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ORIGIN OF THE CONTROVERSY
Any action or plan of action and therefore any method of inquiry aims at some purpose, goal or end. To achieve that end human beings need to organise themselves into a society which conforms to a value-based conceptual framework of any action or plan of action. This value-based framework may sometimes be explicit but most of the time is implicit. However, there is no such unified single framework, instead there are a host of competing frameworks; each staking its claim to regulate and organise the society. The competing frameworks carry their own visualised goals, consequences or ends and consideration of means to attain them. In other words, man imagines and speculates the ends, means, and the interrelation between them bringing the whole issue under the philosophical discourse. This philosophical discourse of ends and means and their inter-relation either helps to understand the problem or leads to the frustration of the organising practice of man.

A discourse on ends and means concerns everyone in the way the terms are used to connote ‘good’ and ‘bad’, which touches our concerns here. For instance, it is said that we may not use bad means in order to achieve a good end. When some theorists says that the end justifies the means, although the charge is often more political than philosophical, as we will see...
later, these theorists are accused of being Machiavellian or being tainted with 'Jesuit' morality.

The term 'means' is ordinarily understood not as a separate category with its criteria of determination but as intertwined in an inseparable way from the 'ends' that may be generated. 'Means' is the engagement of a subject with the intention of bringing about certain 'ends'. Therefore, it may be argued that 'means' cannot be treated normatively in isolation but only conjointly with 'ends', which ordinarily signifies intended or proposed purpose, goal or aim of a person or group of persons.

However, the terms 'purpose', 'goal' or 'aim' are used interchangeably and may sometimes even be used as synonyms. The lexical meaning of the term 'purpose' as cognitive awareness of a goal, for example, gymnasium is for the purpose of physical training; 'goal' as suggesting an idealistic or remote purpose, for example, one of the goals is to learn French; and 'aim' stresses the direction in pursuit of an end, for example, the aim of making money. The relation of the terms 'purpose', 'goal' or 'aim' with 'end' is that 'purpose' is an end with an aim or objective, but an 'aim' has no definite criteria for completion or achieving something, for example, making money; 'goal' on the other hand has a definiteness, for a target has definite criteria or definite period of time for its attainment, like, one's election to a legislative
assembly. Therefore, an end may be a purpose or a goal, that is, depending on whether there is some definiteness. In other words, ‘end’ may have definiteness or indefiniteness depending upon its tendency of relating with purpose or goal.

The word ‘means’ imply the processes of achieving something and it may or may not appear to be appropriate to achieve an ‘end’. ‘Means’ may include instruments, things or persons which are usually used for reaching an ‘end’. If we say that something is a ‘means’ to an end, we mean it enables or facilitates in achieving the end and has only an instrumental value. For example, marketing is only a means to an end of procuring the necessities of life. An end is something we want to achieve and the means represent the way in which we achieve that something.

The terms ‘means’ and ‘ends’ are complementary to each other, likewise, up and down, right and left, inner and outer, black and white, so that one cannot be understood without the other. ‘Means’ can only be defined in relation to ‘ends’ and vice versa. For example, we domesticate animals for our food. Cows are raised to produce milk and not as an end in themselves. However, the relation of ‘ends’ and ‘means’ are not constants but vary from situation to situation. For example, we eat to live,
much as the requirements, but one of the delights of living is eating, therefore we also live to eat.

An end is something we want to realise and the means represents the way in which we endeavour to do so. Sometimes the end is changed into the means for another end. For example, we need food and in order to secure it we cultivate paddy in the field. Here food is the end and cultivation of paddy is the means. Again, we need food for our survival too and so food becomes the means and survival becomes the end. In this sense Dewey argues,

“Ends are, in fact, literally endless, forever coming into existence as new activities occasion new consequences. “Endless ends” is a way of saying that there are no ends – that is no fixed self-enclosed finalities”.  

Means have no intrinsic value but only instrumental value, which is essential and necessary in order to achieve an end. However, what is good may be an end in itself, which is a central idea held by the classical moralists and philosophers. The ‘end’ may be Plato’s eternal and absolute ‘justice’ or pleasure, or the greatest total amount of happiness or Kant’s ‘good will’. However, for a pre-Marxist materialist, from the harmony of Epicurus to the
universal love of Feuerbach, good is only too often the mere pleasure of the moment or a state of mind. For Marxist it can be nothing more or less than people living well, living ever better materially and culturally and ever freer to develop their own capacities or potentialities in harmony with the development of those of all other people.³

