CHAPTER – IV

GANDHISM AND COMMUNISM

“Gandhi has often claimed in the course of his discussion with communist and socialist friends that he is a better communist or socialist than they. Their goal is identical.”\(^1\) Writing the introduction of K.G. Mashruwala’s book 'Gandhi and Marx', Vinoba Bhave has used the words, 'Two Mothers' for Gandhism and Marxism as both of them regard the well-being of the poor and the oppressed with the intensely loving regard of the mother.”\(^2\)

The Mahatma himself admitted at one place "What does Communism mean in the last analysis? It means a classless society - an ideal that is worth striving for. Only I part with it when force is called to aid for achieving it.”\(^3\) Perhaps that is why it is often said that 'Gandhism is Communism minus violence.' Before commenting on this, let us first of all see what the similarities and dissimilarities are between Gandhism and Communism.

The common point between Gandhi and Marx is the extreme concern of both for the suppressed and the oppressed, the resourceless and the ignorant, the dumb and starving sections of the society. They form the major part of the world. And their condition is wretched in this

\(^1\) Harijan, 31-03-1946, p. 63.
\(^2\) Vinoba Bhave’s, “Introduction in K. G. Mashruwala, Gandhi and Marx” (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House), 1971, p. 29.
\(^3\) Harijan, 31-03-1937, p. 40.
world which is abundantly full and capable of providing a larger measure of happiness to each and every one. Both want to establish an order, which would make these masses co-sharers in the gift of nature and fruits of human labour and genius.

Both Gandhi and Marx believed in and understood the power of awakened masses. Marx's belief that, theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses, led him to place the highest emphasis on organizing the masses and energising them with correct theory. He never wavered in his belief that the emancipation of the masses was the work of the masses themselves. In his own words: "Human emancipation will only be complete when the real, individual man has absorbed into himself in the abstract citizen; when as an individual man in his every day life, in his relationships, he has become a species being; and when he has recognized and organised his powers as social power so that he no longer separates this social power from himself as a political power."4

Gandhi was able to accomplish his great task of leading the people of India to freedom from foreign rule because he understood the masses and was extremely adroit in organising them, and rousing their enthusiasm and energy for the task of national liberation. The real seat of power is the people. If the individuals recognise the power in their hands and use it constructively to secure the social good (Sarvodaya) or to engage in Satyagraha against the unjust laws and the repressive measures of the state, the monopolistic effectiveness of the state power would be reduced. The mightiest government can be rendered absolutely

impotent if the people realizing their power use it in a disciplined manner for the common good.

The glaring economic inequalities of the society leading to the concentration of capital in the hands of a few evoked condemnation of both Marx and Gandhi. According to Marx, the existence of equality is naturally bound up with the true application of the rule: 'He who shall work, shall eat.' In the words of Frank Thakurdas, "Marx's sovereign concept, as we all knew, was of economic equality; his life and writings are a glorious epitaph on that; for after all it is economic injustice and economic exploitations that have characterised the whole course of human history."5

The state of inequality was morally degrading and economically untenable for Gandhi also. In an article, 'Gandhiji's Communism', Pyare Lal beautifully depicts Gandhi's state of mind: "Economic equality of his conception did not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount. It simply meant that everybody should have enough for his or her needs. For instance, he required two shawls in winter whereas his grandnephew Kanu Gandhi who stayed with him did not require any warm cloth whatsoever. He required goat's milk, oranges and other fruits: Kanu could do with ordinary food. He envied Kanu but there was no point in it. Kanu was a young man whereas he was an old man of 76. The monthly expenditure of his food was far more than that of Kanu but that did not mean that there was economic inequality between them. The elephant needs a thousand times more food than the ant, but that is not an indication of inequality. So, the real meaning of economic equality

was: 'To each according to his need. That was the definition of Marx. If a single man demanded as much as a man with wife and four children that would be a violation of economic equality.'

"Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former needs more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument," he continued. "The contrast between the rich and the poor is a painful sight."6

And Equality, according to Marx, comes to prevail when classless society is established after the successful results of the revolution. All kinds of equality - social, economic, legal and political - merge so as to prove that what we know by the name of equality is possible only after the liquidation of class antagonisms. All persons engaged in work, whether mental or physical, belong to the class of the toilers and intelligentsia that shows the existence of a new kind of collective life." "The organic unification in one classless collective of all workers means an end to dividing society. It will be a society of peaceful creative labour, equality and the happiness of all the people. This will be a society where, the first time in history, the personality of each worker will attain a full, general and perfect development."7

Marxist notion of equality assumes a humanistic form in the final stage of social development. That is, the existence of equality will merge with the prevalence of 'glorious human values'. When the state withers

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6 Harijan, 31-03-1946, pp. 64-65.
away, people lead a life of perfect co-operation. It is in such an ideal state that Rousseau's concept of moral equality shall prevail. Here, the proletariat will ultimately abolish its own supremacy as a class, and society would represent not as a group of mutually antagonistic classes but an association in which the free development of each should be the condition for the free development of all. When in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the state will lose its political character and will wither away as there are no capitalists now whose interest it had been serving all through. In the words of Engels, "It will be sent to the museum of antiquities and will be placed side by side with the spinning-jenny and Bronze axe. A classless society, based upon the doctrine, 'from each according to his ability and to every one according to his needs', will come into existence."\(^8\)

Similarly, Gandhi's ultimate ideal was also stateless society which he termed "Ramrajya or the kingdom of God on Earth." He further said, "I do not know what it will be like in heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future can not be very unlike."

"In concrete terms, then the independence should be political, economic and moral. 'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form. 'Economic' means entire freedom from the British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the

\(^8\) Engels, F., Fundamental of Marxism Leninism (Moscow: F.L.P.M.), 1975.
tallest. This can take place only by capital or the capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least. 'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of Ramrajya excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral heights.9 At another place, he made it emphatically clear, "By Ramrajya, I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramrajya, Divine Raj, the kingdom of God. For me, Ram and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but one God of truth and righteousness. Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramrajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizens would be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramrajya."10

Gandhi's ideal of stateless society brings him close to Marxian philosophy where ultimate ideal is also the establishment of stateless and classless society.

Another similarity between Gandhi and Marx is that both were social scientists. The scientific temper of Gandhi is brought out clearly in his autobiography, which he appropriately called 'My Experiments with Truth'. Throughout his life, he was conducting experiments of various kinds - experiments in food, in medicine, in living, in political action, in education and so on. His contribution in economics such as his demonstrations of the impossibility of solving any of man's problems

10 Young India, 19-09-1929, p. 305.
through industrialization and his concept of trusteeship are all significant scientific contributions.\textsuperscript{11}

Marx, too, was a great social scientist. Engels called him the greatest living thinker. His scientific contributions were to have discovered 'The law of development of human history and the special law of motion governing the present day capitalist mode of production and the bourgeoisie society that this mode of production has created.'\textsuperscript{12} Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law, has recorded: 'Marx held the view that science must be pursued for itself, irrespective of the eventual results of research, but at the same time, a scientist could only debase himself by giving up active participation in public... and holding aloof from the life and political struggles of his contemporaries.' Marx used to say, "Those who have the good fortune to be able to devote themselves to scientific pursuits must be the first to place their knowledge at the service of humanity."\textsuperscript{13}

Both Gandhi and Marx had no use for theory unrelated to practice. They both were interested in theory only if it served a practical purpose. In his 'Theses on Feuerbach', Karl Marx had argued "Philosophers have interpreted the word in various ways; the point, however is to change it."\textsuperscript{14} Marx was a voracious reader. He was always plunged in a sea of books. Gandhi had not read very much as he informs

\textsuperscript{12} Gemkow, Heinrich, Karl Marx: A Biography (Dresden: Verlag Zeit in Bild), 1968, p. 384.
\textsuperscript{13} Liebknecht, Wilhelm, Marx and Engels Through The Eyes of Their Contemporaries (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 1972, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{14} Marx, Karl, Thesis on Feuerbach Karl Marx’s Selected Writings (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1977, p. 158.
us in his autobiography. He heard of Freud only towards the end of his life and read 'Das Capital' only in his 75th year. It is unlikely that Gandhi who constantly immersed in the thick of political activities, had the time necessary to devote to a proper study of this book. He certainly does not discuss at any length Marx's Theories in his writings. His trusteeship concept and his attitude towards capitalists would have been substantially modified if he had recognised the role of man's objective environment in moulding his character, views and attitudes. On the other hand, the insight that only a changed individual can change society is an insight that Gandhi shared with Marx, but an insight that the followers of both have often neglected.

