CHAPTER III

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATHA GANDHI

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AN OUTLINE OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

Mahatma Gandhi's life is his philosophy. Never in History has there been a man so devoutly a life in tune with his philosophy as Gandhiji. On a mundane plane it is Gandhiji and Gandhiji alone whose action and thought were always in consonance with each other. His aspirations, after salvation were directed towards ethical ideas. On the ethical plane Gandhiji is truly a saint. But to rank him with the Buddha or Christ is to confuse the various orders of values. Gandhiji realized the inevitability of confusion on the part of common men.

In order to understand and appreciate the philosophy of Gandhiji the following significance of philosophy is essential. Philosophy not merely means the knowledge or wisdom about reality but also implies the application of such knowledge to all walks of life. He wanted the life of a non-attached man to be as that which Huxley has described in the words: "The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensation and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possession. Non-attached to the objects of various desires. Non-attached to his anger and hatred, non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position."

Gandhiji started from his Hindu religion and attempted to put forward metaphysical solution of Eternal problems from a Hindu

angle of vision on the basis of his own philosophy. He had not sought to answer or solve the problems from the independent perspective of experience or reason. In this connection it must be admitted that Gandhiji did not accept the Hindu Scriptures in toto.

The character of Reality, as apprehended and realized by Gandhiji, is Truth, which leads to the experience of God as well. Whenever, a true word is uttered, a true action is done and a true feeling is felt, we realize the existence of God. Truth has to be realized not through discursive understanding but intuition. It is not reason but love that leads us to God. In Gandhian philosophy, of course, reason has a definite place of its own. But it never serves the purpose of negating intuition. On the contrary, both intuition and reason are balanced by Truth to maintain an equilibrium between the mind and the soul.

Through intuition Gandhiji discovers the technique of realizing Truth. This technique is of 'Satyagraha' or as he calls it a 'Soul force'. Satyagraha literally means 'holding fast to Truth' which is existence. Gandhiji on so many occasions himself had confessed his imperfection and inability to apply Satyagraha on all walks of life. During the communal disturbances at Noakhali Gandhiji himself said, "My own way of fulfilling may fail, but Truth and Satyagraha shall never fail."

The originality of Gandhiji lives in making Satyagraha an Art. He had applied this art to all affairs individual or domestic,

1. Young India, November 17, 1921.
national or international. All fields of human behaviour, religion, politics, sociology, family planning and education come under its scope. Satyagraha was not used by Gandhiji for the first time in the History of mankind but it is he who first made it an universal art, applicable to all phenomena. He found his Satyagraha an eternal creed which could triumph over all evils and lead the mankind to salvation.

Gandhiji did not worry much about the final form of salvation. Like Buddha, he was most concerned with leading of a good life. In other words, not philosophy but ethics is the pivot of his teachings. He aspired for an ethical excellence. Satyagraha aims at lifting man to the highest ethical plane above which the religious and philosophical planes lie. Gandhiji's aim is humble and his ideal is fixed only on the moral level. Communication with God or Ishwara on the religious plane and Absolute or Brahma, on the highest philosophical plane, is beyond the range of his Satdhan. Religious mysticism or philosophical spiritualism are not his way. He is content with a good life where he needs evil by good and creates good. This does not mean that he has no religious convictions. In deed religion is his starting point but that is only an ethical religion. He needed religion only the extent it is necessary for ethical pursuits.

Posterity will judge that how far he had been a truly moral man. There had been lapses in his life but on the whole it could be said that he had devoted himself as a truth seeker. Every
defect, every lapse, every blunder, puts in securely on right track. On certain occasions Gandhiji confessed that the six passions had haunted him. In Young India he confessed: "all I claim for myself is that I am incessantly trying to overcome every one of my weaknesses .... I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of every thing else. It is, I must confess, as yet a distant scene."

His second achievement is the virtue of honesty. Virtues have become most scarce these days. People are moving round and round in a circle of endless vices. Gandhiji had realized in his life honesty was the only force which could break this vicious circle. To prove the validity of this virtue, he faithfully acted upon what he preached. Thus he gained a high estimation in the eyes of the millions.

Tracing out the causes of Gandhiji's popularity, Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks: "In my travels in different parts of the world I have noted that Gandhiji's reputation is more universal than that of the greatest statesman and leaders of nations, and his personality is more beloved and esteemed than that of any or all of them. His name is familiar to such a degree that there is scarcely a peasant or a factory worker who does not consider him to be a friend of mankind."

1. Young India, November 17, 1931.
Another cause of his popularity lies, as mentioned earlier, in his application of Satyagraha to politics and his programme of Social reforms. People professed before him the wondrous results of non-violence as a kind of moral war, but none in the past experimented with non-violence so comprehensively and so intensely as he has done in our times. Sincere application of Satyagraha to the minutest details of politics is Gandhiji's achievement. If we believe in an upward evolution of man-mind, we must affirm that Ahimsa and Satyagraha are destined to out-shine all forms of violence or Himsa. It is not pious wish but a dialectical necessity.

Social reform forms an important part of Gandhiji's practical philosophy. Discovery of Truth in the social realm had been one of his main objectives. He experimented with the solution of problems such as unemployment, education of the masses, and disunity amongst social groups. His chief contribution to the problems of poverty and employment lies in his programme of Khaddar. In the opinion of C.F. Andrews: "He has been the first in this modern machine age, to revive among the agricultural people of the world on a vast scale the practice of village industries." Thus he wanted to save at least half of the human race from moral as well as physical starvation.

1. By the programme of Khaddar we mean the revival of hand spinning and hand weaving of textile and re-development of village industries.

While studying Gandhiji as a philosopher and his place in the history of philosophy we should bear in mind that history of philosophy is a record of values, and values are of different orders amongst which the most prominent ones are physical values. Thus, we note that Gandhiji had always stressed on these values, and insisted to practically work upon them so that these could be easily adoptable for the common people.

The expression 'Gandhian philosophy' has to be understood in a broad sense. Gandhiji was not a philosopher in the sense Plato and Aristotle, Shankara and Ramamujja or Kant and Hegel were philosophers. Though he was a profound thinker on many fundamental problems, he did not believe in or left any organised system of thought to be known by name. When he was urged to put all his thoughts in an ordered sequence, he used to say that he did not want his ideas to become static but they should grow and change, if necessary, with life and experience. In a fit of disgust at the growing materialism of the West, he wrote the 'Hindswaraj' in 1909 during his return voyage to South Africa after a deputation to England. It was not a great success. Though he went on defending the views expressed therein with remarkable consistency, he had to modify and explain many of them to the confusion and embarrassment of his admires and followers.

To Gandhiji, the universe indicated, without any room for doubt, the existence of a common spiritual source of all matter, life and consciousness. It was not the traditional belief of the
Hindus. Though he was brought up under Hindu and Jain religious influences in his childhood, their effect was more sub-conscious than conscious. It was after his contact with fervent Christians in England and later in South Africa that he became truly religious. When he did so, his mind and soul came to be satisfied only the moment he had rediscovered for himself the fundamental doctrines of Hinduism as they have been expounded in the Bhagavad Gita which became his unfailing scripture. He named this course as God or Truth and consistently refused to be drawn into a discussion of its nature or attributes. The impossibility of the human intellect to comprehend the working of the divine consciousness eliminated the usual discomfort of many sensitive persons who found it difficult to reconcile belief in an omniscient being with the existence of evil and suffering. Yet without an implicit belief in God, all life and existence lose their meaning and purpose. It is through developing ability to see glimpses of the Supreme Being in all the wonderful panorama of the universe, in the mystery of life, and its evolution and above all, in the miracle of human spirit, intelligence and emotion, that man can truly realise himself.

