

# THE POLITICAL THEORY OF GANDHI'S HIND SWARAJ

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WHENEVER WE ATTEMPT TO RE-EVALUATE THE THOUGHT OF A GREAT man we naturally tend to go back to his seminal work. This law of taking the short-cut to a man's thought brings us to Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*.<sup>1</sup> What the *Prince* is to Machiavelli's writings, and the *Social Contract* to the writings of Rousseau, the *HS* is to the vast corpus of Gandhian literature. It sets forth in a brief compass what its author developed in detail in later writings. John Middleton Murry, one of Gandhi's earlier critics, called it "one of the spiritual classics of the world"<sup>2</sup> and Sir Penderel Moon, "the first comprehensive, coherent expression of certain basic ideas that Gandhi never lost sight of throughout all his subsequent political career."<sup>3</sup> George Catlin compared it to *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola.<sup>4</sup> Roy Walker

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<sup>1</sup> A brief account of the book's early history: It was written in Gujarati, in November, 1909, during Gandhi's return voyage from England to South Africa. Of the 20 chapters of the book, the first 12 appeared in *Indian Opinion* (a newspaper which Gandhi founded in 1903, in South Africa) on December 11, 1909, and the last 8 chapters on December 18, 1909. In January 1910 the book was translated into English by Gandhi and published by the International Printing Press, Phoenix, South Africa. The first Indian edition (English) appeared in 1919, published by Natesan of Madras, and the first Indian (Gujarati) edition appeared in 1923, published by Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. An American edition published in Chicago by H. T. Mazumdar under the title of *The Sermon on the Sea*, appeared in 1924. A revised English edition appeared in 1939, also published by the Navajivan Press. This is the accepted standard text now, and citations in this article are from the 1958 printing of this edition.

In citing from *Hind Swaraj* (hereafter *HS*) we have not indicated the page, mainly for the reason of the shortness of the chapters.

In 1910 the Bombay government put the *HS* 'on the index,' for containing "seditious" materials. Other tracts, also by Gandhi, included in the list of prohibited books were, *Universal Dawn*, a rendering of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*; *Mustafa Kamel Pasha's Speech*, a Gujarati translation of the Egyptian patriot's speech just before his death; *Defense of Socrates or the Story of a True Warrior*, a Gujarati rendering of Plato's *Phaedo*. The ban on *HS* was renewed in 1919.

The immediate reason for the writing of the book was Gandhi's fear that the idea of political violence—assassination, guerrilla war, armed rebellion—was gaining the upper hand in the Indian nationalist movement. This immediate concern led him to a general inquiry into the nature and origin of political violence, the cure for it, and to the argument why India should not adopt violence as a means to obtaining *swaraj*, or independence.

Interest in the *HS* grew in proportion to the intensity of the Indian nationalist movement. Selling of the copies of *HS*, in defiance of government ban, became a part of *satyagraha* campaigns. The interest in the *HS* waned by 1930 (as the personality of Gandhi himself emerged as the centre of attention), but it resuscitated after Gandhi's assassination in 1948. But as Professor Devanesan remarked in 1961, "So far as it can be ascertained, no student has yet subjected this little volume to a thorough and careful scrutiny." C.D.S. Devanesan, "The Making of the Mahatma," (an unpublished Harvard University doctoral dissertation, 1961), p. 571. It is hoped that this article will partially fill a need and that it will be a reliable introduction to *HS*.

<sup>2</sup> Murry, "A Spiritual Classic," in *Aryan Path*, (September, 1938), pp. 437-8.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Penderel Moon, *Gandhi and Modern India*, (London, 1968), p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> George Catlin, *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi* (Chicago, 1950), p. 215.

stated that there has been nothing essentially new in Gandhi's thought after he wrote the *HS*.<sup>5</sup>

While there appears to be general agreement as to the importance of the book, there is not the same agreement as to where the importance lies. Those who praise it for its originality often ultimately reject what is original in it.<sup>6</sup> W. Norman Brown states that "in his own major purpose Gandhi may be considered to have failed."<sup>7</sup> K. M. Panikkar has made what is now a common criticism of Gandhi's thought: "with the growth of an industrialized society it is difficult to be certain whether his influence will continue."<sup>8</sup> Sir Penderel Moon implies that only in a medieval society could Gandhi have succeeded.<sup>9</sup> Cole puts it more startlingly: "The Gandhi of this book could not be, in the West, a leader, but only a martyr at most."<sup>10</sup> Similarly Hannah Arendt speaks for many when she asks whether Gandhi would have succeeded against a Hitler or a Stalin or even against the pre-war Japanese.<sup>11</sup>

One thing appears common to the majority of Gandhian critics: his ideas, though noble and elevating, are too medieval, too impractical to be relevant to the politics of a secular, industrialized society. His ideas are criticized mainly on pragmatic grounds.

I shall argue in this article that this is not the most intelligent way of criticizing the *HS*, that it is more sensible to consider the *HS* as an informal treatise on political theory, and only secondarily as a guide to pragmatic action. Its becoming a political guide depends on its being accepted as a theoretical work. Secondly, I shall suggest here that the *HS* expounds the non-violent theory of politics, a theory radically different from any to which we are accustomed. Thirdly, I shall contend that the *HS* presents a vision of India that is meant, above all, to be an ethical standard of evaluation and criticism of the real India, and of the actual process of her modernization and political evolution. And finally, I shall argue that the *HS*, far from being a denial of Western civilization and an exaltation of Indian civilization (as is generally supposed), is rather a framework for the deeper spiritual synthesis of what is best in the civilization of Europe and India, which synthesis in turn is the appropriate sociological matrix of the new politics that Gandhi envisions.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in Devanesan, *op. cit.*, p. 571.

<sup>6</sup> This seems to be the case, for example, with G. D. Cole, "A Disturbing Book: Thoughts on Reading 'Hind Swaraj,' *Aryan Path*, (September, 1938), pp. 429-433.

<sup>7</sup> Brown, "An American View of Gandhi," in M. D. Lewis (ed.), *Gandhi, Maker of Modern India?* (Boston, 1965), p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> K. M. Panikkar, "Gandhi's Legacy to India," in Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 432.

<sup>11</sup> Arendt, "Reflections on Violence," in *Journal of International Affairs*, XXIII (1969), p. 20.

## I

THE GANDHI OF THE HIND SWARAJ—A POLITICAL THEORIST<sup>12</sup>

It has been said on Rousseau's *Social Contract* that it was not "an apology for democracy as a method of government, but a statement of why and how democracy is right."<sup>13</sup> If one may adapt this dictum to the *HS*, one is permitted to say that it does not so much tell us how a modern government based on non-violence is run as why non-violence is the only ethically acceptable doctrine of politics. Of course the *HS* does not deal with political theory in a formal manner. Its literary genre is Dialogue, deliberately chosen by the author because of the difficulty of the subjects treated.<sup>14</sup> The literary genre does not diminish its character as a book on theory any more than do the *Dialogues* of Plato.

