Leo Tolstoy is a projection of the Oriental mind on European soil. About a century ago (1878), he met a Mongolian Lama at Kazan Hospital. Since then he had been seeking light from Oriental philosophy and religion. He made extensive studies in Brahminical and Buddhist texts and in the doctrine of *ahimsa*. From 1900 he kept up regular correspondence with various representatives of Asian culture and philosophy, specially with those who believed in tolerance and non-violence. He also read Chinese and Japanese philosophy but India, the mother of religion and philosophy was his special interest. Tolstoy's closest connection with the Orient was first pointed out by Paul Birukov, his disciple and biographer, in the preface to his *Tolstoi und der Orient* which he dedicated to Gandhi.

Thus in Central Russia there was a Slav aristocrat who grappled with the same spiritual ideals that occupied and moved the Oriental philosophers. The chief merit of Tolstoy was his attempt to identify creed and conduct, to obliterate the distinction between doctrine and doing. "This involved manual labour, minimum needs, no holding of property, no killing. He called landlordism a 'great sin', extolled Henry George's 'Single Tax', condemned military conscription, defended conscientious objectors, helped the pacifist dukhobors to emigrate to Canada, denounced the pogromists of Kishenev, praised William Lloyd Garrison's 'non-resistance', taught in a village primary school and refused the Nobel prize because he did not accept money." 1 Tolstoy, to be true to his creed, renounced his vast property and lived the simple life of an Oriental sage in his *ashram* at Yasnaya Polyana where he taught the doctrine of love and non-violence as a practical philosopher living up to preaching.

Tolstoy accepted love to be the law of life. It is the divine law which represents the highest law of morality. But now this truth

1. Louise Fischer; The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, p.112
has been either distorted or forgotten so that it has become a non-entity. It was Tolstoy's ambition to revive this law of love and to go back to a simple life of peace and equality.

Tolstoy was so much critical of Western countries because they, in their practical life, violated the law of love which was preached by Jesus Christ. "In Christianity the law of love had been expressed so clearly and definitely as has never been expressed in any other religious doctrine; that the Christian world had solemnly accepted that law, although at the same time it had permitted the employment of violence and on that violence it had constructed their whole life. Consequently, the life of the Christian peoples is an absolute contradiction between their profession and the basis of their life."¹

For a long time the Christian world has been unconsciously living in this contradiction. The state became an embodiment of violence. Through the different periods of history different arguments have been offered to justify violence of the state. "In former times the chief method of justifying the use of violence and thereby infringing the law of love was by claiming a divine right for the rulers: Tsars, Sultans, Rajahs, Shahs and other heads of state."² But with the development of human understanding the belief in the godliness of rulers has faded among common men. The old obsolete religious justification has been superseded by new 'scientific' ones. The advocates of violence now preach that coercion of man has existed from eternity. Hence violence is the law of history. The second scientific justification takes recourse to the Darwinian Law. Struggle for existence and survival of the fittest is the law of the animal kingdom. The same law is held to operate in the kingdom of human beings also -- beings who are gifted with intelligence and love. The third and the most widespread justification is that in public life coercion of some for the protection of many in unavoidable.

¹ Tolstoy's Letter to Gandhi, Sept. 7, 1910
² A Letter to a Hindu, Dec. 14, 1908
But why should some people have the exclusive right to decide against whom violence can be used? "Science says that these decisions represent the will of the people, which under a constitutional form of government is supposed to find expression in all the decisions and actions of those who are at the helm at the moment."

Thus Tolstoy raised his voice against all sorts of hypocrisy, perverse morality and evils born of the deadening influence of science on human nature. He decried the state as it is the instrument of coercion and promotes corruption and war. The people should not obey the law of the state. They must not pay taxes. They must refuse conscription. They must not sit on the jury. They must not even resist the evil of the state which will necessarily breed hatred and violence.

An evil cannot do away with another evil. Socialism, communism and anarchism are not equipped to solve the problems of the world. They all involve the inner contradiction of doctrine and doing. This contradiction can only be resolved by acceptance of the law of love and by rejection of all sorts of violence.

Tolstoy is an anarchist but he has nothing to do with terrorism and the cult of the bomb. The remedy against state violence is complete withdrawal from the state. If people refrain from participating in the administration, from going to the law courts and from paying the taxes, the state will become defunct. His advice to the people is to free themselves from their beliefs "in all kinds of Ormuzds, Brahmas, Sabbaoths and their incarnation as Krishnas and Christs," and from the blind belief in the infallibility of religious dogma and scientific truth, of the historic law, the economic law, the law of struggle and survival. If men can shake off all these accumulations, then the simple law of love will survive and become obligatory.