For Gandhiji the implications of this conception of God were far reaching. So long as it is genuine, any religion, however crude or primitive it may appear, has an element of truth and no religion can lay claim to exclusive or even much knowledge of God. All religious deserve not only to be tolerated but to be sympathetically understood and respected except where any of its beliefs is
obviously inconsistent with canons of morality which should be evident to any normal human being when his mind is not over-powered by passions and prejudices.

Belief in God, Prayer, contemplation and other religious activities are for the human spirit, even as good light and pure air for the body are merely conditions for a good life. They do not constitute life itself. Gandhiji did not like or approve the traditions which advocate for religious devotion and prayer as the major activity of one's life. He was a Karma Yogi, par excellence. He fully agreed with Lokamanya Tilak that the main teaching of the Bhagavad Gita was Karmayoga to which the other yogas of knowledge bodily and mental discipline and devotion were valuable accessories. Though the Lokamanya was actively engaged in political and educational activity, he was essentially a thinker and philosopher while Gandhiji, in spite of his revolutionary thinking, was fundamentally a man of action.

According to Gandhiji good, evil and spirituality are not static but dynamic conceptions. They have infinite capacity for growth and a person is truly alive only to the extent his conceptions of these virtues become ever broader and his life embodies them to an ever-increasing extent. Every man and woman has necessarily to start with the notions of good and evil prevalent in his family, community or country. Gandhiji always insisted that no one should discredit or discard traditional morality lightly or in
an arrogant spirit. The mere fact that they have come down through
the ages entitle them for respectful consideration. But if, after
such consideration, whenever possible, discussion with wiser and
more experienced persons, one feels sure that any particular belief
or practice is wrong or harmful, one should give it up and take all
the consequence. It should be noted that the principle of truth
implies complete tolerance towards those who differ to re-examine
its validity if it ceases to satisfy the test of reason or justice.

Gandhi's attitude towards Dharma and untouchability is a
good illustration of his pursuit of truth. He felt that the former
was based on the principles of division of labour, training and
discipline in accordance with one’s task in life and provided equal
freedom for all spiritual growth. He argued that the so-called
equality of opportunity of European liberalism to pursue any occu-
pation or profession combined with enormous inequalities in wealth
and power was for the many a state of slavery and frustration. He
protested that the ideas of superiority and inferiority among the
four castes were later abuses while the poverty of the Brahmins and
Kshatriyas provided a real climate of social equality. On the
other hand, he had no doubt that the classification of a section
of society as untouchables, and to treat them as if they were not
human beings was contrary to every notion of truth, justice or
trade religion. This attitude of Gandhi made him a puzzle for
reformers as well as for the orthodox Hindus. The former thought
that the caste system was altogether rotten and should be given up
altogether. The later were shocked that one who believed in the idea of Dharma should even visualise the prospects of the untouchables freely mixing with other Hindus, entering temples and other sacred places and thereby undermining the entire caste system. But, having convinced himself, Gandhiji did not allow the grass to grow under his feet and launched his great campaign against untouchability even at the risk of weakening his movement for freedom by alienating the powerful sections of orthodox Hindus. Those who still complain that untouchability has not yet disappeared and is to be found in many rural areas, do not quite realise what it was before 1920. In the urban areas untouchability has nearly disappeared. Even in rural areas, the status of untouchables has improved and they are now similar to that of the Hindu population of lower strata whose main handicap is poverty. The Indian Constitution has now prohibited untouchability and great efforts have been made to bring the Scheduled Castes up to the average level in education, health and other matters. They are pulling their weight in legislatures and ministers from among them are being accommodated in the Centre and states.

Gandhiji wanted every individual to possess an integrated personality. He did not despise the body but he wanted that the individuals should be the servant of the soul. To pamper the body and spend much time and effort for securing pleasant sensation was considered as unworthy of human dignity. It does not mean that he wanted to hurt the body and make it suffer as was usual for saints and ascetics of all religions. His aim and objective was to
harmonise the national and spiritual selves of the individual which would in turn produce a healthy and normal personality.

The terms country, nation, race and community had no mysterious or mystical significance for Gandhiji. All of them meant only groups of individuals, who should learn to co-operate with one another for the uplift of all. The individual is bound to serve the people near him and as his personality grows and expands, the world with which he is concerned will be ever widening circle till it embraces the whole of humanity.

It follows from his conception of society that individuals and social morality are intrinsic entities. He rejected frankly the idea that diplomacy, politics, business or professional codes could justify lying, deceit or other conduct which should be considered immoral if it were done by a person in his individual capacity. Often, both his admirers and critics thought that he was an astute and calculating politician. It is true that some of his actions were unpredictable. But that was only because he was inspired by his inner voice, although he never claimed any special supernatural guidance.

Means for Gandhiji, were more important than ends. It is of course necessary that one's ideals and objectives should be in conformity with the objectives of spiritual growth of oneself and of humanity. But the attainment of such a goal is not in his power, while the means adopted for it are indicated to him. The means
should conform to the criteria of truth, non-violence and love. He fully believed and literally practised the greatest teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, that we should not worry about success or failure and our only duty is to turn towards the right direction and adopt the right means. In fact, however, he tried to see things as far as he possibly could and ensure that all the difficulties in the way were properly met and if possible overcome.

These are the basic beliefs which governed Gandhi's life and activities for nearly half a century. To many it may appear that this way of life is too austere and difficult for ordinary men and women to follow. But his practical approach to his thoughts or philosophy has testified that consistency and confidence on the ideals and objectives make the task much easier.

"NON-VIOLENCE"

The concept of non-violence is derived from the concept of Ahimsa which occupies an important place in Hindu texts, Dharamshas-tray and in Buddhism and Jainism. Though the root of non-violence goes deep in the Hindu Social system, it is not the exact synonym of Ahimsa. Gandhi's contribution, in this context is, that he made the concept more systematic, more adaptable and more powerful device of resistance in the modern social and political system. In the light of his contribution it will be a great injustice to say that the concept of non-violence is an old wine in a new bottle.
To appreciate Gandhiji’s view, it will be fruitful to have an outlook of Ahimsa as embodied in Vaishnav Dharma and other Indian religious disciplines.

Ahimsa is a Sanskrit word which, according to Hindu Shastras, connotes the idea of abstinence from violence with all living beings, at every place and every time. Thus Ahimsa includes abstinence from violence not only through acts or words but it also includes abstinence from violence through idea, thought consciousness or what they called through ‘Mana’ with all living beings. In Yogastra, the rules, regulations and the disciplines are basically Ahimsa oriented. If there is any violation or any act of violence in the performance of main duties or maintaining these rules, this is not considered useful in the disciplinary cult of Yogastra. In Hindu religious frame work the importance and greatness of Truth is well established and uncontroversial. The expression of any thing, which looks and seems as it is, by words and the determination of it by consciousness, is Truth. But at the same time it is also emphasized that if there is any conflict between Ahimsa and Truth, Truth ceases to be a Truth because in such case the former prevails over the latter. Ahimsa, according to the Hindu text, is considered to be a great sacred act and a "Maha-Varat". According to Acharsangsastra, a famous book of Jain religion Ahimsa is preached like this. "Do not kill, do not behave in inappropriate manner, do not harm and do not tease any specy, any living being, any plant and anything which have spirit." Thus according to ancient disciplines, emphasis is laid down on the
negative aspect of Ahimsa, that is abstinence from violence with all living beings, and in this sense Ahimsa is highlighted by the religious exponents who preached to follow Ahimsa in all the acts of the individuals. The famous Sanskrit maxim, "Ahimsa Pramo Dharma" (i.e. Ahimsa is the highest duty) is based on the same principle.