Both Gandhi and Marx took the attitude that their own writings were subservient to their political practice, and were stimulated to fresh theoretical practices by the onrush of events and problems. They were not inclined to rest on their scholarly laurels. When some one suggested to Gandhi that he should set forth his ideas in a systematic and formal treatise, Gandhi answered, "For one thing, I have no time, for another, I am still experimenting. Hence let the treatise develop slowly by itself if it does at all." In a like situation, Marx's response was strikingly similar. Three years before his death when he received inquiries regarding the eventual publication of his completed works, Marx replied dryly, 'They first would have to be written.'

16 Ibid.
17 Gemkow, Heinrich, Karl Marx: A Biography, op. cit.
Both Gandhi and Marx distrusted the capitalist system. Gandhi took a somewhat unhistorical view and condemned 'modern civilisation'. Marx, on the other hand, felt confident that the capitalist society will be overthrown and replaced by a socialist state, committed to the harmonious development of human being, after an interim dictatorship of the proletariat. Both of them took a dim view of the impact of machinery on man. But the Mahatma attributed it to mechanisation as such, Marx blamed capitalist society for this adverse impact it had on human beings.

In 'Das Capital', Marx makes several references to the unfavourable impact that machinery has on labour in a capitalist society. "The character of independence and estrangement which the capitalist mode of production as a whole gives to the instruments of labour and to the product as against the workmen is developed by means of machinery into a thorough antagonism. Therefore, it is with the advent of machinery that the workman for the first time brutally revolts against the instruments of labour."\(^{18}\) Marx's major complaint against capitalism is that it cripples the labour. In his early writings, he argued. "It is true that labour produces wonderful things for the rich, but for the weaker, it produces privation. It produces palaces, but for the workers hovels. It produces beauty but for the worker deformity. It replaces labour by machines, but some of the workers it throws back to a barbarous type of

labour, and the other workers it turns into machines. It produces intelligence, but for the workers idiocy criticism.\textsuperscript{19}

In the socialist society, which Marx believed would be established by the forceful overthrow of capitalism, the labourer would come into his own and socialism would ensure the equality of all. Marx felt strongly on the subject of exploited labour and passionately desired their emancipation. On coming into being of a socialist society, Gandhi, too, desired socialism and was opposed to private property, but hoped that the rich could be persuaded to voluntarily place their wealth at the disposal of society. Gandhi feared that too much concentration of political power in the hands of the state would be detrimental to human freedom. But he was very serious about the establishment of socialism in India. On the eve of the independence, he said, "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no high class and low class people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.\textsuperscript{20}

Thus, it is true that there are certain common points between Gandhian thought and Marxism. But their differences are nevertheless fundamental. The fact of the matter is that these two ideologies are irreconcilable, the differences between them are fundamental.

\textsuperscript{19} Marx, Karl, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 1967, pp. 21-28.
\textsuperscript{20} Young India, 10-09-1931, p. 255.
Individual and Society

Take, for instance, the role of individual in a society. Marx did assert that "Man is the measure of Mankind". However, the theory and philosophy which Marx built up did not reflect this assertion of his. His was essentially a collectivist philosophy. What role did Marx ascribe to an individual in a society? How did he envisage the development of an individual? His views on the subject were governed by a purely materialist concept which firmly accepted the primacy of matter over mind. To him, individual was the product of society not its maker. Man's freedom, his ideas, his human emotions, were all linked up with environmental conditions and, therefore, to Marx 'development of human society was a prerequisite for the development of individual'. In other words, individual was just a function of society without any independent existence. Obviously, to Marx, all talk of individuality, freedom of conscience, etc. appeared as bourgeois shibboleths.

Expressing these views unambiguously in the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote: "...In bourgeois society, capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality. And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois as abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

"By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying... You must, therefore, confess that by 'individual' you mean no other person than the bourgeois,
than the middleclass owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the ways, and made impossible."21

In the system of thought that Marx evolved, State has a very important position. When the bourgeois state is smashed and proletariat is organised as a ruling class, that is when proletarian State is established, the life of individual must become a subordinate limb of this all-powerful State and the liberation of the individual must await the ultimate ‘withering away of the State’.

For Gandhi, reform of the society was an integral part of the process of reform of the individual. To him, individual was the starting point of social regeneration. Gandhi considered man as the soul of human society and believed in the 'soul force' as the motivating agency of social change.

He considered self-realization as the ultimate object of man's life but at the same time, he wanted this urge for self-realization to be reconciled with the spirit of service for the society to secure not "the greatest good for the greatest number" as stated by Jeremy Bentham but "the greatest good of all".22

Gandhi wanted the least intervention and if possible no intervention of the State in the life of the individual. He wanted even a criminal to be reformed through the touch of human heart and not through the baton of the police. Preservation of the individuality of man for the emergence of a real decentralised political system and ultimately

a Stateless democracy was the concern of Gandhi. For this reason, opposing the concentration of power in the hands of the State, Gandhi wrote:

"The State represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soul-less machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence. I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of progress."23

The exponents of Marxism may ridicule Gandhi’s concept of individual as a spiritual entity endowed with ‘soul-force’ as an irrational concept. However, primacy of individual has also been emphasised by the protagonists of rationalism and humanism.

In this connection, in his famous work “Reason, Romanticism and Revolution”, M. N. Roy wrote: "New humanism lays emphasis on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world - man is a thinking being, and he can be so only as an individual. The brain is the instrument of thought; and it is individually owned. It cannot be possessed collectively. Revolutions are heralded by iconoclastic ideas conceived by gifted individuals. A brotherhood of men attracted by the ‘adventure of ideas’, keenly conscious of the urge for freedom, fired by the vision of a free society of free men, and motivated by the will to remake the world, so as to restore the individual in his position of

primacy and dignity, will show the way out of the contemporary crisis of modern civilization."\textsuperscript{24}

Gandhi, through the path of humanism, based on his spiritual approach to life, and M. N. Roy, through the path of new humanism rooted in rationalism, converged on the same point – the primacy and dignity of individual in human society.

Violence Vs Non-Violence

When it is said that Gandhism is communism minus violence, the impression created is that the 'minus violence' factor in communism is some small impurity, the removal of which will make it the same as Gandhism. In the words of K.G. Mashruwala, "As a matter of fact, even if it were possible to so equate Gandhism in terms of Communism, the minus violence factor is a major factor of considerable value. The implications of minus violence are so great as to make the equation as illusory as to say that red is green minus yellow and blue, or a worm is a snake minus poison."\textsuperscript{25}

When Vinoba was once told that Gandhism differed from communism only in its strict emphasis on non-violence, he reacted, "Two persons were so physically alike that one could have well served as the double of the other in a political fraud. But there was a slight difference. One breathed, the other did not. The result was that a dinner

was being prepared for one and a coffin for the other. The likeness between these two ideologies bereft to the above pair of doubles.\textsuperscript{26}

Gandhi's greatness as a leader and thinker lay in his transformation of the individualistic message of non-violence into a successful technique for direct mass action. He always insisted upon adherence to truth and non-violence for achieving the end. Marx does not care about the quality of the means, provided they appear efficient enough for achieving the end as quickly as possible.\textsuperscript{27} The Mahatma always pleaded for the purity of means and did not accept the statement that 'end justifies the means', rather he advocated 'means justify the end.'\textsuperscript{28} Ends and Means are convertible terms. The two are inseparable. The purity of one affects the purity of the other. Criticizing those who do not give due importance to means, he said, "They say 'means are after all means'. I would say means are after all every thing. As the means are, so is the end. Violent means will give violent Swaraj. That would be a menace to the world and to India herself...... There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed, the creator has given us control (and that too, very limited), over means, none over the end. Realisation of the goal is in exact proportion to that of means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. Holding such a belief, I have been endeavouring to keep the country to means that are purely peaceful and legitimate."\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., pp. 16-17.
\textsuperscript{27} Sharma, J. N., Alternative Economics, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{28} Young India, 26-12-1924, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 17-7-1924, pp. 236-237.
Means and End

The problem of means and end according to Marx, is a scientific problem. He regards ethics and politics, as applied sciences.\textsuperscript{30} Of course, in his early writings, he appears to hold that ethico-social discipline is a philosophical speculation "about the material condition of life rather than a science of society"\textsuperscript{31} But later on, he changed his views. From the year 1948 he stopped talking in terms of human nature, man in general, etc. These concepts are empty concepts according to him. They exist only in the misery realm of philosophical fantasy.\textsuperscript{32}

The problem of 'Ends and Means' has been a subject matter of a sharp controversy between the Marxian and Gandhian schools. Marx viewed every morality and ethics as class morality. To him, all value judgements were relativist and there was no room for any human values that were absolute. According to Marx, the supreme task before all revolutionaries was the creation of the highest phase of communist society under which ‘from each according to his ability and to each according to his need’ would be the guiding principle. Whatever helped in fulfilling this task was justifiable, ‘Ends justify the means’, was the law Marx prescribed for employing means towards the fulfilment of revolutionary ends.

