CHAPTER- IV

GANDHIAN ALTERNATIVE

The most salient feature that stands out unmistakably in every aspect of the social revolution that Gandhi worked out in India, is the deep respect with which he held man. The task of providing human security is ultimately a task of dealing with men who constitute the society. And so in attempting such a task Gandhi had to deal with the millions of his countrymen belonging to various social groups. In his approach to the diverse classes he had a marvellous consistency in his attitude which can well be described as a sincere respect for the dignity of the human personality.

It was actually much more than a mere attitude. It was a natural outflow, an instinctive expression of the deep-seated conviction of the Mahatma. For in truth it was this conviction about the inviolable dignity that he attached to every single person that proved to be his spring of action. The existing conditions of Indian society were such a blatant violation of the basic rights of the human personality that naturally flow from his high dignity, that they clashed with his convictions and jarred on his sensibilities; and of sheer necessity Gandhi was prodded on to take the momentous decision to make his ‘happiness dependent upon that of the poorest’¹ till he would ‘wipe every tear in every eye’.²

To have, therefore, any fair understanding of the view Gandhi had

---
¹ Harijan, 27 October 1933, pp. 40-45.
of human security, and of the dignity and respect he attached to the human personality, one will have to take into account his various activities and analyse them. For the Gandhian revolution in its essence aimed at resetting man into his rightful position from where the adverse elements of an egoistic society had pulled him down and depersonalised him, economic security is must for this he advocated the following:

**Economic Equality**

Economic equality is a natural consequence of the equality of rights that men enjoy in a society. It simply means, Gandhi says, that everybody should have enough of facilities to provide for his needs as a human person. No one can deny a man that right. For Gandhi nothing could have been more evident. ‘Every man has an equal right to the necessities of life...’ In this he also instinctively included each man's right to opportunities for the full flowering of his personality.

But the Gandhian concept of economic equality does not imply a narrow or absolute equality of property, opportunities etc. The simple reason is that such a concept cannot correspond to actual reality. ‘Even in the most perfect world we shall fail to avoid inequalities. . . .’ For ‘inequalities in intelligence and even opportunities will last till the end of time. A man living on the bank of a river has any day more opportunities of growing crops than one living in and around desert.’

So too may needs vary from person to person as those of the

---

3 Harijan, 31 March 1946, pp. 60-61.
4 Young India, 26 March 1931, p. 52.
5 Harijan, 4 August 1946, p. 247.
6 Ibid., 2 January 1937, pp. 376-377.
7 Young India, 26 March 1931, pp. 51-52.
elephant and the ant'. One may need 'two shawls in winter' whereas another does not 'require any warm clothing whatsoever'. And that means equality cannot imply 'that everyone would have the same amount of goods.'

In spite of this Gandhi was careful to insist on the fundamental and 'essential equality' of all and said it 'is not to be missed.' Every one is equal as far as every one has a right to 'have enough for his or her needs'. And justice demands that every one recognise this right of others. 'My ideal', Gandhi said, 'is equal distribution, but so far as I can see it is not to be realised. I work therefore for - equitable distribution.' Indeed he was ready to call himself and others 'thieves' if they possessed things not of immediate use when so many of their countrymen lacked the necessities of life. It was again his simple logic of justice that concluded that in such circumstances even 'to partake of sweetmeats and other delicacies ... is equivalent to robbery.' For you have no right to the superfluities of life as long as a single person does not have enough for his or her needs. This is merely his doctrine of economic equality pushed to its logical extreme.

**Doctrine of Trusteeship**

One of the applications of the doctrine was Gandhi's scheme of trusteeship. Economic equality suggests 'equal distribution' and this in

---

8 Harijan, 21 April 1946, pp. 96-97.
9 Ibid., 31 March 1946, p. 90.
10 Ibid
11 Young India, 26 March 1931, p. 52.
13 Ibid., 17 March 1946, pp. 46-47.
14 Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 377.

187
turn points to the doctrine of trusteeship. ‘Indeed at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must be that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for the superfluous wealth possessed by them. For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours.’

‘Though I may come by wealth either through legacy or trade and industry, What belongs to me [of it] is the right to an honourable livelihood no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community.’

This implies man's equality of rights to the goods of this earth. And the only way of maintaining this equality of rights in practice is to ordain our property to the common good of ‘people as a whole’ through the principle of trusteeship. 'Earn your crores by all means', Gandhi told his countrymen, 'but understand that the wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people'. It is trusteeship therefore which will help 'in realising a state of equality on earth', which is the essence of the Gandhian view of man's rights.

_Dignity of the Worker_

One of the important fields where Gandhi extended his fight for economic equality was the factory. He saw the poor worker subjected to gross injustice and reduced below the dignity that is his natural due as a person. Gandhi's fight for the right of the worker was chiefly evident in his claims for proper conditions of work, a fair standard of wages, the

---

16 Harijan, 25 August 1940, p. 260.
17 Ibid., 3 June 1939, pp. 150-151.
18 Ibid., 23 February 1947, pp. 36-37.
19 Ibid., 1 February 1942, pp. 20-21.
rights of labour in production and the means to fulfil those rights.

As for the conditions of work, Gandhi had to fight against many abuses against human dignity. He insisted that children should not be made to work in factories. The employment of young children is a 'national degradation' and a 'misuse of children', he insisted.\textsuperscript{21} He constantly pleaded for shorter hours of work and more leisure for workmen so that their condition be not 'reduced to that of the beast'.\textsuperscript{22} He also demanded safety measures against dangers and bad hygiene.

It is, however, when he fought for proper standards of wages that the Gandhian ideal stood out in all its clarity. As usual he did advance arguments from many quarters to support his claims: for example, paying proper wages would boost up industry itself, he said.\textsuperscript{23} But his main contention, rightly, was the welfare and the rights and dignity of the worker himself. 'The labourer is worthy of his hire. This law is as old as the hills. All useful labour ought to bring in the same and adequate wages to the labourer. Till that time comes, the least that should be done is to see that every labourer gets enough to feed and clothe himself and the family.'\textsuperscript{24}

To improve the lot of the labourer his first step was to lay claims to a minimum living wage. A worker must be paid enough to support a family of four to six members, to see to their proper housing, sanitation, to provide them with a balanced diet in a word to help them to live a human life.\textsuperscript{25} The minimum wage may vary from state to state,\textsuperscript{26} but the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Young India, 5 May 1920, pp. 6-7.
  \item Ibid., 28 April 1920, pp. 3-4.
  \item Harijan, 13 February 1937, p. 6.
  \item Ibid., 9 June 1946, p. 174.
  \item Ibid., 31 August 1935, pp. 228-229.
  \item Ibid., 9 June 1946, p. 175.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
principle admits of no mitigation. 'We must have more wages, we must have less work, because we want clean houses, clean bodies, clean minds and a clean soul, and both are essential for this fourfold cleanliness.'

And as for those employees who cannot afford to grant such wages, he said they had better close their shops.

The general principle of Gandhi evidenced another application when he insisted on the rights of labour in production. Here too his persuasive mind could marshal many advantages when he asked the proprietors to take labour to be on an equal footing with capital. They would then supplement each other work as mutual trustees, and bring about a healthy and advantageous family spirit. But again he was keen enough to place the insistence on the right and dignity of labour. He told the employers: "What, I expect of you therefore is that you hold all your riches as a trust to be used solely in the interest of those who sweat for you, and to whose industry and labour you owe all your position and prosperity. I want you to make your labourers co-partners of your wealth."

Time and again he asserted the labourers' right as part proprietors. 'In my opinion the mill-hands are as much the proprietors of their mills as the share holders..." Gandhi was not afraid to accept the revolutionary conclusions the logic of his doctrine would dictate to him. Therefore he urged the workers 'to insist on their rights, and even

27 Young India, 28 April 1920, p. 5.
29 Young India, 20 August 1925, pp. 290-291.
31 Young India, 20 August 1925, p. 287.
32 Ibid., 10 May 1928, pp. 145-146.
33 Harijan, 2 February 1934, p. 8.
34 Young India, 4 August, 1927, p. 248.
to demand the proper use by their employers of the manufactures in which they have had such an important hand. And fearlessness he concluded: 'If then labourers are co-equal owners, their organisation should have the same access to the transactions of the mills as the shareholders.' He taught them too the means to realise their claims, as for example when he reminded them that 'Strikes are an inherent right of the working man.'

Summing up, we might say that in Gandhi's tireless efforts towards economic equality one point stands out clearly. It was particularly on behalf of the neglected masses that he got himself involved in social welfare work. He saw that physical and circumstantial disabilities had made them submit dumbly to the exploiters who preyed on their rights as men. That was an occasion for him to stress emphatically every man's right to the proper means of living. It may not imply a mathematical equality either in our opportunities for growth or in the distribution of the earth's produce. But it does imply an equitable and just distribution which can be had for instance in trusteeship. Again it does demand human conditions of work and at least a minimum living wage for the labourer. And at length it logically leads to the conclusion that even a poor labourer is co-equal with the manager of the factory.

This bespeaks what dignity Gandhi thought accrues to even the humblest of men just because he is a man. The lowest man in the society has rights and therefore a dignity equal to that of the highest. This leads us to the second focal point which is social security.

37 Ibid., 3 July 1937, p. 162.
Social Equality

If Gandhi had to be consistent with his principle of the intrinsic and equal worth of every human being, which was implied in his fight for economic equality, he had to, as he did, fight as well for social equality in an Indian society which in many aspects had unjustly ignored it. He was driven by the basic conviction that no man can claim superiority just by his birth. It is the equality of the human rights derived from one common Father whom we have in God that postulates a social equality among men. And due to his persuasion he threw himself headlong into the struggle for social justice. This struggle was specially seen in his efforts to reinstate the Indian woman in her rightful position, and to purge the scourge of untouchability from India's soil.