Gandhian concept of non-violence is sharp departure from the old concept of Ahimsa because he extended the principles of non-violence from negative approach to positive approach and from application merely to the narrow sphere of the individual to the much larger sphere of the society. Individuals are concerned not only with themselves but as a member of society they have to play very important roles which affects the social pattern or the system of society. So if they are to be non-violent genuinely, they must transform their society. On the other hand a non-violent individual cannot tolerate inequality, exploitation or tyranny in his environment. Hence Gandhiji's untiring insistence on Truth and Non-violence is not only in an individual's life but also in politics, economics, and social relationships. His aim was not merely to reform the individuals, he wished to help in establishing a righteous society, the kingdom of God where love and goodwill will prevail. True non-violence, according to Gandhiji, comes from the heart, and therefore is abiding and permanent. It is the weapon of the strong. It requires great courage, as it means readiness to give up one's life in the cause of the right. It is rooted in
the true religion, or the faith that truth, goodness and love are at the heart of the universe. It accordingly demands of its votary absolute honesty, purity of heart and self-discipline. Over and above all non-violence is regarded as a great moral force to resist against every form of oppression and injustice.

INTERPRETATIVE MODELS

There are several ways to understand the Gandhian concept of non-violence. One is that we may take into account the whole sphere of human activity, the common bases of human actions and the way in which human being reacts against the external world. Human being has certain basic urges which exert great pressure on the individual for its satisfaction. We are constrained to satisfy these basic urges. The development of human personality depends upon the degree and manner in which these urges are satisfied. Thus according to Parsons most of our actions are goal-oriented. Our relation with external world is guided by the fact that how do we strive for the achievement of these goals for which we become somewhat selfish. Human relation with the external world is two-fold. On one hand we adopt violence, which, according to K.G. Nasrulwala, is associated with malevolence, hatred, revenge, enmity, murder, injury, war cruelty, barbarity, torture, deception, rape, loot exploitation and so on." He further stated that violence is "acquisition, re-acquisition and preservation of material interests by any means which prospects of success may suggest." The other

way of anti-violence, which according to Mashruwala is similar to benevolence. He considered anti-violence as "Love, forgiveness, friendliness, peace, kindness, civility, frankness, service, protection, philanthropy, generosity and so on." These two folds of human reactions towards the external world are related to a large extent with selfishness and goods for others, because violence or malevolence is related with selfishness while the anti-violence or benevolence is related with the good for others. Here the important fact is that pure unselfishness is impossible. A man has to be selfish in one or other pretext, because it is inherent in the nature of human being. There is correlation between our goal-oriented activities and our selfish nature. Selfishness to the extent, which is necessary for our goal-oriented activities and unavoidable is a generality and thus just. It does not amount to pathological fact. When it crosses its limit (the limit of being essential for goal-oriented activities) on one hand, and mixes with violence or malevolence on the other, it ceases to be a generality, leads to social pathology and thus unjust. There is a conflict between just and unjust selfishness. Thus in this context non-violence, as Mashruwala said, is just selfishness mixed with benevolence without any touch of malevolence."

The other interpretation of non-violence is that there is an imminent force which governs the whole universe. All the objects

of the world are the subjects of this force which operates through imminent laws. The imminent laws, based on the principles of love and justice, are the attributes of God and inherent in the nature of every living being. Gandhiji once said:

"Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force among the items that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we cease to exist, and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so much there be in all things animate, and the name of that cohesive force among animate beings is love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God."  

These imminent laws, when manifested in human actions, take the form of non-violence which determines the relation between man and man on one hand, and the relation between man and God on the other. These imminent laws are important to integrate all the phenomena of the world. The integration of the society is also based on these general principles. We maintain the integrity of the society till the moment we follow the principle of non-violence.

and the moment we deviate from this principle, we proceed towards disintegration and meet with a crisis which results into a severe conflict in the society. Such conflict can be resolved by the non-violence. Thus the non-violence as an imminent law has the following qualities:

(1) It has an universal applicability. It is not limited to a particular man, group, community, sect, class, area and boundary but it is applicable to the whole humanity and the universe. To relate non-violence with prescribed period and area is to delimit its scope. The non-violence is free from time and space because it is an imminent law and therefore can not be handcuffed by time and space.

(2) The non-violence enhances the other values of the society. The practice of non-violence creates a moral force which enables an individual to stick on the values of the society. Apart from this the non-violence is attached with other values; therefore when an individual adopts non-violence he has to adopt other related values. Secondly, the non-violence serves as a media to attain the highest value. In this respect the attainment of the highest value is the resultant fact of non-violence which gathers all the values at one point.

(3) In the last the realization of justice is possible through the non-violence. The greater the application of the non-violence, the greater is the realization of justice. The non-violence is the manifestation of justice and justice is the goal of
non-violence. They are interlinked and the best way to attain the justice is through non-violence.

Gandhiji further stressed that love, an attribute of God, is present in nature and human relations should be guided through love because it is the basic bond which enables us to live peacefully and respectfully. The principle of love can be extended to the whole universe when we shall be non-violent in our behaviour and actions. He said:

"Though there is enough repulsion in Nature, she lives by attraction. Mutual love enables nature to persist. A man does not live by destruction. Self love compels regard for other. Nation ohoere because there is mutual regard among individuals comprising them. Some day we may extend the national law to the universe, even as we have extended the family law to form nation a larger family."

In the third way the non-violence can be interpreted as a cult or self discipline which helps the Truth to persist and helps the individuals as well to resist against the evils or untruth. Gandhiji considers the Truth as supreme in the whole normative pattern of the society. Truth and God, according to Gandhiji, are synonymous terms. Gandhiji attaches more importance to Truth as

1. Young India, March 2, 1922.
rather than other values. Even love (an important norm in Gandhian concept) is not of the same importance as Truth is. Once Richard D. Gregg asked Gandhiji, why in all his discussion of Satyagraha, he placed so much more importance on the truth rather than on love (perhaps it should be explained that the Indian word sat or Satya means not only truth in the English sense of the world, but also essential beginning). He replied that truth (Sat) exists beyond and unconditioned by space and time. Therefore truth (sat is a greater principle even than love.

Since truth is the supreme norm and such an important matter, it is necessary to prevail the truth over all the phenomena of human life. When the truth persists on the whole social world, the human race will be benefited and the humanity will be saved from suffering. The persistence of truth requires such conditions and environment in which the forces of untruth would be less effective. Such condition will be possible when the individuals will be oriented towards truth and strive to let the truth prevail. Only this much is not sufficient for the conditions and environments favourably to truth, but on the other hand this is also required that individuals would struggle to give more and more resistance in the way of untruth.

In every society both the forces of truth and untruth used to be present and work simultaneously, but generally truth or

righteousness dominates over the untruth because it is displayed in the most of the actions of the individuals while the later is not. The behaviour of the individuals is guided, molded and shaped in accordance with the truth or the righteousness. When the forces of untruth dominate over truth and they are displayed in human action, they cause disruption and damage the integrity and the solidarity of a system. In the concynymum of the forces of truth and untruth the balance between the two is not enough (though it does not cause disruption) but the domination and porsistance of truth over the untruth is also necessary.

