Gandhi was not an economist in the conventional sense of the term. He did not formulate any well-laid economic theory. His approach was essentially eclectic. Nor did he undertake the task of drawing elaborate blue-prints for the economic development and growth of the country. As Acharya Kripalani puts it: "If ever there was a planner without elaborate blue-prints, Gandhiji was one." It could not have been otherwise in the situation he was placed in. The solutions he offered for the alleviation of the economic ills that imperialism-exploited India suffered did not derive out of any rigid doctrinaire approach. The remedies, he suggested, on the other hand, came out of his growing experiences of the reality that confronted him at different stages of his life. Gandhian economics, if that nomenclature be used, was primarily a response, to borrow a Toynbeean phrase, to the challenge that poverty-ridden India flung at a particular phase in the development of Indian history. His economic doctrines were rooted in necessity and they grew out of the social soil of India. The egalitarian economic ideal that he cherished was a necessary part of the elemental humanism that formed the basic core of his life and that spirit urged him on to plunge into the vortex of public life.

In considering Gandhian economics, or, for that matter, any socio-economic philosophy, the only scientific procedure, as suggested by Prof. N. K. Bose should be followed. The scientific procedure is to understand and assess the doctrines in terms of the conditions that give rise to them. Along with the objective background the ethos has to be taken into consideration. Failing this approach pre-possessed feelings and subjective inclinations may blind our

* "His (Gandhi's) social and economic proposals have to be understood in relation to circumstances." - P. Spratt, Gandhism - An Analysis (The Huxley Press, Madras, 1939), p. 510.
vision and lead us far away from an intelligent appreciation of the subject.

We have seen in Chapter II the particular socio-historical context of the emergence of that complex of Gandhi's ideas popularly known as Gandhism. It does not bear repetition here. Suffice it to mention in passing that "his mental horizon was bound by the economics of colonial rule." 3 The problem of all problems that confronted India during British Raj was POVERTY and Gandhi reacted to the crushing effect and demoralising influence of grinding poverty of the masses of the country. This obvious fact should not be lost sight of in any study, worth the name, of the economic doctrines he propounded. The role of traditional culture patterns 4 and the terms of the normative system of the country 5 should not also be underestimated. For we know that economics of growth cannot altogether dispense with institutionalised traditions and value-systems. This much-known truth of the sociology of economics needs to be re-affirmed because volleys of criticism have been made against Gandhi's economic ideas following the dicta of text-book economics and from the standpoint of Western norms. This is more particularly relevant in the case of Gandhi who "who was deeply and primarily concerned with the values-systems." 6 Any intelligent and critical appreciation, because of its inherent discipline, takes into account the interplay of objective and subjective factors.

Gandhi has been dubbed as a social obscurantist and reactionary for his socio-economic philosophy but little effort has been made to assess his socio-economic thought in correct perspective. It has been assumed that he was one advocating throw-back to primitivism, that he was against industrialisation and machinery and that he was for putting the clock of history back. Whether this judgment is wholly or partially valid or erroneous need not detain us for the present. On the other extreme is found a school who attempt to universalize his doctrines as that of providing lasting solutions for all the economic maladjustments of the contemporary society irrespective of the different milieus of
the highly developed and under-developed countries. This propensity of understa-
ting or overstating the relevance of Gandhi's ideas does injustice to the basic
 teachings of Gandhi and betrays bias which is a positive hindrance for any proper
evaluation. The essential fact is that little attention has been paid to Gandhi's
growing and developing awareness of the changing reality. This awareness of the
changing reality found its expression in his utterances and writings. He changed
with the times, though in his own way. Gandhi grew within himself (this mental
growth is not entirely independent of the changes in external reality but this
should not be taken to mean that this growth stood in mechanical dependence upon
objective conditions) and his ideas were to be understood in a process of evolu-
tion. A fact-based study will reveal that on no other subject had Gandhi's views
undergone such a progressive change as on what are called economic subjects viz.,
machinery, industrialism, labour-capital relations etc. The path he travelled
from his Hind Swaraj days (1909) to the late-forties was a long one; and the
re-orientations of his outlook, within a basic pattern, became quite marked and
assumed much significance.

We shall primarily concern ourselves with, in this study, an understanding of
this remarkable evolution and for that purpose we shall try to present his views
chronologically as far as possible. That means we are to travel back to the
period in which his views were pronounced. This procedure will help us to under-
stand his point of view in proper context; and then only shall we be able to find
out his how his ideas and opinions on a particular subject have changed in course
of time, when they have changed at all. Prof. N. K. Bose draws our attention to a
very significant fact that "Sometimes we may even find that only the connotation
of certain terms have changed for him, while his fundamental opinions have remain-
ed substantially unaltered." 7 While Gandhi employed certain terms which sound
conservative and anti-diluvian, it should be noted, "new meanings were always
added to them, so that in quality, they became quite different." 8
Before undertaking the task of tracing the evolution of Gandhi's economic thought, a few more brief introductory remarks have to be made in order to understand his basic approach to economic problems, motivations, and institutions.

**Fundamental Assumptions**

Prof. J. J. Anjaria points out: "although as a practical reformer Gandhiji has thought primarily in terms of immediate practicability, he has gradually developed what is definitely and distinctly a system of thought. Thus Gandhism is not just a series of disjointed maxims of policy, or a catalogue of urgent reforms and remedial measures. There is a philosophy, an ideology, if we like, behind all the reforms it advocates, or to put it differently, even as Capitalism and Socialism have their own fundamental assumptions, so, too, Gandhism has its own fundamental assumptions. The Gandhian system of economic thought cannot be adequately appraised merely in terms of current economic theory which rests on certain limited assumptions. It is a challenge to those assumptions themselves."

Gandhi's economic ideas were suffused with the principles of ultimate truth as he saw it. In that sense his ideas lay not only in the economic and social but was closely integrated with his philosophy of life. When economics is related to this way of life it becomes 'Meta-Economics'.

Gandhi said, srm stands for social justice and moral values. The fullest statement of his views about ultimate criteria in the economic sphere is to be found in his 1916 speech at Muir College, Allahabad. In that memorable speech he declared: "I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatises on laws of economics than many modern text-books. ... He (Jesus) is himself the great economist of his time."

To Gandhi, economics and ethics were not two separate entities. As he put it: "I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics am that hurt the moral well-being.
an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful.\textsuperscript{13} or

That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce.\textsuperscript{14}

Again,

True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just all true ethics to be worth its name, must at the same time be also good economics. All economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science.\textsuperscript{15}

The basic assumptions of Gandhi have remained more or less unaltered. His economic theories have to be read in the context of his attitude towards modern civilization which stands, as it appeared to Gandhi, for greed and exploitation. As we have discussed in a previous chapter, Gandhi's theory of civilization we need not repeat the arguments he advanced in favour of his stand. His views on civilization form the focus of his basic approach to economics.

Gandhi approached human problems from an integrated outlook of life in which economics, ethics, psychology and religion are synthesized.\textsuperscript{*}

\textsuperscript{*} cf. "Science or knowledge is one. It has been divided into several sections, not because they are mutually unconnected or independent fragments, but simply because man's faculties are limited, his capacity is finite, his ability or opportunity is, under the most favourable conditions, inadequate. But because man has made, for his own convenience, these divisions or compartments, their essential unity and integrity, their mutual affinity and dependence, cannot be gainsaid." - K. T. Shah, Ancient...
Gandhian economics is the projection of his philosophy of non-violence which is essentially moral. 16

Gandhi wanted economics to be reduced to terms of religion and morality. But supersensitive to the feelings and needs of the masses that he was, he could never stand apart from his people. As has been correctly observed by Frank Horsens: "To him the basic fact of economics is that man must eat. Freedom from want is the first article of his creed, and throughout his public life he has worked passionately to free his countrymen from the degradation of this poverty." 17

To him, poverty is soul-killing. In his words:

"No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation.

"Every human being has a right to live and, therefore, to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary to clothe and house himself." 18

Satisfaction of basic human needs and moral elevation of individuals were not antithetical for him. And that is why he could adopt a moral approach to economics.

'The two Gandhis'

Mr. Haridas T. Muzumdar has made an important observation which will help us to understand Gandhi's economics in its correct perspective. To quote him:

"In order to understand Gandhi's economics it is necessary for us to distinguish between Gandhi, the individual, with his private utopia, and Gandhi, the citizen-leader, whose utopia must conform to social realities...

"Gandhi, the individual, would feel thoroughly at home in the pre-social-contract-order, postulated by Rousseau...."

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The private utopia of Gandhi would be an idyllic existence in which he could live in harmony with nature, labour for himself a few hours, and commune with his inner self and with God.

But Gandhi, the citizen-leader, did not ever attempt, nor even think of attempting, to make society over into his image. He had already come to the conclusion that he could find neither God nor his true self apart from humanity. His private utopia, therefore, has no relevance in a discussion of Gandhian economics.

While this distinction between the two Gandhis is to be borne in mind, it should not lead us to the conclusion that the citizen-leader Gandhi merely suggested some economic expedients in the social sphere divorced from the basic values he stood for. It would be more logical to draw the conclusion that within the context of the time and the situation confronting him, the economic devices and institutions formulated by Gandhi—the Charkha, village self-sufficiency, trusteeship—sought to exemplify the basic values—{}

Ruskin’s influence on Gandhi

As is well-known, Ruskin exerted a tremendous influence on Gandhi. Both Ruskin and Gandhi preached the supremacy of the spirit. Both believed in the nobleness of human nature. To both, character was more important than intelligence. Both sought to moralize politics and economics. In Ruskinian and Gandhian philosophy, social regeneration enjoy priority over political reform. There is a romantic reaction against industrialism and distrust against machinery in both, if it enslaves rather than frees men. And both Ruskin and Gandhi exhorted the employers to adopt a wise paternal or fraternal attitude towards their employees. Both were opposed to class-struggles.
looked upon a worker as potentially, at least least, a responsible individual.

It was particularly the ideas on political economy rather than anything else which Gandhi assimilated into his own thinking, and adopted from Ruskin without qualification Ruskin's functional view of property. Tools in the hands of those who can use them and wealth restricted within fixed limits are principles which Ruskin and Gandhi held in common. Ruskin's attack on the assumptions of political economy founded on an "ossifant theory of progress", and the industrial system are systematically set forth in his Unto This Last. On reading this book in South Africa Gandhi determined to change his life in accordance with the ideals of the book. In his words: "the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was Unto This Last. I translated it later into Gujarati, siddhik entitled it Sarvodaya (the welfare of all)." It was this work which, according Gandhi himself, had inspired him to establish the Phoenix Settlement (1904) on principles of bread-labour and the responsibility of the community organization to provide for the physical welfare of the worker who is its member. He understood the teachings of Unto This Last to be:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and

* Ruskin's influence on Gandhi was in no sense total. As Joan Bondurant puts it: "Gandhi did not share the more conservative views of Ruskin which held the common man inferior, erected an aristocratic hierarchy, and denied the masses any political control on grounds of incompetence." - Conquest of Violence, p. 156.

Ruskin, in his turn, was largely influenced by Carlyle.
the handicraftsman is the life worth living." 24

Gandhi remarked:

"The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. Unto This Last made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first. I awoke with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice." 25

The first lesson which is related to the good of all was in keeping with the general tenor of Ruskin's philosophy but is nowhere stated, and is assumed if at all only in a vague sort of way; the second is explicitly denied since Ruskin stressed, more than anything else, the impossibility of the equality of man. Christian Socialism has been based upon the dictum: "Take that thing is, and go thy way. I will give unto this last, even as unto thee." (Matt. xx, 14). Though Ruskin gave the title of the four essays as Unto This Last, a careful reading of the book would suggest that he did not accept Christian Socialism. He was not in favour of equality of wages, as is logically derived from the story of New Testament, but, on the other hand, he was an advocate of fixed wages. It is quite interesting to note that Ruskin did not explain the justification for giving such a title nor did he analyse the message of the New Testament story of the master and the servant. Digression apart, the third of the lessons was the only one which was really new to Gandhi, and is the only one in the book. Incidentally it may be pointed out that it shows Gandhi's "habit of selecting, rather arbitrarily, some doctrine or principle from an author he reads, because it appeals to him." 26 This eclectic approach is characteristic of Gandhi as has been observed at the beginning of this chapter.

Evolution of Gandhi's views on Industrialism and Machinery

With this background in view, let us try to arrange Gandhi's views on industrialism and machinery in a chronological order and see for ourselves the process of evolution. Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule the seminal book,
as it is aptly described in a Foreword by Mahadev Desai, of Gandhian thought
was originally written in Gujarati during Gandhi's return journey from England
and published in Indian Opinion in December, 1909. Issued as a booklet in 1910,
it was proscribed in India by the Government of Bombay on March 24, 1910. This
hastened Gandhi's decision to publish the English Translation. 27 The subsequent
history of the book is interesting but not quite relevant here. But it is on
record that in January 1921 (A Word of Explanation' in Young India) Gandhi would
"withdraw nothing except one word of it, and that in deference to a lady friend."
As Mahadev Desai wrote in his preface to the 1938 edition, "Even in 1938 he
would alter nothing in the book, except perhaps the language in some parts."

The book contained a severe condemnation of what was termed as "modern
civilization." Gandhi's attitude towards industrialization was, to a large
extent, influenced by his native religious faith and by Western thinkers like
Ruskin, Tolstoy. R. G. Dutta's Economic History of India greatly moved him. In
his words: "When I read Mr. Dutt's Economic History of India, I wept; and as
I think of it again my heart aches and I think of it again my heart aches and I think of it again my heart aches. It is machinery that has impoverished India." 28 Analysing the results of machine-made goods on the economic
life of India he came to the conclusion:

"Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking
at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern
civilization; it represents a great sin.