But at the outset it must be said that as in his ideal of economic equality, here too Gandhi was too much of a realist to rule out every difference in social status. As he admitted some inequalities in property and opportunities, so too he saw the necessity of a social hierarchy. 'We own no master but Daridranarayana, and if for the time being we own human superiors, we do so voluntarily, well knowing that no organisation can be carried on without discipline. Discipline presupposes an organising head. He is only the first among equals. He is there on sufferance. But whilst he is there, he is entitled to the whole-hearted allegiance and uncompromising obedience of all the fellow servants.'

Though this was said in connection with some 'humanitarian services' there is no doubt that mutatis mutandis it well expresses the social aspect of his philosophy.

Coming to the positive meaning of his social equality he says,

---

38 Harijan, 22 June 1935, p. 147.
I do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated. I believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in the Gita. The Gita teaches us that the members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same dharma for the brahmin as for the bhangi. But it insists that the latter should be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning.  

This equality derives from 'God, who is the creator of all.' All are one in the eyes of God, and so He, 'the Father in heaven will deal with us all with even-handed justice.' Therefore, 'there cannot be greater ignorance than this: birth and observance of forms cannot determine one's superiority or inferiority. Character is the only determining factor. God did not create men with the badge of superiority or inferiority, and no scripture which labels a human being as inferior or untouchable, because of his or her birth, can command our allegiance. It is a denial of God and of Truth which is God.'

From this it was but one step to conclude that all human labour is essentially of the same stamp. 'I do not regard a bhangi's [duties] as in any sense of a lower order [than any]. Indeed the scavenger's 'occupation is as honourable as that of lawyers or government servants.' So coming to the very essence of the thing we can say that Gandhi held that man's essential dignity, which he has in common with all men,
derives neither from his birth nor his occupation but from his very human nature, which thus entitles him to all basic human rights and to an undiscriminating justice.

*Dignity of Womanhood*

This led Gandhi to work for the restoration of the status of India's womanhood which had deteriorated appallingly in a degenerating society. He pointed out gross violation is of the dignity of a woman veiled under customs and traditions: He asserted repeatedly woman's equal rights with man. And marvellously he succeeded in lifting to some extent the degrading burden placed unjustly on the Indian woman.

Custom in India had widely justified in making the woman subordinate to man in a wrong sense. Gandhi revolted against it: 'By sheer force of vicious custom even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have.'

Illiteracy, he pointed out, is no justification for the denial of their 'equal and natural rights' as human beings. He pointed an accusing finger at 'the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected' in being, for instance, incapacitated to inherit anything. 'The root of the evil lies much deeper than most people realise. It lies in man's greed of power and fame, and deeper still in mutual lust ...' She should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man.'

---

45 Address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, 20 February 1918.
46 Ibid.
47 Young India, 17 October 1929, p. 340
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
What came in for real scathing remarks from him was the positive ill-treatment of women. 'We know by painful experience of what is daily happening in India, that there are husbands enough, who regard their wives as their property like their cattle or household furniture, and therefore think they have the right to beat them as they would do to their cattle.' Brutal husbands' he termed them. 'More often than not the woman's time is taken up, not by the performance of essential domestic duties, but catering for the egoistic pleasures of her lord and master. . . . To me this slavery of woman is a symbol of our barbarism.... It is high time that our womankind was freed from this incubus.' He blamed Hindu culture for this. 'Excessive subordination of the wife to the husband... This has resulted in the husband sometimes usurping and exercising authority that reduced him to the level of the beast.'

Similarly Gandhi lashed mercilessly against some evil customs in Indian society, such as child marriage, dowry and purdah. 'It is irreligion not religion to give religious sanction to a brutal custom' he said of the evils of child marriage. He even defied the Hindu scriptures when they gave sanction to it. 'The Smritis bristle with contradictions', he said. The health of the race, the morality of the children involved and so many other reasons, he said, would induce us to hold it as 'sinful' to give children in marriage. In this connection he time and again spoke against it by drawing on his own experience and also on the appalling statistics he had before him of its consequent evils. He was outspoken against

---

50 Ibid., 3 October 1929, p. 323.
51 Ibid., 17 October 1929, p. 340.
52 Harijan, 8 June 1940, pp. 157-158.
53 Young India, 3 October 1929, p. 324.
54 Ibid., 26 August 1926, p. 301.
55 Ibid.
forced marriages and forced widowhood, especially of teenage widowhood. Of course he was all for 'voluntary widowhood . . . which adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the home and uplifts religion itself.' But he could not bear the 'enormity of the wrong done to the Hindu girl widows.... Widowhood imposed by the religion or custom is art unbearable yoke, and defiles the home by secret vice and degrades religion', especially when widowhood is so common in child marriages. Besides it makes one 'lose sight of elementary justice'.

No less was he outspoken on the question of dowry and purdah. The system of dowry for him 'was nothing but the sale of girls'. Speaking of the evils of dowry, for instance disposing of young children to old men by needy parents, Gandhi accused the community of committing 'a double sin'. Any young man who makes dowry a condition for marriage discredits his education Gandhi's country and dishonours womanhood.

He waged war also on the system of purdah. Refuting the charge that it was meant to protect the chastity of women, he said: 'Chastity is not a hothouse growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the purdah. It must grow from: within, and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be as defiant as Sita's. It must be a very poor thing that cannot stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their womenfolk even as the latter are compelled to trust them.' In 1927 he

---

56 Ibid., 5 August 1926, p. 276.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 11 November 1926, p. 388.
59 Harijan, 16 March 1947, p. 67.
60 Young India, 6 October 1927, p. 333.
61 Ibid., 21 June 1928, pp. 207-208.
62 Ibid., 3 February 1927, pp. 33-34.
spoke against the purdah saying: 'It pained and humiliated me deeply. I thought of the wrong done by men to the women of India, by clinging to a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the country.' His campaign bore fruit and in 1942 he could happily write: 'The days of the purdah are gone for good.'

There are many other fields in which Gandhi tried to uphold the dignity of the woman. Thus for example he continually railed against obscene literature which had reached 'an altogether wrong apotheosis' of women, thus degrading their nature. He did his best to counteract the practice of prostitution which he called 'a life of shame', a life of 'debasing indulgence'. against which 'curse' he hoped 'humanity will rise.' So too he pitted himself against the protagonists of contraceptives who asked the Indian woman to violate 'the sacredness of her body.'

Behind all his holy zeal there lay the implicit conviction that women are as much human as men and hence they must enjoy perfect equality of rights pertaining to human nature as such. He said: 'I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not 'suffered by man.' He emphasised the point repeatedly. 'She has the right to participate in the minutest detail of the activity of man, and she has the same right of

---

63 Ibid.
64 Harijan, 8 March 1942, p. 67.
65 Ibid., 21 November 1936, p. 327.
66 Young India, 25 June 1925, pp. 223-224.
67 Ibid., 9 July 1925, p. 238.
69 Harijan, 2 May 1936, pp. 92-93.
70 Young India, 17 October 1929, p. 340.
freedom and liberty as he.\textsuperscript{71}

‘Man and woman are equal in status, but are not identical. They are a peerless pair being complementary to one another …\textsuperscript{72} Of course he admitted the ‘point of bifurcation’ in them. Thus he said: ‘Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocation of the two must also be different.’\textsuperscript{73} The woman by vocation is destined to rear children. And it would be wrong to forsake that work altogether for another.\textsuperscript{74} But what Gandhi fought for is that 'she is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his'\textsuperscript{75} and man is unjust in denying her that right.

Gandhi did succeed in bringing back honour to India's womanhood. He asked them to 'forget that they belong to the weaker sex';\textsuperscript{76} he convinced them that 'the economic and moral salvation of India' rested mainly on them. 'The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation.'\textsuperscript{77} He drew away thousands of them into his political campaign; scores of hundreds answered his call to the satyagraha and swadeshi drive; they lived up to his definition of woman- 'embodiment of sacrifice and suffering' by giving their all to fight for truth with him. The fearlessness they displayed and their capacity to 'work wonders on behalf of the motherland', redounded in getting back to a large extent the honour and dignity that had increasingly been

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, 20 February 1918.
\item Ibid.
\item Harijan, 24 February 1940, p. 13.
\item Ibid.
\item Address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, 20 February 1918.
\item Young India, 14 January 1932, p. 19.
\item Ibid., 11 August 1921, p. 253.
\item Ibid., 17 October 1929, p. 340.
\item Ibid., 11 August 1921, p. 253.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
denied them in modern Indian society.

**Fight for Harijans**

The fight on behalf of women was one part of his fight for social justice; the fight on behalf of the untouchables another. He spoke against the practice of untouchability with all his might and main. He tried to convince people of its unreasonableness. And characteristically he staked his life to bring social equality to them.

Gandhi marshalled all his fund of vehemence to breach the wall of prejudice that guarded the unjust tradition of untouchability. 'I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism', he said. **80** 'A hideous doctrine', he called it, 'a curse that is eating into the vitals of Hinduism'. **81** It was for him 'a sin', an excrescence to be removed by every effort', **82** 'a heinous crime against humanity', **83** 'social leprosy'. **84** 'a hydra-headed monster', **85** poison in Hinduism 'as a drop of arsenic in milk', **86** and so on. Such language from a man so meek and mild points to the deep feelings Gandhi had against untouchability.

But it must be said that for Gandhi untouchability was not synonymous with caste. At least for him caste 'simply means the following on the part of us all of the hereditary and traditional calling of our fore-fathers, in so far as that traditional calling is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only for the purpose of earning one's

---

**Notes:**

80 Address to the Supressed Classes Conference, Ahmedabad, 13 and 14 April 1921.
82 Young India, 27 October 1920, p. 3.
83 Ibid., 8 December 1920, pp. 5-6.
85 Ibid., p. 29.
86 Ibid, p. 68.

199
livelihood'.

Such casteism 'would limit our material ambition, and our energy would be set free for exploring those vast fields whereby and where through we can know God'. It gave the labourer, the Sudra, the same status as the thinker, the Brahmin. It provided for the accentuation of merit and elimination of demerit and it transferred human ambition from the general worldly sphere to the permanent and the spiritual.

