Government. This I call slave mentality. It is evidence of the fact that morally we are still slaves. And when Gandhi talked of moral independence this is what he had in mind.

I am talking to a very educated audience here. Can you name a single country which made its progress in the western world in the last one hundred years entirely because of what the State did? Till the Russian revolution, in all these countries the State was what you call a liberal State, which maintains an army, which maintains some kind of organization for keeping order, which passes some regulatory laws. For the rest, it was the individual, either singly or in co-operation with others, who did everything else, whether it was industry, and agriculture, whether it was scientific research and invention, whether it was exploration or anything else. It was private enterprise, not in the capitalist sense, but in the real sense of the word. The free people of these countries were not waiting for their governments to solve their problems. There certainly were some things which the government alone could do. For the rest, it was the people who themselves acted. The miracle of Germany or the miracle of Japan after the last war is certainly not the doing of their respective governments. The people worked hard, even children cooperated, and built up from scratch or to say, from the bottom, a new country, a new society. Imagine what would have happened to our country and where we would have been today if from the 15th August, 1947 millions and millions of us—young and old, men and women —had put our shoulders to the wheels, working for the country in whichever way it was possible. There is so much to do in our own little neighborhood. But instead of doing it ourselves we wait for somebody else — maybe the Corporation or the Metropolitan Council or the Delhi Administration—to do it for us. If the Indian people had been on the move, if the people had been mobilized for people's action, if the leaders had not depended on this outmoded system of administration which the Britisher had created for their own purposes, imagine where India would have been today! Not at the top of the world, I know. But it would have certainly been one of the leading nations in Asia and Africa. And please remember, we of the middle classes, we who belong to the intelligentsia, we are the greatest criminals in this respect. We have no faith in ourselves and we have no faith in the people. Everyone wants to become a member of this assembly or

literature and history in Indian schools to make the people "Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in manner and in intellect." (Ed.)

that assembly, a footling minister at least and thinks that in that way alone can he serve his country. Assemblies, parliaments, ministers have all their proper place, but they cannot do everything.

After the Russian Revolution a new kind of State came into existence for the first time in history. The Fascists and Nazis took it for a model not for communist purpose, but for their own special purpose. Even in these totalitarian countries the building of, for example, a new Russia, a new China was not entirely the handiwork of the government of these countries. They realized that the people had to be mobilized. They mobilized them partly by working upon their emotions, inspiring them to endeavour, to sacrifice, to suffer, and partly by compulsion. The entire cultural revolution in China was the mobilization of the youth of the country for purposes which the rulers had in mind. Gandhiji was thinking of mobilizing the youth for different purposes in the Indian context. These things have not been attempted in the last twenty one years. Gandhiji wanted to do them. This is the sum and substance of Gandhi after independence.

This draft resolution shows that Gandhiji was going to take the most revolutionary step of his revolutionary life. It is really a great pity that history was denied the opportunity of seeing how a great revolutionary leader, called after his death the Father of the Nation, used his matchless weapon to mobilize the people and how he created through service and non-violent organization a new society, and how through non-violent resistance controlled the State and the rulers. I have said this many times in mass meetings, but I do not remember having said this to an educated, sophisticated audience like this ever before.

One day some years back I was travelling from Patna to my Ashram in Gaya district, a distance of a hundred miles, in a jeep. I had with me a Japanese young man who was going to see the Ashram and meet four other Japanese who were then working in the Ashram. As we motored along, this young Japanese was very keenly observing things on the roadside. On the way we stopped at a well for a drink of water. We had not gone more than 60 miles when my young companion turned to me and said: "Jayaprakash Narayan, you people say that India is a very poor country. I don't think India is a poor country." I was taken aback. "What," I asked him, "have you seen in the villages that you have passed through except mud huts with thatched roofs? Where have you seen any evidence of prosperity?" He said, "Well, this is daytime but I observe in every village people sitting under the shade of a tree or on the verandah talking and smoking. Now, if people can sit around without doing anything during daytime, during working hours, they must surely have enough to eat? In my country, Japan, we have to work hard. If we did not work hard we would not be able to survive. Every able-bodied person has to work, on the farm or in the factory; sick people are in hospitals; old men and women

might be in the home, but even they would be doing something, maybe painting pottery or doing something of that kind." All I could say to this was mutter excuses: "You know, we have unemployment in this country. These people do not have enough work. That is why they are sitting around doing nothing." When he spoke now there was annoyance in his voice and on his face too. "No work to do!" said he, "do you remember the well we stopped at for a drink? Didn't you see that all around the well there were little puddles where dirty water collected; leaves were rotting; and there was no end of flies and mosquitoes. And they drink that water! What prevents them from bringing some dry earth from the field and filling the puddles up and keeping the well clean?"

Now, tell me, what could I say to that? I would invite you to go to any village in India, not in prosperous Punjab or around Delhi, and have a look at the wells. You go to Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, or to Andhra, you will find village wells in a terrible state. They spread all kinds of disease. But people draw water from them and are altogether insensitive to the surrounding filth. Was I to say to my young Japanese friend, "we have in this country a democracy the likes of which you do not have and therefore these people in the villages wait for Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru to bring a bhoomi sena, a land army, to do the cleaning?" Which land army could do this? It is impossible for any State to do all the things that must be done so that our country goes forward.

America is the most affluent country in the world, the most prosperous country. I was in Philadelphia a few months back and went with my Quaker friends to see a weekend camp, a weekend camp in which I found a dozen students of the University of Pennsylvania, some blacks and some whites, some boys and some girls. This was a ghetto area of Philadelphia. The boys and girls had brought food from their homes, had their lunch together and were going to work eight hours in that little cottage of a Negro. And what were they doing? They were papering the walls, and filling up all the little holes with some kind of substance which they had brought with them. Now, even in America, in prosperous America, if the students feel that there is need to go to the slums and do this kind of work, don't you think that in India this kind of work should be multiplied by not a hundred-fold but a thousand-fold, maybe a hundred thousand-fold? It was of this that Gandhi was thinking.

The great leaders of the revolutions of modern times—the French revolution, the American revolution, the Russian revolution, the Turkish revolution, the Cuba revolution, the Algerian revolution, after the success of the revolution became the top dogs, the rulers. I am not suggesting that they did it for love of power. They did it perhaps to realize the objectives of the revolution through the instrument of the state. But Gandhi did not do this, for what he wanted to do just could not be done by state power.

He himself said that his work far from being finished was just going to begin. Imagine a man of seventy-nine talking like this and saying that he wanted to live to the age of 125 years in order to accomplish this task! He realized the limitations of government action. And you can see it for yourself. You can see that whenever a development project was a centralized project, like Bhakra Nangal or Rourkela or Bhilai, something was accomplished, though at great cost both of money and of time. But wherever the plan was a dispersed plan and had to be carried out over wide areas of the country, it invariably failed. It failed because of lack of popular cooperation. This is a kind of upside down picture. It is the people who should be doing and it is the government which should be cooperating. That was what Pyarelal meant when he said that the people were not involved.

Gandhiji wanted to change this. How he would have gone about it we do not know. He had a genius for making big things out of small things. You remember how much ridicule was poured over the Dandi march before it was begun. Some of you were too young then to remember. Some of you may not have been born. But quite a few of you may have read H. V. Iyenger's articles in the *Indian Express*. He was a sub-divisional officer or something of that kind and was posted in some district in Gujarat. A day or two before the Dandi March was to begin he applied for leave which was readily granted.[6] The District Magistrate, Mr. Iyenger's boss, wasn't worried about the March at all. "This will fizzle out. Nothing will come out of it." Mr. Iyenger says that when he arrived in Madras there was a telegram already waiting for him: "Come back immediately." He was called back because the whole of Gujarat, the entire country, was on fire. Gandhi devised simple programmes. Indeed, the programmes had to be so simple that every child could follow it. Take, for example the Salt Satyagraha. Even children got involved. They took their bags, went to the Collector's office and shouted: "We have violated the salt law." Similarly in the 1942 Movement[7] in Bihar, a British sergeant caught hold of a boy hardly 12-15 years, tied a rope around his legs and lowered him into a well and when his head was touching the water, shouted from above "Say you regret it, say you will not do it again, or else I shall drown you." Up came the reply from deep down the well (it brings tears to one's eyes) "Quit India, quit India." One knew then that the day of the empire was done, that it could not continue much longer.

But how Gandhiji would have brought capitalism and feudalism to an end, what programme he would have devised for economic, social and moral independence of the Indian people, nobody knows. All we can say is that

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[6] Refers to the famous Salt March (or Salt Satyagraha) of 1930. Salt was a British government monopoly in India, nobody could make it or buy it except from the government. Mahatma Gandhi and his followers started the March from Ahmedabad to a place called Dandi, on the west coast of India 200 miles away, on March 12, 1930 and reached Dandi on April 5, 1930. (Ed.)

[7] Also known as Quit India Movement of 1942. (Ed)

he wanted to substitute service with power and through service create a new force in society. People lament those days now. Where, they ask, has the spirit of self-sacrifice fled? Gandhiji wanted to keep that spirit alive by calling people away from seats of power and position, back into wilderness with a program of service which is the discipline of non-violence. Even as the violent army has its course of discipline, just so the non-violent corps of satyagrahi has a course of discipline. It helps him establish rapport with the people, so that when the call is given, when a programme is placed, there is an immediate upsurge.

You know what happened after Gandhiji's death. The politicians, as I said at the beginning, put his programme on the shelf. Nehru never mentioned it. One day I talked of people's action etc. and he said, "What do you mean? The State is there. We have so many hundreds of thousands of public servants. Where is the need for any other public servants?" I think he was disillusioned later when he realized the limitation of the administrative system or machine. It is a great pity.

The other day I was invited to speak at the founding day of the Yugoslav Republic. Reading the documents they had given me, I discovered the very significant fact that when the Partisans defeated the Nazis Tito had already a programme for the full utilization of the spirit and the energy of the partisans. And he gave a call for voluntary service: "Let us join hands to build the roads, to repair the bridges, to repair the schools and hospitals and build new ones." This program for voluntary service lasted for three whole years. And it is said that it was this that gave momentum to the whole pace and programme of the Yugoslav society, which resulted in the highest rate of growth in the world during one of these years, 13 per cent. This record has not been bettered. Japan with all its high rate of growth reached a level of 11 per cent in one year.

And in our country? If you go to our villages and look around, you will find thousands and thousands of freedom fighters who are disappointed and feel frustrated. They are eating out their hearts, not because they did not become members of legislatures or ministers, but because they have nothing in the way of nation-building to do. On the other hand, as you know, there is so much to do in the country. After all, only a few hundred people, or may be a few thousand, are needed to man the legislatures and the ministries. What were the rest of those hundreds of thousands who went to prison in the course of the freedom struggle to do? For want of a programme which could engage them, they have all been immobilized.

I wonder if all this means anything to you. Being a Gandhian, I have a purposeful attitude towards even intellectual activities. I believe that even our research should be purposive. Not that I am against fundamental research, but I hold that even fundamental research should be related to the fundamental problems of science, social and physical of India. It is in this

spirit that I have given you some idea of what Gandhi proposed to do after independence. If what I have said makes any sense to you, you should do your bit. I am not inviting you to put on *khaddar* or to become a Gandhian.[8] But in whatever way it is possible for you to help your neighbors, to help your fellow human beings, please consider this to be your responsibility and your duty as a citizen of free and democratic India. I am sure if we had the kind of dictatorship that Germany had under Hitler, or that Russia had under Stalin, or that China has under Mao, we would be compelled to do things. And if we resisted, we would be sent to labour camps, there to starve and yet work sixteen to twenty hours a day; part of the time we might have been made to dig our own graves. No matter whether one was the greatest professor or the greatest scientist living, one would be compelled to fall in line. And falling in line was not enough, either, one had to make the contribution asked for and in the manner that was laid down. I am not suggesting that in totalitarian countries all this is done entirely by force or by striking terror. There sure is the spirit of patriotism at work; there is the desire to create a new society; there are new ideals to pursue; although they all shine brightly only for a time and then start getting dimmer and dimmer; there are all sorts of other incentives.