The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves. The condition

* "My conviction is deeper today than ever. I feel that if India will discard
modern civilization, she can only gain by doing so. But I would warn the
reader against thinking that I am today aiming at Swaraj described therein...
Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery and mills. It requires a
higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for."
of the women working in the mills is shocking. When there were no mills, these women were not starving. If the machinery craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land. It may be considered a heresy, but I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester and to use flimsy Manchester cloth than to multiply mills in India. By using Manchester cloth we only waste our money; but by reproducing Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood, because our very moral being will be sapped, and I call in support of my statement the very mill-hands as witnesses. And those who have amassed wealth out of factories are not likely to be better than other rich men. It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than the American Rockefeller. Impoverished India can become free, but it will be hard for any India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom. I fear we shall have to admit that moneyed men support British rule; their interest is bound up with its stability. ... Machinery is like a snake-hole...

I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery."29

In his views on machinery given in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi levelled a general charge against machinery since its introduction had impoverished India. His charge was not against machine qua-machine but in so far as it stood for the enslavement of human beings. This point needs to be stressed for many took him for an anti-machinist in the absolute sense of the term. Gandhi, it appears, did not depart from his original position even at the last phase of his life, although the meaning of the term "machinery" underwent some amount of modification for him. As Prof. N. K. Bose draws our attention to the fact that "In 1908, the term evidently meant for him something more than the machinery itself, for he included in it the industrial system which went along with the use of power-driven mills in India at that time. The distinction between industrialism and machinery had not yet been drawn by him. As a matter of fact,
At this stage, his knowledge or experience of machines was very limited. He did not know the distinction between the power loom and the spinning wheel and in Hind Swaraj he used the word 'loom' to mean the 'wheel'. He had not even seen a handloom or a spinning wheel when he described it in Hind Swaraj or even in 1915 when he returned to India from South Africa. To quote him:

"I do not remember to have been a handloom or spinning wheel when in 1908 I described it in Hind Swaraj as the panacea for the growing pauperism of India... Even in 1915, when I returned to India from South Africa, I had not actually seen a spinning wheel. When the Satyagraha Ashram was founded at Sabarmati, we introduced a few handlooms there." 32

During the early phase of the non-co-operation movement, the economic problems of mass starvation and famines engaged his serious attention. It was not difficult for him—who identified himself with the teeming millions of India—to recognise that the masses wanted bread and to them 'the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages.' The year 1918-20 were marked with the outbreak of a series of working class economic strikes throughout the country in a number of industrial centres. It was the first time that such numerous and extensive strike actions took place. The lesson of these strikes was not lost on him. The recognition of these facts led him to give a more realistic and concrete shape to his ideas. This becomes evident from the quotations given below:

"Multiplication of mills cannot solve the problem. They can only cause concentration of money and labour and thus make confusion worse confounded." 33

"We want to organize our national power not by adopting the best methods of production only, but by the best method of both the production and distribution." 34

"What India needs is not the concentration of capital in a few hands,
but its distribution so as to be within easy reach of the 7½ lakhs of villages that make this continent 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad."  

During this period we find in his writings an indignant protest against mills and machinery because they tended to the concentration of capital in a few hands. His articles on Khadi relating to that period, as well as on subsequent occasions, as we shall see presently, lay stress on distribution on an equal or equitable basis. A careful study of his writings of this period will drive at the conclusion that there was no departure from his original position of 1909.

As to the charge that Gandhi was an absolutist in respect of his denunciation of machinery, the following passage deserves to be carefully read:

"... I would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India's pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided. I have suggested hand-spinning as the only ready means of driving away penury and making famine of work and wealth impossible. The spinning wheel itself is a piece of valuable machinery, and in my own humble way I have tried to secure improvements in it in keeping with the special conditions of India..."  

Here for the first time we find him to appreciate the distinction between machinery of one kind and another. He came to realise that machinery itself was not bad; it could be used for commonweal as well as for human exploitation. This growing awareness found its expression in the writings of the period (1925-27).

"Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour...."

"I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes."
"That use of machinery is lawful which subserves the interest of all."

The non-co-operation movement itself was described as:

"an attempt to introduce, if it is at all possible, a human or humane spirit among the men behind the machinery. Organisation of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few for the exploitation of many, I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organisation of the machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong but of the whole human race. Thus Lancashire will cease to use machinery for exploiting India and other countries, but on the contrary will devise means for enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans under my scheme seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill."

The extracts given above from the pages of Young India would reveal that Gandhi's ideas regarding machinery were in a process of evolution. His natural humanistic bent of mind saw in machines a symbol of industrialism in 1909, the same feeling for human welfare led him to distinguish between machinery and machinery during this period (1925-27).

Gandhi was realist enough to recognize that the introduction of Charkha will not lead to the complete extinction of the modern machine in British India.

"Do I seek to destroy the mill industry, I have often been asked. If I did, I should not have pressed for the abolition of the excise duty. I want the mill industry to prosper - only I do not want it to prosper at the expense of the country. On the contrary, if the interests of the
Gandhi's instinctive sense of realism drew him nearer to machinery in so far as it could lighten the burden of human toil but his condemnation of industrial system was expressed in severer tones during the period 1926 to 1931. To quote him:

"The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy." 41

Indeed, the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation. The fact is that this industrial civilization is a disease because it is all evil. Let us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships and telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is therefore to destroy industrialism at any cost." 42

In November 1931 he said:

"Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England, that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialisation. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations - as it must do if it becomes
industrialized will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation viz., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources - natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages; and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India? 43

In another article (Young India, 22-10-31, p. 318) he said that his fundamental objection to machinery rested on the fact that it was machinery that had enabled the stronger nations to exploit the weaker. In itself machinery is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. His opposition to machinery became qualified at this stage.

"Are you against all machinery?"

"My answer is emphatically, 'No'. But, I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottages, I should welcome." 44

In October 1924, soon after he had broken one of his famous fasts, he gave an interview to a student from Santiniketan, Sri Ramchandran. In reply to the
question whether he was agt against all machinery Gandhi said:

"What I object to, it is the **crage** for machinery, not machinery as such. The **crage** is for what they call laboursaving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour', till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all; I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The imetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

"Then you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today."

"I would unhesitatingly say 'yes'; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery, instead of becoming a hindrance, will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation."

"When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go."

"It might have to go but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seams with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the Sewing Machine in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine."
But in that case there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.

Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the condition of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine while it will work, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease, and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal working conditions. This is but one of the receptions I have in mind. The Sewing Machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian consideration, and not greed, the motive. Replace greed by love and everything will come right." 46

This long quotation is important from my points of view. The views expressed in 1924 seem to mark a significant departure from those of 1909. We have seen above that Gandhi already realised that there was a line between machinery and industrialism. In the passage quoted above, it seems that he had recognized that all forms of industrial organisation were not necessarily wrong. In certain cases, the centralized use of machinery might be unavoidable keeping in view the object of the lightening of human labour. Gandhi pleaded for nationalization or state-control (presumably he meant social control) in those cases. Referring to this significant departure, Prof. N. K. Bose observes:

"In other words, industrial organization itself was now losing itself
some of its former sting for him, and he was prepared to use it under certain conditions." 47

Prof. D. P. Mukerji referring to the passage quoted above observed:

"At this point, Gandhiji presumably believed that the state was, and would be, an agency for transforming greed into a love for humanity, though elsewhere he was less hopeful. All this appears to be a move away from the uncompromising position taken up in the Hind Swaraj.... For Western readers the change is like that from Tolstoy to William Morris." 48

While Gandhi did not sacrifice his 'ideal' position to the social and economic reality cast its impress upon his mind and he was no dogmatist to reject the 'inevitable'. That he was in no mood to impose his 'ideal' prescriptions is evident from his Presidential address at the 39th Indian National Congress held at Belgaum.

"I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the present instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence." 49

During the middle-thirties the demand for industrialisation of the country grew inside and outside the Congress; the modern liberals like Jawaharlal, left-nationalists like Subhas Chandra Bose, radicals like N. N. Roy and the emerging

* "Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I could reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation and seek the absolute liberation of the same. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because like the body, they are inevitable." - Gandhi - Ramachandran conversations in D. G. Tendulkar, Mahatma (The Publications Division, GOI, 1961), vol. II, p. 162.
Forces of socialism inside and outside the anti-imperialist platform all stood for industrialization. Gandhi could understand what way the wind was blowing. The assumption of office by the Congress posed concrete issues in relation to industrialization. A man of compromise that he was, he was prepared to concede to a great extent, the 'inevitable', though not at the cost of his basic faith.

In reply to the question whether he was against the machine age, he said in 1937:

"To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us."

"You would not industrialise India?"

"I would indeed, in my sense of the term. The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands."

"You would then go back to the natural economy?"

"Yes. Otherwise I should go back to the city. I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition, not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. For I should have no share in the spoliation of the nation which is going on from day to day. But I am industrializing the village in a different way."

He stuck to his deep faith of 'industrialising' the villages of India - the real India as he termed it - in his own way till the last days of his life.

On the eve of independence the issue came to the fore as was quite natural. The socio-economic policy of independent India had to be given a definite orientation. In this background, in reply to a correspondent he wrote:

"I do not believe that industrialisation is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting
a simple but enabled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

"Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically, in the face of a world armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstances is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. The answer is straight and simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making even though only an individual or a group makes the effort."

But

"At the same time I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in arm-chair or armed socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence, without having to enumerate key industries, I would State ownership, where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess moneyed men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership."

The passages quoted above from Gandhi's writings are not exhaustive; they are illustrative. It will be evident from the foregoing that Gandhi underwent a long period of transition and evolution from his extremist position of Hind Swaraj days to the later concept of State ownership of key industries 'where a large number of people (have to) work together.' The humanistic urge impelled him to move nearer and nearer to the socialist point of view regarding machinery in practice, though the development took place within his basic thought-pattern.
Whether his adoption of the socialist idea was based on a correct understanding of history or not is another matter. What is essential in this connection to note is that he moved a long way and conceded the necessity of key industries and that run on the basis of State-ownership; the concession he made should not be taken to mean that he deviated from his basic faith and that eventually he became an advocate for industrialization in the sense the term is usually employed. This becomes evident from the last quoted passage. The idealist Gandhi stood for 'plain living' while the realist element in him recognised, and reacted in his own way, of course, to the given situation.

**Historical Parallel: Interpretations Differ**

Speaking of Gandhi's opposition to machinery, Rene Fulop-Miller observed:

"It would be quite wrong to judge Gandhi's movement by the standard of Western capitalist culture. When Gandhi tried to bring economic relief to his distressed country he could not look for this relief to mechanized industry, which was still almost completely undeveloped, and could not for a long time to come be anything but an insignificant foreign element in India.

"From this point of view Gandhi's action, his bitter fight against the transplantation of industry to India and even against industrialism in general, which at first sight seems utterly absurd to the European, becomes more comprehensible. Even if this hostility to the machine mainly makes use of ethical and religious arguments, nevertheless it contains a core of sober truth from the national and economic point of view. In the economic position of India at the present moment industrialization might in fact be more of a curse than a blessing.

"With regard to the particular point of Gandhi's "machine wrecking", a new light has been thrown by the extraordinarily pertinent observations of the well-known Austrian socialist, Julius Braunthal, in his work, *Mahatma Gandhi Und Indiens Revolution*. Braunthal, for the
first time I think, has drawn attention to the very remarkable parallels between Gandhi and the English factory worker Ned Lud, and indeed the analogies between the Luddite movement and Gandhi's are sufficiently striking.

And he continued:

"Gandhi's efforts are directed not only against the industrial manufacture of textiles, but ultimately against all industry, against machinery as a whole; but here, too, his views are more in accordance with the specific position of India than might appear at first."

"Gandhi rejects machinery only because, instead of saving the work of the individual and alleviating conditions of life for the community, it is now useful only to a minority of rich men, and inflicts infinite harm on the working masses. And as in Gandhi's eyes benefit or injury to the masses, to the poor and needy, is the sole criterion for judging every institution, this recognition of the fatal effect of industrialism on the masses leads him to reject machinery.

"The Occidental," said Braunthal, "may call it the attempt of a petit bourgeois reactionary, and it even appears as such if objectively regarded from a more advanced historical stage; but if it is looked at from the angle of the peculiar historical development and the social and economic conditions of India, this rebellion against capitalism assumes greater revolutionary significance than, say, the rebellion of the Luddites against machinery."

"The hatred of machinery," says Braunthal, "the hatred of capitalism, which burns so strongly in Gandhi, is the reflection of the hate of millions of Indian peasants and handworkers, whose traditional basis of existence was completely destroyed by capitalism and who were excluded from the possibility of existence on a capitalist basis as a factory proletariat."
It is the cry of the Luddites which wrings Gandhi's breast, when he condemns capitalism, the capitalist age, and modern civilization as a monstrous depravity, a black age of darkness. ..." 52

P. Spratt in his analysis (1939) differs from Fulop-Miller. He holds:

"The parallel which Fulop-Miller draws between Mr. Gandhi and the Luddites has little value, though it may apply to some of his followers in India. A more exact comparison would be with Cobbett. ... It is true that Mr. Gandhi now uses the argument that industrialism creates unemployment, but the main reasons for his criticism are quite different....

"A more instructive parallel is provided by John Wesley, whose missionary efforts did so much to spread thrift, sobriety and industry among the lower classes in England in the XVIII and early XIX centuries. Wesley recognised that his teaching promoted riches, yet he denounced luxury and the accumulation of wealth no less vigorously than he applauded thrift and industry. His solution of the difficulty was charity; all wealth above a quantity sufficient to provide the plain necessaries of life was to be given away. Wesley nevertheless helped considerably to strengthen and promote the advance of capitalism in England and America. Mr. Gandhi also lives during the earlier stages of the formation of a capitalist class, in the period of the adoption of capitalist habits of life and ways of thinking by people whose traditions are non-capitalist or pre-capitalist. His doctrine is also such that while part of it may encourage capitalist ways of life and thought, as Wesley's did, another part is directly opposed to capitalist ideas and is such as to prevent their progress. The similarity is due not only to the broad similarity of their social environments, but also to the influence of the one upon the other: Mr. Gandhi, associated, especially in South Africa, with religious people of all persuasions, probably for the most part non-conformists, and directly and through the Indian Victorians,
came into contact with English Liberal thought.