In Geek philosophy, Aristotle used the term ‘end’ in technical sense and defined ends as good to be achieved by action’ or at which everything aims. He also defines the ‘ends’ as that for the sake of which a thing is done. For Aristotle, every end is good and every good is an end. An end is sought if it is somehow good for the seeker, and the good by being sought is the end or purpose of the seeker’s motivation. No activity is possible except for the attainment of some end, that is, for the sake of some good. Hence for the principle of certainty, every agent acts for an end, is implicit in the principle of adequate reason and the concept of force or power and act. If every agent acts for an end, the human agent certainly does so.⁴

Stumpf argues that action aims towards an end. He distinguishes two broad categories of ends apart from instrumental ends, that is, acts that are done as means for other ends, and intrinsic ends, that is, acts that are done for their own sake. Aristotle says that there is a series of special kinds of acts,
which have their own ends but which, when they are completed, are only means by which other ends are to be achieved. Duval also points out that when something is desired for its own sake then it is intrinsic value or is an end in itself. Kant had therefore asserted that we must always treat other people as ends and never as a means to an end. Thus, according to Kantian approach, to treat someone as a means is to regard that person only as a tool to achieve a desired result. The distinction becomes clearer when one reflects that a thing may be useful, good as a means, for producing bad ends as well as good ends. Fagothey argues,

“…human conduct must always be directed toward the good…but...this is not always the moral good. To determine the moral good, it is necessary to link up the various intermediate and subordinate ends man may have into some ultimate and all-inclusive end. Not only must single acts be directed to an end, but also the sum total of one’s acts, one’s whole life, must be directed to some last end and highest good”.

There is another kind of ‘ends’ which, according to Fagothey, is intermediate ends. He explains that ‘means’ always lead to an
end, and its use may bring the agent to the end. The same thing may be both ends and means in different respects, for it may be sought both for its own sake and for the sake of something else. However, there may be a long series of such intermediate ends, for example, as when we want A in order to get B, B in order to get C, C in order to get D, and so on. This view is further argued by Hazlitt as,

“We strive for intermediate ends that in turn become means toward still further ends. It is therefore not always possible to say precisely how much we value something “intrinsically”. But it is always possible to be clear–headed about the distinction. Morality must be valued primarily as a means to human happiness. Because it is an indispensable means, it must be valued very highly. But its value is primarily “instrumental” or derivative, and it is only confusion of thought to hold that value is something wholly apart from, and independent of, any contribution it may make to human happiness” [Italics in the original].

Hazlitt tries to assert that objects or activities may be valued as means, or subordinate ends, or final ends. Activities are valued purely for their own sake, as ultimate ends, are said to have intrinsic value and are valued merely as means to ends may be

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said to have merely instrumental or derivative value, which have both instrumental and intrinsic value.\textsuperscript{10} In this respect we take an example, an eye is useful because it has value as a means; but it has no more intrinsic value then when detached from the body. A thing has intrinsic value when it is prized for its own sake, not as a means to something else. We value the eye as a means of seeing. Seeing may be a means when it shows us something.

When an action is sought for its own sake and not for the sake of anything further it is a last end or ultimate end then it closes the series of ends and means. For example, the reception of an academic degree terminates one’s education but education itself has further purpose for life. However, the last or the absolute end signifies that which is directed to no further ends. Since the ends and the good are identified, a being is absolutely last end and must also be the highest good.

But Hazlitt puts the point differently in terms of ultimate ends. He argues that ultimate ends do not imply that there are no disputes on what are ultimate ends and what are merely means or intermediate ends and how appropriate or effective these means or intermediate ends are in achieving ultimate ends.\textsuperscript{11}

Hedonists, such as Epicurus, while identifying ‘end’ with ‘good’ speak of happiness as the ultimate good. However, the Hedonists define happiness as a life of pleasure. Aristotle, on the
other hand, speaks of happiness as self-realisation. Aristotle thought that happiness is the ultimate end of human action, since it is not desired for the sake of anything else, but everything else is desired because of it. Aristotle also believed that other goods, such as knowledge, were requirements for a happy life and therefore considered desirable as ends in and of themselves. The different philosophers classified ‘ends’, which may be immediate or ultimate, in different ways, such as essential and desirable, short term and long term, actual and utopian, etc.

On the other hand, if we look at ‘means’ it is classified only as theoretical and practical. However, the discourse on ‘means’ invariably contain discussion on moral implications of ends. In contrast there are propositions which insist that moral considerations have no bearing on the ‘ends’ and ‘means’ relation; they argue that ‘the end justifies the means.’