But we have chosen democracy and these methods are not for us. Democracy, however, is worth nothing and cannot last unless the citizen realizes his responsibility and discharges it willingly—his responsibility not only to his family, not only to the job he is doing, but also to the community at large. This is what Gandhiji wanted to teach us. This was part of his concept of moral independence—the creation of a new and responsible citizen of India.

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[8] Khaddar means hand spun and hand woven cloth. (Ed.)

THE RELEVANCE OF GANDHI *

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I AM THANKFUL TO THE INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM for asking me to speak on this subject. And yet I must begin by saying that perhaps I am not the right person to speak on it, because, as you know, I happen to be deeply involved in the Gandhian movement at present. I would not be so involved if I did not believe that Gandhi was relevant to our problems, to our age. I am thus a very committed person and it may well be that because of this I cannot take a very critical attitude as some others might. I hope you will keep this in mind.

In considering the relevance of an individual or an idea, what is of great importance is the point of view from which one is looking at the question. What does one himself want? That is, what are one's own ideas and ideals? For a person having one type of ideas and pursuing one set of ideals and objectives Gandhi may be entirely irrelevant. On the other hand, for another person who is interested in other ideals, who cherishes other set of values of life, who has set himself other social, economic, political objectives Gandhi would be very deeply and intensely relevant. I shall illustrate this by a few examples which occur to me. There are certain individuals—in politics, or in public life, maybe even in the intellectual fields—who may not be concerned with ethical questions and moral values. They are of the view that as far as, let us say, politics and public affairs are concerned, as far as affairs of the state and questions of international relations are concerned, there is no room in these fields for any ethical considerations or ethical values. Obviously, Gandhi would be wholly irrelevant to them from that point of view. I personally believe that this question of human values is at the bottom of all philosophies of life, all the political isms, let us say, democracy, socialism and communism. I do not have to remind you of the recent attempt made in the communist world to give a human face to communism and of what happened in that particular instance. I am sure that to a man like Dubcek, Gandhi is *not* irrelevant, nor to all those who put up such a unique and marvelous opposition to one of the biggest military powers in the world. To the people of Czechoslovakia, to whom I am referring, Gandhi cannot be irrelevant. There may be some to whom human life is of no particular importance or significance. To them the life of the individual, or the individual himself, is just a means to an

* *Edited transcript of a speech delivered on February 17, 1969 under the auspices of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, New Delhi.*

end, a pawn in the game of politics, or of power, or of something else. To such persons Gandhi would be, at least in this respect, irrelevant. On the other hand, there are those for whom—to use the humanist phrase—man is the measure of all things, for whom man is the centre of society and the main concern of all philosophies of life, all political theories, for whom, in other words, man is not a means but an end in himself. To such persons Gandhi would be very relevant.

We in India believe in and have accepted democracy. It may have many imperfections and shortcomings, but still it has withstood all the stresses and strains which a poor and backward country with a huge population like ours has to undergo. It has survived through all these for 21 years and more. There are some, though, to whom democracy is irrelevant, whose faith in democracy is very superficial and who use the concept and processes of democracy as a cover for something that is its very opposite—for them Gandhi would not be relevant.

So, you see, how the subjective quality of the individual who is considering the relevance of Gandhi is also very relevant. I happen to be an individual who believes in "man as the measure of all things," who believes deeply in the humanist philosophy, though not in what some would call materialistic, rationalistic, humanistic (with which I have no quarrel). My own humanism is based on the belief in the universality and the supremacy of the human spirit. For a man like me, who believes in democracy deeply, and who would not sacrifice or want or let the freedom of man be sacrificed for anything—for the State, the glory of the party, or anything else—for me, and for these very reasons, Gandhi is very relevant.

This should serve as a kind of general statement of how I look upon the question of Gandhi's relevance to our age. You may be aware that many people have said, not only in India but in many parts of the world, that Gandhi was perhaps ahead of his time. He was specifically a prophet of the atomic age in which the engines of violence which man has invented for the first time in history threatens to destroy the whole of mankind. Gandhi not only preached non-violence as a philosophy and an ideal but practised it on a very colossal scale and did it, if not with complete success, with very great success. As long as there is this violence which threatens the very future of the human race, the relevance of Gandhi would continue. He will remain relevant till this danger of total annihilation of the human race is removed. I was quite surprised when I read, as some of you might have read, the epilogue in Volume II of Pyarelal's monumental *Mahatma Gandhi, the Last Phase*. General Douglas McArthur, if you please, describing Gandhi as one of those prophets who 'lived far ahead of the time,' said: 'In the evolution of civilization, if it is to survive, all men cannot fail eventually to adopt his belief that the process of mass application of force to resolve contentious issues is fundamentally not only wrong but contains with-

in itself the germs of self-destruction.' Coming from a military leader of that stature the statement is rather remarkable. Sometimes military men are more acutely aware of the dangers of mass violence—not only mob violence but mass, organized violence in the name of nation or empire or ideology or what have you. I think the danger of such violence is appreciated oftentimes better by military men than by politicians or others. Mary Bethune, American Negro woman leader, said when Gandhi was assassinated (this is also from Pyarelal's Epilogue): "a great warm light has been extinguished. . . . His spirit, reached to the stars and sought to win a world without gun or bayonet or blood. . . . As we, mothers of the earth, stand in awesome fear of the roar of jet planes, the crash of atom bombs and the unknown horrors of germ warfare, we must turn our eyes in hope to the East, where the Sun of the Mahatma blazes." I know it no longer blazes in the East, but it did blaze at one time. The *New York Times,* certainly not an impractical idealist like some of us, said that "He has left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's good time prevail over arms and armaments and the dark doctrines of violence." All this eloquence might have been prompted by that great crucifixion, "another crucifixion," as Pearl Buck described it. It might be that this was only the outpouring of the anguished heart of the human race, but I do believe that what they said has a germ of truth, which has yet to be learnt by all those who are trying to find a way out of the dangers which threaten to overwhelm us. When I say us, I do not mean the Indian people alone but the people of the whole world.

Now, let us come to India and to our present-day problems. I am not a philosopher. To me the attraction of Gandhi was that of a revolutionary. It is this aspect of Gandhiji's life that first attracted me to him and that still attracts me to him. I was very much impressed by one experience through which I lived during the first non-Congress Ministry in my State. If you have given any serious thought to the problem of land reform in India, you will agree with me that after the abolition of the Zamindari system there has been hardly any worthwhile land reform in the country. That this has stood in the way of agricultural development was brought out not by a socialist or a communist, not by a Gandhian like me, but by Dr. Ladejinsky, a Ford Foundation specialist who was commissioned by the Planning Commission to make a report on the tenurial system in the country and their relation to the agricultural performance in the package programme areas. To those who may be interested in the question I would recommend this small report, which for some time had been suppressed by the Planning Commission because it was so adverse to the State Governments which were all Congress Governments at that time.

Keeping all this in mind I made a very simple suggestion to my friends in the Mahamaya Prasad Sinha Ministry. I told them that if they were

thinking of a radical land reform bill, they were welcome to make it as radical as they liked and they would have my support. But, I pointed out, a new legislation would take a long time. The drafting of the bill, the presentation to the Assembly, the reporting of the Select Committee, the discussions with the opposition parties—all this is time-consuming. Moreover, the coalition itself had within it parties which might not be prepared to go very far — parties, in fact, which were even more conservative than the Congress Party, at least on this question. Therefore, I suggested an alternative programme of action. I reminded them that there were on the statute books several enactments passed by the Congress administrations in the last 19 years. I pointed out the relevant ones and I said: "Why don't you implement all these? If you do, you will have made a small revolution in the countryside in Bihar." They are simple, ordinary things, like recording the homestead rights of Harijans and other landless people who had their huts built on the lands of landowners; the law gave them occupancy rights in the small plots of land on which their little huts were constructed; they could not be evicted from those lands. The only requirement was that they should be registered and brought on government records. They could be brought on record *suo moto* by officers without anybody having to apply. The fact of actual tenancy was easy to ascertain, for the whole village knows who is living where and on whose land. The relevant legislation was passed as far back as something like 1950 when Mr. Srikrishna Sinha was the Chief Minister. Take for another example the rights of sharecroppers, which is in all conscience a terrible problem. Similarly, the ceiling legislation is already something like five years old, and yet you would be surprised to know that not a single acre of land has yet been declared surplus and distributed to the landless in the State of Bihar. The Revenue Department during the Mahamaya Prasad Ministry said it was their calculation that the ceiling was so high and so much time had been given to the landowners to sell or transfer their land that not more than 67 thousand acres could be made available for redistribution. Well, if *benami,* bogus transfers had been made to servants, or to people who were dead, or to relations who did not exist, then it was for the government to detect evasions and bring the culprits to book. Again, take the Money Lenders Act. The highest rate of interest permissible in law is 12½ per cent, but 150 per cent interest is being charged even now in the tribal areas. It would appear that the poorer the farmer the higher is the interest he is made to pay to the moneylender. I said the laws were there and all that the Government had to do was implement them. Nothing was done. The Jana Sangh and Raja Saheb Kamakhya Narayan's party, both of which were constituents of the coalition, kicked up such a terrific row that the government nearly broke on the issue and nothing was done. I am now very eagerly looking forward to what Mr. Jyoti Basu (I hope as the

leader of the largest party he is made the Chief Minister)* may do in West Bengal in the way of land reform. We in India have parliamentary democracy. A very large majority of the voters are farmers. Maybe they are only dwarf farmers, petty holders of an acre or half an acre, but nonetheless they have the mentality of property owners and I think that is one reason (if there are others it is for economists and sociologists to identify them) why India has been so backward in land reforms or even in enforcing those laws which were passed years ago.