"Mr. Gandhi however has had the advantage of acquaintance also with the later phases of capitalism, with a well-developed industrial system." 53

Analogy is no homology. But even then we cannot altogether dispense with parallels and analogies. In our opinion, if any historical parallel is to be drawn, we should look to Carlyle and Ruskin for such a parallel. As is well-known, the sensitive minds — poets, writers, and artists — rebelled and protested in words and pictures against the new ugliness of nineteenth-century capitalism and in looking at that ugliness, were brought to see the horror and misery that underlay it and the smugness and greediness that perpetuated it.

There were two types of reaction to the phenomenon of industrial exploitation. Some who grasped the forces at work for change wanted to direct the dynamics, wanted to accelerate the progress and thus shorten the period of the pain. There were others who being horrified at the toll of human sufferings demanded by the change wanted to return to the earlier-pre-industrial-period of history. This type of reaction is known as Romantic reaction. Carlyle and Ruskin represented this romantic reaction. The Romantics had not the understanding to push their analysis to the point of the class and property basis of society and therein lay the failure of Romanticism to become the social mode of expression of the rising working class. But this is not to say that the romantic movement was unimportant or unjustified. On the contrary, one cannot comprehend the typical dilemmas of the new civilization unless one understands the reason and rationale of the romantic reaction against it." 54

Gandhi, in his earlier days particularly, gave expression to such feelings. The main fount of inspiration for the Romanticists of England and Gandhi was the same — essential humanism. Gandhi's reaction was not sterile and merely sentimental as was
the case in most of the countries, nor was it retrograde. As Ashoka Mehta has correctly pointed out: "Their similarities are patent but its uniqueness is equally important." And it is this uniqueness that deserves our appreciation.

**Critique of Capitalism**

Brutal exploitation of man by man under the system of capitalism evoked Gandhi's protest and he condemned the system in no uncertain terms. His denunciation of the acquisitive society stemmed out of his intense feelings and deep concern for the down-trodden humanity. For him the only yardstick of judging any economic system was human welfare. He judged economic institutions in terms of common good or good of all. That was his credo. To him, accumulation of capital was immoral; it ran counter to his concept of non-possession, _ahidigraha_. He extended his ethical principles to the domain of property relationship. That he looked at the problem from a moral point of view is evident from the following passage:

"I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, and keep it, I thieve it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day-to-day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying for starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this inequality so long we are thieving." 56

For him, accumulation of wealth always involves violence. 57 The solutions he offered for the elimination of capitalism were guided by this ethical outlook. It may be suggested that his means of attaining an ideal economic order rid of exploitation were more moral than economic.

Prof. M. L. Dantwala in his *Gandhism Reconsidered* (1944) has suggested that
Gandhi's opposition to capitalism was not based on any logic like that of the materialist conception of history propounded by Marx from which to arrive at the inevitability of socialism. Gandhi did not adopt any theory of value which could explain accumulation of the surplus value. He opposed capitalism, because there was too much of inequality in it. He championed the cause of the dumb and the semi-starved, and wanted to bring about a decent and higher standard of living to them. Changes in the social order and in the existing economic system were necessary for improving the conditions of the poor. These changes could be possible if the capitalistic principle of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market was not adhered to. Instead of following the capitalistic norm of economic propriety and justice, the Gandhian order postulated social justice which protected starving millions. In the Gandhian society, there is economic equality; industries are run not on profit basis. Unlike in the capitalist society, the enterprises in the system are not guided by the consideration of large consumption and higher profit but solely by the principle of producing decent conditions of living both for the producers and the consumers. Gandhi opposed capitalism because he did not subscribe to the capitalistic code of justice.

Dr. Kenneth Bivett observes:

"To see exactly what Gandhi opposed, and from what standpoint, we must borrow Max Weber's distinction between the budgetary unit and the profit-making enterprise.

"Weber distinguished budgetary units from units where the test of success is profit - profit being measured by the rise in the value of all a firm's assets over time, i.e. by capital values. Doubtless the profit is then used, at one of several removes to create marginal utility, but the men who make it need not think twice about them... the distinction between them is one of degree.

"... What he (Gandhi) objected to was the allocation of all productive
Gandhi would not have said that cost was irrelevant to all decisions about allocating resources - if one sort of spinning wheel cost less than another, that was a point in its favour - but he would have held that some decisions about the use of resources should not be based on the profit test alone.

Spratt observes that his protest was not so much against wealth as against inequality. (p. 230) This analysis helps us to understand Gandhi's views on trusteeship and socialism in a proper perspective.

Background: Gandhi's views on Class war, Trusteeship, Socialism etc.

With the passage of time his criticism of capitalism grew severer. The soul-killing process and the economic inequality generated by capitalism repelled him and he tried in his own way to bring an end to the rule of capital. The ideal society, as he conceived it, is not to be brought about by forcible overthrow of capitalism but by pursuing the principle of trusteeship. And that was in keeping with his general creed of conversion since he believed that man was not beyond redemption. The theory of conversion or change of heart follows his concept of human nature.

Before we start discussing his views on labour-capital relations, trusteeship, socialism etc. another point should be made clear which has been hinted at the beginning of this chapter.

Gandhi lived and moved in a specific historical period and he undertook upon himself, or history assigned its task to him, as one would like it, the historic task of leading the Indian nation against political subjugation. In exaggerated enthusiasm of portraying him as a world teacher his role as the supreme political leader of the country should not be underestimated. And the ideology of that political movement was nationalism which is essentially, and necessarily too, multi-class in character. This multi-class composition of the movement exerted its influence, it seems, on Gandhi's thinking process.
That gives us a clue to understand the development of his ideas. It was also in South Africa, where all his main ideas were derived, the class question in the Indian Community was entirely negligible. It was there as a leader of the Indian Community as a whole that he led the movement. While Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene, the class question was not on the agenda. It was only after the emergence of the militant Trade Union movement in industrial centres like Bombay and the peasant movement in U. P. that the class question made itself a generally recognised factor in public life. The new-emerging socialist forces also made its impact felt on the national movement. With the inauguration of Congress ministries in provinces the issue came to the fore. This objective background should be borne in mind. Lest there by any misreading of this analysis it should be made clear that this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that because of this objective compulsion of combining the antagonistic class forces round the banner of nationalism, Gandhi yielded ground to the capitalist system personally or acquired in the exploitative capitalist system. The Indian capitalists who closely allied themselves to Gandhi at different phases of his life for their own reasons (as the role of the Indian capitalists in national liberation movement and their association with Gandhi do not come within the purview of the present study we leave that out) did not escape his severe condemnation on occasions. Incidentally it may be pointed out that he did not employ the terms 'Capitalism' 'Capitalists' etc. in the technical sense but used in a broad sense to denote the exploitative system and 'a few who ride on the back of millions.'

The following sections on Capital and Labour, Class War, Economic Equality, Trusteeship and Socialism should be read together to have a clearer picture of his views. An integral approach can be discerned from such a construction.

On Capital and Labour

The moral strain in his attitude towards Labour-Capital relations is found since his Ahmedabad days (1918). As he repeatedly said: "The success of the
workers entirely depends on the justice of their demands and their correct behaviour."

58 He wanted the labourers to raise themselves to the status of part-proprietors. 59

During the days of non-co-operation he wrote:

"The avowed policy of Non-co-operation has been not to make political use of disputes between Labour and Capital. They have endeavoured to hold the balance evenly between the two - we would be fools if we want only set labour against capital. It would be just the way to play into the hands of a Government which would greatly strengthen its hold on the country by setting capitalists against labourers and vice versa." 60

Pleading for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour he wrote in 1925:

"Swaraj as conceived by me does not mean the end of kingship. Nor does it mean the end of capital. Accumulated capital means ruling power. I am for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour etc. I do not wish for the supremacy of the one over the other. I do not think there is any natural antagonism between them. The rich and the poor will always be with us. But their mutual relations will be subject to constant change." 61

The next year he wrote:

"I do not fight any of capital. I fight capitalism. The West teaches us to avoid concentration of capital, to avoid a racial war in another and deadlier form. Capital and labour need not be antagonistic to each other. I cannot picture to myself a time when no man shall be richer than another. But I do picture to myself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich. Even in a most perfect world, we shall fail to avoid inequalities, but we can and must avoid strife and bitterness. There are numerous"
examples extant of the rich and the poor living in perfect friendliness.
We have but to multiply such instances." 62

In 1927 the labourers of the Maharaja Mills, Bangalore were on strike. In a
fairly long talk one evening when they gathered to present their purse to his

"I do not think there need be any clash between capital and labour.
Each is dependent on the other. What is essential today is that the ca­
pitalist should not lord over the labourer. In my opinion the mill hands
are as much the proprietors of their mills as the shareholders, and when
the mill owners realise that the mill hands are as much mill-owners as
they, there will be no quarrel between them. But there is no right in
the world that does not presuppose a duty. An owner never spoils his
property. When you know that the mill is as much yours as of the mill­
owners, you will never damage your property, you will never angrily des­
troy cloth or machinery with a view to squaring your quarrel with the
mill owners. Right, if you must, on the path of righteousness and God
will be with you. There is no royal road, I repeat, to gaining your rights
except self-purification and suffering." 63

The 1917 revolution of Russia broadcast its message of 'expropriation of
the expropriators' and of ushering in a new era of socialism. The message of
the conquest of political power by the working class was spread far beyond the
frontiers of Russia. And India was not immune to the 'contagious' spell of
Bolshevism. The working class of India, so long politically and organisation­
ally immature, began to show signs of adulthood. A sharp left-wing orientation
in Indian trade union movement became visible after 1927. Class struggle as a
method of TU movement was advocated at this period. Jawaharlal's articles
on Soviet Russia 64 (one of the articles 'Education' appeared in Young India)
and the inauguration of five year planning in Soviet Union evoked great admira­
tion from the radical youth. A wave of leftist ideas was gushing.
all round. In a word there was a new impulse throughout the country. Gandhi, it seems, responded to this atmosphere in his own characteristic way. Students of Gujarat Vidyapith discussed Bolshevism with Gandhi, who defined his own attitude thus:

"I must confess that I have not yet been able fully to understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it. But from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective State ownership of the same. And if that is so I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form cannot last for long. For it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence. But be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain: the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes."

In the passage quoted above we find him appreciating the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, though his disavowal of the Bolshevik method was unequivocal. He did not accept, for his basic belief, the Bolshevik way of forcible and violent expropriation of private property and collective state ownership, yet he is seen to be moved by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin. This was, it seems, a move away, though within the same orbit,
from his earlier position of 1919:

"Bolshevism is the necessary result of modern materialistic civilisation. Its insane worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon materialistic advancement as the goal and which has lost all touch with the final things in life."  

In a speech before an audience of young communists in England in 1931 when Gandhi visited it to attend the Second Round Table Conference:

"Q. How exactly do you think the Indian princes, landlords, millowners and money-lenders and other profiteers are enriched?

A. At the present moment by exploiting the masses.

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

A. To a certain extent, yes.

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

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

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

"The zamindar is merely a tool of a system. It is not necessary to take up movement against them at the same time against the British system. It is possible to distinguish between the two. But, we had to tell the people not to pay to the zamindars, because, out of this money the zamindars paid to the Government. But, we have no quarrel with the zamindars as such, so long as they act well by the tenants." 67

In Class War

The growing pauperism of rural India and intense exploitation of industrial working class, more keenly felt round about the days of the general crisis of world capitalism of early thirties, had its bearing on the national movement. The newly emerging movements and forces exerted their pressure on the Indian National Congress as a result of which the latter included in its programme a charter of fundamental rights guaranteeing democratic rights and alleviatory economic measures to the workers and peasants. The whole country was in a ferment.

Referring to the zamindars Gandhi warned "the capitalist class to read the sign of the times and revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess." In the same article he continued: "There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the
other the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed forces that a powerful Government can bring into play can avert."

"Q. But what about the zamindar? Would you eliminate him? Would you destroy him?

A. I do not want to destroy the zamindar, but neither do I feel that the zamindar is inevitable. I expect to convert the zamindars and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and therefore there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict. For it is an essential part of non-violence to go along the line of least resistance. The moment the cultivators of the soil realize their power, the zamindari evil will be sterilized. What can the poor zamindar do when they say that they will simply not work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children in a decent manner?

In reality the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power. That is how I do not see the necessity of class conflict. If I thought it inevitable, I should not hesitate to preach it and teach it."

"I never said that there should be co-operation between the exploiter and the exploited so long as exploitation and the will to exploit persists. Only I do not believe that the capitalists and the landlords are all exploiters by an inherent necessity, or that there is a basic or irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and those of the masses. All exploitation is based on co-operation, willing or forced, of the exploited. However much we may detest admitting it, the fact remains that there would be no exploitation if people refuse to obey the exploiter. ... What is needed is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transfor-
mation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer.

"The idea of class war does not appeal to me. In India a class war is not only not inevitable, but it is avoidable if we have understood the message of non-violence. Those who talk about class war as being inevitable, have not understood the implications of non-violence or have understood them only skin-deep." 70

or

"Exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-co-operate with their exploiters. That will convert the exploiters also. I have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners. Capital as such is not evil; it is its wrong use that is evil. Capital in some form or other will always be needed." 71

During the Second World War he wrote:

"I have visions that the end of this war will mean also the end of the rule of the capital. I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence." 72

One notices here a marked advance in Gandhi's thought as compared to his earlier position of 1925 (passage cited above).

Second World War brought in its train indescribable miseries for the people of this country. The situation of the country was explosive. In Gandhi's own words: "England is sitting on an unexploded mine in India and it may explode any day." 73

It was in this background that Gandhi's ideas were taking a new look at about this time. As early as June 1942 he gave several important interviews to Louis Fischer, in the course of which he drew a picture of his contemplated civil
disobedience movement.

"In the villages*, Gandhi explained, "the peasants will stop paying the
taxes. ... But refusal to pay it will give the peasants courage to think that
they are capable of independent action. Their next step will be to seize the
land."