This requires a moral force and inner power in the individuals to act against in a particular direction. Being a difficult job an individual cannot develop this sort of force, power and ability unless he is trained and disciplined. Non-violence disciplines the individuals, creates this moral force and emerges into such and inner power through which individuals try to manifest truth in their actions which lead to the persistence of truth, and give resistance to the untruth so that it may be in effective and could not operate actively.

It is said, that, "The real evil and enemy is within each one of use." If we are not strong enough to fight the inner battle, we will be defeated not only in this inner field of battle but in the field of outer-world also. The evils of outer-world are the

external result and reflection of our inner psychological and spiritual defects. These defects can be removed when we will equip ourselves with non-violent-cult on important issues, not only by cultivating sentiments but also by daily discipline and control of our thoughts, words and small acts. For this purpose we have to form habits consciously and deliberately in accordance with our highest ideals and the most complete and permanent security. This training enables every one of us to contribute positively in the solidarity of a given system.

Gandhiji seeks to justify his choice between the two ultimate values of violence and non-violence by restoring a teleological view of history as a movement towards the realization of non-violence; in other words, by denying the claim of violence as an ultimate value.

"If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards Ahimsa. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live on chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of wandering hunter. He, therefore, took to agriculture and depended principally on mother earth for his food. Thus being a nomad he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are the signs of progressive Ahimsa (Violence) and diminishing Ahimsa (Violence)
had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards Ahimsa, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal a cycle, unless it be God Himself."

Gandhiji was of opinion that the total non-violence is not possible in our world. Like other values in Gandhian thought, Non-violence is not wholly realizable in practice. What can be realized is relative non-violence which is nothing more than an approximation to the ultimate value of non-violence. "Perfect non-violence" says Gandhiji "is impossible so long as we exist physically."

Gandhiji was criticized by the orthodox Hindus on two grounds with regard to his views on non-violence: First that his views were opposed to the law of Karma, and second, that he had introduced an artificial distinction between the life of human beings and that of animals which was not permitted by traditional Hindu religion or philosophy.

The first criticism was on the occasion of the killing of the agonized calf in Gandhiji's ashrama in 1928."

1. Harijan, August 11, 1940.
"If you believe in the law of Karma, then your killing of the calf was a vain attempt to interfere with the operation of that law." The argument is that the agonized condition of the calf was the result of its own Karma and by killing it Gandhiji had interfered with that law and thus committed an immorality. This is, in fact, what happened to Hindu society for many centuries and why the idea of social service was completely alien to the Hindus, Buddhists or Jains until the reformation of the second half of the Nineteenth Century.

It was argued by critics at the time that Gandhiji's support for the killing of animals which are injurious to human beings was the result of his western education. Gandhiji observed that although there is a superficial resemblance between his position and that of utilitarian, in reality there is an unbridgeable gulf between the two. Such being the idea of non-violence, it is natural that Gandhiji would be opposed to the Soviet system of Government. The Nazi rule in Germany, and the second world war which was ostensibly fought for the sake of democracy. Gandhiji's approach to values and as a matter of fact, to most social and political questions is largely a historical and evolutionary conflict with special reference to the biological evolution of man, and then formulated a concept of non-violence to test the scientific enquiry.

Since the death of Gandhiji violence has spread across the world in so many different forms that we often fail to recognize

1. Young India, October 11, 1928.
them as such. The violence of mind conditioning as well as economic violence, the agitation thought about by the Consumers Society of rich countries or the misery of poor nations. These are all facts of our present day world which Gandhiji, paradoxically would have responded by non-violence.

"I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrants m sword, not by putting up against it a sharper edged weapon but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance."

Non-violence is thus the spirit and freedom's last recourse after which only brute force is possible with final victory going to the most ruthless. Gandhiji speaks to a world which is still human, which the spirit has not yet deserted, because "faith in mankind" is his ultimate message.

Non-violence is considered by some critics, as an act of coward, but Gandhiji emphatically denied this charge. He stressed that non-violence does not mean surrender before tyranny or brutality but in such cases it empowers a man to check and resist against such brutality with force. He explained his view as such:

"My Dharma teaches me for the sake of others to give my life without even attempting to kill. But my dharma also enables me to say that where choice lies

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1. Young India, October 8, 1925.
between running away to the neglect of one's charge and killing the would-be ravisher, it is one's duty to kill and be killed, never to desert the post of duty .......

A simple Pujari not knowing the meaning of non-violence told me with some glee that when mob entered his temple to break his idols, he carefully hide himself away. Such a man I hold to be unjust to be a pujari. He should have died at his post. He would then have sanctified the idol with his beloved. He would have been justified in killing the intruders, if he had not the courage to die at his post with a prayer on his lips that God might have pity on the assailants. But it was unmanly for him to have hidden himself to save his perishable skin. The truth is that cowardice itself is violence of a subtle and therefore dangerous type, and far more difficult to eradicate than the habit of physical violence. A coward never risks his life. A man who would kill often risks it. A non-violent person's life is always at the disposal of him who would take it. For he knows that the soul within never dies. The ensnaring body is ever persishing. The more a man gives his life, the more he serves it. Thus non-violence requires more than the courage of the soldier of war. The Citas
definition of a soldier is one who does not know what it is to run away from danger."

Non-violence has so little in common with a strategy of withdrawal that its first act is to test the strength of the adversary. "Forgiveness" he wrote in 1920 is the adornment of the soldier but not of the coward, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence.

Gandhiji believed in non-violence as a moral principle. He was also convinced that "Pure" individuals could yield immense power which could make organized mass non-violent struggle unnecessary. Nevertheless, he insisted that the community as a whole should learn to use non-violent action which would enable people to solve problems by their own efforts. This led to different questions for which Gandhiji claimed no final answers.

Gandhiji's insistence that his important contribution was to offer people a technique with which they could themselves cope with their social and political problems was not reversed when he became dissatisfied with the Indian practice of non-violent action and when he emphatically advocated the "non-violence of the brave" his desire for an improved quality of non-violence did not mean the rejection of mass non-violent action. On the contrary Gandhiji confirmed his confidence in the role of collective non-violent popular action to solve problems.

1. Young India, December 18, 1924.
It is usually understood that Gandhi's later convictions of the Indian practice of non-violent actions mean that he saw the roots of the problems to be the attempt to practice non-violent action as a policy, rather than tried to promote non-violence as a Creed for the whole of life.

"I admit at once that there is a doubtful proportion if full believers in my theory of non-violence. But it should not be forgotten that I have also said that for my movement I do not at all need believers in the theory of non-violence, full or imperfect. It is enough if people carry out the rules of non-violent action."

In applying non-violent action as a practical technique for limited objectivism, however Gandhi always insisted that the application had to be honest. The maintenance of non-violence had to be thought and the policy had to be well implemented.

Gandhi's life was a search for truth which was dearer to him than all else. Truth was his religion: "Truth is God" he writes. For him only non-violence personified as a single minded militant who has killed the spirit of violence within him, is capable of retrieving truth if it is lost to sight, or of revealing truth if it is still to be discovered.

This is the high ambition inspiring "Satyagraha" literally. The grasp of truth. The French Orientalist Louis Massignon, who knew Gandhiji personally and became one of his supporters translated the definition in concrete terms as a "Civil Campaign for truth." Its only weapon is "Ahimsa", refusal to injure, respect for others.

Thus the aim of Satyagraha is truth, his method non-injury the positive aspect of which is love and compassion. The end and the means are so closely interwoven that Satyagraha can not be seemingly turned to another purpose as a mere strategic device of tactical manoeuvre.