\textsuperscript{31} Marx, Karl, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, op. cit., p. 27.
Marx had envisaged a number of stages before the ideal communist society was established. Every stage had its ends and quite naturally, following Marx's concept of relationship between means and ends, every phase would be marked by suitable means employed to accomplish ends in that phase. For instance, after the establishment of transitional 'dictatorship of the proletariat', everything that was essential to subserve the task of setting up this dictatorship and making it effective was justified, according to Marx. Under such circumstances, the voices of dissent could be ruthlessly suppressed and silenced forever. At the altar of proletarian dictatorship, men with honest differences of opinions could be liquidated. ‘Ends justify the means, and when the end is power either of the group or of an individual, there need be no limits of degradation to which human being could sink.

If, in the onward march of society towards communism, initial phase required primitive accumulation of capital, millions could be sent to the forced labour camps, under the garb of punishing the 'counter-revolutionaries' but in effect ensuring primitive capital accumulation through the blood and sweat of forced labour used as a raw material. All this can be done without any prick in the conscience, because ‘ends justify the means’.

The colleagues in the ‘revolutionary’ party could be liquidated without any embarrassment because this apparently tyrannical measure could be justified again on the basis of the revolutionary ends. It is for this reason that the infamous 'Moscow trials' in which innocent men were liquidated by the monstrous power machine could be conducted...
with a 'revolutionary' zeal under the glorified slogan ‘ends justify the means’.

It is futile to characterize all these monstrosities committed in the name of the proletarian revolution as distortions and aberrations of the basic philosophy of Marx. Only if Marx had shown more concern for the relation between means and ends, many human tragedies that were enacted by the regimes swearing by Marx could have been averted.

Gandhi's insistence on fair means to achieve fair ends appeared to critics as sheer sermonising. But as history unfolded itself and many concealed horrors of totalitarian regimes came to light, Gandhi's approach to the problem, of 'ends and means' acquired relevance.

In the entire framework of Gandhi's thinking, life of an individual, despite its social purpose, also had an independent and autonomous existence. Naturally, morality governing his life had, according to Gandhi, both a social as well as individual content. While some aspects of morality changed with the changing society, there were some which, according to Gandhi, were absolute and universal. It is here that Gandhi struck a discordant note with Marx. About this aspect, Henry Bamford Parkes wrote:

"What Marxists fail to recognise is that there are two different kinds of morality. Morality means, in the first place, a system of ethical prohibitions, regulating such matters as property and sexual relationships and having as its purpose the ordering and preservation of society. Morality, in this sense, is a product of social conditions, and changes when society changes.
... Morality means also, however, that ordering and disciplining of emotions, that achievement of self-harmony and self-control, that recognition of the independent rights and reality of men, which have been recognized in all ages as the finest fruit of civilization.  

The aspects of morality referred to in Parkes' quotation are not entirely missing in the approach of Marx. The main question is of striking a proper balance. This can be done through a series of swings. The understanding between Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan may help in striking a balance between the two aspects of Gandhi's teachings: struggle against injustice and constructive work to rectify it.

The latter aspect of morality to which Parkes has referred reflects Gandhi's approach to the question of morality. With this moral approach, Gandhi always believed that whatever was morally right could not be politically wrong. He, therefore, conceived of a revolution that had moral content. He did not desire to build the edifice of a new society on the debris of destruction of the dignity of man. He refused to treat individual as mere means to achieve the ends. It is in this broader perspective that Gandhi stressed the use of fair means to achieve fair ends. The pollution of means, he believed, would always pollute the ends themselves.

Leaving aside the spiritual and moral aspect of Gandhi's views, do we not have the experience on the political plane that democratic ends are seldom achieved through anti-democratic means?

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This correspondence between means and ends is also established by the experience that revolutionary ends are seldom attained through statusquoist or non-revolutionary means. In this context, it has to be remembered that the Bhoodan movement stagnated essentially because, while experimenting with the method of persuasion, it gave up the path of peaceful struggle against the landlords for the redressal of the grievances of the peasants and against the government for the effective implementation of its own agrarian laws. History has often demonstrated that after a violent revolution, the revolution devours her own children and dictatorship is installed. The palace coups organised through deceit, conspiracy and violence rarely lead to the establishment of just and democratic regimes. On the other hand, they often set the pace for further chain reaction of coups.

In sharp contrast to this, transformations that take place through democratic means generally result in the establishment of enduring democratic systems. On the international plane, we often hear of the talk by big powers regarding the establishment of enduring world peace. However, this objective is also likely to prove illusive if peace is sought to be established by big powers through improving their nuclear capabilities and potential for destruction. Peace cannot be built through the armoury of violence. Only the message of Gandhi to ensure unison between means and ends can achieve the desired results.

Marx has no love for non-violence as a means. He accepts the maxim that 'end justifies the means'. Violence is justified according to him, if, it helps in realizing the ideal. He held the history of all hitherto existing society as the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave,
meaning patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and detail
journey man; in a word, the oppressor and the oppressed, stood in
constant opposition to one another; carried on an uninterrupted, now
hidden now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a
revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of
the contending classes.\textsuperscript{34} Throughout the ages, the working class people,
whether slaves, peasants or industrial workers, have been brutally
exploited by the ruling classes. So, it is natural that they struggle against
oppression and strive for a free and happy life. If, for such an end, they
adopt violent means, they can not be condemned.

Marx is of the opinion that without class struggle, there will be no
social progress. The developmental progress of society is usually faster,
if the struggle of the exploited against the exploiters is more stubborn
and organized. Therefore, the exploited has got the moral right to decide
what type of means he will use for realizing his objective quickly. Thus,
Marx accords moral sanction to the adoption of any kind of means. If it
is only through a violent means that the objective is achieved and
achieved quickly, the adoption of such a means is morally justified.
Further, clarifying the Marxian stand on this issue, V. I. Lenin
emphasizes, "If it is necessary to use any rude, cunning, unlawful
method, evasions, concealment of truth, one should."\textsuperscript{35}

Marxism does not advocate violence for its own sake, claim some
of its followers. In a letter to Gorky, Lenin has also written, "Opposition

\textsuperscript{34} Marx, Karl Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party,
op. cit., pp. 40-41.

\textsuperscript{35} Lenin, V. I., Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder
(Moscow: Novosti Press), 1969, p. 5.
to all violence is our ultimate ideal - it is hellishly hard task." They believe that violence is thrust upon the oppressed by the ruling class, and the majority of the population as a measure of self-defence and of vindicating the ethical ideal of non-exploitation represented by communism takes resort to just and necessary violence. The extent of violence which must be employed is a matter that depends on the intensity of the resistance which is countenanced. Gandhi, on the other hand, urges that all type of violence is an evil and, therefore, is to be eschewed. Thus, Gandhi and Marx are diametrically opposed to each other with regard to the selection of means for the realization of the end.

Spirit Vs Matter

The cornerstone of Gandhian philosophy is the supremacy of spirit over matter. Gandhi starts with the premise of an omnipotent and all pervading spiritual power which can be called by many names, Brahm or God or Truth. The existence of God or the supreme reality can not be proved through the evidence of the senses. It is self-evident and can be realised only through inner experience of man. Man can have a revelation of the spiritual power intimately by a process of ethical discipline and thereby purifying one's heart through a life of truth and non-violence. It is only through renunciation of the luxuries of life and ridding oneself of the life of indulgence and sensate values that man can reach nearer God or the supreme reality.

36 Miller, Rene Fulop, Lenin and Gandhi (London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons), 1972, p. XIII.
Gandhi is over-confident about the presence of spirit in man. This consciousness of the presence of the spiritual power in man has induced Gandhi to believe in the basic goodness of man and to believe in the unity of all souls. For him, 'Whatever happens to one body must affect the whole of matter and the whole of spirit'.\(^{38}\) For the spirit manifests in all life. "If one gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one falls, the whole world falls to that extent. Naturally for him, dealing of man with man is judged with spiritual considerations. "To me God is truth and love, God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet he is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love, God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word, for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly."\(^{39}\) For, Gandhi's spiritualism has an inherent potency to combine the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, Gautama Buddha's compassion, the Hindu concept of love and the Islam’s obedience to the will of God.