"With violence?" Mr. Fischler asked.

"There may be violence," Gandhi rejoined. "But then again the landlords may
co-operate."

"You are an optimist," Mr. Fischer remarked.

"They might co-operate by fleeing," Gandhi said. 74

or

"What would happen in a free India? What is your programme for the improve­
ment of the lot of the peasantry?" Louis Fischer asked in an interview with
Gandhi on 6 June, 1942.

"The peasants would take the land. We would not have to tell them to take it.
They would take it."

"Would the landlords be compensated?"

"No", he said. "That would be fiscally impossible. You see," he smiled;
"our gratitude to our millionaire friends does not prevent us from saying such
things." 75

It has been generally assumed that Gandhi did not recognise the existence of
class struggle. Let us see what he himself had to say on the subject:

"The correspondent is wrong in suggesting that I do not believe in the
existence of class struggle. What I do not believe in is the necessity of
fomenting and keeping it up. I entertain a growing belief that it is per­
fectly possible to avoid it. There is no virtue in fomenting it, as there
is in preventing it." 76

This is very suggestive indeed for while he did not fail to recognise the
social reality of antagonism between classes he, on the other hand, because of his
basic belief in conversion through non-violent means, was opposed to 'the necessity of class conflict'. What did Gandhi mean when he pronounced his opposition to the necessity of class conflict? Prof. N. K. Bose observes in this connection:

"... when the term 'class war' was used by Gandhi, he always meant war in terms of violence. He never looked upon Satyagraha for the sake of establishment of economic equality as 'war' because it was non-violent. Yet, in the sense in which Marx himself used the term, such non-violent non-co-operation would be no less a form of class war than its violent manifestation." 77

As Marx's position is generally misunderstood a brief note may be added in passing. It has been a common fashion to portray him as the prophet of class struggle. It would be wrong in supposing that Marx advocated class struggle; it was in order to abolish the class distinctions and establishing a classless society that he gave a new philosophy for the humanity to follow. In a letter to Weydemeyer dated 5 March, 1852 Marx wrote:

"... as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the two classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society." 78

While Marx and Gandhi both stood for an egalitarian social order, they
differed in their method and approach for the realisation of such a society.

Theory of Trusteeship

Gandhi while attacking the inequitable and unjustifiable basis of capitalism and vested interests went on pleading for the adoption of trusteeship. The theory of trusteeship occupies a central place in the scheme of Gandhian thought and as such it demands our close attention.

The theory of trusteeship was not just an economic expedient for Gandhi; it was "no makeshift" for him. Trusteeship had its philosophic appeal for him too. In his words: "My theory of trusteeship is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. ... It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it." 79 The idea of trusteeship is integrally related to the concept of aparigraha. As Prof. D. P. Mukherji observed: "Trusteeship, for Gandhiji, was an interim measure sanctioned by Indian traditions." 80 The concept is to be viewed in the context of the values it stood for. It is embedded in the matrix of those values. The doctrine is as old as the ages. But it was Gandhi who tried to apply this philosophical teaching into the concrete realities of life, to the solution of the existing economic inequities.

* "They (the capitalists) know that I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced socialist or even communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ." - Harijan, 16-12-39, p. 376.

** "Property, according to the Hindu view, is a mandate held by its possessors for the common use and benefit of the commonwealth. The Bhagavat tells us that we have a claim only so much as would satisfy our hunger. If any one desires more, he is a thief deserving punishment (VII. 14.8)." - S. Radhakrishnan, 'The Individual and the Social Order in Hinduism' in The Individual in East and West (Ed: E. R. Hughes, Oxford University Press, London, 1937), p. 127.
Being influenced by the idealism of the Upanishad, Gandhi stated that things of this world should be enjoyed by renunciation. As he stated in his *Autobiography*, words like * aparigraha* (non-possession) and * samabhava* (equability) gripped him. His study of English law also came to his help in deciding to divest himself of all possessions. "My study of English law came to my help. Snell's discussion of the maxims of Equity came to my memory. I understood more clearly in the light of the Gita teaching the implication of the word 'trustee'. My regard for jurisprudence increased, I discovered in it religion." Non-possession and equability to him presupposed "a change of heart, a change of attitude". This was during his early South Africa days.

In a letter to Polak who was at the time in India, Gandhi expressed his views on modern civilization wherein he employed the word 'trustee' for the first time. Laying his heart bare before the august audience assembled on the occasion of the opening of the Benares Hindu University on 4 February, 1916, Gandhi appealed to the 'richly bedecked noblemen' present on dais to strip themselves of the jewellery and 'hold it in trust' for their countrymen in India. It was his 'first plunge' in Indian public life. And at the first stroke he hit at the core of the problem.

On the eve of the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 he wrote:

"The greatest obstacle in the path of non-violence is the presence in our midst of the indigenous interests that have sprung up from British rule, the interests of monied men, speculators, scrip-holders,

landholders, factoryowners and the like. All these do not always realize
that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they
become as callous as the British principals whose tools and agents they
are. If like the Japanese Samurai they could but realize that they must
give up their blood-stained gains, the battle is won for non-violence. It
must not be difficult for them to see that the holding of millions is a
crime when millions of their own kith and kin are starving and that,
therefore, they must give up their agency. No principal has yet been found
able to work without faithful agents.

"But non-violence has to be patient with these as with the British
principals. The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert.
He may not however wait endlessly. When therefore the limit is reached, he
takes risks and conceives plans of active satyagraha which may mean civil
disobedience and the like. His patience is never exhausted to the point of
giving up his creed." 84

In an interview with Prof. N. K. Bose on 9th and 10th November 1934, Gandhi
explained why he preferred the doctrine of trusteeship.

"Love and exclusive possession can never go together.... Perfection in
love or non-possession will remain an unattainable ideal as long as we
are alive, but towards which we must ceaselessly strive.

"Those who own money now, are asked to behave like trustees holding
their riches on behalf of the poor. You may say that trusteeship is a
legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act
up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it
is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's
definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for
it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on
earth than by any other method.
Q. If you say that private possession is incompatible with non-violence, why do you put up with it?

A. That is a concession one has to make to those who earn money but who would not voluntarily use their earnings for the benefit of mankind.

Q. Why then not have State-ownership in place of private property and thus minimize violence?

A. It is better than private ownership. But that, too, is objectionable on the ground of violence. It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the evils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time. 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. Hence I prefer the doctrine of trusteeship.

In 1939 in reply to a question of a member of Gandhi Seva Sangh he explained the theory of trusteeship in the following terms:

"Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth—either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry—I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me 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. I enunciated this theory when the socialist theory was placed before the country in respect to the possessions held by zamindars and ruling chiefs. They would do away with these privileged classes. I want them to outgrow their greed and sense of possession, and to come down in spite of their wealth to the level of those who earn their bread by labour. The labourer has to realize that the wealthy man is less owner of his wealth than the labourer is owner of his own, viz.,..."
the power to work.

"The question how many can be real trustees according to this definition is beside the point. If the theory is true, it is immaterial whether many live up to it or only one man lives up to it. The question is of conviction. If you accept the principle of Ahimsa, you have to strive to live up to it, no matter whether you succeed or fail. There is nothing in this theory which can be said to be beyond the grasp of intellect, though you may say it is difficult of practice." 86

And later in 1942:

"The rich should ponder well as to what is their duty today. They who employ mercenaries to guard their wealth may find those very guardians turning on them. The monied classes have got to learn how to fight either with arms or with the weapon of non-violence. For those who wish to follow the latter way, the best and most effective mantra is: tena tyakten bhunjitha (Enjoy thy wealth by renouncing it). Expanded it means: "Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society." 87

With reference to the above remarks, Shri Shankarrao Deo raised a query to which Gandhi replied in Harijan of Feb 22, 1942, at p. 29 in an article "Not Necessarily Impure", an extract of which is given below:

"Why first earn crores and then use them for society? As society today is constituted the means of earning crores are bound to be impure; and one who earns crores by impure means cannot be expected to follow the mantra tena tyakten bhunjitha because in the very process of earning crores by impure means the man's character is bound to be tainted or vitiated.

"I request you to emphasize as much, if not more, the purity of means of earning money as on spending. If purity of means is strictly observed,
then, according to me, crores could not be accumulated at all and the difficulty of spending for society will assume a very minor prospect."

Gandhi answered:

"I must demur. Surely a man may conceiveably make crores through strictly pure means, assuming that a man may legitimately possess riches. For the purpose of my argument, I have assumed that private possession itself is not held to be impure. If I own a mining lease and I tumble upon a diamond of rare value, I may suddenly find myself a millionaire without being held guilty of having used impure means. This actually happened when Cullinan Diamond, much more valuable than the Kohinoor was found. Such instances can be easily multiplied. My argument was surely addressed to such men. I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposition that generally rich men and for that matter most men are not particular as to the way they make money. In the application of the method of non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect response."

He also said:

"But I accept the proposition that it is better not to desire wealth than to acquire it and become a trustee. I gave up my own long ago, which should be proof enough of what I would like others to do. But what am I to advise those who are already wealthy or who would not shed the desire for wealth? I can only say to them that they should use their wealth for service."

"Personally I do not believe in inherited riches. The well-to-do should educate and bring up their children so that they may learn how to be independent. The tragedy is that they do not do so. Their children get some education, they even recite verses in praise of poverty, but they have no compunction about helping themselves to parental wealth. That being so I
exercise my common sense and advise that is practicable." 88

And then,

"Q. From your writings one gathers the notion that your 'trustee' is not anything more than a very benevolent philanthropist and donor, such as the first Parsi Baronet, the Tatas, the Wadias, the Birlas, Shri Bajaj and the like. Is that so? Will you please explain whom you regard as the primary or rightful beneficiaries of the possessions of a rich man? Is there to be a limit to the amount or part of the income and capital which he can spend upon himself, his kith and kin and for non-public purposes? Can one who exceeds such limit be prevented from doing so? If he is incompetent or otherwise fails to discharge his obligations as a trustee, can he be removed and called upon to render accounts by a beneficiary or the State? Do the same principles apply to princes and zamindars, or is their trusteeship of a different nature?

"A. If the trusteeship idea catches, philanthropy, as we know it, will disappear. Of those you have named only Jamnalalji * came near, but only near, it. A trustee has no heir but the public. In a State built on the basis of non-violence, the commission of trustees will be regulated. Princes and zamindars will be on a par with other men of wealth." 89 (emphasis added)

* Gandhi maintained that if every wealthy person tried to become like Jamnalal Bajaj, economic equality would not be a far-off dream. - See To a Gandhian Capitalist: Correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and Jamnalal Bajaj and the members of his family. Edited by Kaka Kalelkar, Jamnalal Seva Trust, Wardha, 1951.
On Inheritance

The question of inheritance is vital in any scheme of socio-economic reconstruction. As we have observed earlier, Gandhi was aware of the "indigenous interests" who live on "the blood of the masses". It was this realisation which guided him to advise the Congress ministries (1937) to tax riches heavily.

To quote:

"Riches have not yet been sufficiently taxed. In this of all countries in the world possession of inordinate wealth by individuals should be held as a crime against Indian humanity. Therefore the maximum limit of taxation of riches beyond a certain margin can never be reached. In England, I understand, they have already gone as far as 70% of the earnings beyond a prescribed figure. There is no reason why India should not go to a much higher figure. Why should there not be death duties? These sons of millionaires who are of age and yet inherit their parents' wealth are losers for the very inheritance. The nation thus becomes a double loser. For the inheritance should rightly belong to the nation. And the nation loses again in that the full faculties of the heirs are not drawn out, being crushed under the load of riches." 90 (emphasis added)

The following extracts from Gandhi's later writings will give a new focus to his views developed in course of his growing experience.

"Q. How would the successor of a trustee be determined? Will he only have the right of proposing a name, the right of finalization being vested in the State?

A. As he had said yesterday, choice should be given to the original owner who became the first trustee, but the choice must be finalized by the State. Such arrangement puts a check on the State as well as the individual. (emphasis added)

\[ ... \]
Q. When the replacement of private by public property thus takes place through the operation of the theory of trusteeship, will the ownership vest in the State, which is an instrument of violence, or in associations of a voluntary character like village communes and municipalities, which may, of course, derive their final authority from State-made laws?

A. That question involved some confusion of thought. Legal ownership in the transformed condition was vested in the trustee, not in the State. It was in order to avoid confiscation that the doctrine of trusteeship came into play, retaining for society the ability of the original owner in his own right.

"Nor did he, the speaker, hold that the State must always be based on violence. It might be so in theory, but the practice of the theory demanded a State which would for the most part be based on non-violence."

Q. You have asked men to be trustees. Is it implied that they should give up private ownership in their property and create out of it a trust valid in the eyes of law and managed democratically? How will the successor of the present incumbent be determined on his demise?

A. In answer Gandhi said that he adhered to the position taken by him years ago that everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore it was for His people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion he became a trustee of that portion for God's people.

"God who was all-powerful had no need to store. He created from day to day, hence men also should in theory live from day to day and not stock things. If this truth was imbibed by the people generally, it would become legalized and trusteeship would become a legalized institution. He wished it become a gift from India to the world. Then there
would be no exploitation and no reserves as in Australia and other coun-
tries for White men and their posterity. In these distinctions lay the
seeds of a war more virulent than the last two. As to the successor, the
trustee in office would have the right to nominate his successor subject
to legal sanction.* 92

"To the landlords he said that if what was said against them was true,
he would warn them that their days were numbered. They could no longer
continue as lords and masters. They had a bright future if they became
the trustees of the poor *kisanes. He had in mind *not trustees in
name but in reality. Such trustees would take nothing for themselves
that their labour and care did not entitle them to. Then they would find
that no law would be able to touch them. The *kisane would be their #
friends." 93

"Q. You say that a Raja, a zamindar or a capitalist should be a *khara
trustee for the poor. Do you think that any such exist today? Or do you
expect them to be so transformed?