Hartland-Swann attempts to break out of this bi-polar debate and introduces the notion of being personal and the social. For him, ends, which morality enjoins us to promote, are the reorganisation of human suffering or the welfare of the community; whereas others think in terms of personal perfection, or self-fulfillment or maximisation of individual happiness. However, priorities may vary from person to person and within one person from time to time. Some ends appear moral, others
non-moral, some social, some personal, and some mixture of both.\textsuperscript{13}

Hazlitt interestingly insists that ends may be pluralistic, but only if we recognise that this refers to subordinate or intermediate ends. But he argues ends are never irreducibly pluralistic for in choosing between subordinate ends, which we are constantly obliged to do, we are necessarily guided by a preference of one over the other. This preference is based on our judgment that one of these ‘ends’ is more nearly an ultimate end for us, or at least a better means of realising a more ultimate end, than the other.\textsuperscript{14}

However, in order to avoid one of the most important problems of moral philosophy, modern moral philosophers have contended that ends are pluralistic and wholly incommensurable. Moral philosophy has engaged itself with taking of moral in practice in daily life which faced with conflicting ‘ends’. But Hazlitt disagrees and argues that ends are not necessarily incommensurable, otherwise there would be no way to choose or decide between them. This is another way of saying that we cannot have ‘pluralistic’ or diverse ultimate ends. When we are challenged by two or more supposed ultimate ends, or two or more supposed ‘parts’ of an ultimate end, neither or none of which can be reduced to the other or expressed in terms of the
other, we shall do well to avoid the confusion that one of the two ‘ultimate’ ends is really a means to the other.

Muirhead, on the other hand, understands the problem of ends and means as a question of universal and particular phenomena reflected as the expression of a general character in an individual act. For Muirhead, the particular object is realised by right choice of the means.\(^{15}\)

**The Relationship of ‘ends’ and ‘means’**

The desire to attain a certain ‘end’, according to Muirhead, requires particular ‘means’, thought or felt most likely to achieve the ‘end’. In other words, the relation of ends and means involves probability as a criterion for deciding on the means to be adopted, which appears to be analogous to cause and effect relationship. The analogy between the means-ends and the cause-effect relationship has serious practical implications. There can be no blame or praise for something being the cause of something else, but if that something is a means to obtain something else, irrespective of whether it is its natural effect or otherwise, it is blameworthy or praiseworthy. For example the giving of money to a poor person to motivate him to vote for the donor or his candidate in an election makes it a means and is therefore blamed. Therefore, there is a sharp distinction between ‘cause
and effect’ and ‘ends and means’ relationship requiring that the two should not be confused. The ends and means relationship, unlike the cause and effect, may suffice to say here, includes the moral agent.

Falk argues that to apply ends-means analyses to the activities of other living things is to extend them by analogy from their bases of proper application to human action emanating from moral agent. Paton argues,

“…the reduction of coherence to a relation between means and end seems to presuppose that the end of an action is to produce something. But this is surely false in case of friendly conversation or playing games, and many men have thought that moral action must be done for its own sake. We must not prejudice this question by a hurried acceptance of the category of means and end. At least some coherent actions seem to be ends as a whole or all the way through…

“Even where the end – if we accept the term – is to produce something, an action is not necessarily coherent because it actually produces the end”.  

The end is achieved consciously by man that is, by his subjective intervention in the objective processes of which his
consciousness itself is the product and outgrowth. Man is the product as well as the maker of the society. He sets to himself social ends and chooses means to attain those ends. Shah has pointed out that the problem of ends, means, and its interrelationship is restricted to the subjective structures of human beings though there are objective grounds occupied by social relations.\textsuperscript{18}

The subjective and objective dichotomy of ends and means interrogates the primary concern of classical philosophy and religion only with ‘good in itself’, which provides separation between ‘ends’ and ‘means’ and gives their movement a defined direction but with a static status. But this is not the case with progressive social movement, which invariably discloses the dialectical inseparability of ends and means. The organising activities are means to an end. In dynamic organisation ends and means are always inter-connected, each passing over into the other as phases of the historic process displaying a clear dialectical relation.\textsuperscript{19}

The dialectics of ends and means has historical, moral and political significance. The ‘means’ is the activity of a subject engaged in bringing about a certain ‘end’. The ‘end’ is initially an ideal which may be very different from the actual result or outcome of the adopted means. The ‘end’ is firstly a subjective
notion conceived in consciousness as the desired change in the objective world of things. The Marxists argue that human being live in a world which is the outcome of the ends and means dialectics of previous generations. This dialectics is at work since the very earliest stages of human development and is the basis for the formation of thought and language, or conscious practice.