The spiritual successor of Tolstoy was Gandhi who, through his correspondence with the Russian philosopher imbibed his teachings.

1. Ibid
2. Ibid
and applied them in his political life. In humble acknowledgment
Gandhi says in his autobiography: "Tolstoy's Kingdom of God is within
You overwhelmed me. It left an abiding impression on me." "I made too
an intensive study of Tolstoy's books: The Gospel in Brief, What to
Do? and such other books made a deep impression on me. I began to
realise more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love."

Gandhi was indebted also to Ruskin who, like Tolstoy, condemned
the pseudo-science of political economy and proclaimed the truth of
that science only which is concerned with the welfare of all. In his
Unto This Last Ruskin exposed the evils of capitalism and colonial
exploitation. Like Tolstoy's Letter to a Hindu, Gandhi translated it
into Gujarati and coined the Indian word Sarvodaya for Ruskin's
science of social welfare.

Gandhi concludes the opening chapter of his autobiography, Part II
with these words: "Three moderns have left deep impress on my life,
and captivated me: Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his
book the Kingdom of God is within You; and Ruskin by his Unto This Last."

Another Western philosopher with whom Gandhi felt spiritual
brotherhood was the American pacifist Thoreau. In his pamphlet
entitled On the Duty of Civil Disobedience he argued that a man must
obey his conscience even against the will of his fellow citizens.
This appealed strongly to Gandhi. Man will respond and submit to the
call of his conscience only but not to any external power - neither
the state nor any other authority. Hence Gandhi agrees with Thoreau
that that government is best which governs the least.

2. Philosophy

Gandhi was no less a philosopher and a humanist than Aurobindo
and Tagore. But he had neither the depth of vision of the one nor the
glow of imagination of the other. He did not leave the arena of
struggle to retreat into meditation on the future of mankind. Gandhi
drew his philosophy from his experience of struggle for the liberation

1. The Story of my Experiments with Truth, Ahmedabad, 1927, vol. I,
pp. 211f.
of India which he led for about a quarter of a century. He discovered from this struggle and applied to it a new technique which was an integral part of his philosophy or theory of reality. With him God, truth and humanity are one. "Nothing so completely describes my God as Truth.----- Realisation of Truth is impossible without a complete merging of oneself in an identification with the limitless ocean of life. Hence for me there is no escape from social service.----- For all is one though we seem to be many." He was nurtured in the traditional Indian conception of Advaita, i.e., the unity of the Absolute and its finite manifestations. He affirms that "all life in its essence is one and that the humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realisation of that identity."

Gandhi's politics was derived from this realisation. In India his aim was to rid the country of its divisions and discords, to cleanse Hinduism of its social abomination and of untouchability. With Tagore, Gandhi believed that if the dumb millions of India are robbed of the happiness of life, social progress will be impossible and political liberty will be an utter failure. "I recognise no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb million. They do not recognise His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth, or Truth which is God, through the service of these millions." Gandhi did not stop there. He understood the cause of India's liberation on the background of the good of mankind. "I want freedom of my country so that the resources of my country might be utilised for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, even so must a country has to be free in order, it may die, if necessary for the benefit of the world. My love of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free that if need be the whole country may die so that the human race

1. S.Radakrishnan and J.H.Muirhead: Contemporary Indian Philosophy.
2. Correspondence with Govt. 1942-44. Navajivan Publishing House, 1944
3. Harijan, 11.5.59
may live. There is no room for race-hatred. Let that be our nationalism. Thus Gandhi is neither a nationalist nor an internationalist in the traditional meaning of the words. He is a worshipper of humanity.

3. Economics

From humanism Gandhi is led to believe in a simple life where man is free from the mad craze for wealth, from exploitation and inequality, where society recoils from the exuberance of production and enjoyment, where man is satisfied with the fulfilment of the primary needs of living by means of his own labour and devotes the surplus of his time for spiritual and cultural development. Hence he is totally opposed to the industrial civilization and would replace it with a decentralized rural economy, the cooperative economy of the self-sufficient village republic.

Against industrialization Gandhi says: "I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester and use flimsy Manchester cloth than to multiply mills in India. By using Manchester cloth we would waste our money but by reproducing Manchester in India we shall keep our money at the price of our blood because our moral being will be sapped---- Impoverished India can be free but it will be hard for an India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom." Machines are demoralizing because they keep the mill hands starving and impoverish India. Poverty is bad, immorality is worse.