A. I think that some very few exist even to-day, though not in the
full sense of the term. They are certainly moving in that direction. It
can, however, be asked whether the present Rajas and others can be ex-
pected to become trustees of the poor. If they do not become trustees of
their own accord, force of circumstances will compel the reform unless
they court utter destruction. When *Panchayat Raj is established, pu-

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ublic opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of
the *zamindars, the capitalists and the Rajas can hold sway only so
long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the peo-

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le non-co-operate with the evil of *zamindari or capitalism, it must die
do

of imanition. In *Panchayat Raj only the *Panchayat will be obeyed and
the *Panchayat can only work through the laws of their making." 94
On Talents

Gandhi provided the answer to the problem of recurring inequalities, the reference is here to the inherent inequality of man, arising from "residuary ownership." He wished talents to be fostered and held in trust to be used in the interest of society.

In Harijan dated 2 August 1942 (p. 249) he wrote:

"Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or say the social structure surrounding him. Therefore he can use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives."

We have quoted in fair length Gandhi's exposition of the doctrine of trusteeship. We will conclude this section with a practical trusteeship formula the draft of which was prepared by Dr. Prof. M. L. Dantwala and was placed before Gandhi, who made a few changes in it. The final draft read as follows:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.

3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.

4. Thus under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.

5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so
a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed. 95

A study of the Gandhian theory of trusteeship suggests that it rests on certain basic assumptions. It is in terms of his basic approach of non-violence that is, conversion, that the significance of the theory is to be understood. This theory, because of its importance, demands a fuller discussion. Opinions as to the efficacy of trusteeship as a means of effecting social transformation are sharply divided. But one point need be stressed at this stage. A study of the evolution of his trusteeship concept proves to the hilt that "with the passage of time Gandhi went on adding an economic and sociological content into the rather more-keistic conception of trusteeship." 96

Appraisal of the doctrine

A brief survey of opinions held on Gandhi's theory of trusteeship may be added here.

Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his Modern Islam in India in a passing reference maintains that the trust theory of property preferred by some Muslim interpreters of Islam is identical with that held by Gandhi. 97

The theory of trusteeship has been generally objected to on the ground that as a means of effecting social transformation this theory, ethical content notwithstanding, is ineffective. Trusteeship implies, according to this opinion, class collaboration or class harmony.

Here is a Marxist appraisal of the doctrine:

"the division of society into the property owning and the propertyless
classes which is the characteristic of capitalism is sought to be retained in Gandhism also. The only difference in Gandhism is that the erstwhile capitalist, property owning class will consider itself trustee on behalf of the proletariat. The change is purely in the subjective sphere, the objective conditions of production will continue by remaining as they were in capitalism. Production will continue by unplanned private competition among the individual trustees. These conditions of production have a compelling logic of their own which lead to the same contradictions as are witnessed under capitalism today. The class appropriation of surplus value, which trust production will continue in a pious guise, will mean larger and larger accumulations of the capital on the one hand and pauperization of the masses on the other. ... These evils cannot be banished by wishing a change in the hearts and minds of the owners of property." 98

or

As Prof. Hiren Mukerjee in his study [Gandhiji makes out:

"This apostle of pity wanted a sea-change in human relationships, but, he had a great deal more than the convinced conservative's patience in bringing about change; he was ready to be gentle even with flagrantly self-seeking and basically anti-social vested interests; and in his pre-occupation with the right kind of means for social change, he would make compromises and concessions to the 'status quo' which were often paradoxical, and in their implications, as in the idea of the rich of being 'trustees' of the poor, positively pernicious."

Referring to "Utopian" socialists like Robert Owen, Saint Simon and Fourier he adds:

"Social transformation by moral suasion which changes the hardest of hearts and by making sure of individual self-reformation guarantees the quality of the transformation, is thus not an exclusively Gandhian
contribution to social thought. It has its merits, no doubt, but history has shown repeatedly that projected into a practical "social perspective", it tends to become impractical. Not to recognise its limitations and to harp on it as the only remedy of society's ills is to take deceptive moral union to one's soul and to put on a mantle of myth as a safeguard against the chilling blasts of real life problems.\footnote{100}

Referring to Christ, Buddha and Gandhi, C. G. Shah, a Marxist theoretician observes:

"The survey of all history decisively proves that this technique of liquidating poverty and economic disparities rampant in the social world has decisively failed." \footnote{101}

But criticism of this theory has not been levelled only from the Marxist quarters. Even a very sympathetic reviewer of Gandhian Economics like Prof. J. J. Angaria doubts its validity as a long term solution.

To quote him:

"As a short term measure, this is excellent. Coercion is ethically bad; on any large scale, it is also not expedient. But the run away from the problem by merely appealing to the more fortunate ones to show a little more charity - a awful word - is no solution." \footnote{102}

Dr. T. K. N. Unnithan in Gandhi and Free India observes:

"Gandhi does not question the historical existence of the institution of the rich as such, though he questions the nature of its working and envisages a future possibility of its complete elimination. This probably is due to his passionate desire to give effect to his cherished doctrine of non-violence. It is unlikely that Gandhi sought to justify the historical growth of the institution of wealth; the probability is that he ignored it or tolerated it as a result of his conviction that any attempts to question it would result in violence. Therefore, even
if the trusteeship concept did involve an element of coercion or injustice towards the poor, this must be regarded as unavoidable. Further, he believed that the building up of a non-violent society in the future is not possible if the foundations are not non-violent, and from this point of view also he found it expedient to grant such concessions.

To simplify matters he: presumed honesty on the part of the trustees.

Prof. N. K. Bose in his Studies rebuts the charge that Gandhian theory of trusteeship is another name for class collaboration. "... apart from its wider-idealistic application, even within the sphere of economic life, the Gandhian theory of our trusteeship does not make for class collaboration but for class liquidation, as a friend of mine once very happily put it. This liquidation, which will result in all men turning into labourers and placing their mental and material resources at the service of humanity taken as a whole, will be effected not by the forceful regimentation of the exploiters by the exploited, but by a change of heart brought about among among the exploiters by the non-violent non-co-operation of those on whom the former demand depend for the making, the retention and the employment of their wealth. In course of that struggle, the exploited will also become free from the weaknesses which have given rise to the present social inequalities. Under the new constitution of things brought into being by the joint endeavour of today's hostile classes, all men will live as servants of the community, willingly and joyfully, through a complete reorientation of life's values in a new direction. Through economic equality, society will also, in its turn, secure for every man full opportunity for the development of his physical, mental and moral powers without allowing him to restrict similar opportunity in others. And the product of those talents will be shared by all in common."

Prof. Amlan Datta contends Prof. Bose's interpretation. To quote him:

"Prof. Bose, in his Studies in Gandhism, suggests that Gandhi:
was wedded not to the theory of class-collaboration, but to the theory of peaceful and voluntary class-liquidation. This seems to be a representation of Gandhism as better than what it really is. A theory which cannot envisage a new order in which landlordism will be not simply purified, but will be quite out of place is by no means a complete theory of the liquidation of the landlord class. In actual practice the Gandhian theory lends itself to being merely employed as a shield against any movement for overthrowing the dominant classes in existing society.

In his exposition of the Gandhian doctrine of trusteeship, Prof. Dantwala observes:

"One may or may not believe in the efficiency or practicability of this method of bringing about a revolutionary change, but one can understand why in the Gandhian scheme of a new society there is no reliance on the power and authority of the state for ushering in changes or for preserving the New Order." 105

To sum up, the Gandhian theory of trusteeship is based on certain fundamental assumptions. The coherence and completeness of the theory convinces any one so long its premises are accepted. It is not altogether impossible to understand Gandhi's position from his own point of view. But once those assumptions are challenged this theory loses all its logic.

Economic Equality

The glaring economic inequalities of the society leading to the concentration of capital in a few hands naturally evoked Gandhi's condemnation. This state of inequality was morally degrading and economically untenable for him. As we have observed earlier, Gandhi in 1904 drew the lesson from Ruskin that a lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work. We have seen that what did Ruskin preach was not equality of wages but fixed wages. But Gandhi
understood Ruskin as advocating equality of wages. Whether Gandhi's understanding of Ruskin is correct or not is another matter. What is important to be noted is that the concept of equality of wages tallied with the general texture of his thinking.

A man of practical affairs that he was, Gandhi began to feel in his encounter with real life that equality of wages or the ideal of equal distribution of wealth would not be acceptable to the nation at the stage.

As he wrote:

"My ideal is equal distribution; but so far as I can see it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution."

Economic equality though remaining an ideal with him, he was prepared to allow a man of intellect to earn more. He would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earning must be used for the good of the State, (he, it seems, meant the community in the context) just as the earning sons of the father go to the common family fund. (the extract of his speech is given in the section on capital and labour.)

For Gandhi, economic equality is the master key to non-violent independence. In an article 'Implications of Constructive Programme' in Harijan of 18. 8. 40, p. 252, he observed:

"The whole of this programme will, however, be a structure on sand if it is not built on the solid foundation of economic equality. Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by every one. It does mean, however, that every one will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat, and sufficient khadi with which to cover himself. It also means that cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed by purely non-violent means."

Or as he explained in his Constructive Programme:
"Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and a levelling up of the semi-starved, naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly impossible so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day, unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good." 109

How the ideal of equal distribution is to be realised? What did Gandhi envisage?

"The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more. ... To bring this ideal into being the entire social order has got to be reconstructed. A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We may not perhaps be able to realize the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extent as we progress towards our goal we shall find contentment and happiness, and to that extent too shall we have contributed towards the bringing into being of a non-violent society.

"It is perfectly possible for an individual to adopt this way of life without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can observe a certain rule of conduct, it follows that a group of individuals can do likewise. It is necessary for me to emphasize the
fact that no one need wait for anyone else in order to adopt a right course. Men generally hesitate to make a beginning if they feel that the objective cannot be had in its entirety. Such an attitude of mind is in reality a bar to progress.

"Now let us consider how equal distribution can be brought about through non-violence. The first step towards it is for him who has made this ideal part of his being to bring about the necessary changes in his personal life. He would reduce his wants to a minimum, bearing in mind the poverty of India. His earnings would be free of dishonesty. The desire for speculation would be renounced. His habitation would be in keeping with the new mode of life. There would be self-restraint exercised in every sphere of life. When he has done all that is possible in his own life, then only will he be in a position to preach this ideal among his associates and neighbours.

"Indeed at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for the superfluous wealth possessed by them." 110

On January 29, 1946 he was asked questions in the Constructive Workers' conference at Madras. One of the questions was that exactly did Gandhi mean by economic equality.

"Gandhiji's reply was that economic equality of his conception did not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount. It simply meant that everybody should have enough for his or her needs. For instance... the elephant needs a thousand times more food than the ant, but that is not an indication of inequality. So the real meaning of economic equality was: "To each according to his need." That was the definition of Marx. If a single man demanded as much as a man with wife and four children that would be a violation of economic equality."
Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument. The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen - the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief. He did not want to taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities, but they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first."

But then what is the difference between Gandhi's technique and that of the Communists or Socialists for realizing the goal of economic equality?

"The Socialists and Communists say they can do propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, "When they get control over the State they will enforce equality." Under my plan, the State will be there to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate to them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightway: make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception, if I am the owner of fifty motor cars or even of ten bigha of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor. That is what I have been trying
to do for the last fifty years or more, and so, I claim to be a foremost Communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it." 112

We have seen that Gandhi while pleading for equal distribution accepted equitable distribution as a practical goal. But this does not mean that he resiled from his original position of equal distribution. That he only recognised the reality and toned down his practical goal but at the same time clung to his ideal is evident from the following:

"Q. Do you hold that all persons who perform useful and necessary service in society, whether farmer or bhandi, engineer or accountant, doctor or teacher, have a moral right only to equal wages with the rest? Of course, it is understood, educational or other expenses shall be a charge of the State. Our question is, should not all persons get the same wages for their personal needs? Do you not think that if we work for this equality, it will come sooner under the root of untouchability than any other process?

"As to this Gandhi had no doubt that if India was to live an exemplary life of independence which would be the envy of the world, all the bhandis, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day's work. Indian society may never reach the goal but it was the duty of every Indian to set his sail towards that goal as and no other if India was to be a happy land." 113

Gandhi's concept of economic equality was not in terms of absolute equality so far as his practical goal was concerned. Equal payment of wages that he advocated as an ideal to be pursued may be logically derived from the basic tenets of Christian Socialism. George Bernard Shaw, it am may be noted in this connection, was an ardent advocate of equality of wages. Marx Marx's
concept of 'to each according to his needs', appealed to Gandhi, so it seems to us, because of its humanist essence. Distribution according to needs is introduced under Communism (the higher phase of socialism). It takes place owing to a direct economic need which arises at this high stage in the development of social production. In socialist society (the lower phase), material and cultural values are distributed with the quantity and quality of labour expended by each worker in social production. Equalisation of wages is not economically tenable at this stage. Gandhi, unlike Marx, did not care to distinguish the stages of socialist society in terms of labour productivity; he set before himself the ideal and strove for it taking into account the practical obstacles that stood in the way and prescribed such measures which could be realised in the immediate context. One may construct the interpretation that while Swaraj was an immediate goal for Gandhi, Ram Raj was the ultimate ideal. In this connection, Dr. V. P. Varma states:

"Gandhi does not clarify whether he wanted payment according to needs for the first stage, that is Swaraj or for the highest ideal of society, that is Ramraj. It is possible to hold that he wanted the application of this formula for Ramraj. In Swaraj, however, Gandhi would like the elimination of all forms of economic exploitation through non-coercive techniques." 114

Evolution of Views on Socialism

We have seen above, from Gandhi's writings, his views on class inequalities and the means he suggested for effecting reconstruction of the social order. The statements have shown that Gandhi moved with the times and responded to the challenge of inequality in his own way. Here we find a man growing, developing, moving and making the masses move with him for the realisation of a new society, as he envisaged it to be, free from exploitation. This may be further adduced from his views on socialism (some of the important pronouncements wherein his basic stand had been clarified have been given above). In 1916 he said:

...
"I am no socialist and I do not want to dispossess those who have possessions; but I do say that, personally, those of us who want to see light out of darkness have to follow this rule. I do not want to dispossess anybody. I should then be departing from the rule of Ahimsa." 115

As we have seen above in a previous section (Sec. on Evolution of views on industrialism and machinery), in 1924 he admitted the necessity of nationalisation or state control. Though that was a guarded approval of socialism yet a clear advance from his earlier position is evident.