‘Ends’ and ‘means’ are processes that are in greater or lesser contradictory dialectical relation with each other throughout their development constituting a learning process of continual adjustment of both ends and means in a form of activity, which is both its own end and its own means. For the continual adjustment of ends and means concept, Ehlers asserts,

“Means and ends are correlative aspects of civilized living, and nothing but tragedy occurs when they become separated. Such a tragedy occurs when values and ideals are set apart...In any civilized community, means and ends are logically distinguishable, but they are not actually separable". 20

Shelvankar, however, criticises that an end is something we want to attain but dialectically it would mean we have something
different from the end, we have the antithesis of the ‘means’. The means represent the way in which we may pass from the state of not having attained our end to the state of having attained it.\textsuperscript{21} The argument is primarily that ends and means are distinct and the dialectical relation is not possible. This is a rather naive reading of the argument claiming dialectical relation between ends and means. Ingle quoting Ferdinand LaSalle shows the dialectical relation of ends and means,

\begin{quote}
“Show us not the aim without the way
For ends and means on earth are so entangled
That changing one, you change the other too;
Each different path brings other ends in view”\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

**Distinction between ‘ends’ and ‘means’**

The logical distinction between ends and means arises in connection with the contention that one should not perform an evil action for the sake of a good action. This distinction is associated with the notion that ‘end justifies the means’, which arises from consequentialist ethics. Consequentialism is easily deducible from the emphasis placed on the outcome of an action and then determining moral correctness by weighing the merit of that action against the merit of the outcome. The consequential ethicist
emphasises the distinction between ends and means and argues that the moral act is the one that achieves the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The implication of this piece of reasoning is that an immoral act is justified if it is the medium by which greater happiness is accomplished, for example, telling a lie in order to save a life. The pragmatist philosopher Dewey points out that,

“Means and ends are two names of the same reality. The term denotes not a division in reality but a distinction in judgment. Without understanding this fact we cannot understand the nature of habits nor can we pass beyond the usual separation of the moral and non-moral conduct. ‘Ends’ is a name for a series of acts taken collectively – like the term army. ‘Means’ is a name for the same series taken distributively – like this soldier, that officer”.23

The distinction between ends and means may be properly applied as a strong and rigorous test of moral principles, demanding careful examination. Ordinarily the ends and means distinction understands means as benign tools used to settle an outcome but also as a factor that provide their attributes and characteristics to the creation of the outcome.
In most of the contexts the significance of ends and means are clear. However, when used in moral philosophy further clarification is definitely needed, which is the purpose of this thesis. In order to do this we must distinguish means that are merely means, and means that may be both ends and means, that is, means to approximate end and, in turn, means to an end that is itself a means to some further end.

The distinction between ends and means constitute a teleological, if it is not historical, approach for both the traditional and contemporary theories of action. This distinction goes back to Aristotle who holds that the origin of action is choice, and the origin of choice is desire and reasoning, the means, with a view to an end, while wish relates only to an end. Accordingly, choice contributes to the end, for instance, we wish to be healthy so we choose the acts that will make us healthy. The contention, therefore, is that we deliberate not about ends but about what contributes to the ends, which in the last analysis is about means. Consequently, we draw our attention to intentions, to the procedures by which they can be realised, and, if need be, also to their consequences and side-effects, all of which are subject to action – theoretical and moral inquiry, as well as moral judgment and responsibility.24
Stumpf points out that like Aristotle, Aquinas considers ethics or morality a quest for happiness. He argues that happiness is connected closely with man’s ends or purpose. Aristotle argued men could achieve virtue and happiness by fulfilling their natural capacities or ends. Aquinas, as a Christian, added to this his concept of man’s supernatural end. Aquinas, therefore, argued that there is a double level of morality corresponding to man’s natural end and to his supernatural end.\(^{25}\)

It is argued that the distinction between ends and means is fundamental to any study of man from which political systems are derivable. If we take democracy we find two ideals involved in it, viz. the free individual and the open society. The primacy of the individual cannot be maintained as an end unless our society also maintains the means whereby power may be restrained, for democracy and freedom as ends cannot be achieved by authoritarian or undemocratic means.\(^{26}\)

Iyer argues that most schools of thought accept a sharp dichotomy between ends and means, claiming it to be a distinction that is deeply embedded in our ethical, political, and psychological vocabulary determining the very nature of human action. It is thus that distinctions have been repeatedly made between immediate and ultimate, short-term and long-term, diverse and common, individual and social, essential and
desirable ends, as also between attainable and utopian ends. It is therefore concluded that end entirely justifies the means is a dangerous dogma and is merely an extreme version of the commonly uncriticised belief that moral considerations cannot be applied to the means except in relation to the ends, or that the latter have a moral priority.  