The socialists argue that the evils of machinery can be corrected by means of socialisation. But Gandhi thinks that mere socialisation will not bring power in the hands of the common man nor remove the evils inherent in industrialism. "Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus 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." To a question

1. Mahadev Desai: Gandhiji in Indian Villages, Madras, 1927, p. 170
2. M. K. Gandhi: Indian Home Rule, Ahmedabad, 1944, p. 56
3. Young India, 13.11.34
whether he opposed machinery because it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few he agreed that he was. "I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is a taboo to me."

In the place of centralized machine industries Gandhi wants a decentralized economy of cottage industries of which the charkha or spinning wheel is the symbol. The agriculturist requires a supplementary industry to enable him to utilise his spare hours and to improve his income. Hand-spinning will put this supplementary income in the hands of the poor villager.

The charkha, the village and non-violence are inseparably related to one another. "Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning wheel."

Gandhi is thus against centralization of the means of production of the vital necessaries of life, viz., food and clothing. He is also opposed to production for profit. Machineries go against his principle because they are at the disposal of private persons. He is in favour of nationalization of whatever machineries need exist. "I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalised or state-controlled."

In Gandhi's opinion, physical labour will obliterate the distinction between the high and the low. Even artists, intellectuals, etc., should do some manual work for their bread or cloth. This keeps them in organic link with the masses of people who are producers of social wealth. Manual work is also a useful stimulus for intellectual and cultural activities of those who are gifted with necessary talents. It is also a divine law that one should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Gandhi borrowed his conception of bread labour from Tolstoy. He finds the same principle in the third chapter of the Gita where it is said that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food. Offering of sacrifice Gandhi understands as bread labour. At his

1. Harijan, 2.11.34 2. Harijan, 14.11.35 3. Young India, 13.11.24
trial in 1922 Gandhi described himself as a farmer and a weaver thereby pledging himself to sacred manual labour which he kept to the end of his life.

All work of the village will be founded on cooperative labour. Agriculture will be based on cooperative farming; so also will be cattle-rearing. The new village-centered society and civilization will not be a mere repetition of the past. The entire moral code as well as the property relations will be based on new principles. The village will be a self-sufficient republic for all its vital needs. It will grow its own food crops and cotton for cloth. It will have its own playground, theatre, school, public hall, waterworks, everything conducted on cooperative basis. Non-violent non-cooperation will be the sanction of the village community. Villages will be interdependent for many things in which dependence may be necessary.¹

4. Politics

"Science of war leads to dictatorship pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy."² In his Indian Home Rule Gandhi defines swaraj as government by the consent of the people with the vote of the largest number of the adult population who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the state. In the Gandhian state physical labour is the cornerstone of democracy.

The government will be set up on the basis of the widest possible franchise. It is not sufficient to give vote to the working masses. They must be trained to exercise their rights and discharge their responsibilities as citizens of a democratic state. "Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of the capacity by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses into a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority."³

Gandhi does not subscribe to the utilitarian formula of the greatest good of the greatest number. He wants the welfare of all and not of a fraction of humanity. He derived this conception from

¹. Harijan 15.2.42  ². Harijan, 15.10.38  ³. Young India, 29.1.25
Ruskinde Unto This Last and coined the word Sarvodaya for it. Sarvodaya really means Swaraj. It is a state of enlightened anarchy where everyone is his own ruler, where everyone rules himself in such a manner that is never a hindrance to his neighbour. Since there is no state there is no political power. In Sarvodaya 'nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred. The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces and the millions in miserable nooks devoid of sunlight or ventilation. Hindu-Muslim differences, untouchability, vertical differences between high and low, these must not be.\(^1\)

Defining the stateless democracy of Sarvodaya Gandhi says:

"In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it."\(^2\)

Till this is attained Gandhi is for decentralization of power as he is for decentralization of economy. Political power is a means to enable the people to better their condition.

2. Harijan, 28.7.46.
Evidently, Gandhi thinks that the state is an undesirable institution. "It does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress. The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul but as the state is a soulless machine it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence." Anarchy, however, is the ideal and meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi agrees with Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least. Only such a government may lead towards the utopia of Ramrajya where man is free from tyranny and exploitation and lives as a moral being.