Now, why did I bring all this up? Merely in order to show how this revolutionary leader, Gandhi, fashioned a tool of revolution, a method, which was independent of the State, independent of legislation, and by means of which you went directly to the people and brought about changes by changing the people. Any hack can write about the failure of this movement or that programme, but it will surprise you, if you look into the figures, that many times more land, more acreage of land, many times more area of land, has been redistributed through the movement of land gift, *Bhoodan,* than by land legislation in the whole country. In one or two States, legislation did perhaps go a little ahead of *Bhoodan,* but taking the country as a whole, five times, maybe even ten times, more land has been redistributed by *Bhoodan* than by legislation. We try to find out from the State Governments how much land had been redistributed to the landless. We keep on writing to them, but do not hear anything in reply because the record is so disappointing. I shall make another bold statement to you: As of today there is no political party in the country, no matter how radical it is, which has a more radical agrarian programme than, let us say, the *Gramdan* programme of Vinoba. You will not find even the most radical of the leftist parties, the left communist party, saying in its election manifesto in West Bengal that when it came to power it would abolish private ownership of land and vest it in the village community, the Gram Sabha. I am quite sure every socialist, every communist believes that the means of production should be socially owned, though not necessarily by the State, and socially controlled. But they just cannot put it down on paper because they fear they would not get votes. Even the half-acre-wallahs will say: "No, thank you. We are not such fools as to give you our votes so that you may take away our ownership rights." And, yet, you can go, as we have done, and persuade them voluntarily to sign a document (which is a legal document under *Gramdan* legislation), declaring that they surrender their ownership rights in land to the village community, the Gram Sabha. This radical change from private to community ownership is a very radical transformation. And it is taking place. In about seventy thousand villages in the country, if not more, the majority of the farmers, if not all, have agreed to do this. This may be a mere paper declaration, but it is a declaration made by them and attested

* This was said before the formation of the U. F. Ministry in West Bengal.

to by their signatures on pieces of paper. The next stage as provided by the law is the confirmation of the *Gramdan*. It is this character of Gandhi and his philosophy, and not only the philosophy but the methodology that he fashioned and placed before the world and used himself that has been an attraction to me. And I find that this seems to be working. Maybe in the Indian conditions, as far as land is concerned, this method is the only one which will succeed. This is a bold statement to make, but I do make it as a result of whatever I have been able to study and experience. Because an overwhelmingly large part of the electorate is made up of farmers, peasant proprietors, small or middle class (big are very few, as you know), re-distribution of land through legislation is extremely difficult. Zamindari was abolished because there were only a few zamindaris. Industries might be nationalized because owners are few. But in this particular case it seems to me that Gandhi's method is the only method that is likely to succeed. Many socialists and communists have been of great help in this movement and we look forward to their continued cooperation.

I shall not talk on the theoretical level of how great a revolutionary Gandhi was. His whole life bears testimony to that. He kept on experimenting with what he called the Truth—continuously discovering, discarding, and improving. But my subject is not what Gandhi did, but what his relevance is to us today. And the relevance is here in actual practice in this very sensitive field of rural life, rural society. Bihar is 90 per cent rural, the whole of India is about 72 per cent rural; only 18 per cent is urban even now. In the sensitive field of the question of relationship of land to the rural people the relevance of Gandhi is still in action in this *Bhoodan-Gramdan* movement. I had reacted to *Bhoodan* in the same way in which my other colleagues in the Socialist Party had done at that time. Like them I thought it would take centuries. But I discovered that it would not take centuries, and it has not taken centuries. In fact, it has worked much faster than any other method. In spite of Mr. Nehru, in spite of the Planning Commission, in spite of the socialists, in spite of the communists, the government has made very little progress in this particular field. This seems to be the picture generally in the whole of Asia wherever change has been attempted to be brought about democratically. (Where there is dictatorship that is another matter; we are not discussing that at the moment).

Take our unemployment question, take our whole direction of industrialization, economic development and the rest of it and see where we are today. Take our system of education. Any one who really has his feet firmly planted on the Indian soil (he may have his head anywhere—in Moscow, in Washington, in London or in Paris) cannot say that Gandhi was irrelevant to the present conditions of India. And he will continue to be relevant, maybe for half a century, or even more. I was a critic of Gandhi in my socialist days—I still am a socialist of a sort—a voluntarian or a

communitarian socialist, if you please. But I am convinced that when Gandhi emphasized finding jobs for human hands before we found jobs for machines, he was looking at the development of our country from the people's point of view, from the human point of view, not from the econometrician's or the statistician's point of view. Unless our economic development takes this turn, we shall make little progress. I had hoped that after Dr. Gadgil's taking over the Planning Commission this would happen. I still have not lost hope, though I am very much disturbed by the trends that I notice. I feel that unless economic development is man-oriented rather than statistics-oriented, we would go further and further downhill. The situation in the country would become more and more disturbed and discontent among the people would mount. I do not know what directions it may find; our democracy may be threatened and anything may result from it.

Gandhiji is criticized for his suspicion of industrialism. He suspected that industrialism would completely distort human life and values of life. I may not go whole hog with him on this. But I would like to remind you that Gandhiji did not say that he was against science, against technology. After all, a seeker after truth that he was, he could not have been against science. He himself made experiments in fields you and I would hesitate to enter, and it was all a scientific approach. He was not against technology or science, nor against the machine. But he did not want the machine to become the master of man. What has happened in the Western society, including the communist society, is that technology, the machine has become the master. The London *Economist* in one of its recent issues visualized the development in the American society in the next few years. It is a picture which strikes terror into my heart—a society which is so over-mechanized, over-organized, over-centralized, so gigantic, so colossal, so far beyond the human scale that the autonomy of the individual is completely obliterated. It might nominally be democracy. But the man is not his own master; he cannot make choices; he feigns he makes them, but somebody else makes them for him. One begins to doubt whether there is any difference between totalitarianism so called and this kind of democracy. I certainly would not like to live in such a society. Man is almost anonymous in such a society. Maybe he has his own little circle of friends, or little community. But yet, on the whole, he is just nobody; he does not count for anything at all. These aspects of technology and of science, I think, are basically ethical. It revolves around the question whether one would inculcate an attitude of mind which does not put any kind of limit to wants. It sounds silly to talk about limitation of wants in a poor country like India. But take the United States or any of the prosperous countries. There is there an insatiable craving for more and more technology and the limitless expansion of human wants and an unending race between them. And the whole world becomes an unwilling victim of the technological Frankenstein that has been created.

I have here something from Schumacher which I shall read out to you: "I was recently in the United States and in meetings I heard this. They freely talk about the polarization of the population in the United States into three immense megalopolitan areas—one extending from Boston to Washington, a continuous built-up area of 60 million people; one around Chicago, another 60 million; and one of the West Coast from San Francisco to Santiago, again a continuous built-up with 60 million people, the rest of the country being left practically empty, deserted provincial towns and the land cultivated with huge tractors and combined harvesters and immense amounts of chemicals. If this is somebody's conception of the future of the United States, it is hardly a future worth having." I cannot agree more with Mr. Schumacher when he makes this statement. If the repeated technological explosion that is taking place is allowed to go unchecked, then I wonder if the American President, or even the whole American people, will be able to prevent the evolution of American life and society in this direction.

We have to ask ourselves if we in India would also like to develop into this kind of society. This is a matter of choice, a subjective thing. I happen to believe in the small community, not necessarily the small community that we have today but the agro-industrial community in which the amenities of life are provided, of course, but in which there is opportunity for cultural life and intellectual life and opportunity for self-development. What the limits of such a community should be in the matter of population and area may be a variable quantity, but nonetheless variable within bounds. I think the social sciences and the physical sciences have, for the first time in history, made it possible for man to really order his future. Enough is known about man, the individual, the society, groups, etc. to enable us to do this, as Julian Huxley says. But how is this going to happen, unless people understand where they want to go and unless they are able to control those who are making decisions for them? As at present they do not even know where the decisions are being made.

I have digressed a little, but the point I am making is that there is no virtue in bigness itself. Look at the way Delhi is growing. There must be a limit to the size if the city of Delhi is to be a city worth living in. I do not know whether anybody can control this.

This much about the relevance of Gandhi to technology, to science, to such questions as planning, employment, and so on. I am not saying that one must accept it in its entirety. It would be a very foolish person, a foolish Gandhian who were to seize every letter of Gandhi and try to put it into practice. There must be enough of originality to take from Gandhi what is worth taking and apply it to what we have today. I am quite sure that in the spheres which I have mentioned there is a very great deal which we can take. I spoke of the agricultural situation and the rural community. I shall conclude by saying a few words about business, industry and commerce.

We have, broadly speaking, three competing concepts. They overlap undoubtedly, but they can still be distinguished. One is that of private enterprise which, as industrialism develops the way it is developing at least in the United States and some of the other countries, becomes less and less private but nonetheless is there. At least the private profit element is certainly there even though the management is in the hands of a class of managers, who have hardly any ownership rights except perhaps as share-holders. The other is the democratic socialist concept and the third is the communist concept of industry. Now, here problems have also arisen which are very serious and deserve to be understood better and examined further. But I shall confine myself to the problems of our own country. Socialists who believe in the democratic method, not to speak of communists who, while making use of democracy, themselves say that they do not believe in it in all situations, always cry in Parliament for more and more nationalization. Nationalization is believed to be a kind of solution to the problems which capitalism in India has created. Now, some of the nationalized industries are doing well but most of the larger ones are not. This may be the fault of management, not the fault of nationalization itself. But all this argument does not go beyond the economic level. It is clear to me that the values of socialism, as I understood them when I was a socialist and as I understood them even today, are nowhere near realization in the nationalized sector. What is happening in the communist countries as well as in the socialist and the democratic socialist countries is that nationalization is followed by bureaucratism so that it becomes a kind of bureaucratic economy rather than a socialist economy. If you wish to call a bureaucratic economy a socialist economy just because ownership is vested in the nation I have no quarrel. But that is not my conception of socialist economy. You go to Jamshedpur and Rourkela which are not far from each other, one in the private sector and the other in the public sector. Except for that and except for the manner of distributing the surplus value, to use a Marxian phrase, what is the difference between the two? There isn't any surplus value in Rourkela for distribution, but one hopes there will be. It is our bureaucracy, I think, which is at fault and which is one of the great evils from which we suffer. I do believe that unless this whole bureaucratic system is radically transformed there is no future for our administration, for our government, for our industry or anything else. This, was, however, the case. Take the relationship between the employees and the management—there is no difference. At least in Jamshedpur there is one recognized union: the Tata Worker's Union. In Rourkela, on the other hand, there are five unions contending among themselves all the time and the management plays one against the other. Take again, the way the workers live, the way the managers and the technicians live, look at the townships that have been built, as to the question of the place of workers in the management—there is no difference. Here,

I think, every country, whether in the democratic world or in the communist world (I don't call it by any other name), has failed to solve the basic problems. The only country which perhaps is nearer a solution from my point of view is Yugoslavia although there too the League of Communists continues to be the final arbiter of the fate of the people. If you go a little deeper into the question of the performance of workers, including the technicians and others in the socialized or nationalized sector, you will find that there is a great deal to be desired.

I should like to share a reminiscence with you. When we formed the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and framed its programme, I showed a copy to Gandhiji and asked for his opinion. He looked at it and pointing his finger at one of the items said: "This is after my own heart. If you people can really do this, I am all with you." And the item? It read: "From each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs." Now for me this is the ideal. True a long-range ideal, but nonetheless an ideal to work for. Unless you reach this ideal there is no socialism because either there will be coercion or there will be incentives, including monetary incentives. Stalin had to introduce Stakhanovism and use other methods. Even Tito had to accept the gap between the highest and the lowest. In the spheres in which the ethics of socialist economy is important and relevant, I do not know what else except Gandhi would be relevant. This is so because you cannot force any individual to give his best and take only what he needs. It has to be done willingly. It must come from within; it is an ethical behaviour and nothing else. I dare say that in the communist and socialist worlds there are idealists who are burning the candles of their lives at both ends for the cause. But I am not talking about a few idealists. I am talking of the generality of people. The common people have to accept it as the only right kind of conduct. We have not yet been able to find a practical way of implementing Gandhiji's concept of trusteeship which is applicable not only to the owners, but also to the workers. Every member of the society has to have this attitude of being a trustee. This means a responsible citizen, a responsible worker, a responsible manager. This means everyone discharges his responsibility of his own will and volition as if he was impelled from within and not because he draws a fat salary or because he dreads the sword hanging over his head. I do think that if the kind of values in the economic field that communism believes in have to be realized, they can only be realized by some method of voluntariness, which is the essence of trusteeship. How it is to be brought about I do not know, but I hope we will discover a way. If a whole State comes under *gramdan,* then we will have to face the problems of urban communities, the problems of industry and commerce and the problems of labour and so on. At the moment, however, we are groping in the dark. But it seems to me that here also Gandhi has a contribution to make. His guidelines were two: Conversion

and non-violent non-cooperation. Conversion means going to the people trying to persuade them. This is the opposite of applying force and is a perfectly democratic method. After all, the Communists won in West Bengal not because they threatened people into voting for them but because they persuaded them. Non-cooperation was to be applied when a great majority had been persuaded and only a few recalcitrants were left. But non-cooperation was wholly unlike a strike, a *gherao* or a *bundh* and, of course, was totally non-violent. These were the two methods Gandhi had indicated. But how he would have applied them in concrete situations—in regard, for example, to Ahmedabad millowners with whom he had a fight in his early days—I do not know.