Viewed from the Marxian point of view, Gandhi’s conception of spirit can not be appreciated at all. Marx, on the other hand, considers matter to be the ultimate reality and spirit only a reflex of matter. To him, "The more careful a man becomes about values, the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes."\(^{40}\) He maintains that one should not sink himself in the imagination of spirit. Rather one should

\(^{38}\) Harijan, 12-11-1938, p. 226.
\(^{39}\) Young India, 05-03-1925, p. 81.
\(^{40}\) Marx, Karl, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, op. cit.
be aware of one's flesh. "Although we should possess spirit, spirit should not possess us...only by being aware of his flesh is man fully aware of himself and only by being aware of himself, is he aware or rational."41

Marx is essentially a philosopher of matter and he has fused the materialistic traditions of Democritus, Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza, with the dialetics of Hegelian idealistic philosophy. In Marx, the concept of matter is an all embracing concept, which includes not merely separate objects or processes or phenomena, but all objective reality. Lenin, defining the concept of matter, wrote: "Matter is a philosophical concept denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensation and which is copied, photographed, and reflected by our sensations."42

Marxian view of matter is not static, but dynamic. To them, matter exists only in motion through which it manifests or reveals itself. All bodies, starting with the atoms in the molecules to the whole man, to the cosmic and territorial bodies, are in continuous motion. Likewise, living organism and social life are in a state of flux. It is impossible to find a single particle in the world of matter which is in a state of eternal rest. It is for this reason that Marx regards life, consciousness and even social life as 'higher form of motion of matter.' Marx appears to be confident of the view that the forms of motion of matter are 'interconnected' and inseparable. Their unity and interconnection is

based on the material unity of the world. If appropriate conditions are provided, one form of motion can be converted into other.

Marx's concept of matter and motion is apparently found to be strong metaphysical basis for all his ideologies in the field of economics, politics and ethics. Gandhi takes the help of spirit in explaining and defending his ideologies. Thus on this aspect also, they have taken the opposite stands.

Every thinker who theorises upon the problem of social reconstruction and government is guided by certain preconceived assumptions regarding human nature. If he assumes human nature to be utterly selfish and wicked, then he glorifies the role of state. But if the human being is considered to be wholly good and peaceful, in that case the state becomes unnecessary and the ultimate goal of a stateless society is envisaged. Marxists do not fall into either of the two categories, since they believe that human nature is a social construct and man the product of his environment. Consequently, he acts and thinks in accordance with its laws. Any change in human nature can only be possible by effecting a corresponding change in man's environment. Gandhi, on the other hand, repudiates both the assumptions pertaining to human nature, regarding him wicked on one hand and the product of social construct on the other.

To Gandhi, man is basically good, since he is a part of divinity. The ideal man, according to Gandhi, is the non-attached man, who is full of qualities of truth and non-violence, renunciation and self-sacrifice and that these virtues can be cultivated and men initiated into moral
excellence till a stage comes when life becomes regulated and the need for Government is felt no more.

View of History

At this stage it becomes imperative to have a look at how both Gandhi and Communists viewed history. To the Mahatma, history meant gradual unfolding of the spirit of love and non-violence resulting in an increasing awareness of universal brotherhood. He discarded the mercantilistic interpretation of history as given by Marx. Marx had believed that man was dominated by considerations of economic self-interests. According to him, the ultimate causes of social changes and political revolutions are to be sought not in the minds of men, in their increasing insight into eternal truth, but in the changes in the modes of production and exchange; they are to be sought not in the philosophy but in the economics of the period concerned. "Social relations are closely bound with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces, men change their modes of production, they change all their social relations. The hand mill gives you society with a feudal lord, the steam mill society with the industrial capitalist."\(^{43}\)

The whole universe and all the things in the history are explicable in purely materialistic terms and are rooted in the economic process. According to Marx, the course of history is determined by the actions of groups not by those of individuals, and the only meaningful groups are those based on the modes of production which are termed as 'classes' in the Marxian language. In every society, there have been two main classes having diametrically opposed interests. The history of hitherto

\(^{43}\) Marx Karl and F. Engels, Selected Works, Vo. II, op. cit., p. 143.
existing society is the history of class struggle. The final phase, according to him, is the impending struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx distinguishes five economic systems or modes of production - primitive, communal, slave feudal, capitalist and socialist. Under the first, means of production are owned by the society; under the second, slave owners own them; under the third, they are owned partially by the feudal lord; under the fourth, the capitalist owns the means of production and the workers are compelled to work for him; under the fifth, the workers themselves will own the means of production and with the abolition of the inherent contradictions of capitalism, production will reach its fullest development. Thus both from the point of view of production and of freedom, each of these stages marks an advance over the one preceding it. This, being in accordance with the law of dialectics, harmonises in the synthesis that of value in the thesis and anti-thesis. To understand social revolution, man must distinguish between changes in the productive forces and the various ideological forms with which men become aware and fight under the banner of one or the other ideology. Marxists contend that most history has been written under this illusion and the true causes of the revolutions have remained concealed till the advent of Marx. Engels claimed: "Marx discovered the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology that mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, religion, science, art, etc. and that, therefore, the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which state institutions, the legal conceptions, the art and even the religious ideas of the people concerned have been evolved and in the
light of which these things must be explained instead of *vice versa* as had hitherto been the case." Thus the economic system of society, which Marx calls the sub-structure, always provides the real basis, and the religious laws, ethics, etc. are the super-structure built upon and determined by it. As such, in Marx's view, ideas are not supreme; it is not they which determines the form of society but it is the society which determine their form. The dialectics of Marx, when applied to the interpretation of history, ends in a deterministic philosophy which militates against the fundamental concept of man's essential freedom and creativity.

Gandhi discards this economic interpretation of history and did not think in terms of a single factor determining the social process. Experience also shows that there is no single determinant of social phenomena. Whatever might be their origins, every sphere of life and society - political, social, economic, cultural, etc. - acquire lives of their own and though all these aspects interlock and changes in one sphere affect the others, the effects are not always such as one would like to see. It was a widely held belief in radical circles when Gandhi was fighting against untouchability that he was wasting his energy in vain. The evil was a feudal relic and would disappear when the country was industrialized. India is now proud to be counted as the tenth largest industrial nation in the world but that has had little impact on the problems of untouchability and casteism. There are even sociological studies to show that casteism has become stronger in the industrial areas. Political freedom has not automatically lifted the educational system of India out of rut in which imperial rule had left it. Socialist

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44 Ibid., p. 143.
industrialization in the USSR has not helped to rid that country of anti-semitism and has not changed everything that needed to be changed. A new ruling class has emerged, intent on keeping the common people in their place. Women in highly industrialised Japan still lack basic equality with men. Such instances can be multiplied endlessly.

So, Gandhi took the approach of a multi-pronged attack on all fronts and while engaged in the struggle for political freedom, set in motion programmes and processes for changes in other spheres of the country's life: for radical changes in the economic system based on a new productive technology, for a new educational system for changes in values in social life that would rid it of the evils of casteism, untouchability, the liberation of women and so on. These programmes were all conceived as parts of one integral whole which he named the ‘Constructive Programme.’

Gandhi also rejects the gross materialism of Marx. Gandhi's interpretation of history is the extension of his metaphysics - the concepts of truth and nonviolence and his belief in God. He has a firm faith that God, the maker of us all, is the director of this human drama being enacted in the theatre of this world. His unshakable faith in God leads him to believe in the Divine dispensation and the Will and the capacity of God to right and wrong and undo the injustice prevailing in the world.

Thus unlike Marx, Gandhi believes in the dynamic forces of the spirit, or God acting behind all social and historical movements. Not a leaf stirs without His order. The spirit is moving with a purpose.
progressively towards the realization of truth and perfection at all levels both in the life of individual and society. As a corollary of this arises his belief in the force of religion in the history of man. Man's spiritual and moral progress stems from religion. It leads Gandhi to believe in the power of the spirit of man to shape the environment according to the law of spiritual evolution. Believing in the spiritual unity of all men, Gandhi argues that "If one man gains spiritually the whole world gains, if he falls the whole world falls to that extent." Viewed in this light history becomes a gradual unfolding of the cosmic souls. To Gandhi, it is the progressive realization of non-violence. "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 to live the life of a wandering hunter. He, therefore, took to agriculture and depended mainly on mother earth for his food. Thus from being a nomad, he settled down to a civilised, stable life, founded villages and towns, and from a member of family, he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive ahimsa and diminishing himsa."  

Capital Vs Labour

There is also a basic difference between Gandhism and Marxism on capital vs. labour. On the one hand, we have Gandhi's concept of trusteeship which is heavily loaded with spiritualism and idealism, and

45 Harijan, 11-08-1940, p. 245.
on the other, we have the hard materialism of Marx purported to be scientific which finds manifestation in his concept of surplus value.

