CHAPTER-VII

INTERNATIONALISM

As an ardent freedom fighter, Tilak perceived the need for thoroughly understanding the issue of ‘Imperialism’ and ‘Imperial Relationship’ in their various facets. It appears that while doing this, Tilak thought it appropriate to extend his field of inquiry and apply his mind also to the forces operating on International Relations in general. In this chapter, it is proposed to make an attempt to trace Tilak’s approach and contribution to this field.

Tilak appears to be concentrating his attention on the understanding and assessment of the issue of Imperial relationship in its proper perspective. It seems that Tilak thought this necessary, particularly because of the peculiar political situation in which he was operating.

As is well-known, the Indian Liberals themselves had looked upon the British Rule as ‘a Divine Dispensation’. They thought it correct to view the British Imperial rulers as their political Gurus and Saviours of India as well. The Moderates hoped that the English Liberals and the Indian Liberals would emerge as natural allies and that the latter would be in a position to reach their destination under the guidance of the former. In other words, the Indian Liberals expected the Imperial rulers to function as agents of modernization. As has been observed earlier, the British rulers, on their part, had claimed that they (the British) were destined to undertake a mission of acculturation. They
boasted much about the ‘Whiteman’s burden’, etc. These claims only reinforced the hope of the Moderates.

As a keen observer of the deteriorating Indian conditions, Tilak found it difficult to accept these claims about the benevolent British Imperial rule as also to share the hopes of the Moderates. He argued that those who did so, failed to take cognizance of the fact that the Indo-British relationship was but a specimen of the general model of ‘Imperial Relationship’, and as such, was bound to be functioning according to its own logic. Hence, he stressed the need of understanding and assessing the real implications of ‘Imperial Relationship’-Imperialism-in general, and then draw inferences regarding the Indo-British relationship, accordingly.

Tilak’s experience led him to the fundamental premise-about the validity of which he was totally convinced-that empires are not built out of philanthropic considerations and ultruistic motives; they are built shee-{}

rly for the furtherance of the interests of the ruling nations. Empi-

re-building seeks to promote the welfare of the imperial rulers. And the imperial nation ever tries to impose its own culture on the people of the subject-country. As a result, an imperial relationship is bound to prove detrimental-both spiritually and materially-to the subject nation. As this point has been elaborately discussed in the chapter ‘Swaraj Justification’, only a summary of Tilak’s argument is attempted at this stage. As has already been noted, while discussing the issue of Swaraj for India, Tilak was not speaking specifically about the British empire but was referring to the ‘Empires’ in general.
The nature of this relationship, Tilak viewed, makes the contradiction between the interests of an imperial nation and of a subject-nation inevitable and unavoidable. This contradiction is inherent in the situation itself. The imperial power would, most naturally, be guided by the considerations of its own national interest. These considerations would influence the imperial nation’s mode of behaviour and formulation of policies towards the subject-nation. This is a universal phenomenon. Compulsions of this relationship are such that an imperial power—however liberal and benevolent—cannot, in its position as an imperial power, behave differently even if it intends to. Replacement of one group of persons at the helm of imperial affairs by another one—more generous and liberal—would in no way benefit the subject-nation because the same calculations would prevail upon them. Good intentions on the part of a few such individuals from the imperial nation would not make any material difference. Referring to the high hopes of the Moderates about Lord Morley and other Liberals, Tilak pointed out that they (the Moderates) forget that the English as a ‘nation’ have very high stakes in the Indian empire. India has been reduced to a much-cow.

It must not be forgotten, observed Tilak, that under such circumstances, the English people, as a whole would not tolerate any Morley or, for that matter, any other Liberal leader to take a different course of action that would adversely affect the former’s vested interests. If, in the face of strong public opposition, persons like Morley insist on deviating from the established line of strategy on the part of the imperial nation, their very political existence would
be in jeopardy.\textsuperscript{6} In support of his argument, Tilak cited the experience that Gladstone met with when he (the latter) insisted on adopting liberal policy and extending political reforms to Ireland.

It is well known that Tilak was in favour of helping the British Labour Party in their election efforts. He had also expressed hope that the Labour Party would assume a more considerate position towards the Indian cause. Let it be mentioned, however, that Tilak was under no illusion that the Labour Party would do so, out of ideological and philanthropic considerations. According to him, the Labour Party would do so because the labourers, as a class, found themselves at the receiving end of the exploitative Capitalist system.\textsuperscript{7} He explained, “The Labour party finds itself in difficulties at present. Being, thus, engaged in a similar struggle, it is prepared to help India. Once these difficulties are overcome, it is likely to forget India.”\textsuperscript{8} As Tilak perceived, ‘an Imperial power would naturally be interested in perpetuating its rule’. He wanted, thus, to impress upon the minds of the Indians, “Never have any conquerors willingly granted freedom to their subject-people.”\textsuperscript{9} All these observations clearly indicate that Tilak’s assessment of the Indo-British relationship was based on objective criteria.

Tilak admitted that the actual mode of operation and the style of behaviour of the imperial rulers may apparently differ in different situations. He, however, cautioned that this outward appearance need not make one blind to the basic characteristics of the imperial relationship. Thus, referring to the tall claims of some British authorities that they did not resort to the savage
methods of the ‘Roman Empire’, Tilak exclaimed, “this only proves that they (the British) had become wiser after the 1857 Uprising. It was this lesson, and not the considerations of philanthropy but of self-preservation, that dissuaded them from emulating the Roman pattern”.\textsuperscript{10} Tilak was clearly suggesting, if the method of operation was more refined, it only showed the imperial power’s better perception of the situation. He emphasized that despite the outward appearances, the characteristics of this pattern of relationship would remain the same, and the same considerations would prevail.