While I have shared these thoughts with you I have been conscious that if my recent illness had not prevented my writing out the speech or even organizing my thoughts better, I would not have taken such a long time to outline them. But what I have said will have given you, I hope, some idea of why and in what way I consider Gandhi relevant to our age and our country and why I believe he will remain so relevant for many years to come.

TAGORE AND GANDHI: A STUDY OF THEIR CONTROVERSIES

ARUN COOMER BOSE

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ON TAGORE AND GANDHI, ON THEIR CLOSE cooperation and deep respect for each other. But hardly any attention has been focused on the serious controversies that occasionally raged between these two giants of modern India.

They did not compete with each other for anything, nor were they rivals in any walk of life. They lived and moved in their different worlds, that touched each other only at the periphery; and from each other they received love and respect in profusion.

Still, on occasions they differed, and differed seriously, because their aims and ideals, and their attitude to and outlook on life were considerably different. Their differences have been superbly summed up by Nehru in the following words: "No two persons could probably differ so much as Gandhi and Tagore in their make up and temperament. It is interesting to compare and contrast them. Tagore, the aristocratic artist, turned democrat with proletarian sympathies, represented essentially the cultural tradition of India, the tradition of accepting life in the fullness thereof and going through it with song and dance.[1] Gandhi, more a man of the people, almost the embodiment of the Indian peasant, represented the other tradition of India, that of renunciation and asceticism. And yet, Tagore was primarily a man of thought, and Gandhi of concentrated and ceaseless activity." [2]

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[1] In one poem, *Mukti* i.e. deliverance, Tagore says:

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation,
I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds
of delight.
No, I will never shut the door of my senses,
The delights of sight and hearing and touch
will bear thy delight.
Yes, all my illusions will burn into illuminations of joy,
And all my desires ripen into fruits of love."

In the sonnet, *Mayabad,* i.e. cult of illusions, he says:

"Alas, my cheerless country,
Donning the worn-out garment of decrepitude,
Loaded with the burden of wisdom,
You imagine you have seen through the fraud
of creation."

In an address to the inmates of Gandhi's institution at Sabarmati, in Gujrat, on 4 December, 1922, Tagore said: "Only unfortunately, human beings make the mistake and get infatuated with the idea of suffering for its own sake and so as an end in itself. This idea is not true." *Young India,* 21-12-1922.

[2] Visva-Bharati Quarterly (Gandhi Memorial Peace Number), October, 1949, pp. 279-80. This number will be referred to hereafter as the *Peace Number.*

However, both drew their inspiration primarily from Indian traditions and culture, and from the people around them; yet they sought to imbibe what they considered the best in the cultures of others, and looked forward to a millennium devoid of unnatural barriers between peoples and peoples.[3] Both, in their own way, were intensely religious; while both hated ritualism, and worshipped man as the living God. They had profound pity for the poor and the persecuted, the depressed and the repressed, and readily revolted against tyranny and injustice in any form.[4] Both were eager to remove the barriers raised by privileges and property; yet both were reluctant to apply force for their abolition or fair distribution. They had great faith in the freedom and dignity of man; and hated the civilization that made a machine of him. They were liberals with faith, and socialists who believed in appeals to human sentiment.

They lived fairly long, their lives spanning a climacteric period of Indian history, and their sensitive minds were naturally concerned with the problems affecting and agitating their countrymen. But their responses, as expected, were often different. Gandhi, the leader of the people, had to face those problems rather closely, and saw those from the angle of an idealist in action. But the poetic vision of Tagore embraced the whole world, and he saw its problems and possibilities from a different height and angle. As a poet and philosopher, he normally lived in the world of the muses, but the echo of events around would sometimes disturb the dreamland, and then, like an ancient seer, the Great Sentinel[5] would wield his pen to warn and to advise. And, it was usually on such occasions that Tagore, the poet-philosopher of India and apostle of internationalism, would find himself ranged against Gandhi, the messiah of the Indian masses.

Tagore's first note of caution was expressed in a letter to Gandhi, dated 12 April 1919 (incidentally the day before the Jalianwalla-Bagh massacre

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[3] Tagore wrote to Andrews, early in March 1921, while crossing the Atlantic to the U.S.A., "When we protest against injustices hurled against India, we do so as men and not as Indians."

Also see Tagore's *A Vision of Indian History*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 45, and *Nationalism*, London, 1923.

Gandhi said: "I am wedded to India because I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world . . . . My religion has no geographical limits . . . . For me patriotism is the same as humanity . . . . I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India." *Peace Number*, p. 290.

Again, Gandhi could say during the dark days of the Battle of Britain: "I do not want England to be defeated or humiliated . . . . We are all tarred with the same brush, we are all members of the vast human family." *Harijan*, 29-9-1940.

[4] Even the poet presided over public meetings and led processions during the Anti-Partition Movement in Bengal, in 1905-07, and many of his songs inspired young men to face the police and brave the gallows. In May 1919, he renounced the coveted knighthood in protest against the brutal massacre at Jalianwalla-Bagh, and in late 1931 he came to Calcutta to preside over a protest meeting against police firing on political prisoners in jail at Hijli in the district of Midnapore, West Bengal. See also note no. 21.

[5] Replying to Tagore's criticism of the so-called fetish for the *charkha*, i.e. the spinning wheel, Gandhi referred to him as the Great Sentinel. *Young India*, 13-10-1921.

took place), where he warned the latter (when he gave the call for a country-wide cessation of work) against rousing popular passion, which might get out of control. He wrote: "Power in all its forms is irrational; it is like the horse that drags the carriage blindfolded. . . . Passive resistance is a force which is not necessarily moral in itself; it can be used against truth as well as for it. . . . I know your teaching is to fight against evil by the help of the good. But such a fight is for heroes and not for men led by the impulses of the moment."

But Gandhi, the practical idealist, had his own aims and objectives. His immediate aim was to rally and resuscitate the nation, stunned by unexpected use of force. Fear reigned everywhere, and Gandhi's primary task was to inspire self-confidence among his people and to remove their awe for the alien authority. Non-violent non-cooperation was his answer to the situation, as he saw it, and "*Swaraj* [6] in a year" was the slogan with which he sought to rouse his countrymen to united action. But to Tagore, the rationalist, such an appeal to emotion was revolting. He frankly said: "But when he talks of '*Swaraj* in a year' I fail to fall in with him . . . . When my nation has turned a deaf ear to the dictates of reason and good advice, and believes in the chimera of '*Swaraj* in a year' I cannot help entertain some fears for her." [7] To Tagore, the internationalist, who was then in the U.S.A. seeking and preaching East-West cooperation, and who, in the words of Gandhi, had "a horror for anything negative,"—the very term non-cooperation, particularly as it was then practised by the students in India, was repulsive. He gave expression to his innermost feeling when he said: "All humanity's greatest is mine. The infinite personality of man can only come from the magnificent harmony of all races." [8] Naturally, to him, "There is something undignified in the announcement of the non-cooperation movement." [9] He wrote to Andrews on 5 March 1921: "The idea of non-cooperation is political asceticism. Our students are bringing their offerings of sacrifices to what? Not to a fuller education, but to non-education. . . . I believe in the true meeting of the East and the West." A week later he again wrote: "We from the East have come to her [West] to learn whatever she has to teach us, for by doing so we hasten the fulfillment of this age. We know that the East also has her lessons to give, and she has her own responsibility of not allowing her light to be extinguished." [10] He again wrote on 10 May 1921: "The cry which has been raised today of rejecting Western culture only means the paralysing of our own power to give anything to the West." [11]

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[6] "*Swaraj*" in Sanskrit literally means self-government but actually stands for independence.

[7] Tagore, "Call of Truth," *Modern Review* (Calcutta Monthly), October, 1921.

[8] *Peace Number,* p. 290.

[9] Tagore to Andrews from New York, on 7-1-1921.

[10] *Letters to a Friend,* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1928), pp. 131-33.

[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 163-65.

But Gandhi was concerned, primarily, with arousing India, and transforming the lives and spirit of her common people. So he had little patience with the poet's anxiety over young people leaving schools and colleges. He was opposed to the prevailing literary education (that made one unrealistic and bookish) in general and to English education (to the neglect of their mother-tongue and own culture) in particular. The existing educational system in India, according to him, merely produced intellectual robots and social parasites, ignorant and contemptuous of their own people and heritage.

So to the poet's admonitions, Gandhi said: "I have never been able to make a fetish of literary training. My experience has proved to my satisfaction that literary training by itself adds not an inch to one's moral height, and that character-building is independent of literary training. . . . A government builds its prestige upon the apparent voluntary association of the governed. And if it was wrong to cooperate with the Government in keeping slaves, we are bound to begin with those institutions in which our association appeared to be most voluntary. The youth of a nation are its hope. I hold that, as soon as we discovered that the system of Government was wholly or mainly evil, it became sinful for us to associate our children with it. . . . I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. . . . It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth." [12]

Tagore might dream of brilliant minds drawing nourishment from the East and the West, and afflorescing in a free atmosphere into good citizens of the world. But to Gandhi, the spokesman of starving millions, the primary and immediate concern was how to meet their basic needs and unite the people in a common purpose. As the first step towards solving these problems he asked his countrymen to take up the spinning wheel.

But it was the spinning wheel that provided another occasion for controversy between these two giants. The common Indian is very familiar with the spinning wheel, and Gandhi sought to use it both as a rallying symbol for the Indian masses, and as a challenge to the British rule and the age of machines it has introduced. To him the machine civilization was evil incarnate. So he could say, "I would not shed a tear if there were no railroads in India." [13] He was equally sincere when he said, "I feel that if India will discard 'modern civilization' she can only gain by doing so." [14]

The poet too hated machine-civilization as something soul-killing. But his rejection, in this case, was less complete and more realistic.[15] He could not totally deny the blessings and the beneficial possibilities of man's control over nature. What, actually, he sought was a proper blending of the soul

[12] *Young India,* 1-6-1921, pp. 170-73.
[13] *Peace Number,* p. 291.
[14] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad, 1958), p. 17.
[15] *See* Tagore's *A Visit to Japan* and *Letters from Russia.*

and the steel. Science and technology were to serve man and his spirit instead of dominating his relations, attitudes, and values. That is partly why he was flabbergasted when Gandhi called upon his countrymen to burn foreign clothes and to spin daily to achieve *Swaraj*. The whole thing appeared to Tagore as very irrational and aimed at the credulousness of his ignorant countrymen. He wrote in indignation: "To one and all he simply says, 'Spin and weave, spin and weave. . . .' Is this the call of the New Age, to new creation? . . . Consider the burning of cloth heaped up before the very eyes of our motherhood, shivering and ashamed in her nakedness. . . . The question of using or refusing cloth of a particular manufacture belongs mainly to economic science." [16] Further, Tagore was opposed to any kind of routine-bound regimentation, that made the same demand from all. He sincerely believed that he and many like him could spend an hour more fruitfully for civilization with a pen and paper than with a spinning wheel. So he observed: "But where, by means of failure to acknowledge the differences in man's temperament it is in the wrong place, there thread can only be spun at the cost of a great deal of mind itself. Mind is no less valuable than cotton threads." [17]

To his charges Gandhi thus replied: "To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. . . . Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning wheel. . . . *Swaraj* has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. . . . I do want growth. I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. . . . It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth. I must confess that I do not draw a sharp distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. . . . Our non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-cooperation is with the system the English have established. . . . Our non-cooperation is a refusal to cooperate with the English administrators on their own terms. . . . The hungry millions ask for one poem—invigorating food." [18]

The poet returned to his attack on the *Charkha* again in September 1925. His attack, however, was more against the habit of uncritical obedience to authority and belief in short-cuts with the aid of magical symbols. He wrote: "This reliance on outward help is a symptom of slavishness, for no habit can more easily destroy all reliance on self. . . . And so it becomes necessary to restate afresh the old truth that the foundation of

[16] Tagore, "Call of Truth," *op. cit.*
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] Gandhi, "The Great Sentinel," *Young India,* 13-10-1921, pp. 324-26.