Marx, on the other hand, has given a completely different picture. He says that capital creates nothing but is itself created by labour. The wood, as a tree, created by nature, has a value, but this is not exchange value and does not become such until human labour power has been extended upon it to transform it into objects, which can be bought and sold in the market. In short, the value of all marketable commodities is determined by the quantity of labour power which goes to produce them, but the worker, however, under the capitalist system, does not receive a just share of value of his skill. Instead, he gets less than that. Let us take an hypothetical example. Suppose, the actual price of a product produced by the labourer is Rs. 100. And he is paid Rs. 75 as wages. This difference of Rs. 25 is appropriated by the capitalist and this is called the surplus value. Surplus value is thus difference between actual price and actual payment.

\[
\text{Actual price - Actual payment} = \text{Surplus value}
\]

\[
100 - 75 = 25
\]

This surplus is pocketed by the capitalist and this constitutes his profit - a toll wrung from the grinding toil of the masses. Competition impels the capitalist to beat down the worker's wage to the lowest possible point. This can be more readily and fully accomplished in large scale units of industrial organisations. Hence because of the larger profits, there is a progressive tendency towards consolidation which results in the concentration of capital in the hands of a very small class -
the bourgeois. The poor grow poorer and the rich richer until finally the workers are impelled to organise.

Marx concludes that by its very nature, capitalism is full of inner contradictions and is doubly doomed by the general law of capital accumulation and centralization which begins to operate automatically as soon as capitalist appropriates surplus value.

Marx drew attention to the fact that "capital's secondary modes of exploitation"46 like speculation, and usury were more predominant than the capitalist mode of production in France of 1848-50. This meant the stranglehold of a 'financial aristocracy' over the economy which was obsessed by the 'mania to get rich' - to get rich not by production but by "pocketing the already available wealth of others." Karl Marx continues: "Clashing every moment with bourgeois laws themselves, an unbridled assertion of unhealthy and dissolute appetite manifested itself, particularly at the top of bourgeois society - lusts wherein wealth derived from gambling naturally seeks its satisfaction, where pleasure becomes debauched, where money, filth and blood commingle. The financial aristocracy in its mode of acquisition as well as its pleasure is nothing but the rebirth of the lumpen proletariat on the heights of bourgeois society"47

The above mentioned passage sums up so well as an important feature of the class situation at the top of the class structure even in countries like India.

46 Marx, Karl and Frederick, On Colonialism (Moscow: Progress Publications), 1955, p. 149
47 Ibid., p. 142.
And what is the lumpen proletariat? Engels observes: "The lumpen proletariat, the sum of the deprived elements of all classes, which establishes its headquarters in the big cities, is the worst of all possible allies. The rabble is absolutely venal and absolutely brazen. If the French workers in every revolution, inscribed on the houses, Death to Thieves, and even shot some, they did it, not out of enthusiasm for property but because they rightly considered it necessary above all to keep that gang at a distance. Every leader of these workers who uses these scoundrels as guards or relies on them for support proves himself by this action alone a traitor to the movement."\textsuperscript{48}

In a nutshell, in transitional societies like India, the 'financial aristocracy', the government and military bureaucracy, the lumpen middle class and the lumpen proletariat are the typical unproductive social categories which seem almost to overshadow the productive classes like the genuine industrial and agricultural entrepreneurs, the skilled intelligentsia, the toiling peasants and the working classes. This block of the unproductive classes obstructs the formation and consolidation of a block of the productive classes. These unproductive classes are also the vehicles of two perverse psychological drives viz. avarice (i.e. the mania to get rich) on the one hand and envy (i.e. the craze to ape the rich or to pull them down to one's own level) on the other.

Avarice and envy are thus the sources of two major tendencies of contemporary social movements, the tendency of parasitic economism, on the one hand, and primitive rebelliousness and anarchism, on the

other. These are found in the most concentrated form in the 'financial aristocracy', the lumpen middle class and the 'lumpen proletariat'. They infect all other classes of society including the working class. What are idealized even by the radicals as class conflicts are thus conflicts not between one class combination committed to sectional interest and another to the interest of the whole society; not between one representing parasitic appropriation of the economic surplus and another representing enlargement of this surplus 'so as to raise the level of social productivity'; not between one representing a low level of social ethics and culture and another representing a much higher level. The compulsive force of avarice seems to be leading all social classes now towards aggressive competition in parasitic economism; and when avarice is thwarted, the compulsive force of envy generates moods of primitive rebelliousness and in such moods, the lumpen proletariat is the most active force, subjecting the society occasionally to a mad orgy of primitive terror, arson, loot and violence. Both these tendencies use socialism as an ideological disguise, one thriving under the guise of 'distributive socialism' and the other under the guise of 'militant' and 'extremist' socialism.

Both these orientations are, however, alien to the Marxist concept of social revolution. As Marx stated very clearly in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts: "General envy constituting itself as a power is the disguise in which avarice re-establishes itself and satisfies itself, only in another way. The thoughts of every piece of private property - inherent in each place as such - are at least turned against all wealthing private property in the form of envy and the urge to reduce to a common level, so that this envy and urge even constitutes the essence of
competition. The crude communism is only the consummation of this envy and of this levelling down proceeding from this preconceived minimum. How little this annulment of private property is really an appropriation is in fact proved by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilisation, the regression to the unnatural simplicity of the poor and undemanding man who has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not yet even attained it" 49

Thus, we see that Marx does not believe that the capitalist will act as a trustee of the poor. There is a never ending greed of the capitalist which makes him more and more exploiter, till at certain stage, the only thing that the labourer has is to 'loose his chains' and this is when a violent revolution takes place. There is hardly any need to elaborate further how far apart Gandhi and Marx are in their stand here.

Man Vs Machine

The relation between 'man and machine' occupied the mind both of Marx as well as Gandhi. Both of them were conscious of the hardships of man that accompanied the rapid development of machine and technology. However, they arrived at different conclusions as a result of their study of this problem which was basically economic in nature but had human overtones.

Views of Marx on this subject have been elaborately expressed in the special chapter ‘machinery and modern industry’ in the first volume

49 Marx, Karl, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (Moscow: Progress Publishers), p. 100.
of his classic work Das Capital and to some extent in Communist Manifesto also.

In these works, Marx, in his own characteristic style, has dealt with various consequences of the machine and its rationalisation. He has analysed as to how, with the progress and refinement of machine, human labour gradually got displaced and with further development of technology, artisans were swept aside and factory system, with the emergent class of proletariat, was established.

In Das Capital, Marx gives a graphic description of the inevitable impact of rationalisation and modernization of machinery causing further division of labour in which labour was compelled to undertake specialised and simplified jobs that deprived his work of all charm and added monotony to it.

However, with all these consequences of the developing machine, Marx never realised the imperative need to propound technological changes that would restore a balance between man and machine. He could not envisage that at least in developing economies that faced inadequacy of capital and a large number of unemployed, what was needed was not the craze for higher and higher modernised technology but a technology that was labour-intensive in character.

His entire approach rested on the premise that with the progress of machine and modernization of technology, there might arise the displacement of labour, grave hardships to the workers and ruination of the artisans but out of all that will emerge an organised proletarian -
class that will fight the capitalist system and will ultimately lead to the success of the proletarian revolution.

Referring to the hardships which workers had to face, Marx wrote: "No doubt, he is far from denying that temporary inconvenience may result from the capitalist use of machinery. But where is the model without its reverse! Any employment of machinery, except by capital, is to him an impossibility. Exploitation of the workman by the machine is, therefore, with him identical with exploitation of the machine by the workman. Whoever, therefore, exposes the real state of things in the capitalist employment of machinery, is against its employment in any way, and is an enemy of social progress!"\textsuperscript{50}

Marx did not restrict his study to the impact of machine in the industry alone. In Das Capital, he has also considered the role played by the machine in the field of agriculture. Here, too, his approach has been that modern industry had exerted a revolutionary effect on agriculture in initiating a process of destroying the peasant who was clinging to the old order and in throwing up a new class of wage-labour that constituted a force of social change. Commenting on this aspect, Marx wrote: "In the sphere of agriculture, modern industry has a more revolutionary effect than elsewhere, for this reason, that it annihilates the peasant, that bulwark of the old society, and replaces him by the wage-labourer. Thus for social changes, and the class-antagonisms, the desires are brought to the same level in the country as in the towns.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50} Marx, Karl, Das Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 416.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 474.
Thus in the field of industry, as well as agriculture, Marx did not deny the dehumanising influence of machine and evolving technology, but he expressed the hope that out of this evil would rise a new force that would compel capitalism, with all its machinery and technology, to act as its own ‘grave digger’.