Untouchability on the other hand implied the idea of 'inferiority and superiority' and thus had much more malice in it than its literal meaning would suggest. In this meaning alone Gandhi defended casteism, at least in his early period. For he said: 'If untouchability and caste are convertible terms, the sooner caste perishes the better for all concerned.'

To convince people of the injustice of untouchability he had recourse to many ways of persuasion. For instance he repeatedly told people that we have no right to speak against foreign domination till we rid ourselves of the domination of our own people. 'The curse of foreign domination and the attendant exploitation is the justest retribution meted out by God to us for our exploitation of a sixth of our own race and their studied degradation in the sacred name of religion.'

He allied this argument with the argument of swaraj; 'Without the removal of the taint swaraj is a meaningless term. . . , I consider the removal of untouchability as a most powerful factor in the process of

---

87 Ibid., p. 62.
88 Ibid., p. 63.
89 Ibid., pp. 78-79.
90 Young India, 25 March 1926, pp. 113-114.
91 Ibid., 13 October 1921, pp. 322-323.
attainment of swaraj.\textsuperscript{92}

He even said it is essential to it.\textsuperscript{93} And at another place be declared: 'There seems to be a lurking thought with many of us that we can gain swaraj and keep untouchability. They do not even see the contradiction inherent in the thought.\textsuperscript{94}

The contradiction is evident if we consider the definition of swaraj given by Gandhi. 'Swaraj is synonymous with Ram Raj - the establishment of the kingdom of Righteousness on earth.'\textsuperscript{95}

But above all Gandhi put forward the argument from reason, the argument of social equality. 'Untouchability is repugnant to reason and to their instinct of mercy, pity or love.'\textsuperscript{96} It is a ‘heinous crime against humanity’\textsuperscript{97} and ought to be fought on all fronts. And such a fight ‘is a fight for the recognition of human dignity’.\textsuperscript{98} He could not understand how one could ‘accord differential treatment to any person, be he Brahmin or bhangi, who worships the same God . . . .’\textsuperscript{99} and when ‘all are-one in the eyes of God’.\textsuperscript{100} So he pleaded for equality 'in the eye of the law, in the matter of elementary human rights even as irrespective of caste, race, creed or colour, we have certain things in common, e.g. hunger, thirst, etc.'\textsuperscript{101}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{92} Gandhi, M. K., The Bleeding Wound, op. cit., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{95} Address to the Suppressed Classes Conference, Ahmedabad, April 1921.
\textsuperscript{96} Young India, 13 October 1921, p. 321.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 8 December, 1920, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 5 February 1925, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{100} Young India, 6 August 1931, p. 205.
\textsuperscript{101} Gandhi, M. K., The Bleeding Wound, op. cit.
\end{flushleft}
Defining his aim he said: “You must have the right to worship, in any temple in which the members of other castes are admitted. You must have admission to schools along with the children of other castes without any distinction. You must be eligible to the highest office in the land not excluding even that of the Viceroy's. That is my definition of the removal of untouchability.”

For this removal of untouchability Gandhi took every means, possible and even did not hesitate to stake life for it. He called the untouchable by a new name, 'Harijan', the children or - people of God. He bade Harijans to come and live in his Ashram as members of one family among people drawn from all castes. He adopted a Harijan girl. He encouraged other caste members to marry Harijans. 'I therefore tell all the boys and girls who want to marry that they cannot be married at Sevagram Ashram unless one of the parties is a Harijan.'

'I have more than once staked my all for their sake', Gandhi - wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, announcing the epic fast he was about to undertake for the sake of the untouchables. His fast unto death against the 'Communal Award' in 1932 was 'to resist your [British] decision with my life', which 'does not protect them [the Harijans] or the Hindu society in general from being disrupted'. The fast had an electric effect. It caused a 'religious-emotional upheaval' in

---

103 Hindustan Standard, 5 January 1946.
104 Letter dated 11 March 1932, Yerawda Central Prison.
105 Gandhi's Letter to the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, dated 18 August 1932, Yerawda Central Prison.
106 Gandhi's Letter to Ramsay McDonald, dated 9 September 1932, Yerawda Central Prison.
India. 'A spirit of reform, penance and self-purification swept the land.' Hundreds of temples flung their doors open to Harijans. Roads and streets, schools and wells, hotels and holy places lowered their bars against Harijans. In a spirit of penance many refrained from going to theatres, restaurants etc. At the orthodox Benares University the Principal with many other Brahmins dined publicly with street cleaners, cobblers and scavengers. And that was certainly not a stray case. The Mahatma had dealt a well calculated death blow to untouchability and it was certainly doomed to perish.

In retrospect, we see that for Gandhi neither birth nor occupation essentially differentiates one man from another, because it is one and the same human nature that is participated in by every human being which brings with it human rights and human dignity, though it does not necessarily postulate an absolute mathematical social equality. Among other things this Gandhian conviction was seen in his heroic struggle on behalf of India's women and untouchables whom he declared to be equal to any other human being as far as they are endowed with both human nature and dignity.

The one conclusion which obviously flows from all this is that the dignity that Gandhi attached to human nature was really very lofty which is very essential for human security. Neither age-old customs nor religious sanctions can justify any one's looking down on another human person even in the slightest way. If man is man he has a unique claim for deep respect for the inviolable dignity of his nature.

---

108 Ibid., p. 347.
Sustainable Peace is The Third Focal Point of His Vision of Human Nature

Gandhi has also been described as an apostle of peace. Certainly he was. He strove and died for peace. He advocated 'peace—but not at any price', for his philosophy was a philosophy of commitment—it was based upon the concept of moral responsibility, as well as that of 'peace at any price' which underlay his ethic of intention.\textsuperscript{109} This may sound paradoxical. But he moved, Dr. Power rightly observes, from 'truth to truth' through a tangle of paradoxes.\textsuperscript{110}

Gandhi's philosophy of peace is to be sharply distinguished from the conservative plea for 'peace at any cost' which is in essence a plea for the maintenance of \textit{status quo}. Peace, he advocated, is integrally related to justice. As he wrote: "Peace must be just."\textsuperscript{111} Peace is not mere cessation of hostilities. Gandhi did not share the diplomatic view of peace.\textsuperscript{112} Peace for him connoted a positive state of affairs, the precondition being freedom from exploitation. What he advocated was non-violent and just peace which alone, in his opinion, could ensure lasting peace.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{113} Carr, Edward Hallett, Conditions of Peace (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.), 1944, p. xxiii.
As an earnest believer in the universality of satyagraha he wrote in Young India: "It may be long before the law of love will be recognized in international affairs. The machineries of governments stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another. Yet ... we could see how the world is moving steadily to realize that between nation and nation, as between man and man, force has failed to solve problems, but that the economic sanction of non-co-operation is far more mighty and conclusive than armies and navies."

He asserted: "It may take long to lay the wires for international love, but the sanction of international non-cooperation in preference to continued physical compulsion...is a distinct progress towards the ultimate and real solution."

The Italian invasion of Abyssinia moved Gandhi to send a message to the Editor of The Cosmopolitan, New York, which was one of the first of his appeals against the wave of darkness that was to sweep the whole world:

"Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have not realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as a chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of conditions of attainment thereof. If the recognized leaders of mankind who have control over the engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use, with full knowledge of its implications, permanent peace can be attained. This

---

114 Young India, 23 June 1919, p. 50.
115 Ibid., p. 51.
is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and, therefore, increase their material possessions.\textsuperscript{116}

Gandhi explained his concept of non-violent peace while talking to the Christian missionaries in early December 1938: "Peace will never come until the Great Powers courageously decide to disarm themselves. It seems to me that recent events must force that belief on the Great Powers. I have an implicit faith—a faith that today burns brighter than ever, after half a century's experience of unbroken practice of non-violence—that mankind can only be saved through non-violence..."\textsuperscript{117}

"There will be no peace", Gandhi reiterated his conviction on the eve of the San Francisco Conference, "for the Allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud and are determined to hammer cut real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all wars. In such a world only the militarily weaker nations will be free from the fear of intimidation or exploitation."\textsuperscript{118}

Similarly, he told a director of an influential British daily paper in 1946: "I have no doubt that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of which war is the natural expression and

\textsuperscript{116} Harijan, 16 May, 1936, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 24 December, 1938, p. 395.
\textsuperscript{118} Bombay Chronicle, 18-04-1945.
atom bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world.”

What did Gandhi think of the various devices for bringing or maintaining peace for human security? Arbitration, world government, international organization, disarmament and world police and defence force are the traditional solutions suggested for preventing aggression.

Gandhi’s preferred method of resolving inter-state questions was what he called 'arbitration'. "How I wish here Hitler would respond to the appeal of the President of the United States and allow his claim to be investigated by arbitrators in whose choice he will have as effective voice as the disputants !" Incidentally, Roosevelt did not mention 'arbitration', nor did he suggest a disinterested panel selected by the disputants. He said that his message came from a 'friendly intermediary', not even a 'mediator', asking Hitler to promise not to attack specified European nations for a minimum of ten years, and called himself a 'post office that would secure guarantees from other powers.'