Hazlitt admitting a distinction between ends and means, indispensable for the intelligent conduct of life, finds it not to be an objective distinction, like that between a table and a room. He asserts that the distinction between ends and means is subjective, since ends and means are significant only in relation to human purposes and human satisfactions, and, for each individual, in relation to his purposes and his satisfactions. In this sense Aquinas draws the distinction between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ ends when human happiness is treated as the subjective final end and God as the objective final end.

However, it is to be pointed out that the logical distinction between ends and means is basic. To admit that men act purposively is to admit that they drive toward ends. They must necessarily employ means to achieve them. Yet certain objects or activities can become ends in themselves as well as means to other ends. For example, the primary need of a working man may be to earn money, but this does not deny that he may also enjoy
the work itself, which may be his ‘end’, and he may regard the money earned chiefly as a means to other ends.\textsuperscript{30} Paton sees the matter differently and argues,

“The distinction of means and ends has the same kind of utility and same kind of abstraction as the distinction of premises and conclusion. Every premise is also a conclusion and every conclusion is also a premise. The act of thinking or inferring is continuous throughout the whole, and is of the same character throughout the whole. Neither, premises nor conclusion are what they are in isolation from one another, and the conclusion is as necessary to the understanding of the premises”.\textsuperscript{31}

**End justifies the means**

The ends and means relationship is much often talked of in terms of justification. The arguments centre on the issue whether ends justify the means, even if the means are not otherwise acceptable. But the relation of ends and means in no way implies that any end justifies any means. It implies that ends and means are so inextricably connected that the question can not be answered by a simple yes or no. People believe that some actions are justified by the results they bring about, it equally
insists that there are some things that should and must not be done for no matter what ends. Fletcher points out the views of Ewing and Neibuhr and argues,

“…the means used ought to fit the end, ought to be fitting. If they are, they are justified. For in the last analysis, it is the end sought that gives the means used their meaningness. The end does justify the means” [Italics in the original]. 32

The argument presented here is establishing an equation between ‘meaningness’ and ‘justification’ in the relation of ends and means. The meaningness of ‘means’ is derived or derivable only in relation to ‘end’ is the crux of the argument. However, this thesis is more concerned with ‘justification’ in terms of morality, that is, philosophical rather than linguistic turn provided by Ewing and Neibuhr. Rege has rightly pointed out that,

“The question ‘Does the end justify the means?’ can be raised either as a philosophical question or as a practical question which needs to be answered one way or the other when concrete situations, in which moral agents find themselves from time to time, seem to demand actions which are contrary to their moral intuitions and violative of firmly established
moral norms to which they adhere as a rule. When regarded as a philosophical question, the answer it will receive from utilitarian is obvious. Indeed for utilitarianism the question can only be rhetorical, being nothing else than its basic principle posed in the interrogative form. Only the ends justify the means. Actions are proper, legitimate, right, obligatory, etc. only by virtue of the consequences which they have or may reasonably be expected to have. There is no other source of rightness of actions, no other way in which actions can become obligatory”.

The interrogation then is not in terms of linguistic significance but moral, which is also the theme of this thesis. In short, end justifies the means is a moral significance and has to be dealt with in moral philosophy. It may be a truism to say that some ends justify means; for example, if you want to smoke a cigarette that justifies you in making a spill out of yesterday’s newspaper and setting it alight. Similarly all ends justify the means sounds absurd. In other words, sometimes the end justifies the means is tenable and sometimes it is not, the question is moral. It can therefore be argued that each case has to be assessed separately. The argument presented against ends justify the means assume the equation to mean all ends justify the means, however, no
philosopher has ever held such a view. The equation has only been interrogated as specific and as moral, which is the liberal standpoint.

Duval argues that the relationship between ends and means in morality is controversial but commonly it is assumed that end justifies the means. The implication that goal is so valuable that anything which helps to achieve it is acceptable. For example, those who believe that all actions are motivated by survival might feel that anything done in order to survive is justified. Duval says there are others who believe that for an action to be moral both the ends and the means must be justified. Utilitarianism believes that it might be acceptable, in some circumstances, to use others as a means to an end if the greater happiness for all concerned is achieved. Still others suggest that when you desire a certain end, you necessarily desire all the means that lead to that end.34 Fagothey has argued,

“An act that is bad in itself cannot become good or indifferent by a good motive or good circumstances, and much less by indifferent ones. Nothing can change its intrinsically evil nature. No person is ever allowed voluntarily to will that kind of act in any circumstances or for any motive. That is why we must reject the false principle that ‘the end justifies
the means’, in its common acceptance, and insist that we are never allowed to do evil that good may come out of it. A good motive and good circumstances may somewhat lessen the badness of the act, but it remains bad and forbidden. Each bad motive or circumstance added to an intrinsically bad act makes it worse” [Italics in the original].