The entire approach of Marx was a dialectical one which relied for social and economic transformation on the maturing of capitalist crisis. Such a crisis, he agreed, may cause suffering and hardship to labour but Marx expected the workers to bear them as the birth pangs of a proletarian revolution.

Gandhi's views regarding relation between 'man and machine' were governed by his primary concern for man. He had his own views on economics, whose base was the dignity of human life. Gandhi did not want human being to be crushed under the deadweight of modem civilization based on industrialisation. He had the practical sense not to indulge in total opposition to machine. All that he desired was to regulate the use of machinery in a discriminating way so that machine does not displace human labour.

The Mahatma had no quarrel with the scientists who brought forward new innovations in the field of technology. All that he desired was that these innovations should not be ingenious devices to create huge armies of unemployed and make work on the machine lifeless, mechanical and monotonous, shorn of all charm, for those who find jobs on the machine.
In an age of automation and computers, when even thought processes and emotions can be recorded by machine, there is no wonder if human hands are sought to be crippled in production processes. Even in highly developed countries like the U.S., automation has posed a grave threat of unemployment and displacement of human labour. One can only imagine the immensity of this threat in developing countries with vast populations. Drawing lessons from the developed countries like U.S., Gandhi fervently pleaded for a decentralised technology and revival of handicrafts so that no human-machines remained idle due to the pressure of mechanical machines.

Gandhi was aware of the fact that heavy technology inevitably attracted greater degree of centralisation and to that extent, greater erosion of local initiative and undesirable concentration of economic power in the hands of a few. To avoid all this, he favoured dispersal of small industries to rural areas. He was not opposed to making use of modern inventions to improve the working of these small industries in villages. Clarifying his perspective in this matter, Gandhi wrote: "If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. ...But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do?"52

It is thus clear that Gandhi was not against machine as such, nor was he against modern inventions that could be fruitfully employed for the benefit of people in the remotest villages. Where that was possible, he wanted reliance on handicrafts and cottage industries.

The general approach of Gandhi to the problem of man and machine can be summed up in his own words: "What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on saving labour, till thousands are without work and thrown on the streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few but in the hands of all. 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."

Nationalism

How far were Marx and Gandhi conscious of the appeal of Nationalism in the task of nation building and social and economic reconstruction? Here again, one discovers that although both of them had a very broad outlook and were committed in their own way to the spirit of 'universalism', they viewed the appeal of nationalism and religion in altogether different perspectives.

Marx was basically concerned with his class approach, and, therefore, he looked at these concepts in the context of class alignments and antagonisms. Marx did not want the proletariat, aiming at the overthrow of the capitalist order to get bogged down in ‘bourgeois prejudices’ of national loyalties and religious sentiments.

53 Young India, 25-06-1925, p. 56.
Marx contended that for its own vested interests in trade in world market, the bourgeoisie was adopting the so-called world outlook and the proletariat determined to fight the bourgeois must also adopt an outlook of ‘proletarian internationalism’ and refuse to fight with proletariat of other countries in the interest of bourgeois in their own countries.

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx wrote: "Modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests."54

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx did exhort the workers to rise as the ‘leading class of nation’ but at the same time, he warned them not to allow any barriers to be erected between the proletariat of different nations. He wanted the workers to realise that they had no motherland but only a revolutionary class that transcended all geographical boundaries of nations.

Referring to this aspect in the Communist Manifesto, Marx wrote: ‘The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.’

54 Marx Karl and Engels, Communist Manifesto, op. cit., p. 92.
"National differences and antagonisms between peoples are more and more vanishing daily, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto. "The supremacy of the 'Proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster."\textsuperscript{55}

These inferences of the Communist Manifesto regarding the declining national differences and antagonisms are not borne out by experiences either of capitalist or communist countries. The national conflicts and wars galore, including conflicts and wars even between-communist States, have falsified the claims of the Communist Manifesto. The communist States are found to be as nationalistic as capitalist ones. In fact, sometimes, they are even more rigid and assertive on national rights and prestige. Marx had a firm belief that the institution of religion served as a protective shield to the establishment and status quo.

He conceded that when the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity and further, Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas with a fierce battle between the feudal society and the then revolutionary bourgeois. Marx's contention was that the ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

Though it was claimed that religious, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas were modified in the course of historical development, Marx emphasised that religion, morality, philosophy, political science

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 102.
and law constantly survived this change. He, therefore, believed that all of them symbolized barriers in the path of revolution.

Gandhi believed in ‘nationalism’ merely as an instrument to bring about the fullest development of nation’s personality, which could be used to serve mankind. He did recognise the potential of the ethos of nationalism and spirit of Swadeshi in galvanising the nation for the task of reconstruction. At the same time, he was conscious of the dangers of nationalism becoming exclusive and aggressive, to the detriment of humanity. He, therefore, wanted nationalism to be tempered with non-violence. He emphasised that non-violent nationalism of his concept would be ‘cooperative and constructive’ and would be an integral part of universal humanity instead of being exclusive, competitive and militant. Recalling the experiences of India's struggle for freedom, Gandhi argued that non-violence had raised Indian politics to the level of high idealism and had saved Indian nationalism from exclusiveness and opportunism. However, it is an agonising reality that during the last phase of Gandhi’s life, this thin veneer of morality over Indian politics had already started peeling off.

Throwing light on his concept of nationalism, Gandhi wrote: "My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, is not devised to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral. I believe in the extreme truth of sic utere tuo at alienum non laelas (meaning: use yours not to injure others)."\(^{56}\)

"My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or

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56 Young India, 26-03-1931.
the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always, in every case, without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that, but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life.\textsuperscript{57}

These views expressed by Gandhi, though laudable, were at best subjective beliefs or wishes that had no objective legs to stand upon. As a result, Gandhi's concept of nationalism, free from exclusiveness, remained locked up in a world of illusions, as was the fate of Marx's concept of proletarian internationalism.

Gandhi's entire thinking had a metaphysical base. He once remarked 'most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man.'

Gandhi's political and social thinking was embedded in religious consciousness. However, his conception of religion was not based on mere scriptures nor was it restricted to a particular sect. Gandhi said, he believed in that religion "which changes one's nature, which binds one to truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless unless it has found itself, known its maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the maker and itself."\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 04-04-1929.
\textsuperscript{58} Harijan, 02-03-1934, p. 23.
To Gandhi, religion implied ‘belief in the ordered moral government of the universe’. To him, politics with its apparatus of State, was mostly coercive and, so with his religious bent of mind, Gandhi considered politics an unavoidable evil. Explaining his participation in politics Gandhi said, “If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircle us like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake... I am trying to introduce religion into politics.”

Gandhi always considered himself a devout Hindu. He saw in Hinduism the beauty of ‘all embracing inclusiveness’. His faith in Hinduism was so deep and abiding that in Young India of 24 November 1927, he wrote: "If Hinduism had not come to my rescue, the only course for me would have been suicide. I remain a Hindu because Hinduism is a heaven which makes the world worth living in.”

Religion and Politics

With the foregoing approach of Gandhi towards religion, which he inducted in politics, the appeal of his movement to vast sections of the population, deeply influenced by Hindu religion, undoubtedly became more powerful. But, at the same time, because of this approach, men like Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, could exploit the Hindu ethos of Gandhi’s politics to foster separatist tendencies among the Muslims and, as a result, in later years of Gandhi’s life, a big section of Muslim masses remained (or chose to remain)

60 Young India, 24-11-1927, p.
isolated from the main-stream of Indian national movement, despite Gandhi's sincere efforts for its integration with the movement.

With his intense religious background, Gandhi had a living faith in God, the Maker of Universe and also in soul force, which he considered highly essential for the success of the technique of Satyagraha.

Because of his firm faith in the spiritual nature of man, Gandhi rejected the view that man is, in his entirety, the creature of his own milieu. He, however, never underrated the influence of the latter.

He conceded that the majority of the people are affected by their environment and, to an extent, all get affected by it. But Gandhi wanted that man should try to live by self-direction i.e. ‘by the exercise of his will rather than by mere habit’. In other words, man should be his own path-finder and able to move against the current if he conscientiously felt he is right and, he asserted, that this happiness with God’s blessings.

Thus Marx and Gandhi thought and functioned on altogether different wavelengths, though both of them were moved by the vision of a new human civilization.