Literary genre apart, the question arises whether it is legitimate for a thinker to propose certain theories without for the moment worrying about their pragmatic value, paying attention, in the first instance at any rate, only to their truth and coherence. A stand on this question must be taken if we are to appreciate the contention that the *HS* is a work of political theory.

This raises the question of what we consider political theory to be.<sup>15</sup> Briefly, it may be looked upon as a body of coherent ideas and moral imperatives indicating the direction of how men ought to live and how they ought to pursue their public goals—based partly on the historical experience of the human species and partly on the philosophic speculation on human nature. Though, in part speculative, it has a congruence to action. The speculative truths and the moral ideals it proposes are congruent to being realized by

<sup>12</sup> I would like to emphasize that this article deals essentially with the ideas of the *HS* only. It does not pretend to be a general treatment of Gandhi's political theory, although, it is hoped, as stated in Note 1, that it would serve as a reliable introduction to it. For general treatment of Gandhian political thought, see J. V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence, The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, (1957, 1965); G. Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (1951); H. J. N. Horsburgh, *Non-Violence and Aggression, A Study of Gandhi's Moral Equivalent of War* (1968); K.P. Karunakaran, *Continuity and Change in Indian Politics* (1964); N. H. Morris-Jones, "Mahatma Gandhi: Political Philosopher?" *Political Studies*, 8 (1960), pp. 16-37; S. Panter-Brick, *Gandhi Against Machiavellism, Non-Violence in Politics* (1966); Paul F. Power, *Gandhi on World Affairs* (1960), and "A Gandhian Model for World Politics" in *Gandhi: His Relevance for Our Times* (1964).

<sup>13</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The French Revolution* (London, 1911, 1948), p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> "To make it easy reading, the chapters are written in the form of a dialogue between the reader and the editor." Preface to the first Gujarati edition. This literary genre came for immediate criticism, and so Gandhi wrote in 1910 in the Preface to the first English edition; "I have no answer to offer to this objection except that the Gujarati language readily lends itself to such treatment and that it is considered the best method of treating difficult subjects. Had I written for English readers in the first instance, the subject would have been handled in a different manner. Moreover, the dialogue as it has been given, actually took place between several friends, mostly readers of *Indian Opinion*, and myself."

<sup>15</sup> For two brief, excellent recent discussions of this topic see John Plamenatz, "The Use of Political Theory," in Anthony Quinton, *Political Philosophy* (London, 1967); and George Kateb, *Political Theory: Its Nature and Uses* (New York, 1968).

individuals and groups. This congruence with action (note, we do not say that a political theory, to be valid must be realized here and now, but only that it must, by its mode, be congruent with action) makes political theory a *practical* theory. Thus a political theory can inspire a nation or a group, endow them with a political vision, justify their actions and policies, in short, endow men's public actions with the categories of the moral ought, the just, the good and the true. Political theory, as we understand it then, does not have to propose concrete lines of action on specific issues in time and place, but only to indicate the general outlines of public action in terms of goals and means, motives and justifications. They do not have to provide detailed blueprints, like the annual budget or even the party manifesto. And as Plamenatz observes, "The fact that they (political theories) have not served as blueprints for the reconstruction of society is no evidence that they have not been important. They have powerfully affected men's images of themselves and of society, and have profoundly influenced their behaviour."<sup>16</sup>

Political theory, then, is not so much a study of particular political facts in their concrete aspects, but rather a judgment and evaluation of them in their general or more universal relations. Its congruity to action shows itself in relating universal standards of truth and ethics to particular events. It helps to realize what is possible—what is responsibly possible—in an ethical context. Thus, unlike pure metaphysics, the man who adopts his own political theory, must search for ways of approximating the actual to the ideal. Mere knowledge of the just, the true and the good is not sufficient for a political actor. Having ascertained such knowledge, he must proceed to act accordingly. Also, political theory brings about an awareness of the need for these things in public conduct and action. The first and proper test of a political theory is the coherent statement of the moral imperatives. Its second test is the congruence of these imperatives to action. And the third, but only the extrinsic test, is the realization of goals in the light of the abstract imperatives. The realization of goals only extrinsically validates a theory. From empirical realization we do not argue to the abstract validity of a political theory.

If the above view—briefly stated—of what a political theory is, is correct, it is obvious that in approaching the *HS*, we must distinguish between what it states as "ought" and what is capable of actual realization. We must ask whether Gandhi put forward certain political imperatives, whether he was consistent in doing so, whether he inspired and continues to inspire certain types of political vision, whether he provides criteria for evaluation and judgment of concrete political behaviour. Gandhi himself, though not a formal theorist in his own estimation, nevertheless wrote as if he were a theorist. He assumed a didactic role by proposing what he thought to be right in a context of universal relationships. Plamenatz makes the interesting

<sup>16</sup> Plamenatz, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

suggestion that every political theorist is in some respects a political propagandist.<sup>17</sup> This fits in well with Gandhi. As he himself wrote in the first Gujarati edition of the *HS* his purpose was didactic or propagandistic: to serve his motherland by proposing Truth and persuading the motherland to follow it. "The only motive is to serve my country, to find out the Truth and to follow it. If, therefore, my views are proved to be wrong, I shall have no hesitation in rejecting them. If they are proved to be right, I would naturally wish, for the sake of the motherland, that others should adopt them."<sup>18</sup> He reiterates the point in the very first exchange between the Editor (Gandhi) and the Reader. His purpose is to inspire the nation, to correct popular defects, and to propose new ideas. In answer to the question of the Reader, the Editor answers: "One of the purposes of a newspaper is to understand popular feelings and to give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects. The exercise of all these three functions is involved in answering your questions."<sup>19</sup>

As for the congruity of his theory to action, there can be no better illustration of it than the life and achievements of Gandhi himself. Setting about with visions of non-violence, of an idealized India, he realized in actual fact what was only responsibly possible. He never pressed an ethical idea beyond what it could bear in an actual context. He would not demand of his political adversaries—viceroys or governors, or countrymen or others—to conform to his standards perfectly. If a partial advance towards justice, truth and love were possible, he would be satisfied. This method of procedure was possible because Gandhi's theory of political action conformed to what we have tried to describe here as political theory.