He was no dogmatic to stick to his earlier position if and when situations demanded. He moved away from his earlier idea of dispossession which was to him repugnant in 1916. In a speech 116 before the forty-ninth meeting of the Federal Structure Committee of Round Table Conference held on November 19, 1931 he gave a picture of how things were to shape themselves if a national government was to come into being in India. His association with the indigenous capitalists did not prevent him from taking the side of the poor and press the views of the common man. He supported the Indian capitalists' opposition to the financial safeguards and Government's currency policy, and spoke strongly against the British representatives on commercial discrimination. He agreed that there must be no racial discrimination but the national government would have to discriminate in favour of the poor against the rich. Not only Government obligations, he proceeded, but "existing interests should be subject to judicial scrutiny whenever necessary." His principle applied to Indians equally. "If they have obtained concessions ... because they did some service to the officials of the days and got some miles of land, well, if I had possession of the government, I would quickly dispossess them." Refering to the representatives of the moneyed men he declared: "... They are not representatives of those who lack even a place to sleep and have not even
a crust of bread to eat. If the National Government comes to the conclusion that that place is unnecessary, no matter what interests are concerned they will be dispossessed, and they will be dispossessed I may tell you, without any compensation, because if you want this government to pay compensation it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.”

On the same occasion, while he did not go to the length of advocating in full throat the state control of key industries he was moving slowly but steadily from his earlier position. In the BTC he said, "The Congress conception is that if the key industries are not taken over by the State itself, the State will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and administration and development of key industries.”

It was after 1934 when the ideas of a substantial section of Congressmen and of the educated public generally turned for the first time towards Socialism, he also began to call himself a socialist. P. Spratt noting this evolution of his ideas towards socialism observes:

"There is no insincerity or mere vulgar opportunism in this. It is due to his sensitiveness to the feelings and thought of the community, and his direct response, unhampered by any rigid theories of his own, to the 'moral atmosphere' about him.” 117

In the wake of the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement by Gandhi in 1933 there emerged the Congress Socialist group. At the first Congress Socialist Conference held at Patna in 1934, the programme of the party was formulated. On the publication of the programme an attempt was made by some of the leaders of CSP to ascertain Gandhi’s views on it. 118 The detailed discussion that followed brings out in sharp relief his views on socialism.

"Q.: What is your attitude towards socialism?

A.: I call myself a socialist. I love the very word, but I will not preach the same socialism as most socialists do."
Q.: Are your objections to scientific socialism as understood in the West, fundamental objections in principle, or are they only objections to its applications in India?

A.: I do not know what scientific socialism is. I have not read any books on it. But if the socialist programmes I have seen represented, I think, it is not applicable in that form to this country.

Q.: Do you agree with the socialist ideal of the nationalisation of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange?

A.: I believe in the nationalisation of key and principal industries as is laid down in the resolution of the Karachi Congress. More than that I cannot at present visualize. Nor do I want all the means of production to be nationalized. Is even Rabindranath Tagore to be nationalized? These are day dreams.

Q.: For the landlords, don't you think coercion is necessary?

A.: You must convert both landlords and the landless. It is easier to convert the former than the latter, for with landlords it is only a question of economic interest, whereas with the landless, it is a matter of relation. It is no use getting angry with the landlords. They also deserve our pity, for it is the land that is eating them up. So many American millionaires have come to me and asked me how they can find happiness.

Q.: Are you not talking in terms of individuals while socialists think in terms of classes?

A.: But what is after all a class? It is an aggregate of individuals. You cannot convert landlords and capitalists by violence but only by persuasion. We can tell them that they are entitled to amass wealth, but they cannot spend it in any manner they choose. They must become trustees of their own wealth. "You have the capacity to make money", I would
tell them, "for that you will be allowed to take a commission for yourself. But you must abandon unfair means." I would see by what means they amass wealth. If it is ill-gotten I would take it away. At the Round Table Conference I caused consternation to people like Sir Cowasji Jehangir by saying, I would examine every title-deed of property.

Q. Is that not quite impracticable? How can you go through millions of cases of property holders?

A. I would take the cases of ten such landlords and capitalists as sample cases and if the decision was adverse the rest would relinquish their claims themselves.

Q. Don't you recognize the conflict of interest between the possessing and the exploited classes resulting in a class struggle?

A. Today there is a conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker because the former dreams of profits of lakhs of rupees without giving anything to the worker. I would stop the capitalists from doing so. I have told them particularly in Ahmedabad, that they must regard the workers as partners. I say to them: "You bring your capital into the concern, they bring their only capital - their persons." When the Ahmedabad mill-owners came to me for a wage-out, I told them: "It is true you have a right to your interest, but first you must guarantee the man's wages."

Q. But socialists deny the very right to draw interest.

A. But won't they reward brains?

Q. Are you contemplating the perpetuation of private enterprise and free competition or planned economy by the State?

A. I believe in private and also in planned production. If you have only State production, men will become moral and intellectual paupers. They will forget their responsibilities. I would therefore allow the capitalist and the zamindar to keep their factory and their land, but I
would make them consider themselves trustees of their property.

Q. : How will you do it ?
A. : By non-violence. I would make them undergo a change of heart. It is possible to convert them.

Q. : Will you adopt economic pressure as a means of conversion?
A. : Yes, but it must be non-violent.

Q. : Non-violent in the sense of not shedding blood ?
A. : Once socialists accept non-violence, they must accept me as the expert on non-violence. But I believe in legislation. There is an element of coercion in it; but that cannot be helped.

Q. : On what basis would you like peasants and workers to be organized ?
A. : With the idea of improving their position and redressing their grievances. What I object to is their being used for political purposes. For instance, it may be that my efforts for the Harijans may result in their supporting the national struggle, but that is not why I am fighting for them. That motive is not even present in my mind. Similarly socialists should not organize workers with the idea of using them against British Imperialism. That is why I do not feel happy about the Bombay textile strike. I have an idea, it is called and led by people to gain political power for themselves.

Q. : Do you think it is wrong to tell the workers that what they are really fighting is the system of imperialism and that so long as that system remains their conditions cannot improve ?
A. : Yes. At present the workers should only be taught to impose their will on the mill-owners. To bring in the Government also is to overstep your case. Whatever State there is even your own Capitalistic Government will support the mill-owners. Even under this system I can teach labour
to use its power and to claim partnership with capital. I would ask them to take possession of the mills.

Q. : But so long as the Imperialist Government is there that is impossible.

A. : Even without control of the State there can be nationalization. I can start a mill for the benefit of the workers.

Gandhi's advice to the Socialists asking them not to organize the workers with the idea of using them against British imperialism should not be construed to mean that he was against the workers' participation in the anti-imperialist movement. He objected to their 'being used'. He might have thought, as per his assessment of the maturity and organization of the workers, that giving them a call to the workers at an inopportune moment instead of helping might harm the cause. For in the latter part of the interview referred to above we read:

Q. : Should not war be resisted by general strike of railwaymen, dockers, telegraphists and munition workers?

A. : Yes. There should be strike when war breaks out, but we should not declare our intentions from now.

Similarly in an interview to an American correspondent on August 8, 1942, he categorically stated that general strike was not outside his contemplation. He said: "If a general strike becomes a dire necessity, I shall not flinch." 119

Gandhi's Picture of Socialism

He had his own picture of socialism. In 1934 he said: "The socialism that India can assimilate is the socialism of the spinning wheel." 120

He developed his concept of socialism in encounter with the growing influence of scientific socialism. The whole country was surcharged with socialist slogans. Even the platform of Indian National Congress was utilised to voice
the urges of the newly-emerging socialist forces. Jawaharlal's advocacy of socialism in 'the scientific, economic sense' (Presidential Address to the National Congress, Lucknow, April, 1936) as 'the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems' at strengthened, in a limited sense, the forces of socialism. At Faizpur Congress (December, 1936) the same fervour was there. Gandhi took no part in the Congress debates but his speech made on the exhibition grounds on December 27 was significant. In this speech we get an idea how his concept of socialism was evolved.

1 "Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: "All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e. the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is us who have not lived up to it. I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. The most effective substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel with all its implication. Land and all property is his who will work for it. Unfortunately the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact." 

His concept of socialism was entirely his own in the sense that socialism did not represent itself to him as a necessary and logical stage in social evolution growing out of the technological basis and production relations of capitalism.

As he said:

"Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is
explicit in the first verse of Ishwarishad. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific socialists. It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. It may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing." 123

In 1937 Gandhi in reply to a question of an Egyptian interviewer told him that he was a believer in non-violent Communism. He added: "If Communism came without any violence, it would be welcome. For then no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people. A millionaire may have his millions, but he will hold them for the people. The State could take charge of them whenever they would need them for the common cause. 124

It was not out of any theoretical study or critical-intellectual analysis of the social development of history that Gandhi arrived at his socialism. That Socialism was natural to him will be clear from the account given below.

Feeling the necessity for a clearer outline of the picture of future India, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, the then CSP leader made an attempt to draw a picture of Swaraj which was meant as a draft resolution for consideration by the Ramgarh Congress (1940).

* "The political and economic organization of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organization shall conduct to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development
Gandhi while publishing 'Jayaprakash's Picture' in Harijan (20.4.40, p. 96) commented:

"As an ideal to be reduced to practice as soon as possible after India comes into her own, I endorse in general all except one of the propositions enunciated by Shri Jayaprakash. " (the reference is made here to J. P.'s proposition about the princes)."

of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized.

"The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

"The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and down-trodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

"In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises, the workers shall be represented through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government."
"I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialist doctrines. (emphasis added)

"I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by further training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation."

Similarly in 1934 he wrote:

"Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. . . . Our socialism or communism should be based on non-violence and on harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant."

A sharp orientation in his thinking took place round about 1942. We have seen above that during early 1942 that he had had his visions that the rule of the poor would be established. (Harijan, 1-2-42, p. 20) (the quotation given above at p. . . .)

We find Gandhi advocating at this period the idea of collective or co-operative (he did not distinguish between the two) ownership. In an article in Harijan (15-2-42, p. 39) he placed his opinions on the subject in the following terms:

"The world today (he wrote) is moving towards the ideal of collective or co-operative effort in every department of life. Much in this line has been and is being accomplished. It has come into our country also, but in such a distorted form that our poor have not been
able to reap its benefits.... I firmly believe that we shall not derive the benefits of agriculture until we take to co-operative farming. ... And what applies to land applies equally to cattle."

The momentous Quit India resolution of 1942 - a product of Gandhi's bold imagination - embodied the significant declaration that the primary functions of the future independent government would be "to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and the factories." This may sound just a bourgeois-liberal phrase-mongering but in continuation of the same sentence it read: "to whom all power and authority must belong." 127 This it is admitted was no declaration of socialism straightway, but the implications should not be lost sight of. The August '42 resolution was certainly an advance from the earlier position of Congress. The credit for giving a new orientation to the Congress was undoubtedly Gandhi's.

During his detention in the Aga Khan Palace (1942-44) he read for the first time at the age of seventy four Karl Marx's first volume of Capital. He also read Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Gandhi did not care whether Marxism was right or wrong. "All I know is that the poor are being crushed. Something has got to be done for them. To me this is axiomatic." 128 Moral indignation against acquisitiveness was the axiology of socialism for him.

In 1946 in a discussion with Louis Fischer, Gandhi declared that he was a socialist before many of the Indian socialists were born. When asked as to explain the meaning of his socialism, Gandhi replied:

"My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is material progress. For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to. That does not mean that I mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other socialism, there is
no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body."

Continuing he said:

"I call myself a communist also."

"My communism is not very different from socialism. It is a harmonious blending of the two. Communism, as I have understood it, is a natural corollary of socialism." 129

Speaking before the Delhi Provincial Political Conference on July 2, 1947, Gandhi declared himself to be a socialist. 130

"Nearly fifty years ago, " Gandhi went on, " When I was practising law in South Africa, many people used to call themselves socialists. But they were less of socialists than I was. I used to work among the labourers. I have made this part of my life's work. This is true socialism. I have always considered myself a true servant of the peasants and the workers. ... I am of the opinion that even a king can be a socialist by becoming a servant of the people."

His way was to make the ruler a socialist through love. Gandhi added on to say:

"If socialism means befriending one's enemies I should be treated as a true socialist. This conception of socialism is my own. The socialists should learn socialism from me. Only then we can establish a true workers' and peasants' raj."

In an editorial in Harijan dated 13. 7. 47, p. 232 entitled 'Who is a Socialist' he wrote:

"Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal - none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.
"In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity."

"Socialism begins with the first convert."

"This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth."

"... only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialist. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible."

The next week Harijan (p. 240) carried another article on Socialism by Gandhi.

"Truth and Ahimsa must incarnate in Socialism. ... It (Satyagraha) is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means."

We have traced above the evolution of Gandhi's view on socialism. Interpretations differ as to the nature of his socialism vis-à-vis Marxian Socialism. Some have maintained that the difference between Marxian Socialism and Gandhian Socialism which is variant of Sarvodaya is not in the ends but in the means. *

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* "The difference between Communism and Sarvodaya is not in the ends but in the means. Gandhi himself more than once declared that he was a communist minus their violence." - K. G. Mashruwala, Quoted in M. K. Gandhi, Sarvodaya (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1958), p. 168."
while some hold the view that Gandhian concept of social reconstruction is essentially different from the other.

Dr. Hima Bihari Majumder in an article on 'Gandhian Socialism' mentions that Gandhi went much further than Proudhon as regards the concept of property and he finds some resemblance between Gandhian approach and Christian Socialism. But, according to Dr. Majumder, there are very important points of difference between Gandhian Socialism and the Christian Social movements. Generally, he continues, the different schools of Christian Socialists are hostile to liberalism and individualism, whereas Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch champion of the development of the personality of the individual. Again, the Christian socialists are in favour of state intervention. But Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to the concentration of wide powers in the hands of the state.