The Ramraj or the new social order of Sarvodaya is hardly different from the classless and stateless utopia of Karl Marx. It is communism without violence and its necessary implications. Violence would lead to extermination of antagonists and destroy individual freedom. Real welfare of all is not possible through violence and by crippling the individual. Gandhi used to say that he was not for samyavada (communism or doctrine of equality) but for samyadharma (practice of equality). Throughout his life he tried to live like the poor and share the conditions of their living. He found that neither the capitalists nor the communists were prepared to abandon the life of ease and comfort and adopt the simple, hard and laborious life of the common man. If non-violence and bread labour were accepted as an integral part of the communist movement Gandhi would have no quarrel with it.

In his views of social revolution Gandhi stood very close to the 'true or philosophical socialism' of the Left-Hegelian Moses Hess. Hess, like Gandhi, believed that socialism is not merely the question of bread, that it is primarily a question of moral values, that social revolution presupposes a moral revolution. Like Gandhi, "Moses Hess was a man of singular purity of character. He was sensitive to every form of injustice, passionate in his

devotion to principles, and almost saintly in his everyday behaviour. He was unable to hate even those who had harmed him." He wrote:

"You have been told that you cannot serve two masters at once - God and Mammon. But we tell you that you cannot serve either one of them, if you think and feel like a human being. Love one another, unite in spirit, and your hearts will be filled with that blessedness which you have so vainly sought for outside of yourselves, in God. Organise, unite in the real world, and by your deeds and works you will possess all the wealth which you have so vainly sought, in money."

This almost sounds like Gandhi and Tagore.

5. Trusteeship and Satyagraha

Gandhi proclaims himself as a socialist, but differs in method. He does not think that socialism is achieved merely when centralized industries are planned and owned by the state nor does he believe in violence as a means. He is in favor of dispossessing whatever interests are against the people. The dispossess should be without compensation but without violence as well. He is against inheritance and favours high death duties for equalization of income.

"Those sons of millionaires who are of age and yet inherit their parents' wealth are losers of the very inheritance. The nation thus becomes a double loser. For the inheritance should rightly belong to the nation as the nation loses in that full faculties of the heirs are not drawn out, being crushed under the load of riches."3

Socialism must grow from the bottom through the cooperative labour of the villagers. For securing equal distribution of wealth Gandhi prefers conversion of property into trusteeship to centralization of power in the hands of the state. The state and its rulers are an exaggerated edition of ourselves. If the rulers are bad it is

2. Socialist Essays, p.149. Neer, however, did not stick to his humanism and later on showed Marxist inclination.
because they are dominated by a bad environment. The redress lies not in killing or in putting violent pressure on the rulers and the state but in changing the environment that is ourselves. To secure equal distribution of wealth the best course is to make the wealthy the trustees of the superfluous wealth possessed by them. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the cooperation of the poor. Once the poor are aware of this fact they can refuse cooperation and free themselves by non-violent means from the inequalities they have been subjected to. Under such circumstances the rich will have no other course but to accept the position of trustees for public wealth. Because while they will lose their wealth they will save their feelings and honour.

The method for redress enjoined by Gandhi is Satyagraha. "The idea underlying Satyagraha is to convert the wrong-doer, to awaken the sense of justice in him, to show him so that without cooperation direct or indirect of the wronged the wrong-doer cannot do the wrong intended by him." In war of inflicts violence upon the adversary, in Satyagraha one draws to maximum suffering upon oneself. It is a science of the soul, Satyagraha is rooted in the power, in the inward strength of the soul. It is not merely the negative virtue of abstaining from violence but the positive one of doing good. To hit ones adversary is of base violence. But to be truly non-violent one must love the opponent and pray for him even when he hits. The Gita and the Sermon of the Mount had taught Gandhi this conception of universal love. Gandhi may be said to have renewed the teachings of Jesus which the Christian world has forgotten today. Hence the violent movement does not depend upon the quantity of men and women taking part in it. The cause for as upon the quantity. The object is to convert the opponent; Satyagraha embarrassing or punishing him is tabooed. A struggle of the idea involves tremendous responsibilities. The fighter must be disciplinarian. He must be habitually law-abiding. There must be adequate safeguard against outbreak of violence whether she.

farjjan, 10.12.38
among the fighters or on the part of the general public. There should
be no secrecy about the movement. It can never go underground and
permit such activities as sabotage, publication of unauthorised
sheets, etc. Before launching a fight the Satyagrahi tries all methods
of honourable settlement. He fixes his demands at the minimum and
this minimum is also the maximum. He does not raise his demands at
a favourable turn of the struggle. He is never afraid of a temporary
halt or even of a retreat. "My own experience has been that
each suspension has found the people better equipped for the fight
and for control over forces of violence. Therefore, in advising
suspension I dismiss from my mind the fear that it may lead to deser-
tion and disbelief."  