Swaraj cannot be based on any external conformity, but only on the internal union of hearts. If a great union is to be achieved, its field must be great likewise. . . . Nothing great can be gotten cheap. We only cheat ourselves when we try to acquire things that are precious with a price that is inadequate. . . . The *Charkha* is doing harm because of the undue prominence it has thus usurped, whereby it only adds fuel to the smouldering weakness that is eating into our vitals." [19]

The Mahatma's answer was: "I have indeed asked the famishing man or woman, who is idle for want of any work whatsoever, to spin for a living and the half-starved farmer to spin during his leisure hours to supplement his slender sources. If the Poet spins half an hour daily his poetry would gain richness. For it would then represent the poor man's wants and woes in a more forcible manner than now. The Poet thinks that the *Charkha* is calculated to bring about a deathlike sameness in the nation and thus imagining he would shun it if he could. The truth is that the *Charkha* is intended to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. . . . Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. . . . I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine; but I know it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes." [20]

Tagore, who was unflinchingly opposed to fetish for any kind of authority, faith or symbol, again lashed out at Gandhi, when the latter asserted that the practice of untouchability was mainly responsible for the earthquake in Bihar, in January 1934. Few have written so effectively on the dignity, nay the divinity, of labour, and few have rebuked their countrymen so harshly for practicing untouchability.[21] Still, he would not accept from Gandhi that untouchability, which was most rigidly practiced in South India, was the cause of the destructive earthquake in Bihar. He wrote: "It has caused me painful surprise to find Mahatma Gandhi accusing those, who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability, of having brought down God's vengeance upon certain parts of Bihar, evidently specially se-

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[19] *The Modern Review*, September, 1925, pp. 263-270.

[20] *Young India*, 5-11-1925, pp. 376-377.

[21] In his poem *Apamanita*, i.e., the insulted, Tagore says:

"O my hapless country, those whom you have insulted,
Their humiliation will drag you down to their level."

Again in his *Dhulamandir*, i.e., temple of dust, he says:

"He has gone where the tiller is ploughing the soil,
And someone is breaking stones for the road, all the twelve months."

Again he writes in his *Ebar Firao Moré*, i.e., let me now return:

Their heart wilted, withered and broken must be galvanized with new hope.
Beckoning them we must exhort, "lift up your heads and stand united
They before whom you quake in fear, quake more than you in guilt
They will take to their heels the hour you are roused."

lected for His desolating displeasure. It is all the more unfortunate because this kind of unscientific view of things is too readily accepted by a large section of our countrymen. . . . We, who are immensely grateful to Mahatmaji for inducing, by his wonderful inspiration, freedom from fear and feebleness in the minds of his countrymen, feel profoundly hurt when any word from his mouth may emphasize the elements of unreason in those very minds—unreason, which is a fundamental source of all blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect." [22]

Though Gandhi "instinctively felt that the earthquake was a visitation for the sin of untouchability," the actual social purpose of his assertion was made clear, when he said, "If my belief turns out to be ill-founded it will still have done good to me and those who believe with me.[23] Possibly, it was to emphasize the sin of untouchability that he said on another occasion: "If Indians have become the pariah of the Empire it is retributive justice, meted out to us by a just God." [24] Obviously, while Tagore was interested in providing rational and convincing explanations, Gandhi was primarily concerned with achieving the desired goal, social good.

Despite all their controversies, it was to Gandhi that Tagore turned when the Visva-Bharati was facing acute financial difficulty, towards the middle of the thirties. To the poet's letter, dated 12 September 1935, seeking his help, Gandhi feelingly replied, on 13 October, assuring him of his fullest cooperation, and it was due to his efforts that a few rich people presented the poet with sixty thousand Rupees only, on 27 March 1936, when the latter, then well over seventy, was touring North India with his troupe, staging dance recitals to collect money for his institution. Having solved his immediate financial problems, Gandhi requested Tagore not to go out again in his "begging missions" at that age. But he was disturbed to learn, in the beginning of 1937, that the poet was again preparing to set out for Ahmedabad to stage a couple of his dance-dramas. Gandhi, the ascetic-fighter could never understand an artist's attachment to beauty and creativity.[25] So he gave a very polite expression to his displeasure in his letter, dated 19 February 1937, requesting the poet not to go out in his "begging missions" again. This touched the sensitive poet, who in his reply, dated 26 February, charged Gandhi for accusing him without understanding

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[22] *Harijan,* 16-2-1934, p. 4.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] *Peace Number,* p. 290.

[25] Gandhi's attitude can be understood from his letter to Tagore's niece, Indira Devi Chowdhury, after his last visit to Santiniketan:

> "I have a suspicion that perhaps there is more of music than warranted by life, . . . The music of life is in danger of being lost in the music of the voice." Pyarelal, The *Santiniketan Pilgrimage* (Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad, 1958), p. 27.

[26] The poet's son, Rathindranath Tagore, wrote to Andrews on 17-10-1937:

> "Whenever we try to render one of his plays or operas he will begin composing new songs or write a new play, attend the rehearsals, and

the poet's mind.[26] The latter's reply to it, dated 2 March, seeking his Gurudeva's pardon, Tagore's letter inviting Gandhi to attend the opening ceremony of China Bhavan (centre for Chinese studies at Santiniketan), and his reply to it on 14 April, only bear proof of their deep love and respect for each other, which no misunderstanding or difference of opinion could really affect. Then, when early in 1939, a serious crisis appeared within the Indian National Congress after the election of Subhas Chandra Bose as its President at Tripuri (who was opposed by Gandhi's nominee, P. Sitaramaya), Tagore, then in his seventy-eighth year, boldly exerted himself in favour of the democratically elected president, and condemned the Pant Resolution,[27] that sought to compel the new president to choose his working committee with the consent of Gandhi himself. Tagore then wrote more than one letter to Gandhi to see that a showdown was avoided and justice was done.

Tagore could act like this because he was firmly convinced of their mutual attachment and understanding. When a year later, Gandhi came to Santiniketan to meet the ailing poet, a year before his death, the latter requested him to take care of his institution—his life's treasure—when he was dead and gone. And Gandhi, true to his word, came to Santiniketan in 1945, shortly after his release from jail, to aid and advise its inmates.

In fact, they had bouts of controversies over immediate issues and approach without experiencing any real difference. These controversies, though often quite serious, were primarily intellectual and stemmed from their own assessment of what was true and good. The basic unity of their thought and values enabled them to appreciate each other's purpose and personality, and gave even their heated dialogue a matchless dignity. It was because of this that Gandhi could say, replying to a question, during his last visit to Santiniketan in 1945: "I have found no real conflict between us. I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudeva and myself, but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none." [28]

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insist on accompanying the players. Is there anybody who can suppress the artist in him? It is no longer a question of money-raising, the artist in him is aroused and a passion, over which he has no control, leads him on . . . . There is nothing that keeps up his spirits (and his health) at Santiniketan as the atmosphere of art and music. Can we deprive him of his sustenance?"

[27] It is known by the name of the mover, Govind Ballabh Pant, who for many years after independence was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and then the Home Minister of the Government of India. He died in 1961.

[28] Pyarelal, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Santiniketan. Originally, it was the name of the house the poet's father, Devendranath, built in late 19th century, about a mile from the town of Bolpur. The poet started his experimental school there in 1901, and the community that grew up there came to be known by that name. Today it is almost a separate township, with its own post-office, bank, etc.
2. Visva-Bharati. It means universal education, i.e., a real university. It was formally established at Santiniketan, on 23 December 1918, and teaching according to its courses began in July 1919. In 1921, Tagore formed a trust, and handed over the institution to the public, what had hitherto been his personal property. In 1951, it was recognised as a statutory university, under the direct supervision of the University Grants Commission, with Nehru as its first Chancellor.
3. Andrews, Charles F. He came to Delhi as a protestant missionary teacher in the beginning of this century. But, it was in London that he first met Tagore, when the latter was reading out the *Gitanjali* to his English friends. He felt attracted to serve Tagore and his cause, gave up his denominational affiliations in 1914, and joined Tagore at Santiniketan. Tagore immediately sent him to Gandhi in South Africa with certain messages. Since then, till his death in 1940, he remained one of the staunchest friends of both, and served India through his speeches and writings more than any other foreigner.

GANDHI'S RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIA

NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS WHICH IS FACING MANKIND TODAY IS that of War. In this Atomic Age, positional warfare of the classical kind seems to have become temporarily outmoded. Perfection in atomic bombs is being used more for the sake of securing political advantages, while in many parts of the world, men have progressively lapsed into cruder and more primitive ways of killing their opponents, while guerrilla tactics have largely replaced the more conventional forms of warfare.

Along with this development on one side, there is proceeding, on the other, a more frantic, but sincere attempt, to build up a consensus that all sovereign States should surrender part of their sovereignty and take recourse to constitutional, legal modes of settling disputes in some kind of a world assembly, or, if possible, a world court.

This desire to settle points of dispute in a civil manner is more in evidence among nations like the U.S. or Russia, for perhaps they realize much more effectively than other nations the dangers that they will have to face if a full-scale atomic war breaks out in the world. Smaller nations, however, do not realize the dangers to the same extent. They have not enough arms of their own; and they have proved their fondness for toying with war, particularly when the supply of either arms or of air-force comes to them as a gift or a loan from more powerful patrons. Their hunger for power, or thirst for battle, remains unsatiated; and they are consequently tempted more by powerful weapons of destruction than those who have actually succeeded in perfecting them.

A large part of Asia has thus become an arena where many immaturely modernized societies are battling with one another for securing more arms; so that they can establish political power and consolidate the 'national' unity of scattered communities who have so long lived, more or less, in economic isolation from one another within the boundaries of their State. But besides this endeavor to establish a firm nationalism, there is also another idea which seems to be operating among a progressively growing section of the masses over this widespread area.

This is the demand for social justice; and it is obvious that, among the rising educated and partly westernized classes of Asia, there is an earnest desire to establish social and economic equality where people had hitherto been divided into rich and poor, land-owning and landless agricultural

classes, or where, under the domination of Western powers, large masses of men were torn out of their secluded self-sufficiency, and thrown into the whirlpool of international commercial markets in which they completely lost their political independence.