Therefore, the moral argument is that only good acts should be used as means to attain an end, otherwise the end will contain its evil elements, if not be wholly bad.

Moralists attack the maxim ‘end justify the means’ by arguing that it is morally wrong to acquire a good end through evil means. But the general ideal of morality is part of the hierarchy of ends most of us subscribe to, and those formulae or instructions bear their moral innocence on their faces. In general, part of what is involved in the statement that the end does not justify the means is that, in the light of the totality of ends a person subscribes to, certain means to attain the ends under consideration may make more important or higher ends unattainable or more difficult to attain. Often, this conflict between two or more ends on account of a certain means is a moral conflict in that the higher ends of morality are against such means. However, Hazlitt argues,
“Morality is primarily a means – a necessary means to human happiness. If we declare that duty should be done merely for duty’s sake, without regard to the ends that are served by doing our duty, we leave ourselves with no way of deciding what our duty, in any particular situation, really is or ought to be.”

Therefore, he asserts that the moralists, being primarily concerned with conduct tend to become absorbed with means, to value the actions men ought to perform more than the ends which such actions serve.

But the complex background of ends includes the ideal of morality, as we have come to regard or think of it. Because of the pervasiveness of morality we think of our more specific or determinate ends as already conforming to, or as within the framework of morality. This conformation to the ideal of morality is usually what is at stake when people argue that the end alone does not completely justify the means. But, of course, one can argue that the end, meaning a certain specified end under consideration, does not justify a given means to it on the ground that other ends make the means inappropriate or improper. One often gives up a certain end because all the means he can employ to attain it are invalidated by higher ends. To clarify the
maxim that the ‘end justifies the means’ Fagothey goes on to argue,

“War is an ugly thing no matter how we look on it or for what noble purposes we may undertake it. The essential means is force, and the use of force is a brutal matter admitting of no finely drawn distinctions and delicate niceties. The soldier in the heart of battle can hardly be expected to fight with a gun in one hand and a textbook of ethics in the other”. 39

The maxim ‘end justifies the means’ has recently been identified as a slogan of the Marxists with its implication of violence. The maxim is therefore subjected to the criticism that it takes too narrow a view of our life’s ideals. The ‘maxim end justifies the means’ is not merely a Marxist slogan but is also found in Machiavelli and Jesuits, as pointed out in the beginning of this chapter. The condemnation of the slogan arises out of the liberal demand for preserving the social conditions, claimed to be congenial to pursuit of diverse ends and ideals of people in a liberal society. However, it can easily be argued convincingly that there no people or nation that has ever abrogated their right to use every means in its power to achieve its liberation and that there is no society which forbids itself the means necessary for its
maintenance or perpetuation. In short, violence cannot be the criteria for rejection of a maxim. Selsam argues,

“...the relations of means and ends are found everywhere in all religious, national or class struggles. The problems are inherent in any effort to move from one state of things to another. Those who seek no change have no such problems. They do whatever they do to maintain things as they are. Their means, too, are subject to the same examination as has just been made. But they never trouble to make such an examination. They may use effective or ineffectiv means to preserve, let us say, feudalism or capitalism. They themselves lose no sleep over such a theoretical question as whether “the end justifies the means”.  

Therefore he asserts that ‘end justifies the means’ and that one cannot blindly reject or accept it. Selsam insists that approaching the issue in a generalised form already suggests insolubility of the problems, that is, a particular type of criticism is predetermined. The generalised form of the approach places it in the class of such questions as ‘is life worth living’. Selsam quotes Hegel in his support and points out that Hegel thought that the life has a value only when it has something valuable as its objects. He concludes
means are good only when they have good as their end. But this brings us to the threshold of the problem.\textsuperscript{41}

Hospers interrogates when is an end worth the means? To him if the end is removal of war from the face of the earth and the means is the death of a few thousand human beings the utilitarian would proclaim the end as supremely worthwhile and that it justifies the means, provided that the means really involve no more evil than the statement indicates, and provided that the end really will be achieved once this means is taken, and provided that the end can be achieved by no other means that involves less evil than this one. In actual practice, the end does not justify the means as often as one might think because these conditions are not met.\textsuperscript{42}

Fletcher approaches the matter differently and poses the question that if the end does not justify the means, then what does? His answer obviously is ‘nothing’. Fletcher writes that unless some purpose or end is in view then to justify or sanctify an action is literally meaningless, that is, means-less, accidental, merely random, pointless. Every action without exception is haphazard if it is without an end to serve; it only acquires its status as a means, that is, it only becomes meaningful by virtue of an end beyond itself, ends, in their turn, need means. It has been suggested that means without ends are empty and ends without
means are blind, they are relative to each other. In any course of action it is the coexistence of ends and means that places it in the realm of moral principles.\textsuperscript{43}