Similarly, their views, too, about religion and politics are poles apart. Gandhi regards religion as very important for human life. He claimed, however, to be a practical religious idealist and was not much interested in the transcendental and eschatological aspects of religion. Religion signified, to him, belief in the ordered moral governance of the world and the spirit of faith in and dependence upon the absolute truth. Hence it demanded a complete conservation of a man's being and
direction of personality to Truth which is God and implied an emphasis on the moral values of man as spirit. "For me, morals, ethics, and religion are convertible terms. A moral life without reference to religion is like a house built upon sand. And religion divorced from morality is like "sounding brass good only for making a noise and breaking heads."61

Gandhi categorically said that he wanted to bring religion into politics. "For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the Gita, I want to live at peace with both friends and foes. So, my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there is no politics devoid of religion. Politics bereft of religion is a death-trap because it kills the soul."62

Religion is based on the recognition of the superiority of moral vows. A religious life signifies the dedicated pursuit of these vows. Hence the incorporation of religion in politics means a progressive movement towards the continued and faithful practice of moral vows of truth and love. The central point of Gandhian political philosophy is that the fundamental religious ethics common to all the great religions has to be made concrete in individual, social and political life. It is, hence, opposed to regarding political action as the sphere of the non-moral. Summarizing his reflections upon life in the last chapter of his autobiography, he wrote, "To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of creations

61 Ibid.
62 Young India, 03-04-1924, p. 112.
as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.\textsuperscript{63}

The Marxists are the sworn enemies of religion which in the words of Marx, is ‘the sob of the oppressed creature,’ ‘the heart of a heartless world’\textsuperscript{64}, and ‘the opium of the poor.’ “The first word of religion is a lie,” said Engels. Lenin was of the view, ”Religion is one of the aspects of spiritual oppression.” Thus religion from the Communist point of view is a gigantic deception.

Therefore, ”Criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism” asserted Marx. ”The criticism of religion disillusions man to make him think and act and shape his reality like a man who has been disillusioned and has come to reason, so that he will revolve round himself and therefore round his true sun. Religion is the illusory sun which revolves round man as long as he does not revolve round himself.”\textsuperscript{64} Marxism thus developed is a major ingredient of the critical, modern consciousness. It marked a break from certain types of religious Consciousness insofar as it awakened in man a new consciousness of his latent powers and unrealised potentialities. It was a major factor for liberating him from ‘false consciousness’, from the pernicious influence of religious myths, superstitions and ideas about nature, and about man and society which were responsible for the darkness and passivity of the Middle Ages.

\textsuperscript{64} Marx, Karl, On Religion, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
According to this reasoning, man's false consciousness is a basic element in his exploitation and oppression in a class society. Marx, therefore, considers the liberation of man from this 'false consciousness' as one of the most essential conditions for his emancipation from class exploitation. And this acquiring of a new consciousness is an intellectual or a cultural task which can be fulfilled only when the suffering humanity which works gets united with the working minority which thinks. 'Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy,' said Marx. Marxism, in this way, finds the chief 'enemy' of the people in their own ignorance and their chief weapon in their 'critical self-consciousness'. The external enemy (i.e. the exploiting and ruling class) is, therefore, strong only to the extent that the oppressed classes have not first overcome their 'internal enemy' (viz. their own ignorance or 'false consciousness'). By considering the development of a 'critical self-consciousness' as the key aspect of a revolutionary programme, Marxism serves to combine a revolutionary programme and a revolutionary spirit with a humanist orientation. It clearly demarcates itself from the primitive-anarchist doctrine of mass emancipation through more class hatred and class violence. It is committed to the conception of people being their own liberators through their enlightenment and struggle, instead of being liberated by any force, whether supernatural or superhuman, which is outside them. It is committed simultaneously to the view of the oppressed classes acquiring an intellectual and ethical superiority over the ruling classes.

The attitude of Marx towards religion is quite in keeping with his belief that consciousness is a derivative of matter. As is well known, Marx does not believe in the existence of any other thing than the matter. Religious interests, therefore, must be discarded because, 'nothing should' be allowed to compete with the individual's 'loyalty to the state'. Unlike Gandhi, Marx does not introduce religion in the field of politics. Rather he makes definite to keep politics free from any spiritual or mystical outlook.

He also ridicules the idea of another world in the form of heaven (or paradise). It is the most disgraceful manifestation of religious consciousness according to him. He is of the view that “this longing for the heavenly world by man is due to the oppressive social and economic conditions of his life in his world. Thus the religious estrangement is a protest against social tyranny. A time will come when in the social whole of men-labouring-in nature, religion would wither away and the question of theism versus atheism would simply become irrelevant.”

Last but not the least, communism is based on certain set principles while Gandhian ideology is ever evolving. Vinoba Bhave has given a very interesting comparison between Valmiki Ramayana and Communism. It is said that Valmiki wrote the Ramayana long before the birth of Rama and Rama conformed to every word of it during his earthly career and so had also no occasion to worry himself about using his own judgement in order to take a decision. He had just to consult the book and act accordingly. Since the consequences had also been predicted, he was not worried about the results also. So, too, is the case

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with the communists. Lenin acted as Marx had prescribed. Common men also, according to him, are to merely follow Marx and they can straightaway reach their goals. "If, at times, there appears a discrepancy between the words of Marx and the actions of Lenin, the Pandits of Communism have, of course, to labour a little to prove that there is no real discrepancy. This is not very difficult, for, it is well known maxim of interpretation that a smriti-text (rule) must conform to a shruti-text (law). And, hence, if the rule is clear, then one need only so interpret the law that the former is justified! Do that and you get the line clear."\(^67\)

It is quite otherwise with the Gandhian ideology. "If communism is a solid and imposing structure of granite, Gandhism is an ever changing amoeba."\(^68\) Gandhian ideas are ever growing. There is no finality in his approach. This is largely so because his concepts are not absolute but relative. He himself kept on modifying, elaborating and enriching his own concepts on the basis of his experience. If his later pronouncements contradict his earlier ones, he had asked not to worry about reconciling the two, but to accept the later and reject the earlier and proceed further.\(^69\) Even in his major fights, he had no premeditated plans, no technique, no ordered arrangement, etc. Since he used to say, 'one step is enough for me'. Why should the Lord show him two? And what was the amount of authority to be attached even to his latest utterances? His answer was, "Do not be authority bound. Use your own talent. You might ask me while I am available. Thereafter, every one is

\(^{67}\) Mashruwala, K. G., Gandhi and Marx, op. cit., p. 20.
\(^{68}\) Ibid.
\(^{69}\) Harijan, 29-04-1933, p. 2.
free to think and decide for himself." That is why there is no unanimity of ideas even among his closest followers. Otherwise also, it is better to allow thought to work freely than to beat and drive and shut it up into the rigidity of a system as has been done by the Communists.

Thus there is a fundamental difference between Gandhism and Marxism and the difference can not be stated by such simple equations as 'Gandhism is Communism minus violence' or 'Gandhism is communism plus God'. The difference between both is deeper than what can be expressed by a single equation with plus and minus signs.

Whenever Gandhi got an opportunity, he expressed his views against communism. As early as in 1919, he had said in a speech in Madras, "Bolshevism is a necessary result of modern materialistic civilization. Its insensate worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon materialistic advancement as the goal and which has lost all the touch with the final things in life." In this speech, he pointed out that while the self-restraint was the satyagraha creed, communism stood for self-indulgence. He warned that if the quest of spirit and love yielded to matter and brute force, 'we shall have Bolshevikism rampant in this land which was once so holy'. In an article entitled 'My Path' in the Young India, he wrote, "I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevikism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it was for the good of Russia in the long-run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God,

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70 Ibid., 30-09-1939, p. 288.
it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize, that however much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, no meeting ground between the school of violence and me."

Four years later, writing in Young India, he maintained the same belief. "But from what I know of Bolshevikism, it not only does preclude the use of force, but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form can not last for long. For it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence."73

In reply to a question which several Zamindars put to him, he said on July 25, 1934, "Socialism and Communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it, for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence which belong to the brute nature and not to the moral spirit of man. That is the fundamental conceptions of Hinduism, which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of this truth. That is why, whilst we have had saints who have worn out their bodies and laid

73 Young India, 15-11-1928, p. 381.
down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have had none, as in the West, who laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or the highest regions of the earth. Our socialism or communism should, therefore, be based on non-violence and on harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant.”

When his attention was drawn to a question that, ‘when the rich became callous and selfish and the evil continued unchecked, a revolution of the masses, with all the attendant horrors, inevitably resulted. Since life, as you have put it, is often a choice between evils, won't you, in view of the lesson which the history of the revolution inculcates, welcome the rise of a benevolent dictatorship which would with the minimum use of force, 'soak the rich', give 'justice to the poor', and thereby serve both?’