This underlying desire for national consolidation, freedom, and social justice has given rise to serious outbreaks of violence, in country after country in the Asian continent, which have in consequence been subjected to untold hardships and suffering. And, in many cases, the results of these violent outbreaks have been very far from those anticipated or desired. The masses have often been treated as pawns in a game played by others for the securement of power.

If we look at it from the broad perspective, more smoke appears to come out of these countries than fire. But the fact that smoke arises should itself prove to be an indication of the fire which burns within. Revolutionists may imagine that by blowing up the dying embers, flames would burst out once more in their full glory, and the Revolution will come. But who knows that a premature revolution may not also die out in the process? If the revolutionist believes that, eventually, victory will surely come to the toiling millions, then obviously he depends more upon faith than on reason. One can, of course, admit that if his faith is unshakable, that factor alone may help in turning the course of events in his favour, if he works with intelligence and determination.

But then, one must admit that this need of a faith, which sustains even when the embers of revolution throw up no more than volumes of smoke, has become a great necessity in large parts of the continent of Asia. It is as if there has grown up a demand for a *new religion* which is to take the place of the old, which is no longer able to grapple with the complexities of the times. And, our suggestion is that this new faith has been growing up in one country after another round the name of Marx and of Lenin.

Among other countries, India has also been subject to some of the forces described above. There is the same demand for social justice, the same growth of a new faith, which have been leading some parts of India into paths of violence and revolution. But, fortunately for us in India, we have seen, in our own time, the rise of another revolutionary force under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The social or economic order for which he worked is no less revolutionary in character than that of the most ardent Marxian. But there was one difference which marked off the Gandhian method completely from the Marxian way, as we see it in operation in our land.

While comparing his ideals with those of Socialists, Gandhi once wrote about himself in the following terms:

> According to me the economic constitution of India, and for that matter that of the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient

> work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air or water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today, not only in this unhappy land, but in other parts of the world too.[1]

Again:

> Violence is no monopoly of any one party. I know Congressmen who are neither socialists nor communists, but who are frankly devotees of the cult of violence. Contrariwise, I know socialists and communists who will not hurt a fly, but who believe in the universal ownership of the instruments of production. I rank myself as one among them.[2]

On another occasion, he wrote: "I am essentially a non-violent man, and I believe in war bereft of every trace of violence." [3]

This leads us to the question of the difference which exists between the method of war and that of non-violence, as Gandhi tried to develop it during a long course of its application in India for the establishment of political, social and economic justice.

If we have understood the Communist viewpoint rightly, it appears that they hold that the power of the State forms the keystone in any social structure. It is through it that the exploiters consolidate and maintain their power of depriving the working classes of a large portion of the fruits of their labor. Revolution must therefore be planned to win State power, for the sake of placing it under the dictatorship of the proletariat. If the proletariat are not sufficiently organized, then the Communist Party must act on their behalf. They must capture the State, and, first of all, liquidate all the forces which act against the interests of the working classes. When this task of liquidation is accomplished, then the State will become progressively superfluous and its place will gradually be taken over by the working people's own voluntary organizations which do not depend on force for their continuance; and thus the State will wither away in the course of time.

Gandhi, however, felt that, taking human nature as it is, the State will continue to remain as far as he could see into the future. The task of liquidating the power of the State must therefore begin right here and now. In India, he did organize a fairly large number of voluntary organizations for the sake of building up the economic strength of the agriculturists, for the spread of universal education, the eradication of social segregation, and so on. Such tasks were not to wait until the State had come under the control of the masses. And he firmly believed, that while some men and

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[1] Bose, Nirmal Kumar, *Selections From Gandhi.* Ahmabad, Navajivan Publishing Co., 1968. p. 38.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

women might and should be involved in non-violent non-cooperation, intended to 'regulate authority when abused,' millions must devote themselves to the constructive task of building up, at least, the rudiments of an exploitation-free society. That model would undoubtedly expand rapidly when the power of the State came into the hands of those who represented the masses, and gave primacy to the interests of the latter. But the beginning had to be, and could be made, as we have said, even under the difficulties of existing conditions, when power was largely denied to them.

The reason why he thought that the Constructive Programme, as he called it, was as important and vital an element in the revolution as direct action, in the shape of non-violent resistance, was two-fold. All men were not going to be fighters in the front line, even if the war were to be a non-violent one. Millions of sympathetic people could, however, work in the second line, and engage in building up the model of a non-violent society of the future. He thus wanted to harness the active energy of the masses to the maximum extent. Secondly, Gandhi felt that, if power came, even by means of civil disobedience of a chosen section of the population, it would tend to remain limited to this group alone, and would not diffuse among the rest of the population.

Gandhi's views regarding the transference of power from one class to another exclusively through constitutional means was also of the same nature. He was more interested in seeing power dispersed in as large a fraction of the masses as possible. And he thought that this could be best achieved through an intelligent combination of Constructive Activity and of Civil Disobedience, which should come when the time was opportune for it.

The reason why there is a certain amount of frustration in India is that today, all the plans of our political parties have tended to rely very largely upon the State machinery for bringing about necessary social and economic change. Those who rule the States, or are in-charge of the Central Government, believe that all that has to be done is to reform and utilize the State for the establishment of a socialistic pattern of economy, which is the accepted goal of the Indian Republic. Those who are not in power feel that, if they, *i.e.* their Party, were at the helm of affairs, they would set everything right.

And, guided as the masses are by one political Party or another, they have been led into an extreme reliance upon the State and the governmental machinery for the redress of all their grievances.

This passion for acquiring the power of the State is the new superstition which seems to have enveloped India, as it also seems to have overpowered some of the neighboring countries in a like manner.

The Gandhian way offers an alternative. As we said earlier, when there was a genuine and widespread demand for social justice, Gandhi did not merely try to steer it in the direction of a quick revolution. Instead

of proposing quicker political action, he sought to organize and educate the people, until he felt once more that a crisis had arisen which could only be dealt with by militant but fully non-violent non-cooperation means.

Today, the violence, or its negative counterpart, namely, frustration or a feeling of utter helplessness, is choking our lungs like the smoke which rises from a badly lit fire. Gandhi showed us the way, in his time, to creatively and constructively utilize the fire which burns within, so that we would never be invaded by hopelessness and lack of faith.

Obviously, if he had been alive today, the nature of his Constructive Programme, and even the character of non-violent resistance, if necessary, would have been intelligently designed by him in order to adapt them to the conditions prevailing today. That task yet remains as a challenge and an opportunity for those who have, through experience, retained a faith in the Gandhian way.

And this is why many of us believe firmly in the increased relevance of the Gandhian method, not only in India, but in all lands where the masses have yet to win their freedom from inequality and injustice under which they have laboured so long.

THE GANDHI CENTENARY: MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

MARTIN DEMING LEWIS

THIS IS THE YEAR OF THE GANDHI CENTENARY, THE ONE-HUNDREDTH anniversary of the birth of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in 1869. Gandhi's leadership of Indian nationalism has brought him worldwide acclaim as the architect of India's freedom, "the Father of the Indian Nation." Going beyond this, his more ardent followers have seen him as nothing less than a new Messiah, come to save the world from its ancient heritage of conflict and exploitation, hatred and violence, bloodshed and war.

Both in India and elsewhere, elaborate festivities have been planned to mark the occasion of the centenary. The anniversary celebrations actually started on October 2, 1968 (which would have been Gandhi's ninety-ninth birthday), and they have been gathering momentum ever since. They had barely begun, however, when the New Delhi correspondent of *The New York Times* reported: "Already there are those who think that Gandhi's memory and thought are being more abused than honored in the tremendous outpouring of words." In his dispatch, he cited the establishment of a special telephone service in New Delhi by which callers could listen to a brief, faint recording of Gandhi's own voice. "Unfortunately," he observed,

> the recording is so old that different callers come up with different versions of what he is saying . . . . The difficulty in understanding Gandhi's message appears symbolic of the significance that many Indians are finding in the anniversary. India, they are saying, stopped understanding Gandhi's message even before he died . . . .[1]

It is a commonplace to observe that India's course since independence has been markedly at variance with Gandhi's ideas and ideals.[2] Yet if Gandhi's meaning has been elusive, it is not for any lack of literature on the subject. The sheer bulk of Gandhiana is staggering. A bibliography published fourteen years ago listed more than three thousand books and articles on Gandhi in the English language alone. Since that time, their number has grown steadily. Even then, however, the compiler of that bibliography could boldly claim that more had been written about Gandhi than any other personality in history "except perhaps Jesus Christ."[3]

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[1] Joseph Lelyveld, in *The New York Times,* Oct. 6, 1968.

[2] There are many places one may go for an exploration of this theme. As good a starting point as any is Hugh Tinker, "Magnificent Failure? . . . The Gandhian Ideal in India," in his book *Re-orientations: Essays on Asia in Transition* (New York, 1965), pp. 136-154.

[3] Jagdish Saran Sharma, *Mahatma Gandhi: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Delhi, 1955), p. xv.

Gandhi's own voluminous writings have been treated virtually as scripture. They have been published and republished in innumerable collections and anthologies, some of which might best be described as devotional manuals. One intriguing example that appeared a few years ago in India bears the impressive title, *Glorious Thoughts of Gandhi, Being a Treasury of about Ten Thousand Valuable and Inspiring Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, Classified under Four Hundred Subjects.*[4] At the opposite end of the publishing spectrum, a definitive edition of Gandhi's *Collected Works* is now being prepared by the Publications Division of the Government of India. It encompasses the entire body of his writings—books, articles, speeches, and letters—and it is expected to run to seventy or more volumes by the time it is complete.[5]

During the Mahatma's lifetime, his transformation into hero-symbol and myth had already begun. Now, twenty-one years after his assassination in 1948, the Gandhi myth has come of age. It is hardly surprising that there are some incongruous aspects to the centenary celebrations:

> Like national heroes elsewhere, the Mahatma has given rise to a small industry producing Gandhi calendars and bookmarks, greeting cards and badges, busts and statues in all sizes, made of marble, wood, clay, metal, or papier-mache. The Information Ministry has been releasing old Gandhi texts, as if he were still touring the country making speeches and publishing sheaths of Gandhian "Thoughts for the Day," as if it meant to out-Mao the Chinese.[6]

Returning to the India he had known many years before, the English writer Malcolm Muggeridge finds the centenary little more than a massive exercise in hypocrisy, in which

> millionaires may be expected to proclaim their dedication to the life of poverty Gandhi recommended, soldiers covered with decorations to echo piously his advocacy of non-violence, industrialists to exalt the hand spinning-wheel he saw as a symbol of resistance to the spread of industrialization, birth control zealots to pay their tribute to *Bramacharya,* or total abstinence, which he preached and practiced.

Muggeridge argues that in India today, Gandhi's name "is being used in the crudest possible manner to promote the electoral fortunes of the Congress Party and its candidates." In support of his contention, he cites the attitude of a respected veteran of India's independence movement, C. Rajagopalachari, an old intimate of Gandhi who subsequently broke with his

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[4] N. B. Sen (ed.), *Glorious Thoughts of Gandhi, Being a Treasury of about Ten Thousand Valuable and Inspiring Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, Classified under Four Hundred Subjects* (New Delhi, 1965).

[5] *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi, 1958-). Volume 27 appeared late in 1968, a decade after the first volume had been published; it covers only the two months of May and June, 1925, so that presumably it will be some time before the end is reached.