Ewing argues the claim that ‘end does not justify the means’ is solely based on the notion that evil means cannot be justified on the ground that they achieve a good end. However, he goes on to argue that the reason for its acceptance by most of us is that we do not believe that really evil means are ever necessary or that they can in fact lead to a really good end.\textsuperscript{44} Hazlitt quotes Ewing to argue if the end is the greatest good possible and the means necessary to attain it include great moral evils such as deceit, injustice, gross violation of individual rights or even murder, the utilitarian will have to say that these things are morally justified, provided only their moral evil is exceeded by the goodness of the results, and this seems an immoral doctrine, and certainly a very dangerous one.\textsuperscript{45} Selsam disagrees:

“…the difference is not over means at all but over ends, regardless how important proper means are on both sides of any struggle the question of means is secondary to that of the ends sought. What ends justify what means is ultimately a question of class and status and is necessarily seen differently by the opposing sides…” [Italics in the original].\textsuperscript{46}
However, there is no question of the end justifying or not justifying the means. There exists only the objective fact that the end determines the means, just as the means determine the end. The ends and means are mutually convertible due to the operation of the law of the dialectical unity of the ends and the means.47

Selsam further shows that the question ‘Does the end justify the means?’ requires the answer that it is an analysis of the standards for judging the goodness or justification of means and of ends equally. Clearly there is no way by which we can ascertain whether a given end justifies a given means other than by standards or principles by which both means and ends can be weighed. The means A may be unacceptable for end X and justifiable for end Y and so on round the alphabet. The beginning of the answer to the question of the relation of the two lies in the proposition that while nothing can justify a means but an end, it in no wise follows that any end justifies any means.48

Now if the end is supposed to justify the means, then the means is in need of justification. It presumes that ‘justification’, in this context, can only signify defense, and, so if the means is in need of justification, there must be something indefensible about the means when it is considered all by itself. To take an example, killing by itself is not defensible, but it can be defended on the
ground that it was inevitable as a means, for it was the only means to save an innocent life. This is a typical situation in which we talk of the end justifying the means. Thus it seems that the dictum that ‘the end justifies the means’ stands for the thought that although the means – killing, in our example – does not have any value, but, on the contrary, has disvalue, the adoption of the means can be defended in terms of the value attached to the end. This suggests that behind the thought the dictum embodies there are two ideas that certain actions, and states of affairs, have disvalue, that is, certain actions are wrong and certain states of affairs bad – considered independently of the end, and the value attached to the end is so great that the fact that the means is a means to producing this end overrides any consideration of the disvalue of the means.

**Origin of the controversy**

A discourse on ends and means, their distinction, and inter-dialectical relation opened up a controversy and demanded a justification for the maxim ‘ends justify the means’. It is too obvious to mention that moral controversies gravitated quite often on the notion of means and not ends. The moral position demands that the means to an end should be morally acceptable. The ‘end’ in the debate is not in terms such as ‘natural’ good like
health or a ‘moral’ good like honesty. The end is the result or achievement or even the outcome; an event that has occurred.

To elucidate the formal relation between the notions of ends and means, two contrasting conceptions arise traditionally. On the one hand, the approach is associated with the name of ‘Machiavelli’, who prefers to consider ends and means as rather independent items. On the other hand, the second approach is linked with ‘Jesuits’.

The history of ‘end justifies the means’ as a maxim goes back to the pragmatic writings of Machiavelli in Italy. In fact, the name of Machiavelli is almost identical with this maxim. The corruption of the times, the weakness of the quarrelsome states and the threat of foreign aggression deeply moved Machiavelli. He sought as a ‘rescuer’, a new prince who with his superhuman powers would fulfill his much cherished dream, the redemption of Italy. In this mission the new prince would not be frustrated by any moral conscience and religious commandments. He is absolutely free to adopt means, whatever be its nature, for tackling of the situations. In short, nationalism and patriotism are the keynotes of Machiavellian thought. The recovery of Italy was the supreme goal of his life and works; and for this purpose he did not like to observe much rigidity in the selection of means for the attainment of ends preferring the maxim ‘end justifies the means’. The
notable aspect is that Machiavelli’s use of the maxim is primarily in the political arena.