The inclination to violence must be destroyed by fasting, chastity, silence, wearing the simplest clothing and meditation in the "Ashram", the places of retreat which Gandhiji founded in South Africa and India.

Some people have sought to deny Gandhiji's message any current validity on grounds that what historical circumstances made possible yesterday is no longer applicable today. "British Liberalism" enabled Gandhiji to enter politics because of his reputation as mystic. The morality of nation traditionally protestant could not turn a deaf ear to Gandhiji's appeal to the conscience of his own people, as well as to that of the servants of Empire. And so this sage, armed with his English University degrees and wearing the simplest garments soon found himself introduced into Buckingham palace. But this situation has gone for ever.
It has also been pointed out that when India was part of the closely knit British Empire, the impact of non-violence through economic and political non-cooperation could be extremely effective, whereas in the relatively open world trading pattern of today such passive resistance would not get very far. The loss of one economic market could be made good elsewhere, while the principle of the full sovereignty of the modern state would present any foreign interference in internal affairs. Resistance could thus be crushed by violent means, as happens only too often. Non-violence therefore, these advocates say, would never have a chance.

But this reasoning tells only half the story. It overlooks the fact that disappearance of the closely knit imperial system may turn out to be an advantage instead of a handicap for non-violence. Today when news is broadcast about trouble in one country it often creates a mass movement of sympathy and solidarity in other lands and national public opinion, quickly transformed into international and even world opinion. Nevertheless we can all recall examples which prove that resistance in one area has a good chance of arousing mass support abroad and thereby modify the abuses of power either directly or indirectly.

Since any national event can now have world-wide repercussions, non-violence, too has taken on international importance particularly within the framework of the United Nations. It is only on the highest levels of the human conscience that the spirit of aggression can be transformed into a spirit of conciliation.
"Non-Violence that I preached from Congress platforms is non-violence as a policy. Non-violence being a policy means that it can upon due notice be given up when it proves unsuccessful or ineffective."

It is usually understood that Gandhiji's later strong practice of non-violent action means that he saw the root of the problem to be the attempt to practice non-violent action as a policy.

In a voluminous letter to the British Government of India, refuting charges against himself and the congress based on the events of 1932 and 1943 Gandhiji wrote in July 1943.

"I admit at once that there is doubtful proportion of full believers in my theory of non-violence. But it should be forgotten that I have also said that for my movement I do not at all need believers in the theory of non-violence full or imperfect. It is enough if people carry out the rules for non-violent action."

In 1926 he wrote "The non-violence that I teach is active non-violence of the strongest. But the weakest can partake in it without becoming weaker. They can only be the stronger for having

1. Young India, 11 August 1920 p.3.
been in it. The masses are far bolder today than they ever were."

There are a series of statements made as late as from 1940 to the end of 1947 during the period of his greatest depression over the course of events in India in which he categorically affirmed the relevance of non-violence to society as a whole, and to politics in particular. In fact, at the meeting of All India Congress Committee in January 1942 (at which the proposal that the Congress offer the British support in the war in exchange for independence was discussed), Gandhiji insisted with no regrets on the political nature of non-violent action as he had presented it to India.

"I placed it before the Congress as a political method to be employed for the solution of the political questions. It may be a novel method, but it does not on that account lose its political character ...... it has served us in the past, it has enabled us to cover many stages toward independence, and it is a politician that I suggest to you that it is a grave mistake to contemplate its abandonment. If I have carried the Congress with me all these years, it is in my capacity as a politician. It is hardly fair to describe my method as religious, because it is new."

The experience of colonial struggle shows that such a method did not give the same result in other countries where it was adopted as in India e.g. Indo-China, Algiers and Angola. In other words

non-violence alone has not always succeeded and had in these instances to be countered with violence i.e. using force. In wider question whether the non-violent method would be effective as an instrument in a struggle for national liberation as well, compels us to differentiate between (a) struggle against colonies (b) National Struggle for liberation. India and other underdeveloped countries offer us example of the first, while Yugoslavia's struggle against Fascist oppression is an example of the second. In wars of national liberation on it seems that the non-violence would not be effective. The use of violence or war is inescapable in order to achieve the liberation. However the recent historical experience so far is against the adoption of non-violence but it does not mean that such a method should be completely excluded from this kind of struggle.

First of all, there is a question of the anti-colonialism. India's struggle for freedom was an instance of anti-colonialism and not of a socialist revolution except in the general sense when we consider the social programme of the Indian National Congress. In this transition to a socialist economy, Gandhian method has had its influence.

The second is non-violence as conceived and practiced by Gandhiji, has its parallels in the peaceful revolutions carried out by some European Communist countries. However Gandhiji's conception of non-violence and his emphatic rejection of violence differs from a peaceful socialist revolution. The letter involves obtaining
a majority in a democratically elected parliament. But this would
not mean a revolutionary overthrow of society. Gandhiji's rule
is a passive resistance, but the word passive can be misleading
if used in literal sense.

The place and range in which Gandhiji's method can be
successfully applied quite obviously depends on the conditions
i.e. time, place and circumstances for it is then only that we can
see its ramification in other areas of life and the theoretical
relevance to other disciplines. The basic element for the social
system in Gandhian struggle was the alien political rule, which
he wanted to overthrow and thus liberate India. In order to pre-
serve their political power the British necessarily had to secure
the co-operation of relatively broad strata of Indian society,
above all, economically powerful class. The second important
component was the need to develop capitalism in India thus bringing
it under the domination of British capital and thereby strengthen-
ing its political hold on the country. Gandhiji rightly understood
this policy and therefore directed his struggle in two directions-
first of breaking up the Indo-Anglia Cooporation in one way or the
other and secondly of arresting the development of capitalism in
India. Therefore it seems that Gandhiji's method is most suitable
especially for such societies like the Indian, neither completely
underdeveloped nor fully developed. The second essential condition
for the success of Gandhiji's method of non-violence was, as Lenin
remarked, to the context of a society in which an alien rule had
long oppressed the governed, a situation which would not go on for ever. However, Lenin laid down two basic principles for the non-violent method.

(a) Firstly, a complete solidarity and unity of the oppressed masses. The whole nation must be united in struggle against oppression and must be able to apply the non-violence and non-cooperation method.

(b) The second condition relates to the psychological state of mind, the belief of the governors. They must be convinced both on the basis of the situation in the country as well as in the world. They must feel that the spirit of time is against them, that they cannot dispose any more an argument to justify their rule, which will be valid.