Tilak, therefore, refused to accept the possibility of ‘benevolent imperialism’. He did not deny that under certain peculiar circumstances, a foreign rule may help the subject-nation, to some extent, on the way towards progress and development; that imperial powers may act as unconscious instruments towards modernity. His evaluation of the British Rule in India clearly indicates that Tilak did not deny that foreign rule-in this case, the British rule-has benefited the subject-nation, India, upto a certain point.\textsuperscript{11} What he challenged was the assumption that this phenomenon was the result of a deliberate, conscious and willing act on the part of the foreign rulers who were eager to disseminate democratic philosophy, and to teach the art of representative democratic government. Rajani Palme Dutt’s observations are worth noting here: “When Macaulay, on behalf of imperialism, imposed the system of Anglicised education and defeated the orientatalists, his objective was not to create Indian national consciousness, but to destroy it to the deep roots of its being.”\textsuperscript{12}
It is, thus, evident that Tilak’s point of disagreement with the Moderates had wider implications. It was not limited to the specific inquiry about the role of the British. His disagreement with the Moderates really boils down to the very basic, fundamental, question: Can an imperial power be relied upon to act as a modernizing agent? Tilak thought it necessary to explore the true characteristics of imperial relationship and understand its real meaning and full implications. This led him to conclude that the model of Imperial Relationship has little chance of evolving as an International Harmony Relationship model.

It should go to Tilak’s credit that he went further and thought of investigating whether the British imperialism in the post-Industrial Revolution era-representating modern Imperialism-did, in any way, differ from the traditional type of Imperialism.

Even a cursory look at Tilak’s argument makes it clear that he thoroughly understood the economic imperatives of ‘modern Imperialism’. As early as in 1891, Tilak had observed, “This Government is not content with just holding the reins of political power; it wants to monopolise economic power as well.” Tilak’s use of the term, ‘Industrial Subjugation’-Audyogic Paratantrya’, made in 1894 speaks volumes for itself. As he observed, “Our people at the moment are not allowed to go beyond producing raw materials; all the finished products come from the West, reducing us to a status of total dependence”. Tilak elucidated as to how this situation was deliberately and consciously brought about by the British rulers. He used the traditional idiom to describe this development, “The present rulers, in addition to performing
their avowed role of the ‘Kthatriya’-the warrior king-have taken to and have monopolised trade and commerce, the traditional functions of the ‘Vaishya’-the trader. They have, thus, combined the functions of the Kshatriya and the Vaishya, added Tilak, intending to convey thereby that the motive behind empire, building was no longer only political in character. Tilak explained, “The policy of the British empire is not only to possess the political suzerainty but to monopolize, as well, the trade and commerce of the subject country”.16 To him, it was essential to understand that “Empires meant, in ancient days, quite a different thing from what they mean to-day. The old emperors were satisfied with just a tribute from the subject-people, which was a mark of subordination.”17 To emphasize the difference, Tilak pointed out “The imperial rulers, to-day, are keen to totally subjugate the subject-people, and exert to amass wealth, to the maximum, at the cost of the subject people.”18 He lamented that impressed by the facade of rule of law and non-intervention in the religious matters, the Indians failed to grasp the real nature of British Imperialism. As a result, they failed to anticipate the far-reaching repercussions of the seizure of power by the ‘benevolent’ Britishers, namely, the total exploitation of the Indians in the Industrial sector and their increasing poverty.”19 Tilak is repeatedly seen emphasizing the need of understanding the true depth of the impairment that the Indians suffered as a result of the British Imperial domination. It is thus evident that he used the term ‘Industrial Subjugation’ to bring out, convincingly, the reality behind the facade of benevolent British Imperialism, to its fullest extent and implications. He,
thereby, wanted to focus attention on India’s total dependence on England in the economic field resulting in her complete emaciation. As he observed, the earlier the Indians grasp it, the better.

It is revealing to note that Tilak was conscious that this change in the Imperial structure was a post-Industrial-Revolution phenomenon, made possible by scientific discoveries and technical progress in the West. Elaborating this point, Tilak observed, “Initially, all over the world, people used to produce with their hands, using simple tools. With the advancement of scientific knowledge, the West could harness the power from the natural elements like Electricity, Wind, Steam, and chemicals for promoting production. As a result, they have surpassed us in all fields. We, on the other hand, still rely on the primitive techniques.”

The Industrial Revolution has, thus, not only created a wide gap between the productive capacity of the Industrialised West and the yet-to-be Industrialised East; but, it also changed the calculations of the Industrial Imperial powers. A sort of Colonial Imperialism has emerged, as a result. These Imperial powers were now mainly after securing markets for their finished products. This has resulted in totally incapacitating the subject-nation.

It is high time, observed Tilak, that the Indians, especially, the Moderates like Gokhale, correctly appreciate this linkage, in this modern era, between Industrial development and Political power enjoyed by any nation in the international sphere. “Today, trade and commerce and military prowess (the Sword,” added Tilak, “have become inter-dependent, mutually supportive.”
Elaborating his point further, Tilak observed, “As a nation, India did not suffer any economic loss under the Muslim rule. Without, in any way harming the indigenous industries, the Muslim rulers endeavored to encourage these.”

With the new empires, the considerations were totally different. Now, the new empires are bent upon thoroughly exploiting the subject-people, a thing that was never intended by the old dynastic empires.

Tilak elaborated as to how this development was made feasible by a combination of three factors, namely, political hegemony, mechanical-scientific discoveries, especially that of the steam-power, and capital formation at the cost of the Indian people? He, added that although Watt had discovered the steam engine in 1768, to put such latest technological discoveries to practical use, capital was essential. He further pointed out that the capital thus required for the development of industrial production, had become available mainly because of the East India Company’s commercial exploits in India?

In his famous article, ‘How Were Our Industries Destroyed?’ Tilak explained, at length, as to how the East India Company, after securing the Diwani rights, exploited its political influence to England’s economic advantage. Political power was, deliberately and consciously, used to derive maximum, in fact unjust, profit from their commerce and trade with the Indians. This has led to the accumulation of capital. Tilak specifically maintained that after 1770, there was a definite shift in the policy of the East India Company. The demands of the situation changed with the advent of the Industrial Revolution and their policy changed, accordingly. Initially, India used to export many commodities
to England. After 1770, “the Directors of East India Company, operating from England, were not happy with this situation. They, therefore, issued orders that Indians should be allowed only to produce raw materials, and any efforts to produce finished products should be discouraged.”27 To implement this decision, high tariff was laid upon the export of the finished products from India as well as on the movement of these products within India. This could be made possible because the British were then holding the political reins in India.