Machiavelli argues that to accomplish the end, the ruler is justified in applying any kind of excess. In the Machiavellian world man gives up his right to discuss ends and means and is required to trust naively the final purposes charted out by the leaders. Machiavelli points out that it is the only way to secure a monocratic regime for which he is supposed to be absolutely necessary in the beginning for both the promotion of the public good and the formulation and development of a polity. Obviously, this seems to be the case to which the maxim ‘ends justify the means’ refers. The goodness of the end is supposed to justify the means if the means is not only sufficient but also necessary which would otherwise not be possible to attain. However, he argues,

“It is well that, when the act accuses him, the result should excuse him; and when the result is good…it will always absolve him from blame”.49

The Machiavellian idea that using violence against political opponents as a means is justified by the end, however many subsequent thinks claim this to be untenable at least at the level of debate and rational acceptance. It may be an acceptable argument that means must be adequate to the ends, which helps
in attaining the ends, but this does not fully take into account the tension between ends and means. The tension between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’ is reflected in the relation between means and ends.

The maxim ‘end justifies the means’ is also found in an accusation made by Protestants against the Jesuits, as Trotsky points out,

“The Jesuit order, organized in the first half of the 16th century for combating Protestantism, never taught, let it be said, that any means, even though it be criminal from the point of view of the Catholic morals, was permissible if only it led to the “end”, that is, to the triumph of Catholicism. Such an internally contradictory...absurd doctrine was maliciously attributed to the Jesuits by their Protestant and partly Catholic opponents who were not shy in choosing the means for achieving their own ends. Jesuit theologians who, like the theologians of other schools were occupied with the question of personal responsibility, actually taught that the means in itself can be a matter of indifference but that the moral justification or condemnation of the given means flows from the end” [Italics in the original].
Fletcher argues that the maxim ‘end justifies the means’, is not itself justifiable. He goes on to assert that the Jesuits double-dealing and evasion of the ‘moral law’ is, in fact, to their credit; we embrace their maxim wholeheartedly that the end justifies or sanctifies or validates the means. This is precisely what our principle of extrinsic or contingent value leads to. However, Brunner argues that a necessary end sanctifies the necessary means. Therefore we could speak of the hallowing of the means by the end. Dewey explains more explicitly,

“…[There is a] question of…morality of the means which are used to secure the end desired. Common sense revolt against the maxim [‘end justifies the means’], conveniently laid off upon Jesuits or other far-away people, that the end justifies the means. There is no incorrectness in saying that the question of means employed is overlooked in such cases. But analysis would go further if it were also pointed out that overlooking means is only a device for failing to note those ends, or consequences, which, if they were noted would be seen to be so evil that action would be estopped. Certainly nothing can justify or condemn means except ends, results. But we have to include consequences impartially. Even admitting that lying will save a man’s soul, whatever that may
mean, it would still be true that lying will have other consequences, namely, the usual consequences that follow from tampering with good faith and that lead lying to be condemned. It is willful folly to fasten upon same single end or consequence which is liked, and permits the view of that to blot from perception all other undesired and undesirable consequences.”

Lohrer highlights Pascal’s description of a would-be Jesuit moralist. He presents the matter as if it were the task to subsequently find an end justifying its bad means, so that the means enters, as it were, a holy, or rather a sanctifying alliance. Thus, for instance, the means of the duel, which is in itself objectionable, is morally bad if used as a means to the end of revenge, but it is good as the defence of honour. So whoever wished to retain the practice merely had to exchange the end.

However, this position not only renders ends and means completely independent, but also inverts the task of deliberation, such that it would then not be necessary to locate the means to a given end. Instead, deliberation would rather assign an end to a given means that may have not culminated in an end at all or had a different end altogether. Pascal’s position then conflicts the reading that ‘means’ is a relational notion of the end, which

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suppresses the analysis of the action in terms of ends and means.

Roth argues that the distinction between ends and means is even employed in the Bible that mentions numerous instances when there are valued outcomes through violent or destructive means, such as the flooding of the earth in order to restore goodness, an action that is inconsistent with modern Judeo-Christian moral prescription. This shows that the notion of morality enters into the debate primarily in the modern Judeo-Christian era. However, Mitchison argues,

“…the base of morality is that persons must be ends and not means, and must, if they are logical, follow this up to its political conclusion. It is the controversy between authoritarianism and individualism. At present most of us compromise about it; how much quicker and simpler for us, as parents, educators, politicians and so on, to be authoritarian and insist that those over whom we have power should be means and not ends! But we ought to be careful”.

The ‘ends’ and ‘means’ problem is not so much a question of moral justification, such as, one’s right to employ violent means to achieve worthy ends, but a practical question of appropriateness, that is, under what circumstances and with what ends in view
would violence, political or otherwise, be acceptable and where would other means prove to be more effective.

However, the origin of the controversy on ends and means is simply based on an unsuccessful attempt to develop an acceptable analysis. The controversy, in other words, inherent to the relation, seems to, hinge on the bias that might be natural to the ideological bent of the proponent.
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