(c) Thirdly, it is certain that the temperament of the people, their culture and historical tradition, has an important role. There is no doubt that the Indian people especially and perhaps exceptionally, are well disposed towards non-violence and that its feature is deeply rooted in its national character by a very long tradition. The existence of certain personalities, leaders of the stature of Gandhiji devoted to the idea of non-violence can be preached and the struggle carried on it only by exceptionally strong personalities who are ready to sacrifice themselves willingly for the success of national cause. In this every day sacrifice and complete integration with the people, Gandhiji is
certainly present in his person the greatest example and almost
an unattainable ideal. Equally important element that Gandhiji
demonstrated in his unique method is the respect for the enemy
and refusal to hate him and ever present willingness to compro-
mise, if the situation so demands. Such an attitude disarm the
enemy and offers the guarantee of an honourable retreat, and at
the same time, gives to the people the feeling of highly moral
dignity and belief in the moral right of its struggle. The
success of such a method asks, above all, for character of the
people and their leader and to some extent, the humanism of the
enemy itself. The basic moral value for Gandhiji is the human
being itself even if be an enemy and oppressor. This value, he
affirmed should never be neglected even in the sharpest political
struggle, because non-violence, above all, means respect for the
man, every man. If Christ's recommendations to turn the other
cheek has remained only a recommendation, Gandhiji's idea of non-
vioence, against even a merciless political ruler, finds realiza-
tion in a magnificent demonstration in adverse circumstances.
The consequences of such realizations of moral values must be great
and far reaching. First they are important for the nation itself
which has realized them, for it raises its moral. Secondly such a
method morally raises the enemy nation and other nations, which are
not directly involved in the political struggle. Thus moral stand-
ard of the mankind as a whole rises and holds out the hope of eli-
mination of violence from the affairs of nations, thus enabling
the practical realization of Christ "Love thy enemy."
The political theory has been for ages turning round the question of violence in politics. There is almost a unanimous agreement that violence is an evil but avoidable. The central idea of politics and the major means of realization of power according to this conception has resulted in organised violence of man over man. Gandhi’s example is the first and the most important which shows that violence in politics is not after all inevitable, thus enabling us to modify the long accepted notion of the inevitability of violence. Gandhi’s conception in this regard is of fundamental importance to the whole of political and ethical theories which has sought to justify violence in politics as a relative value. Gandhi of course rejects such a compromise and demonstrated its political worthlessness.

Finally, Gandhi’s theory of non-violence has a great significance for anthropology and for Sociology. Because political activity is the most important and most fundamental of human activities, it engages man to such an extent that he discovers his real nature in and through it. In politics a man cannot disguise himself at all, nor represent himself falsely. In fact we can evaluate a man according to his views about politics. The same can be said of the human society and the kind of politics it lives by.

Gandhi’s struggle by non-violence means is a great experiment which has shaken all those presuppositions. However, Gandhi has been largely influential in softening the rigid views about the
immutability of human nature. He has shown that this is not true and that man can overcome the best in him, if he were to make an effort.

Finally, we have to make a certain similarity between Marx's views of human nature and Gandhiji contrary to what is generally believed about Marx, he did not subscribe to the view that human nature is evil. Evil is forced on man. But if man is liberated from this compulsion of a competitive and oppressive social order, Marx maintained, his positive human qualities will find expression thus automatically minimising the role of violence in human relations. Basically Gandhiji and Marx agree on positive evaluation of human nature.
"SATYAGRAHA"

The term Satyagraha was coined by Gandhiji to express the nature of the non-violent direct action of the Indians in South Africa against the Government there. He was specially anxious to distinguish clearly this group action from passive resistance.

In common parlance Satyagraha is interpreted as non-violent direct action; but non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting and other forms of non-violent direct action do not exhaust the content of Satyagraha. The literal meaning of satyagraha is "holding on to truth" or "insistence on truth." Spiritual unity is the highest Truth and the only way to realize it is to be non-violent, i.e., to love all and suffer for all. That is why Gandhiji identifies satyagraha with "love-force" or "soul-force." Thus satyagraha is the relentless pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means. In this comprehensive sense it includes, all constructive reforming activities, all acts of service. Satyagraha thus does not exclude constitutional methods. As a matter of fact Gandhiji considers civil resistance a constitutional right.

Satyagraha, specially its two principal off shoots, non-cooperation and civil disobedience, should not be confused with the passive resistance movement in England in the beginning of this century. In South Africa Gandhiji himself used the term passive resistance in the sense of satyagraha. But even in 1908 he was
conscious that "passive resistance" was a more popular though less accurate description of satyagraha than soul-force or love-force. Later he drew a clear distinction between these two terms.

Both satyagraha and passive resistance are methods of meeting aggression, settling conflicts and bringing about social and political changes. However, the two differ fundamentally. The difference between the two is due to the fact that passive resistance as practised, for example, by non-conformists in England and by Germans against the French, is a political weapon of expediency, while satyagraha is a moral weapon based on the superiority of soul-force over physical force. Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak; while satyagraha can be practised only by the bravest who have the courage of dying without killing. In passive resistance the aim is to embarrass the opponent into submission; in satyagraha, to wean him from error by love and patient suffering. In passive resistance there is hardly any place for love for the opponent; in satyagraha there is no room for hatred, ill-will and the like. Thus "satyagraha is dynamic, passive resistance is static. Passive resistance acts negatively and suffers reluctantly and infructuously; satyagraha acts positively and suffers with cheerfulness because from love and makes the sufferings fruitful."

Though always distinguished from and generally avoiding violence which is not open to the weak, passive resistance does not exclude

1. Hind Swaraj, p. 66.
the use of violent methods on suitable occasions; satyagraha, on the other hand, does not permit violence in any form even under the most favourable circumstances. Unlike satyagraha passive resistance can be used as a supplement or preliminary to violent revolution. Passive resistance lacks inwardness; it does not share the scruples of satyagraha about the purity of means and ignores the moral character of persons employing it. On the other hand, in satyagraha there is an organic connection between the achievement of the objective and the inner reform of the satyagrahi. Passive resistance is not by its very nature universal in its application. It cannot, for example, be directed against one's nearest relations as satyagraha can be. Passive resistance offered in a spirit of weakness and despair is weakening morally; while satyagraha emphasises all the time internal strength and actually develops it. Satyagraha can thus offer more effective and determined opposition to injustice and tyranny than passive resistance. All the same there is nothing passive about the latter, for resistance is always active.

All the world over in every age, non-violence has been the method of settling family disputes. Gandhiji has applied this rule of domestic life to various spheres of group life. By his life-long researches he has made satyagraha "the moral equivalent of war" and the technique of solving group conflicts.

In fact, he goes further and holds that if we want to make organized non-violence in group conflicts really effective,
we must practice it in all aspects of our daily life. "Our non-violence, if true, must be a part of our normal life, must be in our thought, word and deed and must colour all our behaviour." Thus he wrote in 1935, "Non-violence to be a creed has to be all-pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others." Non-violence in politics may be, he feels, a virtue of necessity and a cover for cowardice. It is only in relations other than those with the Government, e.g., in domestic and social relations, "when we have an equal choice between violence and non-violence, that non-violence could be 2 said not to be a mere expedient." This is why, according to him, non-violence like charity must begin at home. He says, "The alphabet of ahimsa is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family." Gandhiji insists that public satyagraha is only an "extension of private or domestic satyagraha and that every case of the former should be tested by imagining a parallel domestic case."

2. H., October 12, 1936, p.276.
5. Y.I., II, p. 821.
It is, indeed, futile to try to enthrone non-violence in inter-group and international relations unless it is also sought to be enshrined in the hearts of individuals. Violence in the private life of a satyagrahi is an indication of inadequate discipline. It shows that he is blind to the basic law of satyagraha, the principle of spiritual kinship with others. It is an unmistakable sign that he has not yet reached that level of moral development and has not acquired that condition of self-mastery in which violence becomes intolerable. Human life being an indivisible whole, violence in the satyagrahi's private life must project itself into his behaviour as a member of the satyagrahi group.

Acceptance of non-violence by an individual in public affairs only means that this is the non-violence of the weak and that he accepts non-violence only as a policy which he may chance in face of heavy odds and overwhelming temptations. "A soldier fights with an irresistible strength when he has blown up his bridges, burnt his boats. Even so it is with a soldier of ahimsa." Gandhiji's advice, therefore, is that "Ahimsa must be placed before everything else while it is professed.