“As is well known,” Tilak aptly remarked, “any wish of the rulers gets fulfilled.”28 He described this act of imposing unjust tariffs on Indian goods as being ‘Far more baneful in character than the previous monopoly commercial exploitation.’”29

Tilak, for himself, was convinced, and tried to bring to the notice of others that this process was a deliberate and conscious action on the part of the foreign rulers.

Of course, other Indian leaders were also critical of the unfair economic competition between Great Britain and India. But many of them, particularly, the Moderates, had looked upon it as a genuine mistake on the part of the British rulers.30 They had hoped that it was only a matter of properly convincing the British people and Parliament about the wrongness of their economic policies, and necessary steps would be taken to alleviate the grievances of the Indians.

Tilak, however, refused to accept that the transformation of India into an agricultural back-yard of England was the unintended consequence of the
wrong policies of the otherwise-generous and liberal British Imperial rulers. In order to prove his point, Tilak mentioned that as long as the British industries had not established their hegemony, the British Imperial rulers were in favour of imposing high protective tariffs. As soon as the British traders and rulers, because of the Industrial Revolution, felt assured of their secure position and of being able to retain the markets for their finished products as against the Indian indigenous handicrafts and securing raw materials at cheap rates, they started sponsoring and propagating the doctrine of Free Trade as a doctrine of universal validity. The same British Government that had helped their own manufacturers through high tariffs was, obviously, reluctant to extend similar helping hand to the Indians. And the Indians were meted with step-motherly treatment. In support of his argument, Tilak quoted figures of trade between India and Great Britain. (In 1830, Great Britain used to send to India products worth 50,000 sterling pounds, whereas, in 1900, the export rose to 6,11,13,000 sterling pounds.) Tilak sarcastically commented that at this rate, “the Indians would, soon, be exporting cow-dung to get the readymade cow-dung cakes to be used as fuel.” He expressed that the earlier the Indians came to realize the full implications of this situation-the colonial relationship-the sooner would they try to set their priorities right. It may be recalled, this was one of the major reasons for giving priority to the issue of Swaraj.

To bring out, convincingly, the insincerity involved in the argument put forward by the Britishers regarding the universality of the doctrine of Free Trade, Tilak observed that Great Britain itself had started reconsidering its
policy of free trade after facing competition from other European countries. He also illustrated how Lord Chamberlain was planning to turn the British Empire into a closed market.\textsuperscript{35} It is thus evident that Tilak wanted to prove that the harm done to the Indian economy was the result of a conscious and deliberate strategy on the part of the British rulers.

Tilak emphasized that the British rulers fully understood the implications of this type of colonial relations. There was a perfect realization on the part of the British that while actual possession of the territory mattered, what was really important was ‘trade’, i.e., export of finished products and import of raw materials at cheaper rates. Tilak, added, therefore, that if one wanted to understand the real strength of the British Empire, “one must not turn just to the geographical expansion of their direct empire but must take into account extent the of the growth of their foreign trade as well.”\textsuperscript{36} He further emphasised, “In the event of impossibility of conquering a particular country, the shrewd English were keen atleast to monopolize the trade ... The Asian countries like India, China, Iran, Arabia (in today’s parlance, the ‘under-developed’ ones) are the instances of the economic domination by the British through trade.”\textsuperscript{37} Great Britain managed to do this through four means—colonisation, direct political rule, trade, and if none of these worked, added Tilak, then friendship. “Through these strategies, the British are expanding their sphere of influence and by now, have become adept in the art of choosing the correct strategy.”\textsuperscript{38} Indians had been taken in by Macaulay’s remark that the day on which the Indians would ask for English institutions, would be the
proudest day in the English history. Tilak observed that unaware of the colonial relationship, the Indians had failed to take notice of the latter part of Macaulay’s statement. Herein, Macaulay had plainly stated, ‘to trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages.’ The meaning, Tilak elaborated, was clear: The British were more concerned with finding ready markets-croers of people as customers-for their manufactured goods than in the actual possession of India.

Although Tilak did not dilate on the point, it is evident that he wanted to indicate the shift from Commercial Capitalism to Industrial Capitalism. In order to bring out his argument more convincingly, Tilak specifically mentioned the chronological development of this process. He pointed out that initially, the East India Company, and its directors, after securing the Diwani rights, were content with exploiting the trade profits. After the new Mechanical discoveries, especially the Watt’s Steam Engine, the British Directors of the East India Company and the British rulers perceived the new potentialities and, accordingly, they changed their policies. Though he did not talk in terms of the interests of the mercantile class versus the industrialists’ class, there is a definite suggestion, in his article, about he tussle between the two classes. Tilak, elaborately, discussed this shift from Commercial Capitalism to Industrial Capitalism. Of course, he did not speak in terms of the three stages of the evolution of Capitalist Imperialism in India, i.e., Merchant Capitalism, Industrial Capitalism and Finance Capitalism, as Rajani Palme DuLt has distinguished. But it is worth mentioning that Tilak definitely specified the first two
It should be noted that Tilak had correctly perceived the link between the Industrial Revolution, symbolizing production on a mass scale, and the need of an assured market for this finished product, finding outlets for the flood of manufactured goods. Ready availability of such a market ensures prosperity of the Industrialized nation. Tilak felt, “to get a correct perspective of the advocacy of the doctrine of Free Trade on the part of the British economic thinkers, it was necessary to review it against this historical background.” He pointed out that while the other European nations in the post-Napolenoic era were busy setting their own houses in order, Britain enjoyed comparative peace to initiate the Industrial Revolution. It had also been successful in consolidating its empire in the Indian subcontinent, thus, finding in it an assured market. It is at this historical juncture, Tilak pointed out, that the doctrine of Free Trade came to be propagated in Britain. He, thus, felt the propriety of acknowledging the inter-relationship between the emergence of the Industrial Revolution and the adoption and propagation of the policy of ‘free trade’ as a universal principle. It may be recalled that the Moderates, including Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade and R.C. Dutta, had opposed the principle of Free Trade. Dadabhai had even observed that there is no such thing as natural operation of economic principles in India. Ranade had propagated the need of adopting the Listian doctrine. They, however, had generally looked upon the application of
free trade to India as a genuine mistake on the part of the British rulers. They had hoped that it was only a matter of properly convincing the British rulers.