## II

### (a) THE THEORY OF NON-VIOLENCE IN *HS*

The most original contribution of the *HS* is its theory of non-violence. Now one of the better ways to understand how Gandhi tries to legitimize non-violence is to compare it to the theory of natural law in Western classical and medieval political thought. For Gandhi, it seems to me, attributes to the twin-foundations of non-violence—Love and Truth—a role Western political thought attributes to *recta ratio*. Truth and Love are laws of Nature. They supply the moral basis of human society and organization. Conformity to these laws of Nature constitutes moral legitimacy. The aim of personal conduct as well as of national life must be conformity with Nature. Harmony among men and among nations is possible only through Love and Truth. Harmony through Love and Truth is non-violence, disharmony,

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> Gandhi, *Collected Works*, (hereafter *CW*), X, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *HS*, c. 1.

violence. The latter is political pathology, or in Gandhi's phrase, "an interruption of the course of nature."<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi recognizes the existence of both violence and non-violence in human affairs. He is even prepared to concede that of the two, violence (or brute-force, body-force; Gandhi used these terms interchangeably) is historically the more dominant. Non-violence (or soul-force, or passive resistance, or *satyagraha*; Gandhi uses these terms interchangeably) has not been politically successful. "Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called truth-force?" the Reader asks.<sup>21</sup> The answer will depend, the Editor replies, on one's view of history, and how one reads history. If history is understood as "the doings of kings and emperors" soul-force has not succeeded. But then Gandhi denies that history is a record of human violence: it is a record of actions of Love and Truth "interrupted" by violence. He emphatically denies that "the story of the universe had commenced with wars." The original principle of history is not violence. Had it been so, "not a man would have been found alive today." "The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth and love."<sup>22</sup>

Gandhi gives no explanation of the origin of violence in metaphysical or theological terms. There is no doctrine of original sin or class war in the *HS*. There are, however, explanations of violence in political and psychological terms. The root of violence is "fear";<sup>23</sup> "unlimited ambition" for wealth and political control;<sup>24</sup> and the concern for "immediate gain" at the expense of "ultimate" gain.<sup>25</sup> There is also what may be called, for want of a better term, sociological explanations of violence: it originates in materialistic civilizations.

It is interesting to note the almost Augustinian style of contrast that Gandhi employs in describing the objects of soul-force and body-force. Body-force is self-regarding, i.e. devoid of any genuine social purpose. It seeks the welfare of the self, or of one's own nation to the exclusion of the welfare of other nations. That is, it lacks universal standards. It does not recognize the legitimacy of the other wills, but uses others for its own ends. Violence is tyrannical, imperialistic, immoral. Soul-force on the other hand is benevolent, i.e. it seeks to influence other wills, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the well-being of others. It seeks to secure the well-being of individuals and nations in a manner consistent with the well-being of all—(*sarvodaya*).<sup>26</sup> Its purposes, being directed by Love, are social; its stand-

<sup>20</sup> *HS*, c. 17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *HS*, c. 16.

<sup>24</sup> *HS*, c. 13.

<sup>25</sup> *HS*, c. 7.

<sup>26</sup> *HS*, c. 16.

ards, being illumined by Truth, are universal. Thus, though brute-force may be historically prevalent, soul-force alone is legitimate.

Gandhi's political theory, as noted earlier, has a congruence to action. Gandhi, as a theorist, is a propagandist and reformer. We must now turn to the theory of moral reform inherent in Gandhi's political theory. Ultimately only a religious force can restore man to his original nature, and effect the prevalence of soul-force in social and political life. If politics is to lose its viciousness, if fear, ambition, and concern for immediate gain are to be controlled, man must conquer his inner self. There must be the "control of the Mind," brought about by the spirit of chastity, of poverty, by honesty and fearlessness.<sup>27</sup> A person so transformed would at once experience the moral evil of violence and see the necessity of employing only non-violent means to gain political ends.

This means, that voluntary suffering is an inevitable condition of non-violent politics. Gandhi himself has described passive resistance as a "method of securing rights by personal suffering."<sup>28</sup> Speaking of India he said, "we shall become free only through suffering."<sup>29</sup> How does Gandhi legitimize voluntary suffering as a means of politics? First, voluntary suffering thus employed is morally superior to the application of violence for the same purpose: "sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others."<sup>30</sup> Here Gandhi echoes the Socratic doctrine that it is better to suffer injustice than to inflict it on others. Secondly, it assures an economy of suffering. In trying to rectify an unjust situation through voluntary suffering, one hopes that others can be spared of suffering. Thirdly, voluntary suffering is the only morally consistent way of vindicating political truths. For political truths are relative truths. "No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong because he thinks so . . ."<sup>31</sup> Since one cannot be absolutely sure of one's truth, one lacks the moral basis to compel the other in the name of Truth. When relative truths clash, the alternative is to obey one's own conscience, as enlightened by relative truth, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. "This is the key to the use of soul-force."<sup>32</sup>

Gandhi's doctrine of suffering places his political theory in radical opposition to most contemporary theories of politics, particularly those which regard the state as the monopoly of legitimate force, and which defend the theory of reason of state.<sup>33</sup> Max Weber's famous statement on violence as

<sup>27</sup> *HS*, c. 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *HS*, c. 20.

<sup>30</sup> *HS*, c. 17.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> See F. Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and Its Place in History*, English Translation, (New Haven 1957); For a judicious criticism of the Macht theory of state see, A. P. d'Entreves, *The Notion of the State* (Oxford, 1967).

the specific means of politics may be recalled. "He who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence. The genius or demon of politics lives in an inner tension with the god of love, as well as with the Christian God as expressed by the church. This tension can at any time lead to an irreconcilable conflict."<sup>34</sup> This is a direct challenge to Gandhi's doctrine of Love and Truth. He would dismiss it as nothing but the formalization of political pathology. Equally challenging is the statement of another German, von Clausewitz: "A nation cannot buy freedom from slavery of alien rule by artifices and stratagems. It must throw itself recklessly into battle, it must pit a thousand lives against a thousand-fold gain of life. Only in this manner can the nation arise from the sickbed to which it was fastened by foreign chains. . . In our times, struggle and, specifically, an audacious conduct of war are practically the only means to develop a people's spirit of daring."<sup>35</sup> And questions like 'Would Gandhi have succeeded against Hitler or Stalin?' are only polite ways of expressing the same belief in the doctrine of state as 'the monopolist of legitimate force.'

The above considerations bring us to the question of what according to Gandhi is the state, and when may it apply force legitimately. The question is not raised formally in the *HS*, but there are sufficient indications for an answer, particularly in chapters 16 and 17. Gandhi conceives the state as a relationship, or a form of 'cooperation,' based on 'duty,' between those who govern and those who are governed. Governing, then, is a duty, demanded by Love and Truth. And cooperation must last as long as Truth and Love are dutifully respected. The duty to be governed ceases when the ruler violates Truth and Love. And one such violation takes place when the ruler fails to concede the just demands of the ruled. Then the ruled 'non-cooperate.' "If you do not concede our demand, we shall be no longer your petitioners. You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed; we shall no longer have any dealings with you. The force implied in this way may be described as love-force, soul-force, or more popularly but less accurately, passive resistance."<sup>36</sup>

Gandhi is now able to distinguish between a "good" state and a "bad" state: the former is one which embodies duties publicly; the latter is one which departs from duties publicly. As Morris-Jones has remarked, for Gandhi "the relevance and the justification of politics is an expression of

<sup>34</sup> H. H. Gerth, and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber, Essay in Sociology*, (New York, 1946), p. 126. On the discussion of the question of power (*Macht*) and violence (*Gewalt*) as the specific means of politics, see Weber's famous essay "Politics as a Vocation," *Ibid.*, pp. 77-129. For the original German see Max Weber, *Soziologie, Weltgeschichtliche Analysen, Politik*, (Stuttgart, 1956), "Der Beruf zur Politik," p. 167-186. The apparent lack of clarity or consistency in the use of *Macht* and *Gewalt* in this essay was pointed out to me by my colleague Dr. Karl Friedmann.