M. N. Roy, a trenchant critic of Gandhism in one of his writings (written during 1936 detention) observed:

"The Christian Socialism of Charles Kingsley and his followers anticipated Gandhism by more than half a century. ... Gandhi denounces capitalism, but does not advocate its abolition. His avowed desire is to establish harmonious relations between the capitalists and the workers - to persuade the former to be benevolent guardians of the latter. ... the Mahatma cannot be looked upon as a greater enemy of capitalism than Disraeli. Both advocate giving the bitter pill a sugar-coating." P. Spratt in his analysis says of Gandhi:

"His economic preferences are guided by two opposite repulsions: from capitalism as it exists, and from the great scale of economic organisation,

* Vinoba Bhave observes: "The fact of the matter is that these two ideologies are irreconcilable; the difference between them are fundamental."
and the consequent suppression of individual initiative which are expected to prevail under socialism. ... Mr. Gandhi thinks that a stable economic system of an intermediate type could be set up. But this is yet to be proved. It may be that the choice is between capitalism in more or less its traditional form, and some organisation which can be called socialism; and I venture to agree with Mr. Gandhi's description of himself as a socialist because I think that of the two he would prefer the socialistic development and because his proposals, such as those for public or co-operative control of large-scale industries and services, would probably favour it."

Prof. D. P. Mukerji in his paper on 'Mahatma Gandhi's Views on Machines and Technology' observed that to the extent Gandhi would institutionalise the concept of aparigraha in the State that would own, and not possess for greed or profit he was a socialist or even a communist, "with this difference that his socialism did not grow out of industrial civilization, technological values, class conflict, or according to the operations of the laws of dialectics." 134

This, in our opinion, brings out the essential point of difference between the assumptions of Gandhian socialism and Marxian socialism.

It is a cliche that there are as many brands of socialism as there are socialists. The moot question is: What do we mean by socialism or how do we define socialism?

The Encyclopaedia of the Labour Movement gives the definition as follows:

"Socialism is a working class doctrine and movement aiming through the class struggle, at the collective control of society, by the capture of the state machine by the workers and the establishment of self-government in industry." (Vol. III, p. 154)

Gandhian socialism is based on assumptions different from the five clauses that make up the above definition.
But socialism is not merely an economic doctrine; it is ethical too. As Albert Einstein said in his small but significant article, *Why Socialism?* "it is directed towards a social-ethical end." And who dares challenge the ethical basis of Marxian socialism? From the ethical point of view, Gandhian theory certainly passes the criterion of socialism. "His was a moral socialism," Louis Fischer commented.

P. K. Gopalakrishnan observes:

"Gandhiji was a utopian socialist who was one with the socialists of other schools in their indictment of the system of private property, with its waste and social injustice, in the belief that the remedy for existing conditions was to be found in some form of social ownership of wealth and industry under which mutual aid would supplant competition as the law of social well-being. He also voiced the sentiment of all schools of socialism in their advocacy of a society which would afford each individual full opportunities for physical, intellectual and moral development; in the recognition of work as a necessity, and in their demand that all should participate therein, and in their insistence on the importance of removing inequality between classes." 137

This description is valid if the historical materialist method is accepted. This utopia is the source of his strength as well as of his weakness.

If socialism is defined in a broad (necessarily vague?) sense as has been done by G. B. H. Cole ('A broad human movement on behalf of the bottom dog'), Gandhi could certainly be ranked as one of the foremost ethical or moral socialists and the champion of the disinherited.

**Bread Labour**

Bread Labour was both philosophy and economics to Gandhi. As is well-known, he derived the lesson of bread labour from Tolstoy and Ruskin. This concept is integrally related with his basic philosophy of life. It was one of
observed vows... Satyagraha ashramites. The injunction of this law, what he called divine, on every able-bodied person to perform at least that amount of *sharir shrama*, body labour which will produce the equivalent of what he consumes for physical sustenance introduced a new element in the conventional mode of thinking as well as in the sphere of socio-economic thought. The significance of this doctrine will be clear when we acquaint ourselves with the fundamentals of the doctrine as propounded and elaborated upon by Gandhi on different occasions.

The following extract from *Yervada Mandir* gives us an idea how the idea of bread labour gripped his mind. This will further show that he believed that the doctrine had religious sanction and that it being practised would lead to the abolition of ranks in the society.

To quote Gandhi:

"The law, that to live man must work, first came home to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on Bread labour. But even before that I had begun to pay homage to it after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The divine law, that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands, was first stressed by a Russian writer named T. M. Bondareff. Tolstoy advertised if and gave it wider publicity. In my view the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita, where we are told, that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean Bread Labour.

"Reason too leads us to an identical conclusion. How can a man, who does not do body labour, have the right to eat? "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread", says the Bible. ...

"... Again invidious distinctions of rank would be abolished, when everyone without exception acknowledged the obligation of Bread labour. It is common to all the varnas. There is a worldwide conflict between capital and labour, and the poor envy the rich. If all worked for their
bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated; the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property, and would use it mainly in the public interest.

"Bread labour is a veritable blessing to one who would observe Non-violence, worship Truth, and make the observance of brahmacharya a natural act. This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. But at present at any rate, everybody is not in a position to take to it. A person can therefore spin or loom weave, or take up carpentry or smithery, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture however to be the ideal. Everyone must be his own scavenger. ... Scavenging, thus intelligently taken up, will help one to a true appreciation of the equality of man."

What is the position of intellectual labour vis-a-vis manual labour? May not men earn their bread by intellectual labour? Gandhi's answer was an emphatic No. To quote him again:

"The needs of the body must be supplied by the body. "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" perhaps applies here well.

"Mere mental, that is, intellectual labour is for the saukta soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal State, doctors, lawyers and the like will work solely for the benefit of society, not for self. Obedience to the law of Bread labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. Man's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man."

Similarly he wrote in 1925:

"Let me not be misunderstood. I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no amount of it is any compensation for bodily labour."
which everyone of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is, infinitely superior to bodily labour, but it never is or can be a substitute for it, even as intellectual food though far superior to the grains we eat never can be a substitute for them. Indeed without the products of the earth, those of the intellect would be an impossibility.

He maintained this opinion till his last. In the "Question Box" of Harijan (23-2-47, p. 36) we read:

"Q.: Why should we insist on a Babindranath or Raman earning his bread by manual labour? Is it not sheer wastage? Why should not brain workers be considered on a par with manual workers, for both of them perform useful social work?

A.: Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the necessity of physical labour. No man, I claim, ought to be free from that obligation. It will serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output. I venture to say that in ancient times, Brahmans worked with their body as with their mind. But even if they did not, body labour was a proved necessity at the present time. In this connection I would refer to the life of Tolstoy and how he made famous the theory of Bread labour, first propounded in his country by the Russian peasant Bondaref."

And, "If everybody lived by the sweat of his brow, the earth would become a paradise. The question of the use of special talents hardly needed separate consideration. If everyone laboured physically for his bread, it followed that poets, doctors, lawyers, etc., would regard it their duty to use those talents gratis for the service of humanity. Their output will be all the better and richer for their selfless devotion to duty."
But he would not advocate compulsory obedience to the law of Bread Labour for then it would breed poverty, disease and discontent. "It is a state of slavery" for Gandhi. What he wanted was willing obedience to this law as, in his opinion, it would, in the nature of things, bring contentment and health.

What about leisure which, as is claimed, is absolutely necessary for any intellectual-cultural-creative pursuit? The answer depends on how one views the problem of work and leisure. Gandhi held:

"... I am trying to deal with people who do not know what to do with their enforced leisure.

"... Any work, however humdrum, which does not take away the joy of creating something, is not monotonous. I would not mind being my own drawer of water and hewer of wood, provided I am doing the work intelligently and not because some one compels me to do so. All labour when done intelligently and to some high purpose becomes at once re-creation and recreation."

"... My object is to put an end to inertia and lethargy ...

"We know that those who get all that leisure - both the working and the intellectual classes - do not make the best use of it. In fact we too often find the idle mind being turned into the Devil’s workshop."

"Physical labour by itself is not an education even as mental labour is not. It has been with our people deadly drudgery without their knowing this, and that deadens one’s finer instincts. That is where I have my strongest complaint against the savarasa Hindus. They have rendered work for the proletariat a task of hard drudgery, from which they have no pleasure and in which they have no interest. If they had been considered members of the dharma society enjoying the same status as they, theirs would have been the proudest position in life. ... there is no doubt that we are where we are because we have long neglected the Shudras. ... We have so debased our working classes that they cannot
work and live naturally. If our people had laboured intelligently and with joy, we should have been quite different today."

Prof. N. K. Bose explains this point as follows:

"... No one can quarrel with an attempt to avoid reducible drudgery, but the attitude towards work and leisure seems to me to have something wrong about it. The work which is essential for the life of man, should be looked upon as sacred, and made capable of developing the personality of the worker to a large extent. He will undoubtedly need some leisure to devote to work of free choice; but the consciousness that the moral bond of bread labour unites him to the rest of mankind should uplift him and transform the labour which Nature lays upon all of us with a heavy hand, into a creative endeavour capable of unfolding the deepest petals of our being. In this will lie the victory of Man over Nature."

Bread labour, as conceived by Gandhi, is a training in moral discipline as well as an economic answer to the enforced idleness of the millions of people. And "Intelligent Bread Labour is any day the highest form of social service." The importance given to manual labour is further illustrated by Basic education.

Referring to the 'revolutionary' significance of bread labour, Prof. D. P. Mukerji observed:

"... or the value of the dignity of labour, was not quite an Indian value. In a hierarchical society, types of work are defined and relegated to different strata on the two assumptions: (1) that spiritual 'work', that is, pure contemplation, is the highest type; and (2) that each stratum, or caste, which is fixed by birth, has its own 'varna' ('bonds', 'religion'), the practice of which means fulfilment of personality, and the departure of which means 'destruction' of self.

But Gandhiji had a different conception of labour."
The dissociation of bodylabour from mental and spiritual labour has had a long history, which Gandhiji did not take into account. His attitude towards what is known as the "caste-system" cannot be discussed here. But on this matter of bread-labour bringing about economic equality, he was anti-caste and, therefore, a revolutionary, almost a socialist. In other words, if the socialist gave up the usual western assumption, viz., no high technology, no socialism, and remained content with the use of certain special types of machinery, which would not displace labour, or exploit human beings for greed, or concentrate power, etc., then Gandhiji would bless him. If further, the socialist accepted this idea of bread-labour and would build on the revolutionary content of this view, viz., the ending of the separation of physical labour, now the only duty of a whole class of people who form the majority, from mental labour, now the monopoly of the few, then the difference between him and Gandhiji would not exist except in the matter of wantlessness. One could argue here that there was a danger in this concept of bread-labour, viz., the possibility of lowering the impulse and the level of intellectual work by making the intellectual workers work physically for bread without raising the intellectual level and stimulating the impulse of physical workers. But Gandhiji would reply that it could be averted.

Prof. Joan V. Bondurant says:

"There is perhaps no more telling an illustration of the inaccuracy of reading strict conservatism into Gandhi's approach than this suggestion about the use of manual labour. For beyond the explicit statement, there lay implicit in Gandhi's suggestion a potential anything but conservative - the undermining of caste itself."

Swadeshi

Swadeshi was a key concept in Gandhi's philosophy. It was not merely an economic doctrine; it also carried ideological implications. In Swadeshi Gandhi saw it not only the economic salvation of India, but also an answer to the..."
psychological and political problems of the nationalist movement.

In a speech delivered before the Missionary Conference, Madras on 14 February, 1916 he defined the concept of Swadeshi as:

"After much thinking I have arrived at a definition of Swadeshi that, perhaps, best illustrates my meaning. Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is the use of my immediate religious staff surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them of their proved defects. In that of economics I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting." 148

We are concerned here with the application of Swadeshi in the economic sphere. Gandhi stood for self-sufficiency of the country and even of villages except for such foreign things as are needed for the growth of the people. As has been noted by Prof. G. N. Bhawan, Gandhi's views on this aspect of Swadeshi seem to have undergone an evolution. 149

A study of his address on Swadeshi delivered at the Missionary Conference, Madras (1916) shows that he then stood for total self-sufficiency of the country and its economic isolation from the world. Referring to external trade he said: "If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she should be today a land flowing with milk and honey ... that she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirement within her own borders."

In 1926 (Young India, 17-2-26, p. 218) he wrote:
"I have never considered the exclusion of everything foreign under every conceivable circumstance as a part of Swadeshi. The broad definition of Swadeshi is the use of all home-made things to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for the protection of home-industry, more especially those industries without which India will become pauperized. In my opinion, therefore, Swadeshi which excludes the use of everything foreign, no matter how beneficent it may be, and irrespective of the fact that it impoverishes nobody, is a narrow interpretation of Swadeshi."

In Yerwada Mandir we read:

"To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly, and a negation of the Swadeshi Spirit." 150

This shows that he moved away from his earlier position.

Gandhi would certainly permit international trade and exchange of commodities if this meant an exchange of equal advantages and did not involve injustices.

However, if there was choice, he would prefer self-sufficiency. As a matter of practical policy, he did not feel that India should stand aloof in the matter of trade.

He defined a Swadeshi article as any article which "subserves the interest of the millions even though the capital and talent are foreign but under effective Indian control." 151

What was meant by effective Indian control? What industry could satisfy

* "I would not wish India to live a life of complete isolation whereby it would live in water-tight compartments and allow nobody to enter her borders or to trade within her border." - The Nation's Voice, p. 51.
Gandhi to be Indian in his eyes?