Tilak, however, had clearly perceived that the phenomenon of Industrial Revolution as also commercial expansion had culminated in adding a new dimension to the whole concept of the ‘structure of Imperial relationship’. Tilak, further, elaborated that such a colonial relationship might exist between two nations even without one having the actual possession of the other.\(^{48}\) It was in this context that Tilak had observed, “What the British are really interested in, was manipulating trade in their favour, with the result that England’s prosperity rested more on its international trade than on the actual possession of their empire.”\(^{49}\)

In elaborating this relationship between the onset of Industrial Revolution and political supremacy in the international sphere, Tilak further stated that though, because of historical conditions, Britain enjoyed the position of primacy, all the Western countries were beneficiaries of the Industrial Revolution. He added that this phenomenon had influe the whole context of international politics. As he explained, “Trade has become the central focus of today’s international relations. All the European countries, as a result, are running after capturing markets for their finished products.”\(^{50}\) Tilak further observed, “In the modern post-Industrial Revolution era, political power and industrial-commercial development have become complementary.”\(^{51}\) It may be mentioned, here, that Tilak wanted the Indians to understand the full implications of the ‘Boycott Movement, in this context.\(^{52}\) By adversely
affecting the British commercial interests, the Indians would be in a position to force the hands of the British rulers to change their policy.

Observing that England’s political hegemony over France and Germany, in the international field, had in a way helped it in maintaining its superiority in the commercial-industrial field, Tilak stated, “It is my feeling that a country’s socio-economic conditions are, to a large extent, dependent on the political power that it could wield.”

Tilak further observed, “Other European countries also, though they had joined the fray late, were hence following the same tactics”, i.e., were trying to extend the field of their political influence.

The above discussion amply proves that Tilak was aware that in the post-Industrial Revolution era, a new dimension was added to the concept of Imperialism. The advantages and gains which these Imperial nations, in the new set-up, derived from their empires, were qualitatively different from those derived from the old patterns of empires. The new empires, thus, differed, in a major way, from the old ones. His observations distinctly indicate that he perceived that the ‘new model of imperialism’ was related to the post-Industrial Revolution phase of production, even though he did not put them in so many words.

The nineteenth century international situation presented a unique feature. The new situation, as if, divided the world into two antagonistic camps—the West and the East, the former being developed and dynamic, the latter underdeveloped and stagnant. As could be expected, Tilak took
cognizance of this phenomenon as well. He was aware of ‘rivalry within the Western world where each nation was vying with each other to win the race.’

But, at the same time, the West, to Tilak, had developed a sense of solidarity. The Western countries, besides their cultural solidarity, were common beneficiaries of the new advances. Tilak stated that “along with the scientific and technological knowledge, the Western countries had acquired superior military strength with which they could easily overpower the Asian people through massacre.” He observed that as a result, “the European nations have started looking upon themselves as a superior and chosen people of the God, entitled to rule over the Asiatic people” He referred to the super-ego of the (White) European nations who asserted that in virility and courage, the White races far surpassed the non-White people. He added that “the European countries have started behaving as if they had received a Divine decree to rule over the non-White backward countries.

Tilak, further, pointed out that the Westerners not only claimed that “Whites were born to rule over the whole world, and that the other people of the non-White races—whether yellow, black or brown—should never think of themselves to be equal of the Whites,” but they also had the audacity of suggesting that “the people of Asia and Africa should look upon the Western domination as part of Divine Grace, giving them a chance of reforming themselves.” Tilak, naturally, challenged this claim of the Whites to cultured superiority. To him, it was nothing else but ‘cultural arrogance, as also a
‘device’ for legitimising their political domination resulting, into political enslavement of the Asians and Africans.

Tilak observed, “Aware of their strength, the advanced European nations feel confident that they would be successful in their design of expanding their empires and enslaving the peoples of the tropics.” These nations apprehended no real challenge from the people of Asia and Africa, and were aware that “the only hindrance would be their internal competition.” Tilak pointed out that as a result of this realization, “the European nations were trying, unashamedly, to accommodate each other in their inhuman exploits at the cost of Asian and African countries.64

During the first decade of the twentieth century, efforts were started in Europe to minimise the field of conflict and competition among the various nations. The European nations claimed that they were intending to form a league-some sort of orginization of the nations-so that any conflicts arising could be judiciously dealt with; at least, could be kept within bounds. Tilak was not to be taken in by the language of the Western nations as he clearly perceived that this was being done only with an intention of conveniently accommodating each other. To him, “This only indicated that the European nations have come to an understanding, so that they need not waste their energies in fighting among themselves. Instead, it would be more profitable if they could come together and divide the spoils among themselves.”65

Tilak’s objective perception of the situation, naturally, helped him, in 1919 also, to go beyond the facade of international friendship, ‘the League of
Nations’. Tilak remarked that though the Western world talked loudly of the right of national self-determination, international justice, and so on, really speaking, “the League of Nations is a political institution started by the powerful countries to enable themselves to keep under their rule the countries which they (already) hold.” Tilak characterised the League of Nations as a trick played upon the world by European politicians who have succeeded in hood-winking President Wilson of the U.S.A. These observations clearly indicate that Tilak beheld the League of Nations as a sort of ‘a club of dacoits.

Tilak took cognizance of the new dimension—the claim of racial superiority of the Whites over the non-Whites; he, naturally, looked upon of the Western expansionism as an issue which should be a concern of the whole Asia. He observed, “The Asian people are threatened by one common danger. The political activities, as are taking shape in this Eastern sphere, indicate the possibility of their being totally conquered on the lines of the continents of America and Africa, by the European-Christian nations.” He apprehended that like India, other Asian countries might also lose their independence.

Tilak indicated that the Indian people who, themselves, were suffering under the foreign yoke, were sure to deplore any such expansion of Western imperialism. At the same time, he wanted to impress upon his countrymen that India’s political struggle her national movement—was a part and parcel of the struggle in Asia and Africa. He remarked, in 1903, that the Asians should realize that whatever may be their internal differences and conflicts, they would
be sharing the same fate as all of them are exposed to the common danger of Western domination. Tilak added, “The people of India who are themselves experiencing the humiliation of subjection, would never wish that countries like China and Japan should undergo the same cruel fate Our sympathies as Asians, because of our suffering, would always be with the people of Japan or China if they ever come to suffer as a result of Western designs.” These remarks clearly indicate as to why Tilak, so enthusiastically, welcomed Japan’s victory over Russia. This victory, to him, was an effective challenge to the myth, deliberately circulated, that the White race was intrinsically superior and hence invincible. As an inhabitant of a subject-country, there was little that Tilak could actually do; but he definitely tried to awaken Indians to the problem, and to generate a feeling of Asian solidarity. It was with reference to this argument that Laxman-Shastri Joshi has so rightly remarked, “Tilak was the first leader to protest against Modern Imperialism.”