<sup>35</sup> Karl von Clausewitz, *War, Politics and Power*, Edward Collins, (ed.), (Chicago), pp. 302-303.

<sup>36</sup> *HS*, c. 16.

the moral life. The state is to be judged by the qualities of its citizens whose moral development it can help or hinder."<sup>37</sup>

Gandhi, it has been correctly observed, has a clear theory of "resistance politics."<sup>38</sup> But does he have a theory of "positive" politics, a theory of governing? To answer this question it may be helpful to ask the following questions. According to Gandhi, may the individual use violence against other individuals for political ends? May the individual use force against the government when the government is in the moral wrong? May the government use force when it is in the moral right and the ruled is in the moral wrong? The answers to the first two is clearly no. The answer to the third is given by means of a parable: the parable of a child trying to jump into the fire. Use of force, so long as it does not amount to fatal physical injury or serious psychic injury, and so long as the well-being of the child is the sole motive, is justified.<sup>39</sup> Gandhi's idea, as far as I understand it, is that the moral authority of a government depends entirely on its being in the moral right. The moment it departs from its duty it loses the authority to oblige obedience.

Put against this theory of Gandhian state (as found in the *HS*) and the basis of political obligation, we can better appreciate what Gandhi means by voluntary suffering. It is not masochistic nor sentimental surrender to brute-force. Gandhi is aware that some suffering is inevitable in human affairs. His idea is to reduce its volume and to find out a moral basis for it, so that what must be endured can be endured in dignity.

In my view the writer who has grasped the Gandhian doctrine of suffering as an effective political means is Jacques Maritain. Maritain calls *satyagraha*, "spiritual warfare," an order of means, of which our Western civilization is hardly aware, and which offers the human mind an infinite field of discovery—the spiritual means systematically applied to the temporal realm. . . ." <sup>40</sup> Maritain sees that Gandhi's "systematic organization of patience and voluntary suffering as a special method or technique of political activity" can be extended not only to nationalist struggles, but also to "the struggle of the people to maintain or control over the State."<sup>41</sup> According to Maritain, Gandhi's notion of suffering is not different from St. Thomas' doctrine of fortitude. Maritain's commentary of this point is noteworthy:

. . . there are two different orders of means of warfare (taken in the widest sense of the word), as there are two kinds of fortitude and courage, the courage that attacks and the courage that endures, the force of coercion or aggression and the force of patience, the force that inflicts suffering on others and the force that endures suffering inflicted on oneself. There you have two different key-

<sup>37</sup> Morris-Jones, *loc. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>39</sup> *HS*, c. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State*, (Chicago, 1951), p. 68.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

boards that stretch along the two sides of our human nature, though the sounds they give are constantly intermingled: opposing evil through attack and coercion—a way which, at the last extremity, leads to the shedding, if need be, of the blood of others; and opposing evil through suffering and enduring—a way which, at the last extremity, leads to the sacrifice of one's own life. To the second keyboard the means of spiritual warfare belongs."<sup>42</sup>

Aquinas discusses fortitude, one of the four cardinal (principal) virtues—the other three being prudence, justice and temperance—in *The Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, qq. 123-140. Some interesting similarities between the ideas of Aquinas and Gandhi may be noted. First of all, among the vices opposed to fortitude cited by Aquinas are fear,<sup>43</sup> and ambition<sup>44</sup> which are also vices opposed to non-violence. Secondly, the highest expression of fortitude according to Aquinas is endurance, which corresponds to Gandhi's notion of non-violence. Civic order is the object of this virtue for both. Aquinas defines fortitude as the virtue which strengthens the will in "human justice"<sup>45</sup> and removes the obstacles to the establishment of "rectitude of reason in human affairs,"<sup>46</sup> particularly by guarding the will "against being drawn from the 'good of reason' through fear of bodily harm and death."<sup>47</sup> St. Thomas relates fortitude to the fourth Beatitude: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for the sake of justice,"<sup>48</sup> and as we know, Gandhi was profoundly influenced by the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>49</sup> St. Thomas holds that martyrdom, the highest expression of fortitude, cannot be accepted without the grace of God.<sup>50</sup> Gandhi was equally sure that without religious aid non-violence could not succeed.

We may also point out the reasoning of Aquinas by which he supports the view that it requires more courage to endure suffering than to attack, and therefore endurance is morally superior to aggression.

"For it is more difficult to allay fear than to moderate daring, since the danger which is the object of daring and fear, tends by its very nature to check daring, but to increase fear. Now to attack belongs to fortitude in so far as the latter moderates daring, whereas to endure follows the repression of fear. Therefore the principal act of fortitude is endurance, that is to stand immovable in the midst of dangers rather than to attack them.

. . . Endurance is more difficult than aggression, for three reasons. First, because endurance seemingly implies that one is being attacked by a stronger person, whereas aggression denotes that one is attacking as though one were the stronger party; and it is more difficult to contend with a stronger than with

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> *Summa Theologica* (First Complete American Edition. New York, 1947), Q. 125.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 131.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 124, art. 2, ad 1<sup>um</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 123, art. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 123, art. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 139, art. 2.

<sup>49</sup> The Sermon on the Mount "went straight to my heart." Gandhi, *Autobiography* (Ahmedabad, 1925), p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> Q. 124, art. 2, ad 1<sup>um</sup>.

a weaker. Secondly, because he that endures already feels the presence of danger, whereas the aggressor looks upon danger as something to come; and it is more difficult to be unmoved by the present than by the future. Thirdly, because endurance implies length of time, whereas aggression is consistent with sudden movements; and it is more difficult to remain unmoved for a long time, than to be moved suddenly to something arduous."<sup>51</sup>

#### (b) NON-VIOLENCE AND THE THEORY OF ENDS AND MEANS

The theory of non-violence is in effect a theory of political means and ends. Gandhi is one of the major opponents of the doctrine of the separation of the ethics of ends and means. In politics, which is the realm of relative truth, no political end can be absolutely obliging. Since the morality of the political good is not absolutely compelling, one is not free to use *any* means to obtain it. The morality of the means, then, becomes as important as the morality of the end. Gandhi's contention is that, first, the means adopted often determines the moral quality of the outcome or the end, and secondly, the particular issue at hand often determines the nature of the means to be employed. He is arguing against the *a priori* doctrine that the *reason of state* is the political *summum bonum* and therefore any means, including violence, is justifiable. For Gandhi there can be no political end which requires absolute sanction; he in effect denies the *reason of state* doctrine, and its corollary, the end justifies the means.