According to him, acceptance of non-violence as a weapon of expediency, as distinguished from genuine thorough going non-violence, may bring about political freedom in a country like

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India. But this will be "democracy as machinery" or "parlia-
mentary Swaraj" rather than real non-violent Swaraj or "democracy
as faith." For "non-violence as expediency" means "non-violence
so far as profitable and violence when necessary." Violence
implies treating men as mere means. Non-violence of the weak is
thus the denial of the basic principle of democracy, i.e., the
least among men has infinite moral worth. On the other hand, non-
violeince of the brave stands for the equality of all persons. It
never encroaches on the rights of others and leaves them full
scope for development. It will not bring freedom and power to
the weak and the poor and will not be a genuine democracy. This
is why Gandhiji is of opinion that non-violence of the weak will
never take us to the goal of freedom, and "if long practiced may
even render us unfit for self-government." Recent history of India
bears ample testimony to the soundness of Gandhiji's view.

It is remarkable that in his earlier non-violent movements
Gandhiji did not insist on the satyagrahi accepting non-violence
as a creed. This was, perhaps, the price he paid to collaborate
with others to realize his ideal. He expected that the practice
of non-violence as a policy would gradually prepare people for
its acceptance as a creed. But this toning down is compromising
one's means. His experience brought home the mistake and later
he demanded of the satyagrahi a firm unshakable faith in the
principle.

1. H., July 13, 1940, p.197.
Historically too the use of non-violence by isolated individuals in their private life began long before its emergence as a group technique. Even Gandhiji had acquired extensive experience in the use of non-violence in various situations of life before he used it as a political technique. The lessons of truth and chisna were burnt into his soul in early childhood and he began to mould his life according to those laws. The environment in which he was brought up was saturated with Vaishnava and Jaina traditions of chisna.

Gandhiji’s whole life is full of experiments which demonstrate how truth and love enable one to solve life’s complex problems. His Autobiography and other writings are replete with experiences of a most creative nature — experiences that moulded his character and influenced his philosophy.

In modern times Tolstoy and Gandhiji have recommended to us non-violence as an anti-dote against violence. Tolstoy realized the true significance of the Cross and taught mankind how to overcome evil by love. Gandhiji realized in his life the value of Ahimsa. The efficacy of love as an anti-dote of violent hatred cannot be underrated. By loving your enemy you create in him respect and admiration for you. You strive to conquer hatred by love and so you fight your enemy in joy and confidence. “Anger as well as love, can be creative, for both are expressions or modes of energy.
After having had a general description of what Satyagraha is, let us determine how far Gandhiji followed it in his own life. Gandhism is Satyagraha and who is a Gandhi-ite. Though Gandhiji himself had coined the word, yet he did not like to call his way of life Gandhism. He preferred the words Ahimsa and Ahimsa-ite.

Gandhiji launched his first mass Satyagraha in South Africa to remedy the evils done by South African whites against the Indian settlers there.

Gandhiji's first experiment in mass Satyagraha in India was at Champaran. When the Powlatt bill were passed for India in 1919 by the British Government, Gandhiji organized Satyagraha on a national wide scale. The bill were considered by Indian to be unjust and subversive of the principles of liberty and justice. These and other Satyagraha campaigns laid by Gandhiji were strictly non-violent. The moment violence crept into, Gandhiji suspended the movement in 1920 when the non-violent non-co-operation was going on in full swing, suddenly he suspended it, for he found that violence had entered into it.

Where then comes Gandhiji's special contribution. It lies in the facts that Satya was made into Satyagraha, Truth was made into insistence on Truth. It was made into a weapon to fight untruth, injustice and tyranny. It was made dynamic, and contagious. Even today millions of people are truthful. But do they fight untruth. We finds millions of truthful people but few who
would risk their ease and comfort and even their lives to see that Truth prevails. If they are merely truthful, they are Satya Wadis (truthful) but not Satyagrahas, prepared to bear any consequences in pursuit of it.

Professor Toynbee in a Study of History has wondered why Gandhi has applied the weapon of Satyagraha to objects and aims that are mundane. Prof. Toynbee does not quite see the reason why Gandhi has dared to experiment the methods of non-violence on the mundane plane. It is precisely because Gandhi refuses to make any distinction between the mundane and the other worldly plane so far as the moral and physical laws which govern them are concern. For him the outside universe is but a reflection of the inside universe.

The same is the case with non-violence of Gandhi's conception. Gandhi's movement was not merely civil. It was civil disobedience. Why again did Gandhi think of non-violent resistance. Because as the world goes today one murder leads to another murder by common consent.

It is this partial acceptance of Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha that have made us so in-effective after independence. We have ceased to be Satyagrahis. It was left to the Negro leader in America to show us the Gandhian path again. It was the Satyagrahi, Martin Luther King who offered his life in respect of the ideals that he made his own.
THE STATELESS DEMOCRACY

The ideal society is, according to Gandhiji, the Stateless democracy, the state of enlightened anarchy where social life has become so perfect as to be self-regulated. "In such a state (of enlightened anarchy) every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state."

The ideal democracy will be a federation of more-or-less self-sufficing and self-governing satyagrahi village communities. "Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence."

Referring to the democratic satyagrahi rural communities he writes, "....every village will be republic or panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual which is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she

wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

"In this structure composed of innumerable villages 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 on life composed of individuals. The outermost circumferences will not yield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it."

So far as possible every activity of these communities will be conducted on cooperative basis. Such a village will be a perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. "The individual is the architect of his own Government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his village's honour."

It will be a decentralized society with equality pervading every sphere of life. The need for decentralization arises from the fact that centralization means concentration of power in the hands of a few people with the likelihood of its abuse. Centralization adds to the complexity of life which is a distraction in all

creative moral endeavour. It discourages initiative, resourcefulness, courage and creativeness and diminishes opportunities of self-governmont and of resisting injustice. Centralization as a system, wrote Gandhiji in 1941, "is inconsistent with the non-violent structure of society." He remarked in 1939, that "if India is to evolve along non-violent lines it will have to decentralize many things. Centralisation cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force."

Equality in the social sphere will be expressed through the law of varna combined with the ideals of non-possession and broad-labour. According to Gandhiji the law of varna "established certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. While recognizing limitations the law of varna admitted of no distinctions of high and low ..... My conviction is that an ideal social order will only be evolved when the implications of this law are fully understood and given effect to." Varna is, according to Gandhiji, "intimately, though no indissolubly, connected with birth. He also believes that individuals belonging to every varna must do bread-labour, i.e. physical labour enough for their daily bread. Whatever people do with their body or mind apart from bread-labour will be the labour of love for the common good for which no payment should be demanded." Gandhiji's social ideal thus implies fullest freedom

2. N.K. Bose, p. 205.
to every individual to devote himself to social service according to his peculiar aptitude.

The ideal of bread-labour automatically leads to non-possession and economic equality which non-violence also implies. "Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically when there is perfect love there must be perfect non-possession." Thus the law of varna and the ideals of bread-labour and non-possession will bring about complete economic and social equality.

The ideals of non-possession and bread-labour also imply an agricultural, rural civilization based on handicrafts. There will be no room in this society for exploitation, the zamindari system or capitalism. Everybody would be his own master and none a hired labourer of another. We have discussed in Chapter VII the moral physical and economic advantages of cottage industries. Gandhiji is not against machinery as such but he is against centralized mass production and profit motive. Centralized production leads to concentration of power, needs control of big markets and vast quantities of raw materials and leads to exploitation. A non-violent civilization, therefore, cannot grow up the factory system, but "it can be built on self-contained villages." Gandhiji, however, welcomes "simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of millions of

cottages ......." Machinery, however, "must not be allowed to
displace necessary human labour." Besides, this machinery must
be such as the villages can themselves make and can afford to
use.