It is true that inspite of the said homogeneity of the West and solidarity of the East, there did exist internal differences within both these camps. Events contrary to this feeling were taking place, e.g., Japan’s invasion of China. As is well-known, similar were the conditions in the Western camp as well. Yet, even when total unity of purpose did not exist in any of these camps, there, definitely, was a clear division between the interests of the European countries on the one hand and the Asian countries on the other. One can find a parallel in to-day’s world: There is an accepted differentiation made as ‘developed nations’ and ‘underdeveloped nations’ without, in any way, implying that these
two are totally homogeneous groups. It is significant that, despite their internal rivalries, when it comes to their relationship with countries from the other block, the feelings are anta-gonistic. This helps one in clearly understanding how Japan’s victory over Russia boosted the morale of other Asian countries, and as also how important was the part played by this victory in India’s freedom struggle. It was not that when Tilak hailed the victory of Japan over Russia or talked of Asian solidarity, he was not aware of this internal discrepancy. Nevertheless, he was more concerned with the need of dislodging the said myth of ‘White superiority.’

It is thus clear that Tilak was aware that the Industrial Revolution had given rise to a new type of relationship-colonial relationship-on the international plane. And, secondly, he also took cognizance of the fact that the Industrial Revolution, along with the new scientific progress and technical know how, had placed the Western countries in a position of advantage and, in a way, divided the world into two camps-the industrialised European (American)-mainly Christian-countries and the under-developed Afro-Asian non-Christian countries.

An imperial power stands to exploit the imperial relationship to its own advantage, and such a power is naturally interested in its perpetuation. Hence, it would be logically wrong, Tilak maintained, to expect that the imperial power would extend trade facilities or grant constitutional reforms to the subject people only because the former was convinced of the righteousness of the cause. A subject-people would have to rely on their own capacity for self-
help and determined efforts. Neither pious pleadings nor rational argument but only resolute action would bring redress. Even so, Tilak perceived that in their battle against the imperial rulers, the subject-people might be helped, to a certain extent, by the international situation and public opinion. He maintained that international tensions and pressures, strategies and development are sure to influence the policies of the imperial nation towards the subject-nation. At times, the considerations of international politics may work favourably to the subject-nation, if the latter is alert enough to take advantage of the situation. Tilak himself was convinced that the imperialists would respond only when they would find themselves put in tough corners and hence, the demands of the international situation might force the imperial nations to adopt a lenient policy towards the subject-nation. It must be understood that this change in the policy is not due to a change in their attitudes but due to the thrust of circumstances. It was in this context that Tilak explained that if Lord Montagu appeared more generous and considerate than Lord Minto, it was solely because, “Montagu was being pushed forward by the international situation. We must recognize the significance of the changing times. And we must try to take maximum advantage of this pressing situation till it persists.” Tilak proclaimed, ‘Empire’s adversities are our opportunities’. He pointed out that the Indians should note that during the war, the Imperial rulers were in dire need of assistance? This was the time to make the British realize that a contented India would be in a better position to render the necessary help and assistance.
and that ‘if India remains stationary, she would be a dead weight round the neck of the empire.’

Tilak did not think that there was anything morally wrong or ethically unjust on the part of the subject-people to press forward their demands when the imperial power found itself stranded. “For, it is earthly law that once the pressing conditions are over, high promises which are made, are quietly forgotten.” Tilak claimed that nothing could be gained by appealing to the generosity of the imperial rulers. He reiterated, “It was no use urging our claims merely on the ground of liberty or merely on the ground of rights. birth-rights are not always recognized just because they happen to be one’s birth-right one has to work for them.” Tilak added, “Flardpressed by the war skuation, the imperial rulers are thoroughly convinced that granting the just rights and thus keeping the Indians contented, would be to their own material advantage.” And, therefore, the need of pressing the imperialists for a definite declaration of their future plans before extending assistance and help to their war efforts. Observing that ‘Time and tide wait for none;’ Tilak insisted, “We will never (again) get such an opportunity for which we had been waiting for so many years, and we must take fullest advantage of it.” He further stressed, “We ourselves stand to be condemned if we fail to take fullest advantage of the opportune moment.” He elucidated that the men who were in the position to take decisions, “must be made to realize the need themselves then, there is the greatest chance of our prayers, requests, or entreaties being heard.”
Tilak put up, in support of his argument, that people should take cognizance of the changed times and circumstances. He reminded that the allied nations were trying to justify their war efforts by clamouring that “they are fighting for liberty and democracy. Likewise, because of the war situation, the issues like liberty, equality, response to public opinion are being hotly discussed.”

In such conditions, the British rulers will have to change their policies towards their dependencies, at least as a face-saving device. Tilak added, “One must strike while the iron is hot. For, once the war is over, these situational compulsions would be over, and things would come back to square one. The Imperial rulers would conveniently forget everything about political reforms and, especially, about Swaraj.” Tilak wanted his compatriots to awaken to the fact that, “Time is a crucial factor in the events occurring in this world. Because of the war situation, things are turning in India’s favour. If we do not appreciate its significance we would be losing an historic opportunity.”

This discussion clearly indicates that Tilak had not lost the dimension of the effect of international situation on the issue of inter-relationship between the subject-nation and the imperial nation. He advised that the nationalist leaders should take cognizance of this factor. It is revealing to note Tilak’s remark, “Had I not been in prison, I could have correctly judged the international political situation, predicted the war, and would have tried to take maximum advantage of the situation.”
Lastly, Tilak felt that building up of world public opinion might also, to a certain extent, help the cause of the subject people. He, therefore, advocated the need of propagating the Indian National cause in other nations. He had, accordingly, suggested to Vithal Bhai Patel, “I do believe that a favourable opinion of the civilized world towards Indian aspirations is a valuable asset in our freedom struggle. We cannot afford to neglect world public opinion except at our peril. Every important country has its national organizations and its information bureaus in important world centres, and if mighty governments do that, how much more necessary it is for a country like India?”