To explain the relation, "the inviolable connection," between ends and means Gandhi uses the example of the seed and the tree.<sup>52</sup> The tree grows out of the seed, the two constitute a continuum. Similarly ends and means constitute one moral continuum, the means being ends in the process of realization. He takes as another example the various ways one can obtain a watch. The Editor tells the Reader:

"If I want to deprive you of your watch I shall certainly have to fight for it; if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay you for it; and if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it; and according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property, or a donation. Thus we see three

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 123, art. 6. It should be noted however that Aquinas' theory of the superiority of endurance over aggression does not make him a pre-Gandhi Gandhian! For, as is well known, he approved of just war under certain conditions. Though war is contrary to Divine precept, and though one must be ready to obey Divine precept and "if necessary refrain from resistance or self-defense," nevertheless, argues St. Thomas, it is necessary "sometimes" for a man to act otherwise for the "common good or for the good of those with whom he is fighting." Q. 30, art. 1, ad 2<sup>um</sup>. Similarly Maritain: endurance, he seems to say, is the more excellent way; aggression, in certain conditions is pragmatically necessary. See, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74. Although there is some difference between Gandhi on the one hand and Aquinas and Maritain on the other, on the finer point of whether man may use force against force under certain circumstances, both St. Thomas and Maritain would generally agree with Gandhi on the *greater excellence* of endurance, certainly in social relations; and possibly on the impermissibility of war in today's conditions in international relations.

<sup>52</sup> *HS*, c. 16.

different results from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter?"<sup>53</sup>

As to his second contention that the issue at hand would also suggest the morality of the means, Gandhi examines the example of a thief and the ways of dealing with him. The means to be adopted will depend on who the thief is: whether he is your father, or son, or brother, or friend, or an alien, or a bandit, or a starving man. Gandhi's conclusion is: "You will have to adopt the means to fit each case. Hence it follows that your duty is *not* to drive away the thief by any means you like."<sup>54</sup>

'Reason of state,' then, is not the source of political morality for Gandhi. Political morality stems from several sources—the issue at hand, the means employed, to mention two—all of which must be related to duty, Love and Truth. His doctrine of political means emphasizes the dynamic and really positive aspect of his political theory. For him politics is neither a system of punishment nor of competition, it is above all, as was noted already, "spiritual warfare," the incessant, anticipatory and preventive effort to make moral good prevail in human affairs. Thus in the case of the thief, it is not enough to make restitution for the stolen property: politics must adopt such means as would "destroy the man's motive for stealing," and would treat the thief as "an ignorant brother."<sup>55</sup> Voluntary suffering is in a sense concomitant with the passive acceptance of the evils one cannot prevent from occurring. The adoption of voluntary suffering and non-violence as political means involves an *active* concern for the moral well-being of oneself, of one's neighbor, and of the political community.

### (c) NON-VIOLENCE AND SWARAJ

We now come to the crucial issue of the *HS*, the relation between non-violence and swaraj. Politics, the previous arguments indicate, is the first step in the path of moral regeneration. Only those who are capable of political freedom are morally worthy of it. "Real home-rule is self-rule or self-control."<sup>56</sup> Each individual has to achieve it first, has to experience it, "experience the force of the soul within themselves." Each must then "endeavor to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise."<sup>57</sup> There is an intrinsic connection between personal *swaraj*, and national and universal *swaraj*.<sup>58</sup> The moral perfection, expected of the politically liberated man,

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *HS*, c. 20.

<sup>57</sup> *HS*, c. 14.

<sup>58</sup> Cole did not understand Gandhi correctly on this point. He writes: "he (Gandhi) is as near as a man can be to Swaraj in a purely personal sense. But I think he has never solved, to his own satisfaction, the other problems— that of finding terms of collaboration that could span the gulf between man and man, between acting alone and helping others to act in accordance with their lights . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 431. The basis of *swaraj* in Love naturally relates the *swaraj* to others.

is not the moral perfection of an isolated hero. He does not sit in splendid isolation like the philosopher-king. Rather the force that has transformed him is, of its very nature, "other-regarding," social. From each reformed individual moral force flows to the reformed nation. "Real Home Rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people."<sup>59</sup>

To sum up, then, politics of non-violence involves a revolution within the soul. Only on this hypothesis is it a cure of political pathology. Passively it may involve endurance of evil; actively it involves the prevention of evil. This is Gandhi's radical vision of politics, a far cry from politics as competition, as the maximization of interest superintended by the mortal God, the monopolist of legitimate force.

### III

#### GANDHI'S VISION OF NEW INDIA

The vision of India which the *HS* projects corresponds to its theory of non-violence. Consequently we can understand it properly only from the point of view of political theory. One of the functions of political theory, to remind ourselves again, is to state the political ought, to present the political vision, the standard of judgment and evaluation. The India of the *HS* is above all a measuring rod for the actual India.

The ideal India, according to Gandhi, had its nationality in religion. India was accordingly a nation before the British came. Thanks to her religious essence, she has a civilizing mission, to usher in the new politics of non-violence. It followed from this premise that she would reject the adoption of Western political theory which exalted violence.

Gandhi's notion of religion as the basis of nationality may be examined a little more closely. By religion Gandhi here means the syncretist type of religion, "the religion which underlies all religions." What Gandhi really means is 'a religious outlook on life,' according to which "we should be passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits" and which should "set a limit to our worldly ambition."<sup>60</sup> Gandhi does not deny the relevance of worldly pursuits, only he wants a ratio of its importance in relation to godly pursuits.

The foundational religion of Indian nationality, then, is not a confessional religion, Hinduism for example, or any other. Confessional religions, Gandhi considers at best as merely "different roads converging on the same point."<sup>61</sup> But he is aware of the dangers of confessional religion to true nationalism. "If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it," Gandhi hoped, the divisive tendencies of confessional religions could be controlled. Gandhi was very clear on this point: those who

<sup>59</sup> *HS*, c. 17.

<sup>60</sup> *HS*, c. 8.

<sup>61</sup> *HS*, c. 10.

identified confessional religion with the basis of nationality were not true nationalists at all: "those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland."<sup>62</sup>

Paradoxically enough, Gandhi thought it possible to have a nationalism which was religious in outlook but which did not identify itself with any confessional religion. According to him India was singularly suited to develop this type of nationalism, because she possessed the two qualities most needed for such a task, namely the spirit of toleration and the capacity for assimilation. India was religious, tolerant, assimilative. Hence it could adopt what is good in the West without adopting what is evil in it. The achievement of this moral ideal is the task of Indian Home Rule or *Hind Swaraj*.

#### IV

#### GANDHI'S THEORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND POLITICS

a) One idea that pervades the entire *HS* is the causal moral relation between civilization and politics. As the civilization of a community, so its politics. Gandhi devotes no less than nine chapters (out of twenty) to this topic. His view of civilization is basically moralistic: "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty."<sup>63</sup> All other aspects of civilization must be subordinated to the performance of duty. It is thus the stable matrix of historically tested values out of which arise political ideas and institutions.

From this point of elevation Gandhi sees nothing but corruption in Modern Civilization, by which he means the civilization that arose in Europe after the Industrial Revolution and which spread throughout the world.<sup>64</sup> The sense of duty that this civilization inculcates is totally unacceptable to Gandhi. It inculcates utilitarian materialism and practical, if not philosophic, secularism. It is "passive" in regard to the things of the Spirit and active in regard to things of material well-being. It is ethically ambiguous, out of which arises the fact that wealth and power dominate European morals. "Western nations are impatient to fall upon one another, and are restrained only by the accumulation of armaments all around," Gandhi wrote in 1908. "When the situation flares up," he continued, almost with prophetic insight, "we will witness a veritable hell, let loose in Europe. All white nations look upon black races as their legitimate prey. This is inevitable when money is the

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *HS*, c. 13.