Gandhiji believes that the ideal society is incompatible
with heavy transport, courts, lawyers, the modern system of medi-
cine and big cities. He writes, "I doubt if the steel age is
an advance on the flint age." "I whole heartedly detest this mad
desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites
and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction."
In the ideal society there will be no centralized production and,
therefore, no heavy transport requiring such production. Besides,
most of such transport is due to military considerations and inter-
national trade with both of which the non-violent society will have
nothing to do. Similarly, serious differences among non-violent
people will be few and far between and will be adjusted by mutual
discussion, persuasion, sometimes by arbitration and rarely, when
these methods do not suffice, by self-imposed suffering. The idea
of bread-labour rules out professional doctors. There will also
be no mass production of drugs, medical instruments etc. Most of
the diseases that poster human life today will disappear due to
the inward control acquired by the individual, the emphasis on

2. Speeches, and writings of M.K. Gandhi, Madras, 1922.
manual labour and the utter absence of the senseless rush and worry born of the ever-present scare of competition and insecurity in modern life. Gandhiji holds a high opinion of the efficacy of ancient Indian yogic exercises for mental, moral and physical health. The minor ailments that may remain will yield to various methods of nature cure. Thus the ideal democracy will be none the worse for the disappearance of doctors who by promising easy cure encourage self-indulgence instead of insculpting self-control among the people.
DEMOCRACY AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Before Gandhiji's entry into Indian politics the Congress was an organization of upper middle class leaders with little contact with the masses. It met once a year in some big town and its politics ranged between resolutions and deputations of prayers and protests. It was thus mainly a deliberative organization concerned with the formation of opinion rather than with action. Gandhiji transformed the Congress into a revolutionary mass organization.

Under his leadership the object of the Congress had been to identify itself with the masses, to educate and discipline them and to fight non-violently for their rights.

With Gandhiji non-violence had always been a caroed and not a policy. In 1919 under Gandhiji's advice the Congress accepted non-violence as a policy only, i.e., for the restricted purpose of winning Swaraj and regulating relations between various religious and social groups in the country. He had hoped that many would accept non-violence as their creed after they had watched its working. But, though he preached non-violence as a policy, he insisted that "even policies require honest adherence in thought, word and deed .... Non-violence being a policy means that it can upon due notice be given up when it proves unsuccessful or ineffective. But simple morality demands that, whilst a particular policy is pursued, it must be pursued with all one's heart.

In independent India the Congress functions as a political party in charge of groups as well as well-informed and balanced criticisms. The various groups within this organization, he held, should be knit together by their common devotion to truth and non-violence. They should not be irreconcilables, and their differences should concern neither the nor the means. Decision in a non-violent organization should be taken in the democratic way, and the opinion of the majority should count. Gandhiji, however, did not accept the logic of counting heads and forcing big minorities on important questions. Non-violence rules out the tyranny of the majority and requires that minorities should be treated with all consideration. Thus in regard to the Congress he wrote, "I have always held that when a respectable minority objects to any rule of conduct, it would be dignified for the majority to yield to the minority."

Thus ordinarily the policy should be decided by the majority vote, but the dissent of the minority should be reckoned with when the question voted upon is one of principle. More obstruction is negative and destructive and aims at capturing power by embarrassment and manoeuvring while non-violence is positive and constructive and aims at conversion through service.

2. Harijan, August 11, 1940, p.244.
3. Harijan, August 11, 1940, p.244.
In this respect also the Congress often lagged behind Gandhiji's ideal. After 1937 the compactness and the homogeneity of the Congress was unduly strained by the rise of groups which had no faith in the creed and the constructive programme of the Congress. Their presence in the Congress, inspite of these differences, was due to the fact that association with the Congress lent strength to their appeal to the masses. These groups sometimes followed obstructionist policy, and Gandhiji once expressed the opinion that "if these groups did not yield to persuasion the best course for the majority was to hand over the Congress machinery to them and work the Congress programme without using the Congress name."

Thus whenever the Congress declared "War" against the Government, it invested Gandhiji with full powers of a dictator. In 1930, Gandhiji gave an important reason why non-violent direct action should not be controlled by a democratic organisation like the Congress. The Congress consisted of people of a variety of metalities. To some non-violence was a matter of policy and expediency, to others a creed. "The instinct of those, therefore, with whom non-violence is a policy, when tempted by violence, may fail them. That of those who have no remedy but non-violence open to them can never fail them as if they have non-violence in them in reality. Hence the necessity for freedom from Congress control."

2. Young India, February 2, 1930.
But this was dictatorship only in name. It lasted only for the duration of civil disobedience. It was democratic in origin, for it was voluntarily adopted by the Congress. Further, the obedience of the rank and file was entirely voluntary and could be withdrawn at their will. Besides, as the movement of civil disobedience developed important leaders were imprisoned, and the Congress was declared illegal. Congress committees ceased to function and delegated their powers to local dictators. The movement then became decentralized and self-regulated. In fact, Gandhiji expected leadership to be so thoroughly decentralized that every Satyagrahi should be both chief and follower. In a revolutionary movement a more democratic arrangement is hardly possible. Thus the Congress combined effective leadership, concentration of power and fighting efficiency with democracy.

This dictatorship, just because it was dictatorship, may be mistaken for being Fascistic. But the two are poles apart. Fascism is based on violence. The Congress, on the other hand, was a non-violent organization. It did not impose its will on others and had only moral sanctions. Thus as the only purely non-violent organization of importance in the world the congress was the very antithesis of Fascism. The smallest minority group in the Congress could resist the unjust majority non-violently and thus safeguard its rights.

That the Congress did not believe in "leadership" is amply born out by Gandhiji's repeated withdrawal from the Congress. In
July 1940 the Congress went so far as to absolve him of his leadership. Gandhiji's influence over the Congress which was often exaggerated, was purely moral, "My opinion", he says, "prevails only to the extent that I carry conviction. Let me give out the secret that often my advice makes no appeal to the members."

Gandhiji tried to mould the structure of the Congress so as to make it a democratic revolutionary organization and to bring within its orbit of service and influence the 7,00,000 of India's villages. He believed that if had progressed from stage to stage in its march towards democracy in the true sense of the term.

In his conception of democracy Gandhiji was not obsessed with large, unwieldy numbers that make for corruption and hypocrisy. As he wrote in 1934, "True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent."

In an article entitled "Congress Position" and lastly in the draft constitution for the Congress which he wrote on 29th January, 1948 and which is known as his "last will and testament to the nation." Gandhiji suggested that in its present form, i.e. as a propaganda and parliamentary machine the Congress had outlived its use. The existing Congress organization should disband

2. Gandhiji's statement, Harijan September 17, 1934.
itself and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh. The Sangh should be a body of servants of the nation engaged in constructive work, mostly in villages, to achieve social, moral, and economic freedom. It should be organized democratically from the bottom upwards.

In 1920 he gave to the Congress a new Constitution. In 1934 he advocated important changes in the constitution, many of which were accepted by the Bombay session of the Congress (1934). The Constitution of 1934 as amended from time, particularly in 1939, determined the structure of the Congress until 1948.

After Gandhiji's passing away his suggestions could not be accepted by the Congress leaders. The Congress adopted a new constitution in 1948 which introduced some new features in the old structure.