Gandhi introduced the method of fasting in Satyagraha. But it is
to be resorted to only under exceptional circumstances and only by
a highly trained Satyagrahi like Gandhi himself. He took to fasting
sometimes in the midst of struggle to wear people down or for self-purification or in some exigencies to put non-violent pressure for the rectification of a grievous wrong.

Satyagraha is the only true democratic form of revolution because
a change that is worked by violence must produce violence in return
and destroy itself. Real change is effected from within by appeal to the
heart. It is the only way to correct the foundation of democracy. It is designed not merely to bring above activities of life whether private or
public, it is designed to prevent wrongs, unless the Satyagrahi practises truth and
non-violence in his personal life he cannot hope to apply them success-
fully to the la

Civil disobedience is a minor part of Satyagraha. The major part
of its programme. If the cooperation of the whole nation is
secured, the constructive programme civil disobedience may not be
necessary.
between two civil disobedience movements, not merely a means to establish mass contact. Its purpose is to bring the economic and political destiny of the people within their own control through determined cooperative effort. The masses can bring about very little change in their economic and social life but the very little achievement will stimulate their morale. Constructive work also gives discipline to soldiers of non-violence and staying power by providing subsidiary occupations like spinning.

With this object in view, Gandhi founded the Tolstoy Farm in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1910 which became a laboratory, so to say, for experiment on his technique and philosophy. Here he made little experiments on diet and discipline and modest trials on his educational, economic, moral and spiritual ideals. Later on, the Sabarmati Ashram (1915) and the Sevagram Ashram (1936) became camps and laboratories for his struggles and trials and grew into nurseries of the Satyagraha movement.

6. Ends and Means

Gandhi does not stand alone in his philosophy of truth and non-violence. In many of the essential ideas he is in company with such men as Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Rossin Rolland and Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore shares with Gandhi his ideas on humanism, non-violence, cottage industries, reformism and trusteeship. But unlike Gandhi, Tagore has an international outlook on culture and he is prepared to accept foreign influence. For him, the relation between India and the rest of the world will be one of mutual reciprocity. Gandhi's general attitude seems to be antagonistic to foreign culture, to the scientific and modernising influence of the West.

As with Gandhi so with other nationalist fighters of his time, the goal of the Indian struggle was the attainment of India's freedom.  

1. See page 153 of this book.
and therewith of the fullest liberty to make her own contribution towards the promotion of brotherhood and unity of mankind. The purpose of the revolutionary fighter is to capture the citadel of political power in the form of the state from the present ruling classes and then to remodel things in such a manner as to render all exploitation impossible, with the revolutionaries as well as with Gandhi, the purpose has been since independence, to create a new social order with new property relations in place of the old, but while the revolutionaries would not shrink from violence as the means of reaching the destination, for Gandhi the means are not different from the end. The non-violent war does not wound or offend the opponent but recovers him from his own wrongs and brings about a basic change in his mental structure. The fight itself serves the ultimate objective of human brotherhood and unity.

Thus in Gandhian ideology ends and means are completely identified. Gandhi sets up a universal ethical standard of non-violence for the struggles of suffering humanity irrespective of time and situation. As he himself agreed, such a lofty standard is not easy to maintain in a national movement embracing all varieties of people. As a matter of fact, the spiritual discipline envisaged in Satyagraha broke down whenever the Indian struggle grew in volume and intensity. Violence and secrecy crept in at every crucial phase of the struggle and became accepted methods during the peak years of 1942-45. The August revolt and the march of the Indian National Army were not led by Gandhi nor planned on Gandhian technique. The cautious and conciliatory approach of Gandhism served as a convenient shelter to the old order so that Jawaharlal Nehru, one of his most devoted followers confessed that non-violence has become "a sheet-anchor of vested interests who exploit it to maintain the status quo."

This is not at all to minimise the place of Gandhi in India's movement for freedom. Non-cooperation and civil disobedience helped to unify the masses of India when constitutional agitation and armed violence had failed and kept up a movement of resistance against the foreign power.

But Gandhism lives today not merely as a consolidating force of India's national resurgence. It is the most powerful challenge made in modern times against the sinking ethics of political struggle and for the moral and spiritual revival of man. In a world torn with violence and dissensions, vitiated with greed and immorality, his was a lone voice for peace, fellowship, sacrifice and simplicity. His lifelong application to spiritualise a nation's struggle for survival will perhaps remain in history as the beginning of a reaction against the mad worship of material values and the reckless pursuit of wealth and power.