Although Tilak, thus, appreciated the due importance of world public opinion, there was neither ambiguity nor uncertainty in his mind about the fact that international political relationship is fundamentally based on considerations of national interests of the actors and, seldom, on humanistic considerations though much ado is made about it. Tilak’s views on the claims of White man’s burden, culturalization mission, etc., have already been discussed. These clearly show that Tilak held a realistic view of the above matters. It appears that Tilak did extend his realistic approach also to the field of international relations in general.

Tilak noted how, till the emergence of Japan on the international arena, the European nations had preferred to ignore the Asiatic and African nations, and had looked upon them as mere territories, fit for exploitation and eventual conquest. The European countries looked upon the Asian countries as their natural prey. The latter were treated by the European countries as the endowed
preserves to be shared among themselves. “The euphoria of Imperialism is such,” observed Tilak, “that even the learned and the wise are enamoured of it. The European countries have come to look upon themselves as impregnable strongholds of power which, to them, was enough justification to extend their area of influence.”

Tilak, quite graphically, described how the emergence of triumphant Japan in the international arena had changed the entire calculations of the western countries, challenging, for the first time, the myth of the racial supremacy of the Whites? This development was an eye-opener making the Western nations realize that they have to take Asian countries seriously. These countries, accordingly, had sought to re-align their strategies. This was bound to have a long-term influence on the forces of world history? Great Britain, Tilak thus pointed out, was quick to locate a new ally in Japan against. Tzarist Russia, and was keen on cultivating friendship with the former.

Tilak, further, added that the western nations were generally inclined to describe the people of the oriental nations as culturally backward and unsophisticated. Once Japan emerged victorious over Russia, the western nations changed their stance. They began looking upon Japan as an equal. Japan was no more considered by them to be culturally backward. The logic was clear. Tilak argued, “Wisdom lies in strength and not in destitution.”

Tilak’s next-and an important-observation was that a nation might have either a democratic government as in Great Britain or a despotic government as in the Tzarist Russia. The power considerations, guiding their interactions with
other neighboring countries, would be the same. As he saw it, “Whether Russia or England, it would have no compunctions in sacrificing the interests of smaller and weak nations for its own sake.” Tilak’s observations in this regard prove relevant even to-day. Whatever the professed ideology, the concerned nation, in its behaviour with other countries-especially, its neighbouring ones-is still governed by considerations of its own national interests.

Tilak, further, elaborated that “a statesman operating on a practical level in the international field has, at times, to set aside all theoretical and ethical considerations, and think only in terms of what is practically attainable or possible.” The statesman’s first consideration has to be the promotion of national interests, “in all directions and in doing so, he has to concentrate his efforts on removing all the intervening obstacles.” He observed that if a philosopher like Morley dons a robe of a statesman, he would, in all probability, behave as a statesman. Tilak sarcastically remarked that in that case, “the philosopher’s knowledge of philosophy would stand him in good stead only in nicely rationalizing the selfish, interest-oriented policies of the imperial nations.”

Tilak, however, perceived the possibility of a section of people from the imperial nation itself joining hands with the nationalist forces in the subject country. He was not blind to the fact that within the imperial nation itself the interests of all the classes were not identical. Thus, early in 1899, Tilak had observed that the expansion of the British Raj had benefitted mainly the middle classes and traders, and not the poorer sections of the society to that extent.”
As a result, the labour class in the capitalist imperial countries, as Tilak inferred, might extend a helping hand to the nationalist forces in the subject countries, and, thereby, form a common front. As Tilak explained, “In Russia and Germany (after the world-war), they were successful in controlling the genie of autocratic rule. But the selfsame in another form in the form of capitalism still prevails in the British Empire.”\textsuperscript{102} It was Tilak’s conjecture that “As labour suffers under the capitalist autocracy, it naturally would have sympathy for those who, like the Indians, suffer under imperial autocracy. Being thus engaged in a similar struggle, it is prepared to help India.”\textsuperscript{103} Tilak not only foresaw such a possibility of co-operation but, as an active politician, also sought to put it in actual practice. As the Bombay C.I.D. reported, ‘Tilak had made himself as pleasant as possible to the Labour Party in the hope that on reaching power, it would grant them demands.’\textsuperscript{104} It may be noted, here, that Tilak did not in any way hope that the Labour Party would act differently because it had adopted a different ideology, and was proclaiming high ideals of socialism and international justice. The possible alliance, according to him, might emerge as the outcome of shared suffering the labour was being crushed by the atrocious capitalist system. Such an alliance would last, so long as the labour continue to suffer. He was, therefore, aware that “Once their difficulties were over, the Labour Party was likely to forget India.”\textsuperscript{105} It is, thus, clear that Tilak’s was a realistic approach and he was quite aware that the alliance between the labour class, i.e., the deprived sections from the imperial nation
and the nationalist forces from the subject country, would mainly be an alliance of convenience.

At this stage, it may be mentioned that Tilak’s objective approach to Imperial relationship led him to realize that historical events prove that the imperial powers are faced with a peculiar type of dilemma: On the one hand, the demands of the relationship are such that it necessitates vesting the real effective power with imperial nation. But, on the other hand especially with the expansion of the empire the imperial nation faces a situation wherein the task of tending such a large empire takes an overwhelming form. As a result, if the imperial power tries to keep the subject nation at a low level of development, it may, to its chagrin, fund the empire emerging as a dead weight.\textsuperscript{106} Tilak observed that because of the world war (1914.1918), the British have come to realize this. It was because of similar considerations and compulsions of the international situation, reminded Tilak, that the British Government had to soften their policies towards Ireland. He expected that the British rulers would come to realize the need of extending the same concessions to India as well. It was this realization, he added, which was pushing forward Montagu, while proposing his reforms, to be apparently more liberal and just.\textsuperscript{107} While elaborating the Indian case, Tilak pointed out that “Initially, the British Imperial rulers had chosen to keep the Indians disarmed and enfeebled so that the former could rule over the latter with the help of just a handful of loyal, armed Indians. They did apprehend that if larger armies were raised, the incident of 1857 would repeat itself.”\textsuperscript{108} Significantly enough, Tilak had
forewarned, wayback in March 1902, that total submission on the part of the Indians would, in the long run, prove disastrous to the Empire itself. In the event of a major eruption of war between the European powers, for Great Britain, the weight of such a dilapidated Indian sub-continent will become an intolerable burden." Faced with the German challenge, in 1914, “The imperial rulers have come to realize that the Indians could help the British empire in its hour of crisis to defend itself, only if the Indians are self-reliant and thus in a position to defend themselves.” Tilak expected that this change in the British attitude would be reflected in other areas also. He pointed out that, “the British statesmen have understood the necessity of India’s all-round progress and have realized that if it does not take place, not only the British rule in India but the whole British empire would be doomed .... And hence, some of them have come out in favour of Swaraj for India.”