<sup>64</sup> Writing in *Indian Opinion*, in 1908, Gandhi said: "Let it be remembered that western civilization is only a hundred years old, or to be more precise, fifty." *CW*, VIII, p. 374.

thing that matters. Wherever they find any territory, they swoop down on it like crows upon carrion. There are reasons to suggest that this is the outcome of their large industrial undertakings.”<sup>65</sup>

British civilization and British politics were most familiar to Gandhi—his personal contact with them dating back to 1889. Yet he spoke of them as Augustine did of the Romans and of their politics and civilization. “I bear no enmity towards the English but I do towards their civilization.”<sup>66</sup> Again, “The British Government in India constitutes a struggle between the Modern Civilization, which is the Kingdom of Satan, and the Ancient Civilization, which is the Kingdom of God. The one is the God of War, the other is the God of Love.”<sup>67</sup> And one of the purposes of the *HS* was to show the Indians “that they were following a suicidal policy” in hoping to drive out the British by adopting modern civilization and modern methods of violence and to exhort the Indians to “revert to their own glorious civilization.”<sup>68</sup>

Gandhi selected two pillars, in particular, of modernity: *machinery or technology* and what may be referred to as modern *bureaucracy*. What was fundamentally wrong with them was that they became means of “self-interest” rather than public service, of domination of fellowmen. It must be clearly understood that he was not attacking them *per se*, what he was attacking was their disorientation of purpose, brought about by cultural values. Machinery he called the “chief symbol of modern civilization” and it represented “sin”.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly enough he compared the “craze” for machinery and for wealth to the libido. “Money renders a man helpless. The other thing which is equally harmful is sexual vice. Both are poison.”<sup>70</sup> What the aphrodisiac is to the body, technology was to society: both tended to intensify potentialities into dangerous proportions.

What Gandhi said of technology was equally applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to modern bureaucracy, including the professions. They were also infected by disorientation of social purpose. He picked doctors and lawyers (he himself was a Barrister of the Inner Temple). “We become doctors so that we may obtain honors and riches.”<sup>71</sup> As for lawyers they are more interested in the “advancement” of quarrels than in their elimination: they “take to that profession not in order to help others out of their miseries, but to enrich themselves.”<sup>72</sup> What is condemned is the lack of “bounds” of the bureaucracy;<sup>73</sup> instead of being dependent on people, as in Ancient Civilization, they have become “masters” in Modern Civilization. “Careful reflexion will show,” he wrote in 1908, “that what we really desire through

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *HS*, c. 20.

<sup>67</sup> *CW*, X, p. 189; in the Preface to the first English edition of the *HS*.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *HS*, c. 19.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *HS*, c. 12.

<sup>72</sup> *HS*, c. 11.

<sup>73</sup> *HS*, c. 13.

acquisition of wealth is power over other men—power to acquire for our advantage the labor of a servant, a tradesman, or an artisan. And the power we can thus acquire will be in direct proportion to the poverty of others.”<sup>74</sup>

Obviously Gandhi's attack has been virulent, and often misunderstood. G. D. H. Cole, for example, wrote that the *HS* involved a “thorough repudiation of the very basis of Western Civilization, of Western ideals and standards of value, of Western action and of Western thought.”<sup>75</sup> In my opinion a criticism of this sort, though understandable, is not justified. I shall try to show why.

b) Gandhi is not attacking Western Civilization as such but Modern Civilization and its ethical ambiguity—its violence, disorientation of the purposes of technology, wealth, power and sex. This in itself would scarcely make him, as Cole suggests, a radical opponent of Western values and thought. For in the West itself there is a strong philosophical and religious tradition which is sceptical of the claims of the civilization built on technology. Apart from the obvious names of Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy (Gandhi's Western mentors), there are others who in varying degree question some of the fundamental “errors” of modern technology. Even a Walt Rostow, after tracing the stages of economic development, is led to discuss whether the ‘mass-consumption society’ can avoid “secular spiritual stagnation—or boredom,” and if so how.<sup>76</sup> A profound student of culture and its social and political relations, Christopher Dawson arrives at the conclusion: “A society which has lost its religion becomes sooner or later a society which has lost its culture.”<sup>77</sup> Marx himself led the intellectual revolt against the inhumanity of the early phase of the Industrial Revolution. In brief, there is much in the writings of these men and of many others we cannot, for want of space, mention here, which corroborates what Gandhi says about Modern Civilization.

But a Western writer who comes very close to Gandhi on the subject of technological civilization is Henry Bergson. The similarity between the two deserves scrutiny. In his justly influential book, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson examines the cultural issue posed by technology.<sup>78</sup> Speaking as a philosopher, Bergson raises the question to the abstract level of the essence and the purpose of technology. To evaluate the question rightly, Bergson tells us, we should see “mechanization as it should

<sup>74</sup> *CW*, VIII, p. 290.

<sup>75</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 429.

<sup>76</sup> W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, A Non-Communist Manifesto*, (Cambridge, 1960), p. 92.

<sup>77</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, (Image Book, Paperback, 1960), p. 184. Among Dawson's other books *Religion and Culture*, *The Making of Europe*, *Religion and the Modern State*, *The Movement of World Revolution* also have bearing on our subject.

<sup>78</sup> Henry Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, (1932). Citations taken from Doubleday Anchor Book (1956), paperback edition. See especially Chapter IV: “Mechanics and Mysticism.”

be, as what it is in essence.”<sup>79</sup> What then is its essence? Bergson falls back on his philosophy of *elan vital*, and looks for the clue in the beginning of the evolutionary, vital movement—itsself a spiritual phenomenon. Matter and Life need each other, but as Life evolves to the stage of humanity, the role of Matter should become that of the handmaid. But phenomenologically this is not what is happening. There is a deep chasm between the purpose and the phenomenon of technology. Man has a double tendency in him, either to seek bodily comforts, pleasure and luxury, or to seek spiritual development through Love and mysticism. The purpose of the evolutionary movement is to encourage the latter tendency and to produce saints or moral heroes: this is the highest stage of human evolution. But whether humanity will reach that stage is difficult to predict. For man, being free, is capable of choosing the path of luxury or of mysticism, of pleasure or of spiritual joy. Technology, though it has “democratized” physical comforts (and this is its positive contribution), has at the same time tended to increase man’s “artificial needs,” to foster the spirit of luxury, to complicate Life, and to create social tension between consumer and producer, capital and labor. If technology directs man along the path of luxury, humanity will be “stumbling into absurdity,” stagnating spiritually, reaching an evolutionary blind alley, and atrophy itself. The phenomenology of technology is not at all reassuring.<sup>80</sup>