"An industry to be Indian must be demonstrably in the interest of the masses. It must be manned by Indians both skilled and unskilled. Its capital and machinery should be Indian and the labour employed should have a living wage and be comfortably housed, while the welfare of the children of the labourers should be guaranteed by the employers. This is an ideal definition." 152

Until 1930 Gandhi distinguished between the economic aspect of Swadeshi and the economic boycott of foreign goods. "Swadeshi is an eternal principle whose neglect has brought untold grief to mankind. It means production and distribution of articles manufactured in one's own country." But boycott on the other hand was a temporary makeshift resorted to compel the hands of the opponent by deliberately making an attempt to inflict a necessary war upon him. Boycott operates as an undue influence brought in to secure one's purpose. It may indirectly result, but not unless it is persistent and prolonged, in greater manufacture at home." 153

"I swear by Swadeshi because it is an evolutionary process gaining strength as it goes forward. Any organization can serve it. It is independent of the justice or the injustice of the rulers... It is its own reward. Therefore there is no waste of energy, no failure. Even a little practice of this Dharma saves one from a great danger. Swadeshi and boycott are, therefore, not the same but are at the opposite poles." 154

During the Civil Disobedience movement (1930-33) Gandhi acquiesced in the Congress vigorously undertaking the boycott of British goods. 155

Gandhi, it seems, had come to believe that economic boycott could and should be used as a means of non-violent non-co-operation.

In 1939 in answer to a question by Chinese visitor, he favoured the economic boycott of the aggressor nation. 156
The following extract from Gandhi's writings will give an idea as to Gandhi's concept of Swadeshi as compared with Swadeshi of earlier days.

Q. How does this new Swadeshi differ from the old?

A. The old Swadeshi emphasized the indigenous nature of the products, irrespective of the method of production or the prospects of the products. I have ruled out organized industries, not because they are not Swadeshi, but because they do not need special support. They can stand on their own legs and, in the present state of our awakening, can easily command a market. According to the new orientation, if it is new, I would certainly have our Swadeshi organization to seek out all village industries and find how they are faring. We will have experts and chemists who will be prepared to place their knowledge at the disposal of villagers. We will, through our experts, offer to test the articles manufactured by village handicraftsmen and make suggestions to improve their wares, and would sell them if they would accept our conditions. 157

Though Gandhi did not favour legislative interference ordinarily yet we find him as an ardent supporter of protectionism. He pleaded strongly for stiff protective duties upon foreign goods in order to nurture national interests. 158 This may be cited as showing his allegiance to the Indian capitalist class. But a correct reading will be that he was not guided by any such definite interest though objectively the Indian capitalists were benefited by this demand. As P. Spratt reminds us: "His support is no doubt likely to benefit the capitalists rather than any body else, but he does not advocate with that intention. His protection is a villager's protection, designed to help the effort for self-sufficiency, not that for profits." 159
Economics of Khadi

Khadi occupied a pre-eminent place in Gandhi's plan of economic regeneration of poverty-ridden village India. He often referred to Charkha or the spinning wheel as India's Kamadhenu. It was conceived as the image of Swadeshi. The Khadi movement aimed at restoring spinning to the millions of cottages of India from which it was removed by unjust, illegal and tyrannical methods.

A detailed discussion of the economics of Khadi, however important it is, cannot be made here for obvious reasons. Whether Khadi was a valid proposition for the economic development of India during the days Gandhi launched his programme and/or whether it bears any relevance today for the economic growth of modern India are not being discussed here. One may refer to Gandhi's writings on the subject and on the discussions made thereon. We shall limit ourselves to present a bare outline incorporating Gandhi's arguments in favour of Khadi and shall try to follow, in as brief as possible, the different phases of Khadi movement.

Gandhi claimed for Charkha the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive and businesslike manner. His claim for Khadi was based on the following:

1. It supplies the readiest occupation to those who have leisure and are in want of a few coppers;
2. It is known to the thousands;
3. It is easily learnt;
4. It requires practically no outlay or capital;
5. The wheel can be easily and cheaply made;
6. The people have no repugnance to it;
7. It affords immediate relief in time of famine and scarcity;
8. It alone can stop the drain of wealth, which goes out in the purchase of foreign cloth;
(9) It automatically distributes the millions thus saved among the deserving poor.

(10) Even the smallest success means so much immediate gain to the people.

(11) It is the most potent instrument of securing co-operation among the people.

This sums up the main economic arguments in favour of Khadi.

As is well known the importance of spinning wheel and Khadi first dawned on Gandhi in 1919 when he had no idea about the wheel. At that period he could only realize that the chief cause of pauperization was the destruction of the spinning wheel by the British. In the early twenties, when the horizon of his experience expanded, he began to look at the problem from a realistic point of view. The problems of production and distribution of wealth presented themselves as real problems. At that period he began to popularize the spinning wheel with a view to prevent concentration of power and capital and to bring about an equitable distribution of wealth. With this aim in view he established the All India Spinners’ Association in 1925. Round about the period 1935 his views on Khadi underwent further change. The commercial aspect of Khadi yielded place to self-help aspect. Khadi Bhandars were set up. Self-sufficing Khadi was given the first place in all Khadi organizations.

As Khadi stood for a particular view of life and a particular philosophy it claimed for itself a mission of reversing the existing unnatural order. To reverse the order was to restore the natural relation.

As Gandhi wrote:

"Khadi must be taken with all its implications. It means a wholesale Swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessaries of life in India, and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers. That means a reversal of the existing process. That is to say that, instead of half a dozen cities of India and Great Britain living on the
exploitation and the ruin of the 700,000 villages of India, the latter will be largely self-contained, and will voluntarily serve the cities of India and even the outside world in so far as it benefits both the parties." 165

Incidentally, Khadi was an effective instrument of mass contact. The organizational aspect has to be given due importance in any discussion of Khadi. Gandhi himself admitted this. In reply to a criticism of Saklatvala *, he wrote:

"Khaddar has the greatest organizing power in it because it has itself to be organized and because it affects all India. If Khaddar rained from heaven it would be a calamity. But as it can only be manufactured by the willing co-operation of starving millions and thousands of middle class men and women, its success means the best organization conceivable along peaceful lines. If cooking had to be revived and required the same organization, I should claim for it the same merit that I claim for Khaddar."

Besides the economic aspect of Khadi it had a symbolic significance too. As has been noted by Bharatam Kumarappa "The most outstanding and the most popular of all the symbols associated with Gandhiji is undoubtedly the spinning wheel." 166

Charkha, according to Gandhi, symbolises a non-violent way of life. The economics of Khadi stands on certain fundamental assumptions. For a proper appreciation of Gandhi's views it must be stated that spinning wheel, besides its immediate practical utilitarian aspect, symbolised a 'new system'; it stood as an alternate system to over-centralized factory civilization. As Gandhi

* S. D. Saklatvala was a Communist member of British Parliament. See Indian Annual Register 1927, I, 65 ff and II, 117 ff for the series of letters passed between him and Gandhi.
"The science of Khadi requires decentralization of production and consumption." 167 Gandhi's emphasis on decentralized economy as the practical expression of non-violent way of life is consistent with his general outlook. To him, Khadi, decentralization, genuine independence i.e. freedom from exploitation were integrally related.

The economic and sociological premises of Gandhi's concept may legitimately be questioned if the basic assumptions of his theory are not accepted. One may also argue 168 that his views betrayed ignorance of the dynamics of history or that because of his failure to distinguish between industrialism and capitalism - the technological basis of modern civilization and the acquisitive institution of ownership of the means of production - the way he suggested was not sociologically valid. The judgment depends on one's intellectual preference and commitment.

Whether one accepts Gandhi's solution or not, it must be conceded that his reaction against factory-civilization and his plea for substitution of the same by self-sufficing decentralised village economy was ultimately rooted in his revulsion against concentration of economic power in the hands of a few and his economic ideal had an egalitarian humanistic content as is evident from the following:

"According to me the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realised only if the means of production of elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others." 169
NOTES

7. Minal Kumar Bose, op. cit., p. 52.

Dr. V. P. Varma writes: "Gandhi felt that a meta-economic solution was needed..." 'The Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Gandhism' in Gandhian Concept of State (ed. Dr. Himan Bihari Mazumdar, M. O. Sarkar & Sons, Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1957), p. 56.

12. For the full speech, see D. G. Tendulkar, Mahatma (The Publications Division, GOI, 1960), vol. I, pp. 193-197.
14. Young India, 26-12-24, p. 421.


23. Ibid.

24. Ibid, p. 221.

25. Ibid.


27. For background details, The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (The Publications Division, GOI, 1963), vol. 10, pp. 6-7, p. 85, pp. 188-90, p. 245.


29. Ibid, pp. 68-70.


31. Young India, 29-9-38.


34. Young India, 28-7-20 in N. K. Bose, Selections, 250, p. 68.

35. Young India, 23-3-21, p. 93 in N. K. Bose, Selections, 251, p. 68.

36. Young India, 3-11-21, p. 350.

37. Young India, 5-11-25, p. 377.

38. Young India, 15-4-26, p. 142.


40. Young India, 24-2-27, p. 58.

41. Young India, 7-19-26, p. 348.

42. Young India, 7-10-26, p. 348.

43. Young India, 12-11-31, p. 355.

44. Young India, 17-6-26, p. 218.


47. N. K. Bose, Studies in Gandhism, IAP, 1940, p. 60.


For the transformation of William Morris, a brilliant analysis is made in William Morris: From Romantic to a Revolutionary by E. P. Thompson.

49. Young India, 26-12-24, p. 419.


57. Harijan, 16-2-47, p. 25.
59. Young India, February 1922, Quoted in P. Spratt, Gandhism, p. 219 fn.
60. Young India, 20-4-21, p. 124.
61. Young India, 8-1-25, p. 10.
62. Young India, 7-10-26, p. 348.
63. Young India, 4-8-27, p. 248.
65. D. G. Tendulkar, Mahatma (The Publications Division, Govt. of India, March 1961), vol. II. pp. 333-34.; Young India, 15-11-28, p. 381.
67. Young India, 26-11-31, p. 368.
68. Young India, 5-12-39, p. 396.
69. Harijan, 5-12-36, p. 358.
70. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-8-34, Quoted in Selections From Gandhi, op. cit., 302, pp. 93-94.
71. Harijan, 28-7-1940, p. 219.
74. Ibid, p. 98.
82. "Then the British rulers will be trustees, and not tyrants, and they will live in perfect peace with the whole of the inhabitants of India." For the full text of the letter, The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, pp. 477-482.
84. Young India, 6-2-30, p. 44.

The questions discussed related to fundamental social and political matters, a report of the interview, approved by Gandhi, appeared in the Modern Review, October, 1935. Ch. V of Studies in Gandhism reproduces the whole interview report.
86. Harijan, 3-6-39, p. 145.
89. Harijan, 12-4-42, p. 116.
90. Harijan, 31-7-37, p. 197.
91. Harijan, 16-2-47, p. 25.
100. Ibid, p. 197.
106. V. L. Dantwal, op. cit., p. 54.
107. Young India, 17-3-27, p. 66.
111. Harijan, 31-3-46, p. 63.
112. Ibid, p. 64.
113. Harijan, 16-3-47, p. 67.
118. Six questions were submitted to him and he answered them. These questions and answers were published for the first time in Indian Parliament (edited by Shri K. Srinivasan) in 1948 after Gandhi's death. These have been reproduced in M. K. Gandhi, My Socialism (Comp. R. K. Prabhu, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmadabad, 1959), ch. 3, pp. 6-15.
122. Harijan, 2-1-37, Quoted in M. K. Gandhi, My Socialism, p. 3.
125. For Jayaprakash's picture, Acharya Narendra Deva's commendatory note and Gandhi's comments, see Jayaprakash Narayan, Towards struggle (Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay, 1946), pp. 144-155 for Narendra Deva's introduction and Appendix (pp. 240-244); Harijan, 20-4-40, p. 96.
126. N. K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, 301, p. 92.
129. Harijan, 4-8-46, p. 245.
131. Himanbherai Majumdar (Ed) : Gandhian Concept of State (M. C. Sarkar & 
p. 359.
137. P. K. Gopalakrishnan, Development of Economic Ideas in India (1880-1950),

See also Leon Emery, 'Gandhi and Marx', Quest, 19 (October-December, 1958),

Niloy Mazumdar contends Gopalkrishnan's interpretation. 'Economic Thinking of 
Indian Political Elites', Economic Affairs, vol. VIII, No. 10 (October, 1963),
p. 462.
138. M. K. Gandhi, From Yeravda Mandir (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad,
1357), ch. IX, pp. 35-37.
139. Harijan, 29-6-35, p. 156.
140. Young India, 15-10-25, pp. 355-56.
141. Harijan, 2-3-47, p. 47.
142. Harijan, 29-6-35, p. 156.
142A. Harijan, 8-3-35, pp. 31-32.


152. Harijan, 23-10-37, p. 311.

153. Young India, 14-1-20, p. 3.

154. Ibid.


156. Harijan, 28-1-1939, p. 441.


158. Speeches and Writings, op. cit, p. 336.

159. P. Spratt, op. cit, p. 223.

160. For Gandhi's views on Khadi in one volume, see M. K. Gandhi, Khadi - Why and How (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad); Economic and Industrial Life and Relations (same publisher,), vol. II, Section Five.

For an exposition of Gandhi's views on the subject, see J. B. Kripalani, op. cit., especially chs. I, II, III, IV, V, XVII; Nirmal Kumar Bose, Studies in Gandhism (Indian Associated Publishing Co. Ltd., Calcutta, 1947), ch. II.

For a critique, see Anil Baran Roy, The Illusion of the Charka (Arya Sahitya Bhawan, Calcutta, 1929). See also P. Spratt, op. cit., p. 303 ff.
For a critical review of Spratt's analysis, see Nirmal Kumar Bose, Swaraj-o-Gandhibad (a Bengali publication, I.A.P. Co., Ltd., Calcutta, 1354 B.S.), pp. 135-142.


161. Young India, 8-12-21 in Young India 1919-22 (S. Ganesan, Madras, 1922), pp. 551-52.

162. Young India, 21-8-24, p. 277.

163. Harijan, 26-10-35, p. 293.

164. Harijan, 21-7-46, p. 228.


169. Young India, 5-11-28, p. 381.