[6] Joseph Lelyveld, "India Finds Gandhi Inspiring and Irrelevant," *The New York Times Magazine,* May 25, 1969.

erstwhile Congress colleagues and became one of the founders of the conservative Swatantra Party. Rajaji, says Muggeridge, now looks upon the current anniversary celebrations "with a baleful eye." "Outside India," in his view," it may be permissible to praise the Mahatma's dedicated life and teaching, but inside India, where his principles have been travestied and his guidance ignored, silence would be the better part." [7]

Rajaji's discomfort at the centenary observances in India is quite understandable, yet his willingness to be tolerant of similar activities elsewhere seems misplaced. Wherever they are held, such celebrations by their very nature are likely to be little more than reiterations *ad nauseam* of the kind of uncritical adulation that characterizes most of the existing literature on Gandhi. Indians, at least, may be better equipped than foreigners to detect debased coinage that passes for Gandhian gold, since it is their own national experience that is involved. It is outside of India that the Gandhi myth flourishes in its most unchecked and flagrant form.

The appropriate response to the occasion of the centenary should neither be worshipful praise nor embarrassed silence. What is needed instead of either one is a critical re-examination of Gandhi's historic role in which searching questions are asked, and easy answers avoided.

To see the dimensions of the problem, we may begin by taking note of the popular image of Gandhi, an image that has become firmly embedded in the layman's understanding of modern history. This is the notion that Gandhi's career was one of the great success stories of our times. It has been given classic expression by one of Gandhi's American admirers the Reverend John Haynes Holmes, in a book written several years after the Mahatma's death. Recalling his first meeting with Gandhi, in 1931, Dr. Holmes remarks (with obvious reference to the unprepossessing physical appearance of the little man in a loincloth):

> This man a conqueror? The idea seemed completely ludicrous. Yet in the next sixteen years he had defeated England, without violence or bloodshed, and India was free. If there is any parallel in history to this amazing achievement, I do not chance to know what it is.[8]

The same note of triumph is sounded by an Englishman, Geoffrey Ashe, in his new biography entitled *Gandhi: A Study in Revolution.* Ashe opens his discussion with the observation that "everybody on earth has been affected by Gandhi. Because of him the British Empire ceased to exist as such, and when his own people threw Europe off, the rest of Asia and Africa followed." [9]

Such expansive and exaggerated tributes oversimplify history to the point of gross distortion. By doing so, they debase our understanding not

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[7] Malcolm Muggeridge, "The Mahatma Machine," *The Observer Review* (London), May 11, 1969.

[8] John Haynes Holmes, *My Gandhi* (New York, 1953), p. 37.

[9] Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi: A Study in Revolution* (London, 1968), p. vii.

only of Gandhi himself, but also of the historical process that brought India its independence. In that process, Gandhi obviously played a prominent role, yet it was by no means the role of a triumphant conqueror. Indeed, some recent Indian writers have been harshly critical of Gandhi's leadership of the nationalist movement.

One striking example is Dr. R. C. Majumdar, a distinguished scholar who is virtually the dean of Indian historians. Dr. Majumdar declares that "the rise of the Gandhi cult . . . has obscured men's vision about true history." While paying his respects to Gandhi as a saint and a man of God, he bluntly attacks the image of Gandhi as a successful politician. Gandhi, he writes, was "lacking in both political wisdom and political strategy," and "far from being infallible, [he] committed serious blunders, one after another, in pursuit of some Utopian ideals and methods which had no basis in reality." Majumdar calls it "a travesty of truth" to give Gandhi sole credit for India's freedom, and "sheer nonsense" to say that Gandhi's technique of *satyagraha* was "the unique weapon by which it was achieved." [10]

In his book *Indian Independence in Perspective,* Sasadhar Sinha goes further still. He not only pronounces Gandhi a "a dismal political failure," but even suggests that "India would perhaps have achieved her freedom earlier and with less heartache and dislocation in her social and economic life" if it had not been for the peculiarities of Gandhi's approach to politics. For Sinha, the most disastrous aspect of Gandhi's leadership lay in his repeated failure "to carry the logic of mass action to its ultimate conclusion, namely a constitutional settlement with the British at the point of its maximum impact." This failure, he argues, "unnecessarily delayed Indian freedom, and by delaying it, created or aggravated other problems." Furthermore, he contends that

> it is a complete misreading of the history of the Indian national struggle for freedom to say that violence played no part in hastening India's liberation from foreign rule. Contemporary official history and historians are, of course, expected to be silent on this question, for they are largely concerned with proving a thesis, that India achieved her freedom through a non-violent struggle under Gandhian leadership and that everything began and ended with the Mahatma and his loyal followers.[11]

The central complaint of both Majumdar and Sinha is that during Gandhi's two great campaigns of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, in 1920-22 and 1930-32, he deliberately refrained from pressing his advantage against the British, and chose instead to blunt the force of Indian

[10] R. C. Majumdar, *Three Phases of India's Struggle for Freedom* (Bombay, 1961), p. 40; *History of the Freedom Movement in India,* vol. III (Calcutta, 1963), pp. xviii-xxiii. Extended extracts from these works, together with a wide variety of other interpretative assessments of Gandhi (both favorable and critical) are reprinted in a volume edited by the present writer, entitled *Gandhi: Maker of Modern India?* (Boston, 1965).

[11] Sasadhar Sinha, *Indian Independence in Perspective* (Bombay, 1964), pp. 2, 7, 54, 59, 120.

nationalism by suspending the campaigns without tangible reward. Still, both men give Gandhi full credit for his achievement in arousing mass action against the British Raj, on a far wider scale than had ever happened before.

By contrast, however, it is equally possible to interpret Gandhi's campaigns as "negative and destructive movements" which "delayed the advent of Swaraj by about fifteen years." This is the argument put forward by Kanji Dwarkadas, an ardent follower of Mrs. Annie Besant, who claims in his recently-published memoirs that "India would have been a responsible self-governing Dominion, a partner in the British Commonwealth, by 1932 or 1933" if it had listened to the advice of Mrs. Besant and played the constitutional game, rather than following Gandhi into the wilderness of non-cooperation! [12] In somewhat similar vein a British historian of India, Sir Percival Griffiths, has dismissed Gandhi's two great campaigns as "sterile" affairs that had little if any effect on the achievement of independence. Griffiths asserts that "the consistent British purpose (in India) was the gradual development of self-governing institutions." As he sees it, the only area of disagreement between the British government and the Indian nationalists was the timing of each successive constitutional advance. Since none of Gandhi's campaign can be shown to have speeded up the British time-table, he concludes that "it is doubtful if non-cooperation or its succcessor, civil disobedience, advanced self-government by a single day." [13]

Preposterous as this argument may seem, it is a forcible reminder that—at least in outward form—India's constitutional evolution from the First World War right down to the transfer of power in 1947 remained totally unaffected by Gandhi's activities. In 1935, it is true, a new Government of India Act emerged from the legislative mills of Westminster and was adopted by the British Parliament. It had obviously been shaped as the British answer to nationalist agitation, but it came not as a concession to nationalist demands for independence but as an ingeniously-constructed mechanism to fortify and perpetuate British control.

Gandhi's final effort at organized civil disobedience came during the Second World War, when he launched the so-called "Quit India" movement in 1942. In terms of its immediate effects, it can only be described as a fiasco. It was promptly and ruthlessly suppressed by the authorities. The Congress leadership was jailed, and for the remainder of the war, the British continued firmly in control. It was only in 1945 that negotiations began to break the stalemate, and the initiative that was taken to begin these negotiations came not from Gandhi or the Congress, but from the British Government itself.

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[12] Kanji Dwarkadas, *India's Fight for Freedom, 1913-1937: An Eyewitness Story* (Bombay, 1966), p. 459.

[13] Sir Percival Griffiths, *The British Impact on India* (London, 1963), pp. 312, 329; *Modern India* (New York, 1957), p. 76.

The eventual outcome of these negotiations, of course, was the partitioning of India in 1947 and the transfer of power to the two new states of India and Pakistan. It is tempting, perhaps, to see this as Gandhi's final triumph. Indeed, this is the basic rationale for the popular image of Gandhi's success, on the theory that all's well that ends well.

However, it is a risky proposition to give Gandhi's strategy and tactics any major share of the credit for this ultimate British decision to withdraw. Obviously, one part of the picture was the whole history of Gandhi's earlier campaigns, and the pent-up frustrations they had created. But there were numerous other factors as well. At one extreme, there had been the patient activity of the Indian Liberals, the political heirs of the pre-Gandhian "Moderate" nationalists. Throughout the Gandhian era, these men had loyally cooperated with the British authorities in working for the constitutional mechanisms of the 1919 and 1935 Government of India Acts, in the expectation that the British would thus be convinced that Indians were indeed capable of running their own affairs. At the other extreme, there had been a persistent undercurrent of militant terrorist violence. Indeed, during Gandhi's abortive "Quit India" movement in 1942, this terrorism had come closer to the surface than most Gandhians have been willing to admit.

During the Second World War there had also been the dramatic (if unpalatable) episode of the Indian National Army that Subhas Bose had organized under Japanese sponsorship. The example of these Indians who had taken guns in their hands to fight against the British Empire was not lost on other Indians who perforce had remained on the British side.

Finally, the Indian burgeoisie had grown in maturity and assertiveness between the First and the Second World War. It was no longer willing simply to share the crumbs from Britain's table, nor was it bashful about pointing to the dangerous potential that was inherent in the incipient radicalism of Indian workers and peasants. At the same time, the British government had to face its own problems at home, and weigh carefully the political as well as the military costs that would be involved in any attempt to prolong its rule over India.

All of these influences came together in the final British decision to hand over power to the two new states of India and Pakistan. Still, the crucial thing to remember about that decision is the fact that it was a British decision. It can only be understood if it is seen as the outcome of a close calculation of comparative advantage on the part of the British government, a calculation in which the controlling factor was the drastically new situation that had been created by the Second World War.

For Gandhi himself, the form and shape of the transfer of power came not as his ultimate triumph, but as a bitter defeat. His basic purpose had never been simply a change in India's political status. Back in 1909, when he was already forty years old, he had written that "if British rule were

replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better off." [14] This statement might well be taken as the key to his entire political career. His deepest purpose was nothing less than the spiritual regeneration of mankind. He sought to bring about a reformation of society and man, in India, in England, and if possible, everywhere on earth. The world that Gandhi envisioned, and the world for which he had worked, was to be a world organized in conformity with his own ideals of simplicity, harmony, truth, and love.

Now, in 1947, India had won her independence, but it was not the independence of Gandhi's dreams. There was a profound significance to Gandhi's refusal to take part in the independence celebrations of August 15, 1947. It revealed his own deep disillusionment at the India he had helped to make. The sharpest blow of all was the failure to preserve the unity of India. Gandhi saw the partitioning of the sub-continent along religious lines as nothing less than the vivisection of India, and the repudiation of everything he had worked for during thirty long years. As if this was not bad enough in itself, the actual transfer of power took place amidst the most ghastly scenes of violence and butchery, a frenzied explosion of mutual hatreds as Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs turned on one another in an orgy of looting, rape, and cold-blooded murder. All told, more than half a million Indians lost their lives, not in fighting against the British but in fighting amongst themselves. Faced with this fact, it is a cruel jest to credit Gandhi's leadership with victory. His gospel of non-violence and love may have prevented a frontal assault on the British Raj—and the possibility of Independence at an earlier date—but it failed to have any effect at the time it was needed most.