For Tilak, the dilemma, faced by the imperial nations, was: if they encourage the subject-nations to develop, the latter, in order to protect and/or to enhance their own interests, might, at a certain stage, choose seceding from the empire itself.” Tilak referred, at one place, to Lord Curzon’s observation that the Roman Empire continued only so long as the subjected peoples were not granted equal rights along with the Romans. Yet, at the same time, in case the subject-country is not allowed to develop, it may turn out to be a deadweight in the event of an outside challenge.

Irrespective of any direct outside threat, if, within an imperial complex, all the power is concentrated at the centre and the empire is too vast, in all
probability, there is the danger the risk that it would crumble under its own weight. Thus, Tilak observed that “This Empire will bend and break by its own weight and then the Indians would get Swaraj.” Of course, he was quick enough to add that people should not wait till history takes its own course but try to expedite it.”

Apart from his realistic approach about the actual operations of the international relations, Tilak raised certain basic moral and philosophical issues, while discussing the issues concerning the field of international politics especially ‘Imperialism.’

To start with, Tilak described imperialistic mentality as Asuri Sampat a Demonic attribute. He wanted to convey, thereby, that empire-building may bring material wealth and political power but it is an ignoble and uncivilized trait. It exhibits an attitude of gaining wealth and power, at the cost of other nations, by depriving them of their just and legitimate claims. The phrase Asuri Sampat has a typical philosophical connotation for the Hindus. It reveals an attitude which is morally undesirable and which will cause the downfall of those exhibiting such an attribute. It is worth mentioning, here, that Tilak thought it necessary to specifically explain this concept of Asuri Sampat with a special reference to the Gita. He elaborated that ‘Asuri Sampat’ is the ‘attribute’ of a person who exhibits vanity, conceit and arrogance, who is given over to unsuitable desires for sensual pleasures, and who strives to obtain these by unethical means. Moreover, such a person, intoxicated by power that he
wields, boasts of being, ‘The Lord, the Enjoier and the Perfect’, claiming that
no one is like unto him.”115

Tilak had refused to accept that empires are formed essentially for philantrophy. The goal of empire-building was promoting the national interests and gaining material benefits at the cost of the subject people. Naturally, the imperial powers, he pointed out, are not prepared to treat the subject people on a footing of equality. The subject people, as a result, are bound to be deprived both morally and materially. Losing freedom was tantamount to losing the very life-force of the nation. That Tilak elaborately dealt with the malevolent effects of the imperialistic rule on the subject nation, therefore, was but natural. What is really important and noteworthy is his inquiry into the effects of an imperial relationship on the internal political situation within the imperial nation itself.

Elaborating his point, Tilak stated that some may ask as to why should an imperial nation care for the deprivation, whether material or spiritual, of the subject nation if the former the imperial nation itself stands to gain by such a relationship? Tilak observed that people would ask this question only if they ignore the fact that ‘along with his prisoner, the guard who is supposed to keep a vigil on him, loses his own freedom of movement.”116 He explained, “In their obsession for valour, prosperity or ego, the victors are prone to forget the truth that both the nations the subject nation as well as the imperial stand to be morally degraded.”117 Tilak elaborated this process of moral degradation which, ultimately, leads to erosion of the democratic values and process within the imperial nation itself. In doing this, he raised a very fundamental and basic
question: Can an imperial nation truly remain ‘democratic’ in its internal political process? Will it continue to honour the democratic values with the same sincerity and vigour if it is acting as an imperial power in the international arena? He maintained that the people from the imperial nations would be carried away by their sense of pride in their own nation’s greatness, and fail to notice the fact that real political power is being concentrated in the hands of but a few. Tilak explained the process, saying that “Under the compulsions of frequent military considerations, the personal rights and privileges of Members of the British Parliament are getting pruned and all power getting concentrated in the hands of but a select few.”

Such a power, Tilak further observed, is deplorably concentrated in the hands of the oligarchs and, more so, in the army. In support of this argument, he, quoting Spencer, stated that “The Parliament, under these conditions, has been reduced to a status of a ‘Commissariat’ sanctioning the financial demands of the (Imperialist) Army.”

Tilak again, observed that the vainglorious mentality of the people of an imperial nation may turn themselves apathetic towards the curtailment of democratic freedom and individual rights of their own people, in their own land, let alone of those from the subject nation. Tilak illustrated, “The English people were known for their love of individual liberty. Now, with the expansion of the Empire, their attitude has changed immensely. They have ceased tolerating freedom of expression even of their own countrymen, let alone of the subject people.” When some Englishmen had tried to hold a
meeting in support of the Boer people, fearing disturbance from the hooligans, they had sought police protection. The police, however, had declined to do so. Referring to this incident, Tilak pointed out that many prominent journalists, instead of condemning this act on the part of the police, had supported it positively. Tilak’s implication was clear: even the journalists, i.e., the so-called conscience-keepers of democracy of individual liberty were taken by the euphoria of imperialism.  