Gandhi indicted Hitler for his refusal to 'arbitrate' German claims to Danzig and the Polish corridor. "I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Germany is beyond question, if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status. It may be that

---

119 Harijan, 10 November, 1946, p. 389.
120 “International Arbitration was defined by the Hague Convention of 1907 as the settlement of disputes between states by judges of their own choice and on the basis of the respect for law. This definition seems too narrow, for arbitration includes every submission of a dispute to final decision by an impartial judge or court.”—Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 157.
By 'arbitration', Gandhi meant any informal effort by a third party to mediate, conciliate or use good offices.
121 Harijan, 2 September, 1939, p. 260.
his claim is a just claim. My complaint is that he will not let the claim be examined by an impartial tribunal. "123

Technically, Roosevelt's appeal was not for arbitration. But Gandhi was not much interested about the procedural devices of international diplomacy; he was more interested in the spirit of the matter and as such, Roosevelt's offer to act as a 'post office' impressed him.124

On national questions Gandhi did not favour third-party settlement for resolving disputes. Referring to the question of linguistic redistribution of provinces, he said in his prayer speech on January 25, 1948, that he hoped that Indians would not need a Boundary Commission to delimit the frontiers on the new basis. That was the foreign way which Indians had discarded, he added. The best thing in his opinion, would be for themselves to determine the boundaries on the new basis by mutual agreement and consent. To go to a third party in the shape of a Boundary Commission for a settlement would be a negation of independence, he held.125 Nevertheless, he supported the arbitration of debt between free India and the United Kingdom.126 We find him again as an advocate of arbitration when the question relating to this, right or wrong of the Junagadh episode was posed. He observed that appeal to the sword was not to be thought of. The only honourable way out, in his opinion, was the

126 Harijan, 14 April 1946, p. 91.
ancient method of arbitration in the usual manner. What Gandhi said about Junagadh applied equally to Kashmir and Hyderabad.  

As is well known, Gandhi was no enthusiastic admirer of legal positivism. If we bear in mind his general attitude towards the Great Powers, then it would not be of much difficulty to appreciate his reservations about the efficacy of international law as an instrument for the solution of interstate disputes. Commenting on the Kellogg Pact of 1928—which 'renounced war as an instrument of national policy' but preserved the right of western nations, e.g. Great Britain, France, and the U.S.A., to take up arms in defence of their interests in certain regions which they considered 'vital' to their welfare—Gandhi wrote: "I have no difficulty in agreeing that the Kellogg Pact has great possibilities, the patent insincerity of many signatories notwithstanding. ... The parties to the Pact are mostly partners in the exploitation of the peoples of Asia and Africa. ...The Peace Pact, therefore, in substance means a desire to carry on the joint exploitation peacefully."  

But this unfavourable reaction towards international treaties etc. should not be construed to mean that he was indifferent to the problems of inter-state obligation and the citizens' duty as individuals to maintain world peace. As we have seen above in our discussion of his views on rights and duties, he maintained that the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. For Gandhi, it was a question of man's moral responsibility to build a new world free from the horrors of war.

127 Gandhi, M. K., Delhi Diary, op. cit., p. 160.
128 Young India, 4 July, 1929, pp. 267-68.
Gandhi fervently hoped for "a world federation of free and independent States." The Western declarations in the Atlantic Charter did not inspire him because the Charter was based on a denial of the right to self-determination of the subject peoples of the British Empire. Churchill made it explicit application to India. But came the answer from Gandhi: "It went down the ocean as soon as it was born!"

Gandhi's concept of world government transcended the traditional thinking; the pattern of conventional international organizations could not satisfy the conditions for bringing in genuine peace. He held that "Peace cannot be established through mere conferences." One may recall here Tolstoy's review and forceful criticism of the London Peace Congress of 1890 to the effect that the state system based on power is beyond reform by either public or private initiative. Dr. Power suggests that Gandhi's ideas about the League of Nations, the United Nations, etc., show the influence of his dedication to self-help and to anti-colonialism, and of 'weak internationalist tendencies in his composite world-view'. Also, the critical attitude of Tolstoy towards international peace efforts might have influenced Gandhi. While the analysis is acceptable in its broad outline, a point however is to be controverted. The criticism relating to 'weak internationalist tendencies' betrays non-recognition of the objective background of Gandhi's reservations about international bodies; besides, the criticism does not take into account the integral relationship of nationalism and internationalism that that was advocated by Gandhi.

132 Harijan, 17 November 1946, p. 404.
133 Tolstoy, Count Leo, The Kingdom of God is Within You, tr. A Delano (London: Walter Scott Ltd.), 1894, Chp. VI.
134 Power, Paul F., Gandhi on World Affairs, op. cit., p. 79.
should be repeated here that internationalism was not an abstract concept for Gandhi; it was a question of attainment which could only be possible through freedom of India and of the other subject peoples of Asia and Africa.

Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Ansari, on their including Syria, from a prolonged Gandhi tour of the continent including Syria, drew the attention of Gandhi to 'the utter callousness of the French and their utter disregard for the elementary rights of the people of the mandated territory in Syria' and requested him 'to send', as the President of the Congress, a 'cable to the League of Nations which has granted this mandate to France'. Gandhi could not see his way to accept their advice. He seathingly criticized the Great Powers: “I do not believe in making appeals when there is no force behind them, whether moral or material... And what is the League of Nations? Is it not in reality merely England and France? Do the other powers count? Is it any use appealing to France which is and Justice? .... If we would appeal to England, we need not go to the League of Nations. .... But to appeal to her is to appeal to Caesar against Augustus.” He then added, "Relief of Syria lies through India." Gandhi exposed the hollowness of the pretensions of Anglo-French powers and correctly pointed out that Indian freedom from foreign domination could only be a lever for extending moral and material support to another nation groaning under the heels of colonial – mandatory administration was a courteous figure of speech—subjugation. It speaks of his realistic sense, and not of his ‘weak internationalist tendencies’ as has been alleged. Incidentally, Lenin also taught that genuine internationalism rests on intensification of national struggle against imperialism wherever it is entrenched. Gandhi, we agree with Amiya Chakravorty, defined the right perspective and gave a new

135 Young India, 12 November, 1925, pp. 120-21.
sense of proportion. He made the Indians aware of the true basis of internationalism.136

The League of Nations could not effectively assert itself as the genuine guarantee against war. Gandhi criticized the League when he visited its headquarters at Geneva in 1931 for its failure to 'enforce peace' as the League was pledge to do.137 Daring the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (1934-36) Gandhi could not remain indifferent to the situation. He wrote in an article, 'The Greatest Force', in Harijan: "If Abyssinia were non-violent she would have no arms, would want none. She would make no appeal to the League or any other power for an armed intervention. She would never give any cause for complaint. And Italy would find nothing to conquer if the Abyssinians would not offer armed resistance, nor would they give co-operation, willing or forced." 138 It was an advice of non-violent resistance to and non-co-operation with the aggressor.

Referring to Gandhi's stand vis-a-vis this war, Dr. Power offers a comment which we fail to persuade ourselves to accept: "He [Gandhi] had no suggestions to offer the League, other than to imply that it should employ no sanctions against Italy. ...Throughout the Ethiopian crisis he failed to appreciate that the League's economic penalties against Italy were non-violent and similar to his own economic boycotts against British imperialism."139 Since Gandhi had no high hopes about the effectiveness of the League as an instrument for ushering in world peace,

138 Harijan, 12 October, 1935, p. 41.
139 Power, Paul F., Gandhi on World Affairs, op. cit., p. 80.
it was not quite illogical on Gandhi's part to abstain from offering suggestions. The reading of implications in Gandhi's taking up such a position is Dr. Power's own, and that, after all, is a matter of opinion. But we join issue with the learned professor when he equates the League Sanctions with non-violent non-co-operation.

Let us be permitted to recapitulate here the basic Gandhian concept in this regard. It was a fundamental position with Gandhi that he preferred 'international non-co-operation' to 'continued physical compulsion', and that clarifies the concept of non-violent resistance. Non-violent resistance, right or wrong, whatever it may prove to be in the future, was no half-hearted gesture on Gandhi's part. The 'economic sanction of non-co-operation' that he advocated was based on a distinct philosophy of non-violence, while the professed declaration of the League to 'enforce peace' was, at its best, 'a little more than gesture' and at its worst, a device of hoodwinking the war-weary world. While we need not go into the details of the case, let us recall a few of the salient points in connexion with the sanctions imposed against Italy for its violation of the Covenant of the League. Article XVI of the Covenant laid down that in circumstances of any Power's resorting to war contrary to its undertaking in the Covenant, severance of all trade or financial relations, etc., should follow. The only occasion on which the imposition of Sanctions by members of the League was attempted was in October 1935, when Italy by her wanton invasion of Abyssinia rendered herself irrevocably liable to those. The defining of the scope and administration of the Sanctions were entrusted to a Co-ordination Committee, which imposed an embargo on the exports of arms and ammunitions, including a prohibition on the supply of certain commodities to Italy. It should be noted that petroleum, iron and steel, coal and coke, all essential to Italy in
the conduct of the war were, however, not included. A proposal was made that the export of these commodities also should be prohibited, but this proposal was smothered. In these circumstances Sanctions were little more than a gesture, and by April 1936 the Governments that had imposed them began to reverse their policy.\footnote{140} Such, in short, is the story of the League's economic penalties'. One may rightly conclude that "The fundamental notion that the League sanctions constituted a practical instrument of pacification was erroneous."\footnote{141} Does the criticism alleging failure on Gandhi's part to 'appreciate' the efficacy of the League Sanctions stand the test of objectivity? We, however, feel that it is rather difficult for a Westerner to appreciate the concrete significance of world peace in the context of colonial dependence.

The United Nations Organization which was set up in 1945 at the San Francisco Conference could not evoke Gandhi's unqualified approval. He had strong reservations about the future of the organization. He was rather pessimistic about the realization of the professed goals, viz. maintenance of international peace and security, and achieving international co-operation on economic, social, cultural and humanitarian questions. In a statement published on April 18, 1945, Gandhi said: "I very much fear that behind the structure of world security sought to be raised lurk, mistrust and fear which breed war."\footnote{142} He added, "An indispensable preliminary to peace is the complete freedom of India from all foreign control... Freedom of India, will demonstrate to all the exploited races of the earth that their freedom is very near, and that in no case will they henceforth be exploited."