Gandhi had resisted the decision for partition almost to the very end, but events had passed out of his control. The Congress leaders who accepted partition were men who had literally grown up under his own political tutelage, but they now listened to him no longer. Ironically, however (though Gandhi himself may never have realized it), the decision for partition was taken in circumstances that were in considerable part the outgrowth of his own strategy and tactics over the years. It once was fashionable to lay the blame for partition solely on the twin "devils" of Muslim League intransigence and British willingness to "divide and rule." Today, it is generally agreed, even by some of Gandhi's admirers,[15] that the kind of leadership Gandhi had given to the nationalist movement played a significant role in making the partition of India inevitable.

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[14] Quoted in D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi,* vol. I (Delhi, 1960), p. 107.

[15] See, for example, P. D. Kaushik, *The Congress Ideology and Programme, 1920-47: Ideological Foundations of Indian Nationalism During the Gandhian Era* (Bombay, 1964), pp. 321-325; Indira Rothermund, *The Philosophy of Restraint: Mahatma Gandhi's Strategy and Indian Politics* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 98-115.

This may seem hard to understand, in view of Gandhi's persistent efforts to promote what he called "heart unity" between Hindus and Muslims. The root of the problem, however, was that he had taken the communal question at face value as a religious issue, and had failed to see how it was intertwined with issues of economics, politics, and social stratification. He had urged Hindus and Muslims to love each other, while ignoring the political and socio-economic bases of communal tension.

Some insight into the difficulties that developed in later years can be gained by recalling Gandhi's support of the Khilafat movement in 1920. That movement was begun by Muslim religious leaders in India as a protest against the treatment of the defeated Ottoman Empire in the peace settlement after the First World War. In particular, it was a protest against the way the Ottoman sultan, the Caliph of Islam, had been deprived of his sovereignty over some of his former non-Turkish territories. The Khilafat issue had the twin virtues of being anti-British, and of having a powerful emotional appeal for religiously-oriented Muslims. Its critical defect was that it was utterly irrelevant to the real issues that Indians faced in their own country. Indeed, the movement could even be considered anti-nationalist in its implications for India, since it implied an extraterritorial allegiance on the part of Indian Muslims, rather than a bond of common interest with their Hindu compatriots.

Despite all this, Gandhi chose to make the Khilafat cause one of the central issues of his non-cooperation campaign. In 1920, he stated quite crudely: "By helping the Mohammedans of India at a critical moment in their history, I want to buy their friendship." [16] It was a serious miscalculation. As one Indian historian has recently pointed out, by accepting the Muslim divines who made up the Khilafat leadership as the real spokesmen for Muslim India, Gandhi "lost contact with the slowly emerging group of English-educated Muslim middle class, whose differences with the Hindus were not scriptural but concerned government jobs." [17] Fatefully, one of these men was Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who a quarter of a century later would become Gandhi's nemesis as the leader of the new nation of Pakistan.

It is true that the Khilafat movement produced a temporary alliance of Muslims and Hindus, but it was an alliance on the most shaky of all possible foundations. In 1924, the caliphate itself was abolished by Turkish Muslims, under the revolutionary regime of Kemal Ataturk, and even before this happened, Gandhi himself had called off the non-cooperation campaign when it had threatened to pass beyond the limits he wished to set for it. During the years that followed, the breach between Hindus and Muslims grew steadily wider. There were many reasons for the failure of the Indian National Congress to win and hold Muslim support, but part of the res-

[16] M. K. Gandhi, *Young India, 1919-1922* (New York, 1924), p. 167.
[17] A. K. Majumdar, *Advent of Independence* (Bombay, 1963), p. 94.

ponsibility, at least, must be borne by Gandhi himself. His use of Hindu religious and moral concepts to carry a nationalist message certainly strengthened the Congress appeal for the Hindu masses; at the same time, it could only weaken it for Muslims. Finally, the repeated failures of Gandhi's strategy to produce any tangible political result undoubtedly contributed to deteriorating Hindu-Muslim relations, as political frustration found an outlet in communal violence.

The ultimate tragedy of Gandhi's career was that his leadership of Indian nationalism was successful in bringing results he did not want, while it was a failure in terms of his own most cherished ideals. This can be seen in the developments that led to the partitioning of India; it can also be seen in the transformation of the Indian National Congress into an effective political machine.

Here, too, Gandhi's triumph was his defeat. Early in 1948, when India had been an independent nation for less than six months, Gandhi drafted a statement declaring that "the Congress in its present shape and form . . . has outlived its use." [18] He wanted to see it dissolved as a political party, and transformed instead into an agency of social service for village uplift. Needless to say, his advice was never taken seriously. It was not for any such quixotic purpose that Congress politicians had worked so long to secure political power.

Just one day after Gandhi had prepared this statement, he was assassinated. The tragedy was an ironic climax to the manifold contradictions of Gandhi's career, since his murderer was a Hindu fanatic who felt that Gandhi's solicitude for Muslims had been a betrayal of Hinduism.

Any serious effort to evaluate Gandhi's role in the history of modern India must reckon with the issues that have just been discussed. It is not enough simply to praise Gandhi for the moral or spiritual grandeur of his ideas, as has been done so many times over by his worshipful admirers. Men who enter political waters must be judged by political results.

Yet in attempting a political judgment on Gandhi, it is far easier to pose questions than it is to provide answers. As we have seen, the popular image of Gandhi's success as a political strategist and tactician can be and has been challenged. Yet those who criticize Gandhi's leadership of Indian nationalism often build their case on certain assumptions that are dubious at best.

On the one hand, it has been argued that Gandhi led the nationalist movement into a blind alley when he turned it away from constitutionalism in 1920. Those who argue this way (like Kanji Dwarkadas, for example) are assuming that nationalist cooperation with the 1919 Government of India Act would shortly have led to the granting of further and more

[18] Quoted in Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, vol. VIII, p. 283.

meaningful concessions. Such an argument would seem to rest on an overly generous estimate of British intentions.

Something far more powerful than oratory in the Council chambers was needed to shake the hold that Britain still had over India in the years between the two World Wars. Only the most myopic reading of history would permit us to agree with Sir Percival Griffiths, in his view that the 1919 Act and its sequel in 1935 were just preparatory steps leading toward an inevitable transfer of power that was supposedly inherent in long-standing British policy. Gandhi's biographer Louis Fischer sounds a far more realistic note with his pithy comment that "the British, through the years, yielded as much of the appearance of power as circumstances required and as little of its substance as conditions permitted." [19]

The alternative argument, of course, is that Gandhi's leadership was defective because he failed to take full advantage of the mass support he aroused with his non-cooperation and civil disobedience campaigns. Yet this asks us to make of Gandhi a different man than he actually was. Gandhi's approach to politics was laden with mysticism and religiosity, in contrast to other nationalist figures who were more conventionally oriented toward a struggle for tangible political gains. Yet it was precisely Gandhi's mysticism and religiosity that enabled him to evoke the support he did. One cannot have it both ways.

Furthermore, this line of argument assumes that India in 1920 was really ripe for revolution, since this is what would have been involved. Perhaps a more determined and politically-oriented kind of leadership could have succeeded in forcing Britain to her knees. The Irish did it; why not the Indians? Yet the hidden assumption here is that nationalism in India in 1920—or even 1930—was a sufficiently cohesive force to override the manifold divisions of religion, caste, language, and region. This is doubtful, to say the least.

The establishment of British rule in India, from its very beginnings in the eighteenth century, had only been possible because of the absence within Indian society of national consciousness and cohesion. The formation in 1885 of the Indian National Congress did not mean that India was yet a nation, in any sociological sense. It was simply the assertion of an aspiration, a hope and belief that there *should* be an Indian nation.

Initially, this aspiration was held only by a small group of Westernized, English-speaking Indian intellectuals and professional men. Over the years, however, as nationalist agitation continued, the base of "national" sentiment broadened. Surendranath Banerjee, one of the pioneer leaders of Congress, captured the sense of what was happening in the apt title of his autobio-

[19] Louis Fischer, *Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World* (New York, 1954), p. 62.

graphy, *A Nation in the Making.*[20] Yet the Indian "nation" remained only an aspiration. This was partly because British rule provided no mechanism through which that aspiration could be realized; it was also because the divisive forces of language and caste, religion and region remained more significant than any awareness of common nationality.

Gandhi's crucial contribution to the development of nationalism was to make it a mass phenomenon. However, in the India of Gandhi's day, it was only possible for this to happen by appealing to strata of Indian society that were still emmeshed in traditional ideals and social patterns, strata that had hitherto been touched only to a limited degree by secularizing, modernizing, and "nationalizing" influences. This was where a leader like Gandhi, whose appeal was heavily weighted with traditional religious concepts and symbols, could make his greatest impact. Yet it was inevitable that this very use of tradition would dilute and distort the content of nationalism. Thus, the very characteristics of Gandhi's leadership which made him so effective were responsible as well for introducing new complications into the historical process by which an Indian "nation" was slowly taking shape.

It is possible, of course, that another kind of leadership might have succeeded in avoiding these complications. It is permissible to imagine a situation in which a sense of national unity might have been forged out of violent conflict and upheaval against foreign rule. Yet we can only imagine this, for there is no evidence that this was about to happen in the India of 1920. And if we let our imaginations run along these lines, we must also allow for the possibility that India's British rulers would have succeeded in defeating such a movement, either by brute force or by diverting it into internecine conflict. Once we venture onto the uncharted seas of the historical "if," it is impossible to know where to stop.

It may be more fruitful to content ourselves with an attempt to assess what actually happened, rather than to speculate about what might have been. In doing so, however, we must then reckon with yet another line of argument, the interpretation put forward by Gandhi's left-wing and Marxist critics as to the objective effect of Gandhi's strategy and tactics.[21] Its essential thrust is that Gandhi's leadership served not only to arouse the Indian masses into action against the British Raj, but also to keep that mass participation safely under middle-class control, so as to avoid any possibility that it might lead into a dangerously revolutionary situation that could threaten privileged interests in India itself. As with all other summary

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[20] Sir Surendranath Banerjee, *A Nation in the Making, Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Public Life* (London, 1925).

[21] The fullest expression is to be found in E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *The Mahatma and the Ism* (New Delhi, 1959); a somewhat more sympathetic assessment of Gandhi from a Marxist viewpoint is Hiren Mukerjee, *Gandhiji: A Study* (New Delhi, 1960).

assessments of Gandhi's role, this interpretation must be given careful scrutiny in the light of the actual pattern of events, and this is a task that goes well beyond the limits of what is possible in this brief article.

Yet it is significant that the central point of the argument has been confirmed by no less an authority than G. D. Birla, the millionaire Indian industrialist. In a letter written in 1932 to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India in the British cabinet, Birla insisted to Sir Samuel that "Gandhiji is the greatest force on the side of peace and order. He alone is responsible for keeping the left wing in India in check."[22]

It would hardly be fair to suggest that Gandhi was consciously letting himself be used to protect the wealth and privileges of Indian capitalists. Surely, he must have felt that he was making use of their support for his own purposes, to further his own vision of social harmony and the trusteeship for the common good. Yet in 1942, when Louis Fischer asked him whether Congress policies were affected by the fact "that Congress gets its money from the moneyed interests," Gandhi conceded that "it creates a silent debt."[23] In such a situation, historians can hardly escape the responsibility of asking who succeeded in using whom.

Obviously, there are many other dimensions to Gandhi's career which would also need to be examined for a fully-rounded assessment. Even to deal thoroughly with the issues touched on here would require adding yet another book to the already mountainous body of Gandhian literature. Still, perhaps enough has been said to justify the title of this article. The focus of the Gandhi centenary should be on questions, not answers. Otherwise, it will simply become an empty exercise in hero-worship.

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[22] G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma* (Bombay, 1953), p. 57.
[23] Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 41-43.

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