Bergson, like Gandhi, is not rejecting Modern Civilization, but is merely pointing out its disorientation of purpose. To make technology serve human ends, it must become subordinate to man’s spiritual destiny, or what Bergson calls *mysticism*. They are not advocating a Manichaeian rejection of Matter, but an integration of material values by means of a spiritual synthesis. As Bergson puts it, man “must use matter as a support if he wants to get away from matter. In other words, the mystical summons up the mechanical. This has not been sufficiently realized, because machinery, through a mistake at the points, has been switched off on a track at the end of which lies exaggerated comfort and luxury for the few, rather than liberation for all.”<sup>81</sup> To reverse the trend, humanity needs “moral energy.” “So let us not merely say . . . that the mystical summons up the mechanical. We must add that the body, now larger, calls for a bigger soul, and that mechanism should mean mysticism. . . . Machinery will find its true vocation again, it will render services in proportion to its power, only if mankind, which it has bowed still lower to earth, can succeed, through it, in standing erect and looking heavenwards.”<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309. For Bergson’s general philosophical system, of which the *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* is a culminating point, see his *Creative Evolution* (1911), *Matter and Memory* (1913), and *Time and Free Will* (1913).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

This moral transformation of technology is to be effected by *mahatmas*, (literally, "great soul"), mystic geniuses: "Let a mystic genius but appear, he will draw after him a humanity already vastly grown in body, and whose soul he has transformed."<sup>83</sup>

The Mahatma would readily agree with Bergson's conclusion, even though the latter arrived at them through the philosophy of *elan vital* [where Gandhi asks for the balance between spiritual activity and material passivity, Bergson asks for the subordination of "mechanism" to mysticism.] Both ask for the same. Both see the relation between the "craze" for machinery (Gandhi) and the "frenzy" for pleasure (Bergson). Both condemn—one in the direct, simple language of a political propagandist, the other in the elegant language of a French Academician—the non-humanistic phenomenology of technology.

Professor Devanesan, towards the end of his excellent thesis on Gandhi, already cited here, makes the suggestion that Gandhi's polarization of Western Civilization and Indian Civilization "made it difficult to create a stable synthesis from Eastern and Western culture from which an adequate conception of freedom and unity could emerge."<sup>84</sup> This skepticism cannot stand critical scrutiny, and does not accord with Professor Devanesan's own earlier (and correct) evaluation only a few pages back. "*Hind Swaraj* . . . shows that Gandhi was not simply a great Indian, but also one of the greatest men of a new era of internationalism."<sup>85</sup> Again, his "universal appeal lay not only in his ability to present the moral elements of Indian culture, but also in his capacity to speak to the heart of a torn and divided world."<sup>86</sup> It is obvious that Gandhi's synthetic ability and achievement is at the basis of his "capacity" to speak to a divided world.

c) Gandhi owed his own ideas to a synthesis of Indian and European ideas. Two characteristics were key to 'the religious outlook' which he proposed as necessary for the cure of Modern Civilization, namely tolerance and assimilation. His own intellectual development was due to an assimilative and tolerant process, and he held out a similar process of cultural synthesis as the key to the success of the politics of non-violence.

Non-violence rests on a spiritual synthesis of East and West. "My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the *Gita*, *The Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount," he wrote in his Autobiography describing his early mental development.<sup>87</sup> In the Preface to the 1909 Gujarati edition of the *HS* he wrote: "These views are mine, and yet not mine. They are mine because I hope to act according to them. They are almost a part of my being. But, yet, they are not mine, because I lay no claim to originality. They have been formed after reading several books. That which I dimly

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>84</sup> Devanesan, *op. cit.*, p. 578.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 563.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

<sup>87</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 42.

felt received support from these books.”<sup>88</sup> The books referred to, as every reader of the *HS* knows, are the twenty found in the Appendix. Of the twenty, eighteen are by European authors.<sup>89</sup> Similarly in the preface of the first English edition of 1910 Gandhi repeats the European sources but also adds “the masters of Indian philosophy” as the sources of his ideas.<sup>90</sup>

An even more striking proof of Gandhi's synthetic view of cultural values may be found in an advertisement for an Essay Competition which Gandhi had taken in the *Indian Opinion* in 1907. A careful reading of the terms of the Competition—for a prize of ten guineas—would give us an indication of the way the idea of non-violence took shape in Gandhi's mind. The topic of the Essay was “The Ethics of Passive Resistance.” Explaining the subject, Gandhi wrote: “The doctrine, religiously constructed, means a fulfillment of Jesus' famous saying, ‘Resist not evil.’ As such it is of eternal and universal application . . .” As for the terms of competition: The Essay “shcu'd contain an examination of Thoreau's classic, ‘On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,’ Tolstoy's works—more especially, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is Within You’—(Gandhi meant *The Kingdom of God is Within You*), and it should give Biblical and other religious authorities and illustrations; and also the application of the ‘Apology of Socrates’ to the question.”<sup>91</sup>

Furthermore, Gandhi took sharp issue with Kipling's famous lines, “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.” In a public lecture delivered at Hampstead to the Hampstead Peace and Arbitration Society, on October 13, 1909—one month before he wrote the *HS*—he commented on Kipling and characterized his doctrine “to be a doctrine of despair, and inconsistent with the evolution of humanity.” He rather supported Tennyson's vision of the union of East and West, and it was because of this vision that he had “cast his lot with the people of South Africa.” He went on to attack Modern Civilization for its “worship” and “glorification” of the body more than the spirit, and ruled out the possibility of any cultural synthesis on the basis of Modern Civilization. On that basis “the two nations (India and Britain) would be flaying at each other.”<sup>92</sup> The idea is clear: cultural synthesis is possible; evolutionary path lies in that direction; but cultural synthesis on the basis of Modern Civilization will only lead to conflict; true synthesis lies in the harmonization of spiritual values.

Again, internal evidence in the *HS* itself shows that Gandhi was a most discriminating critic of Western and Indian civilizations. The origin of India's

<sup>88</sup> *CW*, X, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> Tolstoy (6); Thoreau, (2); Ruskin (2); Mazzini and Plato, one each, and some other contemporary but now obscure writers. The two Indians included were Dadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Dutt. *HS*, Appendix, p. 105.

<sup>90</sup> *CW*, X, p. 189. The *Autobiography* gives a little more detail on the sources of Indian influence on Gandhi. Raychandbhai is given the same importance as Tolstoy and Thoreau, p. 54.

<sup>91</sup> *CW*, VII, p. 510.

<sup>92</sup> *CW*, IX, p. 476.

moral renovation Gandhi traces to "discontent and unrest."<sup>93</sup> He welcomed these. From these arose the movement towards national reform and purification. But they were due to the "reading of the great works of Indians and Englishmen."<sup>94</sup> Moreover, Gandhi defends the Moderates of the Indian nationalist movement, men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Ranade, Budruddin Tyebji, Manomohan Ghose, who were discriminate carriers of Western ideas, against the Extremists, who were carriers of the unwholesome Western idea of political violence as a means of obtaining *swaraj*. Similarly A. O. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn, both ex-British civil servants, are praised for their contributions to Indian nationalism.