\footnote{142} Bombay Chronicle, 18 April 1945.
In reply to a question by Doon Campbell of Reuter as to whether Gandhi believed that the United Nations Organization, as at present constituted, could maintain a lasting peace, he said that he was afraid that the world was heading toward another showdown. "But if all goes well with India, then the world may have a long peace. It will largely depend on... British statesmanship."\(^{143}\)

A few months hence, Gandhi spoke of the failure of the United Nations to Vincent Sheean.\(^{144}\)

The reference of the Indo-Pak dispute on Kashmir to the U. N. and Gandhi’s advice on the issue have been subjected to various readings. Alan Campbell-Johnson implies that Gandhi gave prior approval to the Indian Union Government’s decision of December 30, 1947, to make a formal reference to the Security Council of UN with regard to Pakistan’s aggression on Kashmir.\(^{145}\) But Pyarelal, a close associate of Gandhi, records, that “Gandhiji was not enamoured of taking any Indo-Pakistan dispute to an outside organisation. It would only get them 'monkey justice', he warned.”\(^{146}\) Were the Union and Pakistan always to depend on a third party to settle their disputes? —he asked in course of his post-prayer address on December 25.\(^{147}\) He pleaded for an amicable settlement with the assistance of impartial Indians.\(^{148}\) He pleaded for amity and goodwill which would enable the Union’s representation to the UNO to be withdrawn with dignity. This, he was sure, the UNO itself would

\(^{144}\) Sheean, Vincent, Lead, Kindly Light (New York: Random House), 1949, p. 189.
\(^{147}\) Gandhi, M. K., Delhi Dairy, op. cit., p. 291.
\(^{148}\) Ibid., p. 291.
welcome.\textsuperscript{149} Pyarelal notes that Gandhi had never concealed his disapproval of the Indian 'Union's taking the Kashmir dispute to the UNO instead of treating it as a domestic issue which ought to have been settled amongst themselves. But Gandhi did not wish to confuse those who were handling the question in the way they thought to be best by dividing their mind. So, when India's representative to the UNO, Gopalswamy Ayyengar, came to see him prior to his departure for the U. S. A. to represent there India's case during the debate on Kashmir, Gandhi said to him: "You must understand that your way and mine are different. You should, therefore, either make up your mind to follow my path and settle the issue by direct negotiations, using the good offices of anyone you like from amongst ourselves or, if necessary, with the help of any country in Asia, or frankly and openly take an independent line."\textsuperscript{150} It is significant that while he was agreeable to the extent of seeking help from any Asiatic country for settlement of the dispute, he did not mention the UN mediation as a formula for coming to such a settlement. It suggests that he was not much optimistic about the UNO.\textsuperscript{151}

Gandhi believed that the doctrine of non-violence held good in the matter of relationship between states and states also. This conviction impelled him to unequivocally recommend total disarmament—unilateral or multilateral. His idea of disarmament is to be distinguished from the Western Powers' plea for progressive disarmament, a policy suited to the interests of 'security' of national states. In 1925 he wrote to a German correspondent: "It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day, unless Europe is to commit

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{150} Pyarelal, The Last Phase of Mahatma, op. cit., p. 696.
\bibitem{151} Harijan, 14 April 1946, p. 91.
\end{thebibliography}

216
suicide, some nation will have to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much other nations as for herself.”

He was optimistic enough to advocate unilateral disarmament: "If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth.”

His call for unilateral disarmament betrayed his idealism, while the realist Gandhi appreciated that with the establishment of a democratic world federation disarmament would be practicable in all countries. He believed that disarmament was possible only through "the matchless weapon of non-violence." And it was his hope that "India will... prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world." to give a lead to other nations for "the delivery of the earth from the burden" of war.

Gandhi’s anxiety for disarmament may be illustrated from his reply to a Swiss friend's question:

"Q. Since disarmament chiefly depends on great powers why should Switzerland, which is a small State and a neutral State, be asked to disarm itself?

---

152 Young India, 8 October 1925, p. 345.
154 Tendulkar, D. G., Mahatma, op cit., Vol. VI, p. 150.
A. It is from the neutral ground of your country that I am speaking to all other powers and not only to Switzerland...And seeing that Switzerland is a neutral territory and non-aggressive nation, there is all the more reason why Switzerland should not need an army. 157

Gandhi knew that the great powers could hardly be expected in ordinary circumstances to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of which they had so long followed. But an incorrigible optimist that he was, he did not give up hope: "It is, however, open to the great powers to take it up any day and cover themselves with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of posterity. If they or any of them can shed the fear of destruction, if they disarm themselves, they will automatically help the rest to regain their sanity. But then these great powers have to give up ambitions and exploitation of the so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized nations of the earth and revise their mode of life. It means a complete revolution." 158

The key point that one finds in Gandhi's views on disarmament is that real disarmament cannot come unless the nations of the world cease to exploit one another. Exploitation must go — that is the essential precondition for the establishment of a world free from blood-spilling and destruction.

It is significant that his view on world police force as an agency for maintaining peace and repelling aggression had undergone an evolution. As late as 1938 he denied that such as agency would be an advance over the conventional way of settling disputes through armed might. During the Second World War his views were modified, though the reservations

157 Young India, 31 December 1931, p. 427.
158 Harijan, 12 November 1938, p. 328.
were there. His endorsement of ‘a world federal defence force’ as envisaged in the historic August (1942) Resolution was a significant departure. His letter to Maurice Frydman dated 28-7-42 may also be cited as an instance. In 1946 he told Professor Catlin: "If of course, we could get a really impartial body, then we would all welcome a world police force." By the time, Gandhi held at the same time, "that men have been educated to be impartial in the use of force, they can be educated in non-violence.

This showed, as has been observed by Professor Catlin, his willingness to be plastic, to compromise in matters of detail, once the principle was accepted, or once it was not involved.

Gandhi hang a challenge before the world in advocating satyagraha as the sure and potent weapon of combating inter-state aggression. Satyagraha is universally applicable, he held. Non-violence, according to Gandhi, excludes war and ushers in peace.

Gandhi’s ideas about peace suggest that the solution he offered for effecting world peace transcended the frontiers of international diplomacy. The chief limitation of international diplomacy is that it is based upon recognition of the power-system. The Gandhian way claims to stand for non-violent and non-exploitative social order which alone can ensure just and enduring peace. Dr. Ralph Bunche observed: “The United Nations approach to world problems is very similar to the Gandhian

---

160 Ibid., p. 279.
161 Ibid., p. 278.
162 Ibid., p. 279.
approach."\textsuperscript{163} This statement of the world-famous mediator, albeit his sincerity, does not commend itself for agreement. The United Nations—however useful it may be in certain aspects, and it is certainly a marked improvement upon the previous international organizations—cannot be credited even with giving a lead in the direction of moving towards a ‘world without war’. "The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence", Gandhi asserted.\textsuperscript{164} The United Nations, because of its very inherent constitution, is not in a position to advocate such an order of future society. While Gandhi pointed towards "a distant goal, an impractical Utopia", although it was, according to him, "not in the least unobtainable," the UN has been engaged in crying for peace giving the least shock to the foundation of power-politics.\textsuperscript{165}

One may argue that the Gandhian declarations on peace contain some practical difficulties for them to be implemented in the present-day world. But Gandhi would not countenance such a 'Practical' difficulty. He would counterpose by saying, if an individual can practise non-violence, why not whole groups of individuals and whole nations? He believed that one must make a beginning and the rest would follow. The Gandhian concept of world peace should be viewed as an integral part of his philosophy of life and one should try to appreciate his attitude within the general framework of his philosophy of ahimsa. Once the postulates of his doctrine of ahimsa are accepted, one finds no difficulty in comprehending the logical application of that doctrine in the realm of international relations. But if the postulates themselves are unacceptable,

\textsuperscript{163} Murthi, Ramana, V. V., Non-Violence in Politics: Gandhian Techniques an Action (Delhi: Frank Bros & Co.), 1958, p. 181.
his concept of peace, *ipso facto*, loses its appeal. The question should, therefore, be treated at a fundamental level.

However 'utopian' Gandhi's plea for unilateral disarmament might be one must concede that this idea has caught the imagination of many people. The demand for unilateral disarmament is no longer an idealist's fad; it has assumed the proportion of a mass movement in Europe. And in the sense of kindling that faith, Gandhi had a definite contribution to the cause of world peace.

Secondly, one may point out that Gandhi's approach was essentially subjective as also idealistic in philosophical outlook: as he wrote—"If there were no greed, there would be no armaments." But his insight did not fail him, as we have argued earlier, to spotlight the canker of Power-dominated world. This was of no mean significance when the olive branch was held aloft by the imperialist powers only to conceal the standard of Eagle from public view.

**Gandhi was Against State Centric Security and Considered State as the Organ of Violence**

Gandhi held that violence was evil. Violence includes not only physical coercion but also economic and social coercion. Power of physical coercion belongs to the state. In the modern absolute state there is no limit to the extent of this power. This power of the state to coerce is, according to Gandhi, a kind of organized violence in which lies the essence of the modern state. To quote Gandhi:

"I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing

---

166 Young India, 5 November 1931, p. 341.
exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.

"The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.

"What I disapprove of is an organization based on force which a State is."167

Gandhi's characterization of the State as the organ of 'violence is a concentrated and organized form' indicates how repelled he was at the omnipotence and the coercive character of the state. As one who believed in the sanctity of the individual and for whom non-violence was a fundamental creed it was but natural that he would, characterize the state in such a term. But creed or subjective faith apart, he drew enough lessons from the world he faced—a world where imperialist domination, economic exploitation and racial discrimination were inseparably tied up with political authority.

The premise of the theory of absolute sovereignty of the state is that the laws of the state are the highest arbiters of the conduct of the citizen irrespective of that conformity of the laws to the general interests of the community. Obligation of the citizen to the state, according to this theory, is unlimited and unconditional. Gandhi resisted political sovereignty understood as absolute, non-responsible power. The validity of the absolutist theory of sovereignty has been questioned from different premises by pluralists, anarchists, and Catholic humanists like

As we are not concerned here with the grounds of political obligation but with the limits of it, it may be pertinent to note that in recent political thought the question of political obligation has become secondary. There is a wider and higher obligation and when that higher obligations comes into conflict with political obligation, resistance to the state becomes just and moral. Both Hindu and Western political theories give sanctions for such resistance. To many of these thinkers the problem of political obligation is essentially moral. The English liberal thinker, T. H. Green, said: “The general principle that the citizen does not carry with it an obligation under all conditions to confirm to this State, since those laws may be inconsistent with the true end of the State as the sustainer and harmonizer of social relations.”