Tilak, here, made a fundamental observation: “Ultimately, ‘Imperialist spirit’ amounts to ‘Slavery’ in respect of the internal matters of the imperialist country itself.” His elaboration of this point is noteworthy as he pointed out: No society is a united mass; it always comprises of individuals. The liberty that society enjoys, thus, ultimately depends directly on the liberty enjoyed by the individuals in any society. It was, thus, logically been surmised that whenever in any society and for whatever reason, ‘Individual Liberty’ particularly ‘liberty of expression’ is curtailed and curbed, the whole society is being engulfed in a sort of slavery. Britain itself provides a convincing example of the inter-relationship between the ‘Imperialistic attitude’ and the ‘shrinking of internal democracy.’ Tilak, further, elaborated, “With the yearning for the outward expansion of the empire, this tendency of curtailing individual liberty would enhance, making it more and more difficult for an imperial power otherwise boasting of being democratic, to remain so in its internal political process. Thus, ‘Imperialism’ is but tantamount to Slavery.” Tilak, further, observed, “History abounds with instances wherein nations, to satisfy their
hunger for empire, did not hesitate to curtail and circumscribe their own internal freedom. As a side-effect of expanding empires, internal democracy finds itself in jeopardy.”124 This observation of Tilak clearly shows that he had a clear perception of the phenomenon of Imperialism.

**Going further, Tilak touched another significant dimension:**

For the extension and perpetuation of the imperial power, the people of the imperial power may, at times, surrender their rights even their entire power—to the group of men which, they think, have the capacity to bear the responsibility of safeguarding and perpetuating the vast empire. Tilak cited, in this connection, the example of the people of the Ancient Roman Empire, voluntarily surrendering their rights to Julius Caesar, and making him a dictator for life. Tilak was quick to remind that the Roman political set-up was democratic in character and that the act of surrendering power was voluntary in character.125 Tilak’s observations, one finds, are thoroughly apt and universal. Even today, at times, power-holders are seen taking their people for a ride in the name of enhancing the nations’ interests.

Tilak thus stressed that the imperial relationship would, ultimately, prove spiritually injurious not only to the subject-nation but also to the imperial power as well. He was, hereby, making a most relevant point.

To conclude, as has been mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Tilak’s observations were not confined only to the relationship between India and Great Britain in particular. Tilak perceived the forces operating on international relations in general.
As the foregoing discussion would bring out, Tilak held a realistic and objective view about international political relations. He was, thus, not carried away by the tall claims of ‘culturalization mission’ as also the claims of ‘White man’s burden’.

While interpreting the Indo-British relationship, it is noteworthy that Tilak thought it necessary to take a ‘general view’ of the relationship. He, thus, pointedly brought out that empires are, without exception, built to prompt the national interests of the imperial power and, as such, there would always be a contradiction in interests of the imperial power and the subject—nation. As has already been seen in an earlier chapter, Tilak, going behind the facade of the ‘generous and liberal’ British rule, laid bare the true characteristics of the ‘phenomenon of Imperialism.’ He also took cognizance of the dilemma faced by an imperial nation. It could be said, justifiably, that Tilak put the phenomenon of ‘Imperialism’ in its proper perspective. This should be considered as one of his major contributions to political theory.

Tilak also refused to be influenced by the professed declarations of the Western nations that the League of Nations was launched with a view of establishing co-operation, peace and justice among all the nations. He preferred to look upon it as a ‘White Man’s Club’, with its real intention of settling the issues pertaining to Western European nations, more peacefully and amicably. It was in this context that Tilak promoted the idea and need of Asian solidarity.
One is impressed to note that Tilak had a clear perception of the colonial character of modern imperialism of the post-Industrial-Revolution era, along with all its implications. It is also noteworthy that Tilak foresaw the possibility of the deprived sections of the Imperial rule joining hands, as a matter of expediency, with the nationalist forces, of the subject—nation. Of course, Tilak did not elaborate the latter point fully.

Tilak’s observations on the way in which international relations are conducted, clearly show that he looked upon the whole business of international relations as a game of ‘real politic’, and insisted that any nation can forget this truth only at its own peril.

Tilak’s approach to international relations was, thus, objective and realistic. This did not, however, prevent him from going beyond the mere practical. It is striking that he raised certain fundamental philosophical and ethical issues. Tilak’s observation that Imperialism inclination towards empire-building is nothing else but Asuri Sampata demonic attribute, challenges the moral foundation of Imperialism.

Tilak also raised two very pertinent questions of fundamental importance:

Firstly: Can a foreign, imperial, power be relied upon to lead the subject nation on the road to modernity, development and progress? This inquiry was very relevant at that peculiar juncture, and has not lost its relevance even today. The inspiration for change, i.e., transition, in fields social, economic and political, may come from outside. But the process of change itself cannot be
masterminded by a foreign especially an imperial power. An imperial power would naturally, be interested in promoting to own interests in exploiting the power-relationship in its own favour and, hence, in perpetuating the same. The imperial power, therefore, cannot, logically, be expected to act as a modernizing agent a political Gum in the true sense of the term. It would suffice to say that recent events in the international arena only re-inforce Tilak’s logic. One may add that implications of this truth for the subject people, according to Tilak, are clear they should strive for freedom.

Secondly, Tilak asked: Can an imperial nation, claiming to have a liberal democratic political system, remain ‘truly derni aic in its internal affairs? Or, will the of imperial nation for further expansion of its empire, result in the moneied class the capitalists and the military gaining an upper hand in the internal political process? According to Tilak, the fact that even the intellectuals who are regarded as the ‘guardians of conscience’, do not feel regretted over the erosion of the democratic process, was equally, if not more, regrettable than the erosion itself. This erosion, the loss of democratic freedom, at times, in Tilak’s view, may even be the result of the voluntary surrendering of power on the part of the people of the imperial nation. Need it be added that, even to-day, the so-called democracies which are desirous of expanding their field of influence in the international sphere, are facing this problem.

Tilak’s observations relating to the field of international relations are significant even to-day, and are indicative of his deep insight into the political issues and his concern for the ethical aspects involved.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


4. Please refer to Chapter ‘Swaraj’: Justification.

5. Please refer to Chapter ‘Swaraj’: Justification.


44. Rajani Palme DatE, India Today, p. 108.


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74. Tarkateerth Joshi, Prastavana, Lok Tilak Lekhasangraha.


77. B.G. Tilak; His Writings & Speeches, p. 323.


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83. B.G. Tilak: His Writings & Speeches, p. 313.

85. B.G. Tilak: His Writings & Speeches, p. 323.


90. Quoted by Pradhan—Bhagwat., Lok.Tilak, p. 324.


105. Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. XXXII—1603-(B)


123. Samagra Tilak. Vol. IV, p. 1013-1018. The whole article is important.