He reacted, "I can not accept benevolent or any other dictatorship. Neither will the rich vanish nor will the poor be protected. Some rich men will certainly be killed out and some poor men will be spoon-fed. As a class, the rich will remain, and the poor also, in spite of dictatorship labelled benevolent. The real remedy is non-violent democracy, otherwise spelt true education of all. The rich should be taught the doctrine of the stewardship and the poor that of selfhelp.”

The Harijan of August 4, 1946 carried a very interesting dialogue between Louis Fischer and the Mahatma. When Fischer called himself a communist, Gandhi said, "O, don't. It is terrible for you to call your-self"

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75 Harijan, 08-06-1940, p. 159.
a communist. I want what you want, what Jaiprakash and socialists want, a free world. But the communists don't. They want a system which enslaves the body and the mind."

"Would you say that of Marx?"

"The Communists have corrupted the Marxists’ teaching to suit their purpose."

"What about Lenin?"

"Lenin started it. Stalin has since completed it. When the Communists come to you, they want to get into the Congress and control the Congress and use it for their own ends."

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

"Yes, you are right, there was a time when the two could not be distinguished. But today socialists are very different from communists."

"You mean to say, you do not want communism of Stalin’s type?"

"But the Indian communists want communism of the Stalin type in India and want to use your name for that purpose." "They would not succeed", replied the Mahatma.76 There are so many other alike utterances and he maintained the same belief till his death in 1948.

76 Ibid., 04-08-1946, p. 246.
Gandhi, the lover of humanity and liberty, found that Russian experiment of Bolshevikism could scarcely prepare the necessary atmosphere for the fuller development of human personality. He strongly denounced the Stanlinistic brand of communism which was prevailing in Russia at that time. He was specially allergic to the very idea of violence for the establishment of the new world order. Despite its passion for social justice and love for the poor, communistic rejection of God and religion and neglect of spiritual evolutions in man with his nobler instincts made Gandhi to oppose it vehemently.

But his opposition to Socialism is not as strong as against Communists. Before 1934, he did not approve of the word 'socialism'. He was very much against it. In 1916, he had declared, "I am no socialist and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions, but I do say that personally those of us who want to see light out of darkness, have to follow this rule. I do not want to dispossess anybody. I should then be departing from the rule of ahimsa."77

But a change is evident from this earlier stand in 1924 when he admitted the necessity of nationalization or state control over certain key industries, which was deemed as guarded approval of socialism. Again, in a speech before the 49th meeting of the Federal Structure Committee of the Round Table Conference held on November 19, 1931, he gave a picture of how things were to shape themselves if a national Government was to come into being in India. His association with the indigenous capitalists did not prevent him from taking the side of the poor and press the views of the common men. He supported the Indian

capitalists' opposition to the financial safeguards and the Government's currency policy, and spoke against the British representatives on commercial discrimination. He argued that there must be no racial discrimination but the national government would have to discriminate in favour of the poor against the rich. ‘Not only the government obligations’, he proceeded, “but also the existing interests be subject to judicial scrutiny, when necessary.” His formula was meant to be applied to the Indians equally: ‘If they have obtained concessions ... because they did some service to the officials of the days and got some miles of land, well, if I had the possession of the government, I would quickly dispossess them.’ Referring to the representatives of moneyed men, he declared, ‘They are not representatives of those who lack even a place to sleep and have not even a crust of bread to eat. If the National Government comes to the conclusion that palace (i.e., the palatial buildings of this white elephant which is called New Delhi) is unnecessary, no matter what interests are concerned, they will be dispossessed, and they will be dispossessed I may tell you, without any compensation, because if you want this government to pay compensation, it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.’

On the same occasion, while he did not go to the length of advocating in full throat the state control of key industries, he had been seen to be moving slowly but steadily from his earlier position. Here, we find a man growing, developing, moving and making the masses move with him for the realisation of a new society as he envisaged it free from exploitation. He clarified in the round Table Conference, “The Congress conception is that if the key industries are not taken over by the state
itself, the state will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and administration and development of key industries.\textsuperscript{78}  

In the wake of suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1933, there emerged the Congress Socialist group. At the first Congress Socialist Conference, held at Patna in 1934, the programme of the party was formulated. After the publication of the programme an attempt was made by some of the leaders of CSP to ascertain Gandhi's views on it. In the course of the discussion, he admitted, "I call myself a socialist. I love the very word, but I will not preach the same socialism as most socialists do."\textsuperscript{79}  

He had his own picture of socialism. In 1934, he advocated, "The socialism that India can assimilate is the socialism of the spinning wheel."\textsuperscript{80} In a speech delivered at the Exhibition ground of Faizpur Congress session, he said on December 27, 1936, "Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: 'All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it'. Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language, it means the state, i.e. the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who has not lived up to it. I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. The most effective

\textsuperscript{80} The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. LVIII, op. cit., p. 306.
substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel with all the implications. Land and all property is his who will work for it. Unfortunately, the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact.\textsuperscript{81}

His concept of socialism was entirely his own in the sense that socialism did not represent itself to him as a necessary and logical stage in social evolution growing out of the technological basis and production relations of capitalism. As he said, "Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of Ishopanishad.\textsuperscript{82}

According to Ishopanishad, whatever life there is in this world is filled with God. Nothing exists without God. Speaking in terms of kingdom, only He reigns. He alone is the master. Understanding this, it is our duty to offer everything to Him and whatever we receive from Him, we must joyfully accept as His gracious gift. Nothing belongs to me, everything belongs to Him. This must be our attitude. Whosoever lives in this way - considering nothing to be his own, everything God's - he will receive every thing. Whichever he receives, he will be satisfied with. He will not envy others. He will not covet the wealth of others.\textsuperscript{83}

In this brief mantra, a great comprehensive axiom regarding life has been enunciated as also the way of expressing it through action. Dedication to God, the acceptance of whatever one gets, only as a token

\textsuperscript{81} Harijan, 02-01-1937, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 20-02-1946, p.12.
\textsuperscript{83} Isawasya Upanishad 1, translated by Donald G. Groom (Varanasi: Sarva Seva Parkashan), 1981.
of his grace, freedom from envy, not coveting wealth but using it for the welfare of all - is the purest form of socialism. And this is what Gandhi meant by socialism.

In 1946, when Louis Fischer put before him an interpolation that you are a socialist and so are they (who believed in violent overthrow). ‘I am, they are not’, affirmed Gandhi. ‘I was socialist before many of them were born. I carried conviction to a rabid socialist in Johannesburg, but that is neither here nor there. My claim will live when their socialism is dead.’ To him, socialism is either a way of life or else it is an arm chair philosophy. He was obviously referring to his experiments at the Tolstoy farm in South Africa and in his different ashrams. Therefore, he called himself the foremost socialist. He believed in the equality of man. Even as the limbs of the individual body are equal so are the members of the society. Perhaps, he got this idea from his faith in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. He had a rock like belief in God and unity of man. He wanted to bring equalization of status because he believed that all men are equal. He was pained to find that the working classes have all these centuries been isolated and relegated to a lower status. So, he wanted ‘to allow no differentiation between the son of a weaver, of an agriculturist and of a bureaucrat.

When he was asked to define his socialism, Gandhi said, "My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their socialism, probably, these have no place. Their one aim is material progress. For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build staircase to Sirius if I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under
the other socialism, there is no individual freedom, you own nothing, not even your body." He was of the firm view that man is superior to the system he propounded. Therefore, he could not compromise with individual freedom. "But the present day socialism in various countries presents a different picture. There is a dilemma! Make men free and they (Socialists) become unequal, make them equal and they cease to be free. This is a fact that socialism and individual liberty do not go together, at least in the communist countries. They openly profess the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and advocate the rule of one party, i.e., the Communist Party, which they call as the vanguard of the people. But Gandhi wanted to bring economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to (his) point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. His way was to make the ruler a socialist through love. "If socialism means befriending one's enemies, I should be treated as a true socialist. This conception of socialism is my own. The socialists should learn the socialism from me. Only then can we establish a true workers' and peasants' raj."  

In an editorial in Harijan dated July 13, 1947, he wrote, "Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in socialism, all members are equal - none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal so are the members of the society. This is socialism."

84 Harijan, 04-08-1946, p. 246.  
85 Sharma, J. N., Alternative Economics, op. cit., p. 150.  
In it the princes and peasants, the wealthy and the poor, the employers and employees, are all on the same level. In terms of religion, there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity ....

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will count for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is zero, in other words no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

The socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal like means to achieve it. Impure means result in impure ends. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One can not reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct can alone reach truth.... Only truthful, non-violent, and pure hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge, there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above, the existence of such a society is impossible.87

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