For Gandhi, as for Green, the relevance and the justification of politics is an expression of the moral life. The state is to be judged by the qualities of its citizens whose moral development it can help or hinder. It may be said that for both Green and Gandhi the two crucial questions of politics are those of obedience to law and the employment of force.

“Our first duty”, Laski wrote, “is to be true to our conscience.” For Gandhi "disobedience to the law of the State becomes a peremptory duty when it comes in conflict with the law of God.” As early as 1909 he wrote in Hind Swaraj: “It is contrary to our conscience... So long

---

as the superstition that man should obey unjust laws exists so long will their slavery exist.”173 And later in 1921: “Submission.....to state wholly or largely unjust is an immortal barter for liberty. A citizen who thus realizes the evil nature of a state is not satisfied to live on its sufferance, and therefore appears to others who do not share his belief to be a nuisance to society, whilst, he is endeavouring to compel the state without committing a moral breach to arrest him. Thus considered, civil resistance is a most powerful expression of a soul’s anguish, and an eloquent protest against the continuance of an evil state.”174

To Gandhi, “political power is not an end in itself but one of the means of enabling people to better their conditions in every department of life.”175 This attitude to the state stands counterposed to the Hegelian metaphysical theory which endeavours to exhibit the state as the embodiment of greatness and an expression of the Spirit or the Absolute.176

Glorification of the sovereignty of the state was, according to Gandhi, a challenge to the moral right of man to shape his own destiny. Even the moderate version of parliamentary sovereignty would make little impression on his mind. He believed in the “sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority”177 should take the place of state sovereignty. In our discussion on the Gandhian theory of trusteeship we have noted that he did have a decided preference for self-reliance and voluntarism. But the theory of trusteeship does not exclude legislative

---

173 Young India, 10 November 1934, p. 934.
175 Young India, 2 July 1931, p. 162.
177 Harijan, 2 January 1937, p. 374.
regulation of the ownership and use of wealth. He would even go to the extent of dispossessing the rich through the instrument of state with the minimum exercise of violence.\textsuperscript{178} He would prefer trusteeship, but if it was unavoidable he would support a minimum of state ownership.\textsuperscript{179} This leads us to the question of compatibility or otherwise of anarchism with sovereignty which will be discussed in connexion with the Gandhian ideal of state.

Gandhi made the essential distinction between State and Society. In modern political theory this distinction has been taken note of Professor Ernest Barker in his celebrated book ‘Principles of Social and Political Theory’ has drawn the distinction between State and Society, and further between within the State and in terms of the State and the area of Society and the activity of social thought. Political obligation is due within the state, and in terms of the state it may be granted that it is unconditional. But there is a sphere of activity in man’s life, which transcends sometimes even the well-known sphere of the political state and enters the wide arena of society. Here political obligation is to be qualified and becomes conditional.\textsuperscript{180} Barker observes that the area of society is voluntary co-operation, its energy is goodwill and its method is elasticity; while the area of the state is mechanical action, its energy is force and its method is rigidity. He says: "...a new and a super-political obligation enters as soon as we take into our view the socially created and socially developed idea of justice; an obligation which we may call 'Social'."\textsuperscript{181} Barker considers the social obligation to be higher. One may

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{178} Bose, Nirmal Kumar, Studies in Gandhism, op. cit., p. 66
\item \textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Barker, Ernest, Principles of Social & Political Theory (London: Oxford University Press), 1961, p. 220.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Ibid., p. 222.
\end{itemize}
recall here the position of Rabindranath who enunciated the philosophy of indifferentism to the state in Svadesi Samaj (1904).

The above discussion shows that Gandhi was opposed to the absolute sovereignty of the state as propounded by Hobbes, Austin and Hegel. He might not have come across any of the writings of these theorists, but that is of no consequence. What is relevant is that he could very well hit at the core of the problem of sovereignty—a concept that has raised many conflicting issues yet to be resolved. His objection to the state sovereignty may be presumed to be based on the following grounds:

First, his metaphysical belief in the primacy of spiritual authority over temporal authority;

Secondly, his faith in the inner moral conscience of the individual as superior to the organized might of the state; and

Thirdly, his belief in the sovereignty of the people based on moral authority as against the organized power system of the legal sovereign.

"If the individual ceases to count", Gandhi asked, "what is left of society?"182 Gandhi regarded the individual as the centre of authority and value. He was categorical in his estimate of the relation between the individual and the state. To quote him: "Ultimately it is the individual which is the unit."183 He held that the state and government derive their existence and power from the individuals. This concept of the ultimate authority of the individual logically paved the way for the enunciation of the theory of non-violent non-cooperation with the state and the

182 Harijan, 1 February 1942, p. 27.
183 Ibid., 28 July 1946, p. 236.
exploitative system that stand in the way of the all-round evolution of the individual, because for Gandhi "The individual is the one supreme consideration." 184 This emphasis on the moral authority of the individual is the key Quote of Gandhian philosophy. His anguish and indignation expressed in the pages of Hind Swaraj against modern civilization—including modern power system—was based on this fundamental belief. And he insisted on this fundamental belief till his last day.

In 1916, on the occasion of the opening of the Benares Hindu University, Gandhi called himself an anarchist, 185 but of another type, 186 (the reference was to the violent revolutionaries or terrorists, as they were generally called). One may not be sure that the distinction that he made between the two types of anarchism was a result of his acquaintance with the prevalent literature of anarchist political philosophy. But as is generally known, he was influenced by Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' to a very considerable extent while he was engaged in his experiments of satyagraha in South Africa. Stefan Zweig described Tolstoy as 'the boldest heretic' and 'revolutionary anarchist'. 187 Tolstoy did not call himself an anarchist, 'because he applied the names to those who wished to change society by violent means; he preferred to think of himself as a literal Christian. Nevertheless, he was not entirely unpleased when, in 1900, the German scholar Paul Eltzbacher wrote a pioneer survey of the various trends of anarchist thought and included Tolstoy's ideas among them, demonstrating that, while he repudiated violence, his basic doctrine — and particularly his categorical rejection of the state and

184 Young India, 13 November 1924, p. 378.
Gandhi, when he described himself as an anarchist, did not mean it, it may be presumed, in the sense of unruliness (negative condition) but in the positive sense of being unruled because rule is unnecessary for the preservation of order.

There were two Gandhis - the idealist - and the realist. In his role as the foremost leader of the national liberation movement the realist in him was sufficiently awake to the objective reality and he pressed forward for the establishment of a democratic political order. In our discussion on the evolution of his economic thought we have seen that in 1924 he told an interviewer that he wanted the unavoidable heavy machinery to be either owned or controlled by the state. But it would be a mistake to infer that he shifted his loyalty, in so far as his ultimate philosophical standpoint was concerned, from the anarchist ideal to the socialist programme of state-ownership.

Speaking of his own ultimate political ideal he wrote in 1931: "If national life become so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But

---

190 Harijan, 21 July 1940, p. 211.
the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that Government is best which governs the least."

Mahadev Desai reported a conversation on the same subject in *Harajan*:

But are we not being driven to philosophical anarchism? Is that not an impossible ideal? These questions were asked by a philosophical friend.

'Does anyone know true non-violence? he asked.

Gandhiji immediately replied: 'Nobody knows it, for nobody can practise perfect non-violence.

'Then how can it be used in politics?

"It can be used in politics precisely as it can be used in the domestic sphere. We may not be perfect in our use of it, but we definitely discard the use of violence, and grow from failure to success.

'You would govern non-violently. But all legislation is violence.

"No, not all legislation. Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be purest anarchy.

'Do you think that non-violence or democracy that you visualize was ever realized in the olden times?

---

191 Young India, 13 November 1924, p. 378.
192 Ibid., 2 July 1931, p. 162.
‘I do not know. But if it was not, it only means that we had never made the attempt to realize the highest in us. I had no doubt in my mind that at some stage we were wiser and that we have to grow wiser than we are today in order to find what beauties are hidden in human nature. Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid’s point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives.

In the same year during a conversation at Santiniketan, in answer to the question can a State carry on strictly according to the principle of non-violence? Gandhi replied. “A government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it.”

In 1946, he wrote: "There remains the question as to whether in an ideal society, there should be any or no government. I do not think, we need worry ourselves about this at this moment. If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid’s line is one without breadth but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal.”

Gandhi’s ultimate political ideal was stateless democracy. The stateless society of self-regulating harmony is ideal in the Platonic sense

193 Ibid., 9 March 1940, p. 31.
194 Ibid., 15 September 1946, p. 309.
that it is a model to strive for, not a goal that can be attained. But as the 'golden age' was far off he thought it is practicable to work for the realization of a 'predominantly non-violent society'. This attitude towards the ultimate ideal, in the sphere of politics in this context, fits in quite squarely with his general philosophical attitude. We have seen in our discussion on Gandhi's concept of human nature that he believed not in the perfection but in the perfectibility of man.195 "Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but should never cease to strive for it."196 G. N. Dhawan interpreted this 'unbridgeable gulf' between the ultimate ideal and realizable goal in the following terms: "The ideal non-violent society of Gandhi, unattainable due to human imperfection, indicates the direction rather than the destination, the process rather than the consummation. The structure of the state that will emerge as a result of a non-violent revolution will be a compromise, a via media, between the ideal non-violent society and the facts of human nature. It will be the attainable 'middle way'197 of Gandhiji, the first step after the revolution, towards the ideal."198

The ultimate ideal of 'purest anarchy' or stateless society being unrealizable, Gandhi’s thought was moving in the ‘direction’ of the evolution of a predominantly non-violent state. The word 'non-violent State' was used by Gandhi himself in Harijan, where he wrote, "the ideal non-violent state will be an ordered anarchy." A non-violent State is a contradiction in terms because the state "represents violence in a concentrated and organized form."199 Dhawan elaborated the concept of

---

195 Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, op. cit., p. 363.
198 Ibid.
199 Harijan, 25 August, 1940, p. 259.
non-violent or satyagraha state. In an explanatory footnote he explained 'non-violent State' in the Rowing terms: "By a non-violent State we mean the State that is predominantly non-violent. A State depending as it does more or less on coercion is the negation of non-violence. The completely non-violent State would no longer be a State. It would then be the Stateless society and society can be Stateless when it is completely or almost completely non-violent. This is an ideal that may not be fully realized. What we may get in actual practice may be a predominantly non-violent State advancing towards, though perhaps never reaching, the Stateless stage." One may object to the employment of such contradictory terms in defining an ideal from the semantic point of view. But the essence of the term is explicit and, as we have observed earlier, Gandhi was not much interested in giving names to things; rather he was more concerned with the substance of things. It is from that point of view that the term "the ideal non-violent State" is to be understood.