Moreover, similarity between certain ideas in the *HS* and in classical and Western political thought shows that Gandhi could not be accused of rejecting Western "ideals" and "thought." To begin with, Gandhi's notion that political good must be in harmony with moral good is equally Platonic, Aristotelian and Thomistic. Secondly, the ethical superiority of voluntary suffering to suffering inflicted on others is Gandhian as well as Socratic and Thomistic. Thirdly, Gandhi's doctrine that positive law is not binding when in conflict with divine law is Christian and Socratic.<sup>95</sup>

Finally, an increasing number of Western activists like Martin Luther King, and intellectuals like Maritain, and critics of modern war like Stratmann seem to find in Gandhi a modern apostle of an ancient Christian doctrine of non-violence. Stratmann writes that Gandhi demonstrated the relevance of the "Command to love" to public policy. His "political ethics were essentially a challenge to ours. Not to Christian ethics which he himself followed, but to the actual ethics of Christians, which are not Christian."<sup>96</sup> Similarly, many other Western students of Gandhi applaud him for rediscovering the genius of early Christianity.<sup>97</sup> In conclusion, we may agree with the great British classicist, John Middleton Murry: "The greatest Christian teacher in the modern world is Gandhi; and *Hind Swaraj* is (I believe) the greatest book that has been written in modern times."<sup>98</sup>

## V

### THE HIND SWARAJ AND THE MODERNIZATION OF INDIA

It will be a strange omission, I think, if in dealing with the seminal work of the leader of the Indian nationalist movement, a word or two were not added as to its relevance to the process of India's modernization. Only a word or two, and that too by way of conclusion, for the question of the

<sup>93</sup> *HS*, c. 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *HS*, c. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Francis Stratmann, O.P., *War and Christianity Today*, (London, 1956), pp. 9-14.

<sup>97</sup> Dom Griffiths, O.S.B., "The Ideal of Non-Violence," in Charles S. Thompson (ed.), *Morals and Missiles*, (London, 1959, 1961), p. 74.

<sup>98</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 441.

relevance of Gandhian political theory to political development deserves serious treatment.<sup>99</sup>

The prevailing view of political development is positivistic and utilitarian. Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama*, to mention only one book, supplies a massive demonstration of this tendency. Literature on political development seems singularly silent on the relevance of political theory as defined earlier in this paper. Whether it is due to contempt or ignorance is not always easy to say.

It is obvious that if we take political development as secularization, participation in competitive politics (politics conceived as competition and the struggle for the maximization of interest, superintended by an institution thought to possess the monopoly of legitimate violence), the ideas of *Hind Swaraj* must appear as either irrelevant or utopian. We have already noted, how many critics, not understanding Gandhi correctly on the issue of machinery or technology, argue to the incompatibility of technology and Gandhi. Here Gandhians, particularly faddist Gandhians, are more guilty. Gandhi's main point in his criticism of technology was that unless the foundation of Modern Civilization were set straight, technology, like undisciplined sex, could either enervate the species or lead it to the danger of self-destruction. That was why he was asking for the proper balance between spiritual activity and worldly passivity, or a religious outlook on life. Gandhi's fears seem more justified today than in 1909. Gandhi anticipated the spirited problems that technology poses. This he was able to do for he had a profound grasp of the importance of cultural values to political and technological development. A civilization that was indifferent to the idea of moral duty, he felt, could scarcely be secure about an advanced technology.

Now one might say that it is ridiculous to suggest that the technology which is available to the underdeveloped countries poses a moral or physical threat to them. All are agreed, and Gandhi is one of the first to do so, that they need a better technology and a better habit of disciplined labor. But where Gandhi parts company with the positivists and the utilitarians is the moral basis of adopting technology. As he puts it he did not like India to become English without the English, to become a tiger without the tiger's spots.<sup>100</sup> If after agreeing to the need of some technology, Gandhi at the same time expressed apprehension about it, it is because he was seeing things with the eyes of a political theorist. Unlike the positivist, the theorist can foresee the moral, causal relations of things. Today political development is very much the preserve of the behavioralists, the positivists and the utilitarians who are indifferent to political theory as if it were some fairy tale.

But the value of the *HS* lies not only in its power to clarify the moral basis of modernization but, as in India, to get modernization started on a

<sup>99</sup> For a general treatment of this problem see T. K. N. Unnithan, *Some Problems of Social Change in India in Relation to Gandhian Ideas*, (Groningen, 1956).

<sup>100</sup> *HS*, cc. 4 and 5.

truly national scale.<sup>101</sup> The *HS* has been crucial to Indian political development in so far as it reflected Gandhi's basic ideas. He made India conscious of the moral necessity to change, to reform its culture, to adopt nationalism, to acquire the discipline of work, to see the necessity of justice and honesty in public life, and to respect the need for the morality of means. All this belongs to the imponderable sphere of morals. But it is only those who can feel "the force of the soul from within," as Gandhi put it,<sup>102</sup> who are able to produce non-violent political results. For in human affairs force must flow from the interior to the exterior. The many-sided moral fervor is part of the whole process of political development, indeed its beginning, and perhaps its chief part. Unfortunately the impression that the *HS* leaves to the reader in a hurry is that it is anti-developmental. But as one reflects on its theoretical foundations, on why it relates goals to norms, one can see its causal normative relationship to India's modernization.

And for those who worry about the problem of non-violence as a means of political development and of politics, Max Weber, strangely enough, suggests a line of thought to ponder. After suggesting that there is the "inner tension" between what he called the ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*) and the ethics of ultimate ends (*Gesinnungsethik*) he however concludes that the man who has a real calling for politics (*Der Beruf zur Politik*) is he who can combine the two ethics and resolve the tension. Though Gandhi is the proponent *par excellence* of the ethic of ultimate ends, he was never irresponsible or reckless in pressing his ethical stand. As noted earlier, he firmly held the idea that politics moved in the realm of relative truth. Thus, as so many instances of Gandhi's political activity shows—his fasts, his *satyagraha* movements, his negotiations with the Viceroy, and, earlier with authorities in South Africa, Gandhi related the ethically desirable to what was practically realizable, or in Weber's terminology the ethics of responsibility with the ethics of ultimate ends. Gandhi was never reckless, he was responsibly pragmatic.

"Surely, politics is made with the head, but it is certainly not made with the head alone. In this the proponents of an ethic of ultimate ends are right. One cannot prescribe to anyone whether he should follow an ethic of absolute ends or an ethic of responsibility, or when the one and when the other . . . it is immensely moving when a *mature* man, no matter whether old or young in years, is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul (Recall for example Gandhi's confession of a Himalayan blunder in advocating *satyagraha* when the people were not really ready for it) . . . And everyone of us who is not spiritually dead must realize the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. In so far as this is true, an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility

<sup>101</sup> Erik Erikson writes: "If some say that his ascendance was unfortunate for an India in desperate need of modernization, I cannot see who else in his time could have brought about the vast, backward mass of Indians closer to the tasks of this century." *loc. cit.*, p. 728.

<sup>102</sup> *HS*, c. 20.

are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison constitute a genuine man—a man who can *have* the 'calling for politics.'<sup>103</sup>

Gandhi was such a genuine man, a man with a 'calling for politics,' notwithstanding non-violence and rejection of "machinery." And the *HS* tells us why.

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<sup>103</sup> Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 127.