Rama Rajya embodied Gandhi's dream of the perfectibility of man and society. The term Rama Raj derives from the Ramayana's classic depiction of the victory of Rama, symbolizing the forces of good, over Ravana, symbolizing the forces of evil and the consequent establishment of a reign of righteousness and justice in the land. Gandhi's reference to Rama Raj aroused fear and suspicion in the minds of the Muslims and provoked a host of critics to aver that he wanted to go back to the mythical Golden Age. We have seen at the very outset that as a medium of communication with the common people he employed traditional terms and gave them new meanings, as he himself admitted.

---

200 Dhawan, Gopinath, The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, op. cit., p. 314.
201 Gandhi, M. K., Delhi Diary, op. cit., p. 161.
In his presidential address at the Third Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavanagar, January 8, 1925, Gandhi said: "Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth Rama gave to all the kings of the world an object-lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal householder. He lent splendour to his throne by his popular administration and proved that Ramarajya was the acme of Swaraj. Rama did not need the very imperfect modern instrument of ascertaining public opinion by counting votes. He had captivated the heart of the people. He knew public opinion by intuition as it were. The subjects of Rama were supremely happy. Such Ramarajya is possible even today. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times the first Caliphs may be said to have established Ramarajya. Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected revenue running into crores and yet personally they were as good as fakirs."202

But later, Gandhi reformulated his concept. In 1927 he said "I assure you will find nothing therein [Gandhi's heart] but love for Rama whom I see face to face in the starving millions of India."203 This is an instance of his utilizing a mythical symbol in the interest of public service. Further in 1947 "Rama, Krishna etc. are called incarnations of God because we attribute divine qualities to them. In truth they are creations of man's imagination. Whether they actually lived or not does not affect the picture of them in men's minds. The Rama and Krishna of history often present difficulties which have to be overcome by all manner of arguments."204 And, "My Rama, the Rama of our prayers, is

203 Young India, 24 March 1927, p. 93.
204 Harijan, 22 June, 1947, p. 200.
not the historical Rama, the son of Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second."\textsuperscript{205}

The picture of Rama Rajya that Gandhi visualized was an expression of his yearning for a just and perfect society—the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth. Rama Raj meant more than Svaraj\textsuperscript{206} or political self-government.

In 1929 he wrote: "I warn my Musalman friends against misunderstanding me in my use of the words 'Ramaraj'. By Ramaraj I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramaraj - Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and rightness. Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramaraj is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure."\textsuperscript{207}

That he did not advocate Hindu Raj but the Kingdom of Righteousness, may be illustrated from many of his statements made towards the close of his life.\textsuperscript{208}

Referring to the criticism of the term Rama Raj for his ideal society, he said: "It is a convenient and expressive phrase, the meaning of which no alternative can so fully express to millions. When I visit the Frontier province or address predominantly Muslim audience I would

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 28 April 1946, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{206} Tendulkar, D. G., Mahatma Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, op. cit., Vol. VI, 1962, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{207} Young India, 19 September 1929, p. 305.
\textsuperscript{208} Gandhi, M. K., Delhi Diary, op. cit., p. 69.
express my meaning to them by calling it Khudai Raj, while to a Christian audience I would describe it as Kingdom of God on earth.\textsuperscript{209}

In 1937, Gandhi described Ramaraj as sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority, as distinguished from the British, Soviet or Nazi system of rule.\textsuperscript{210}

Later, Gandhi added a concrete meaning to the term. In an editorial on 'Independence' he wrote\textsuperscript{211}:

"Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that independence of my dream means Rama-Rajya i.e., the Kingdom of God on earth. I do not know what it will be like in heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

"In concrete terms, then the independence should be political, economic and moral.

"'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of British army in every shape and form.

"'Economic' means entire freedom from the British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest.\textsuperscript{212} This can take place only by capital or the capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

"'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of Rama-Rajya excludes replacement of the British army by a

\textsuperscript{209} Harijan, 18 August 1946, p. 266.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 2 January 1937, p. 374.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., 5 May 1946, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{212} The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2 August 1934.
national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.  

This is what precisely the meaning and essence of ultimate human security

Nearly a year before he made the above statement he drew a similar picture of Rama Rajya.

"Q. What is Rama-Rajya?

A. It can be religiously translated as Kingdom of God on Earth; politically translated it is perfect democracy in which inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race or creed or sex vanish. In it, land and state belong to the people, justice is prompt, perfect and cheap and, therefore, there is freedom of worship, speech and the Press—all this because of the reign of the self-imposed law of moral restraint.

Such a State must be based on Truth and Non-violence, and must consist of prosperous, happy and self-contained villages and village communities. It is a dream that may never be realized. I find happiness in living in that dreamland, ever trying to realize it in the quickest way."

Gandhi held that "There can be no Ramrajya in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat."  

---

213 Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections From Gandhi, op. cit., p. 301.
215 Harijan, 1 June 1947, p. 172.

236
The political transfer of power in India did not enthuse him. In a prayer speech dated 2-12-47 he said that "the independence of today stifled him. It was unreal and unstable."\(^{216}\) He looked beyond the present for the State that would belong to the people. His pronouncements on the subject made during the last days of his life indicate that he improved upon his earlier abstract concept.

To sum up: Rama Raj, notwithstanding its religious tenor and nostalgic reference, stands for an egalitarian non-violent democratic order, with moral values forming the base of such an order.\(^{217}\) Gandhi did not like the ancient myth to be transformed into a reality, but at the same time he envisioned a future which transcends the present to become a reality. Whether this 'utopia' is realizable through the method he advocated is a matter of sharp controversy, for it is a question of one's intellectual preference; but the urge behind this vision can hardly be ignored. It truly inspires.

Gandhi's ultimate ideal was stateless society. Self-government, according to him, means continuous effort to be independent of government control. Anarchism, despite many distinct conceptions and tendencies within its fold, stands for the elimination of state as an institution and its replacement by an entirely free and spontaneous cooperation among individuals, groups, regions and nations. While Anarchism stands for the abolition of the state, Marxian Communist ideal is the withering away of the state. Anarchism, Marxian Communism and Gandhism stand on a common philosophic ground, the underlying sentiment being the establishment of \textit{jus naturale}. But the difference between Marxism and Anarchism is so fundamental in their respective

\footnote{216}{Gandhi, M. K., Delhi Diary, op. cit., p. 225.}
\footnote{217}{Ibid., pp. 216-218.}
attitudes towards man, society, politics and in the application of methods that the two schools of thought stand at the farthest remove from each other.

Gandhi did not approach the problem of human security from a class point of view on which the Marxian theory of state puts its primary emphasis. Briefly summed up, the Marxian political and state doctrine is as follows:

1. The state is the product of the irreconcilable class antagonism and the instrument of oppression by which the ruling class holds down the subject and exploited classes. The state is therefore by no means an instrument of class reconciliation poised above classes and parties, as is put across the masses of the people through the phrase 'civil truce'.

2. The public power erected by the ruling class (standing army, police, prisons, and so on) is strengthened in proportion to the sharpening of the class antagonism within the state. It acts by force, internally and externally (the plunder policy of imperialist states).

3. The civil service, including that of the democratic republic in particular, shows itself likewise to be an organ of capitalist rule: the corruption of public servants and the brotherhood of government and capital.

4. Indispensable for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is the revolutionary seizure of state power by the proletariat. Only when the construction of the communist society is completed, the state wither away altogether.
5. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the state of the proletariat, organized as the ruling class therein, with the object of carrying socialization through.

6. The bourgeois, parasitical and oppressive state machine cannot be taken over and carried further by the victorious proletariat. On the contrary, the bureaucratic-military state machine must be smashed.\textsuperscript{218}

Gandhi while asserting that the state is the embodiment, of violence in a concentrated and organized form would not, however, agree with a Marxist that this violence is in its essence violence of class domination.

Secondly, the Gandhian programme is not 'the revolutionary seizure of power', which Marxism holds to be the sine qua non for the higher phase of socialism, the historic stage of the withering away of the state—but 'generation of power' from below.\textsuperscript{219}

Gandhi would never approve of the centralization of state power even as a temporary expedient or as a transitional phase like the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thirdly, the difference lies in the method. It is generally supposed that Gandhism and Marxism, while sharing the common ideal, depart from each other on the question of means. It has been the especial accusation against Marxism that it advocates the so-called Jesuitical maxim: end justifies means, and as such it places its reliance on violence as an instrument of capture of power. Gandhi himself while appreciating

\textsuperscript{218} Duncker, Herman, Introduction to Marxism (tr.) Gunvor Leeson (Veb: Leipzig), 1962, pp. 166-7.
\textsuperscript{219} Harijan, 17 February 1946, p. 14.
the ethical ideal of Communism was opposed to Marxism on this ground, apart of course from that of the basic philosophical belief. We submit, however, that this is not a correct reading of Marxism. Marxism is not 'Machiavellism'. Dialectical materialism does not know dualism between means and end. Marxists evaluate means not by absolute standard hub by consequences. A means can be justified only by its end. But the end in its turn needs to be justified. From the Marxist point of view, which expresses the historical interests of the proletariat, the end is justified if it leads to increasing the power of men over nature and to the abolition of power of man over man. Marxism recognizes the dialectical inseparability of means and ends.  

This interrelation of means and ends in no way implies that any end justifies any means. It implies rather that means and ends are so inextricably connected that the question cannot be answered by any simple 'yes' or 'no'. The means to social progress must be adapted to their end and be harmonious with it. According to the Marxian doctrine, the means by which the moral goal of socialism can be achieved in an immoral world are determined not only by the nature of socialism as the end but also by the nature of capitalist state power, the degree of democratic development, the relative strength of the opposing forces, specific situations, and so on. Marxism does not advocate violence for its

\[220\] In his play, *Franz von Sickingen*, Ferdinand Lasalle put the following words into the mouth of one of the heroes

"...Show not the goal
But show also the path. So closely interwoven
Are path and goal that each with other
Ever changes, and other paths forthwith
Another goal set up."

own sake221 (its condemnation of individual terrorist method is too well known); violence is thrust upon the oppressed by the ruling class, and the majority of the population as a measure of self-defence and of vindicating the ethical ideal of non-exploitation represented by Communism takes resort to just and necessary violence.222 The extent of violence which must be employed is a matter that depends on the intensity of the resistance which is countenanced. Gandhi, on the other hand, quite like any other ethical idealist, would urge upon us that we must confine ourselves to means that are in themselves good. Violence is all evil and therefore to be eschewed, Gandhi held. A Marxist may allege that Gandhi in his eagerness to stick to the moral failed to draw a distinction between what is evil and, what is morally wrong. The difference between Marxism and Gandhism, therefore, is fundamental.223

Fourthly, according to the Marxian theory of the state, it is only in the Communist society, where there would be no classes (i.e. where there

---

221 "...opposition to all violence is our ultimate ideal—it is a hellishly hard task."—Lenin to Gorky, cited in Rene Fulop-Miller, Lenin and Gandhi, - Tr.: F. S. Flint and D. F. Tait (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons), 1927, p. xiii.
223 In the long run the great social movements involving the actions of masses of people, such as the Cromwellian and French Revolutions, the Russian Revolution of 1917, or the Asian-African-Latin American anti-imperialist struggles of the present day, can be judged only in the way mark Twain judged the French Revolution when he wrote: "There were two 'Reigns of Terror,' if we would but remember it and consider it the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the 'horrors' of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak. ...A city cemetry could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we all have been taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror—that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity it deserves." ( A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court)
would be no difference between the members of society in respect of their relationship to the social means of production), that the state as such ceases of itself: the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the process of production. The state is not abolished, it withers away. But during the transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat a series of restriction on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters and the capitalists are imposed simultaneously with an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people. Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change that democracy undergoes during the transition from capitalism to Communism. Gandhi, on the other hand, would not approve of forcible suppression of adversaries under any circumstances. He would stand for conversion of the adversary through non-violent non-co-operation. There is never the need for the satyagrahi, according to Gandhi, to wait till all opposition has been liquidated.\textsuperscript{224}

Voluntary associations of the people would spring up in the present, and not in some distant future; which would regulate as far as possible the economic and political life of the community. The constructive programme of Gandhi, it may be noted here, not only accompanies and follows non-violent direct action to eliminate state authority, but it precedes that as well. Gandhi described this process as 'one of automatic adjustment'. In other words, the chief difference between the Marxian theory of the state and Gandhi’s ideal of state lies in the fact that in the latter the process of the elimination of state authority is supposed to begin from the immediate present, while 'withering away of the state'

\textsuperscript{224} Harijan, 31 March 1946, pp. 63-4.
presupposes expropriation of the expropriators' and the dictatorship of the proletariat. 225

Was Gandhi a philosophical anarchist? Gandhi's reference to 'enlightened anarchy' as the ultimate ideal and his definition of Rama Rai as the 'sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority', and other similar statements expressing abhorrence of the state as an institution, have lent the impression that he was a philosophical anarchist. Gopinath Dhawan and a host of scholars 226 subscribe to this view. To quote Dhawan: "To Gandhiji the end is 'the greatest good of all.' He is a philosophical anarchist because he believes that this end can be realized only in the classless Stateless democracy of autonomous village communities based on non-violence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisitiveness and on the largest measure of local and individual initiative instead of centralization. ...Gandhiji,......ideally speaking, repudiates the State as such..." 227 Gandhi has often been described as a religious anarchist or a pacifist anarchist like Tolstoy. 228

Benny Sarkar observed that Gandhi was "an almost literal paraphraser of Tolstoy as regards denunciation of the state and advocacy of non-violence. Stripped of all metaphysics, his non-co-operation = --away from the state = anarchism (cf. BAKUNIN,
KROPOTKIN, TOLSTOY) one remembers likewise the anti-statal Spencerian indifferentism of TAGORE’S Swadeshi Samaj. 229

The opinion that Gandhi was a philosophical anarchist has not been shared by all. P. Spratt while recognizing the influence of Tolstoy on Gandhi refuses to call Gandhi an anarchist. 230

Biman Bihari Mazumdar observes: "Mahatma Gandhi condemned the existing social and political order as unjust and he opposed the centralising policy of the state but he never advocated the destruction of the state itself. He may be more aptly described as an upholder of co-operative socialism but unlike the Guild Socialists, Syndicalist and Industrial Unionists, be laid all the emphasis on handicrafts and cottage industries." 231 Power comments: "...unlike Tolstoy, Gandhi did not endorse a stateless society for the temporal world. To do so would have precluded him from struggling for national India's own sovereignty—His approach to the ethical nature of the state agrees with Max Weber's view, that the state is a technical tool rather than something of intrinsic worth." 232

Haridas T. Muzumdar says: "Inspite of his proclaimed belief in the least government as being the best, Gandhi had nothing in common with anarchism." 233

229 Sarkar, Benoy Kumar, Political Philosophies Since 1905 (Madras: B. G. Paul & Co.), 1928, p. 142.
231 Majumdar, Biman Bihari, ‘Gandhian Socialism’ in Gandhian Concept of State, op. cit., p. 192.
Bondurant, in her masterly study, observes that the Gandhian approach points the way towards reconciling political organization with the ideals of anarchism. She criticizes Dhawan's standpoint in not recognizing the relative unimportance of end-structure in the Gandhian approach to the state, and again when Dhawan suggests that Gandhi's democracy would be "...based on non-violence instead of coercion...". For in the Gandhian ideal, she argues, an element of coercion is, in fact, retained. Another point of her criticism relates to Dhawan's description of the non-violent state as the second best society, a middle way. Bondurant holds that it would be inaccurate to suppose that Gandhi thought of retaining the states some intermediate step in a determined progress towards anarchical society, in the manner of Marxist thought. Carrying the argument further, she comments that politics based on satyagraha does not carry with it elements of himsa, but of ahimsa, it still remains politics and may involve a government, a state structure. Gandhi held essential ideals in common with anarchists, but he was willing, as they are not, to accept a degree of state organization and control. Gandhi, according to Bondurant, could not accept the overall philosophical anarchist position. Another important point that she mentions is: Anarchists, like other political theorists, have rarely sought a positive technique whereby a system could be realized.\footnote{Bondurant, Joan, V., Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict (Bombay: Oxford University Press), 1959, p. 7.}

There were two Gandhis—the idealist philosopher and the realist politician—who, paradoxically enough, represented a singularly unified character. Atindranath Bose correctly noted that Gandhi’s "methodology had a pragmatic and an idealist aspect while his philosophy was purely
idealistic.”235 That explains why Gandhi went far ahead of his time and reality. He dreamt of an enlightened anarchy and led the movement for the establishment of a free democratic state. The contradiction between the abstract and the concrete, the ideal and the real, we repeat, can only be appreciated if we take note of the gap between the role that history assigned to Gandhi236 and his subjective yearning for perfection. His astute sense of realism impelled him to fight for the creation of a sovereign national state, which he knew would be far from perfect. Gandhi, unlike some Anarchists, did not contemplate dispensing with the machinery of the state so long as it was a necessity. His concession in favour of state ownership of heavy industries—though his own preference was for the control or ownership of the means of production to lie with smaller, decentralized, more or less autonomous units—brought him close to the socialist programme. Here his position is distinctly different from that of the anarchists who are out to 'abolish' the state. Secondly, while the anarchists are apolitical or even anti-political,237 Gandhi was intensely political. As a politician he knew that politics refers to the disposition of power. And so he moved for a shift of power from the hands of foreign imperialists to a democratic national state. Here a point is to be restated. As the champion of the disinherited he would certainly like to see the interests of the toiling people to get the priority in such a state. Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose succinctly sums up the position when he says: "...Gandhi's conception of the State is neither completely like that of the Anarchists nor of the Communists. It approaches the former with regard to its aim of political and economic

236 Kripalani, J. B., Gandhian Thought (Bombay: Orient Longmans Ltd.), 1931, p. 56.
237 Woodrock, George, Anarchism, op. cit., p. 27.
decentralization, and that of the latter in that the interest of the toiling millions will have a dictatorial position within the State."

One notices that Gandhi did not ignore the demand or underrate the value of the immediate and temporary for the sake of the ultimate. It was somewhat unique on his part to reconcile the apparent contradiction: in his corporate activity he laid stress on the immediate—one stop was enough for him — only to draw further sustenance for attaining to the ideal he cherished. Gandhi, in a rather exalted philosophical mood, could well share Shelley's anarchist vision of man in a world which still lies outside history and outside time, but the realist in him would wake up again to come to grips with the realities with a grim determination to reshape this time-bound world. The distinctive merit of Gandhi lies in the fact that he could dream as well as act.

---

239 The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king Over himself; just, gentle, wise