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GANDHIISM VERSUS SOCIALISM

by

RICHARD B. GREGG

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THE JOHN DAY PAMPHLETS—No. 17

GANDHIISM VERSUS SOCIALISM

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“A new and durable set of values can be created probably only by some great personality living them with immense energy and utter devotion. I believe that Gandhi is such a person and that he is engaged in such a task.

“As the two systems stand today, it is easier for Gandhuism to select, adopt and use the important parts of the program of Socialism than it is for Socialism to adopt the more important parts of Gandhuism. Thus, of the two systems, Gandhuism seems the more flexible and comprehensive, and, therefore, probably more lasting.

“... Gandhuism is psychologically wiser and more effective than Socialism, not only as a new means of revolution, but also as a long-time mode of life and social organization.”

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THE JOHN DAY PAMPHLETS.

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GANDHIISM VERSUS SOCIALISM

**GANDHIISM
VERSUS
SOCIALISM**

by
RICHARD B. GREGG

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THE JOHN DAY COMPANY

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E SEEM to be living in the midst of a change not only of exterior circumstances but also of inner systems of values and of the symbols that go with them. Among the various great movements in the world today, that led by Mahatma Gandhi shows the greatest amount of change of values and symbols. And when such a change really takes place and becomes widely established, that will indeed be revolution.

In a pamphlet like this, one cannot adequately discuss Gandhism or any other great movement of social, economic and political reform. Nevertheless, a consideration of a few of the important elements of Gandhism, and a comparison with similar features of Socialism, will perhaps be useful.

Though I do not want to retain capitalism, Socialism is not the only alternative, and I do not think it is the best. I think that Gandhism, for India, anyhow, is better. As the two systems stand today, it is easier for Gandhism to select, adopt and use the important parts of the program of Socialism than it is for Socialism to adopt the more important parts of Gandhism. Thus, of the two systems, Gandhism seems the more flexible and comprehensive, and, therefore, probably more lasting.

How Society Is Controlled

Most people think that the world is governed by institutions and organizations such as political governments and banks, or by laws, or by certain ruling classes. But really the control is deeper and more subtle. Governments, banks, laws and ruling classes are only the exterior instru-

ments of management. The real control comes from ideas and sentiments—a scheme of values, a set of ideals or activities which people are induced to desire and accept as right, fitting and praiseworthy. The most important adjunct of this control—even more important than organizations—is a set of symbols which indicate and arouse emotions about the given systems of values.

Symbols are necessary tools. We have an infinite number of symbols. Words and numbers, ceremonials of many sorts, gestures and costumes are examples of symbols that are used by every one. A well-known psychologist has said that symbols are stimulators and carriers of emotional and intellectual energy. The use of flags in patriotic assemblies is a good example. Symbols also convey subconscious meanings and associations. They are a kind of inchoate language. And since probably most of our thinking and feeling is subconscious, this language of the subconsciousness is of great importance.

Thus we see that the real control of society is psychological, through men's minds and feelings. Even where government is maintained partly by the physical force of soldiers and police, the control is psychological, through the fear created by such force.

A new and durable set of values can be created probably only by some great personality living them with immense energy and utter devotion. I believe that Gandhi is such a person and that he is engaged in such a task.

Money Valuation and Gandhi's Corrective

Of all the prevailing schemes of value, the most powerful and widespread is money. The control of financial credit is the invisible government of nations. Money valuation with its implications is the heart of the capitalist system. Two functions of money are important for our dis-

cussion—those of a symbol of trust and a store of value.

In the light of these considerations, how do Gandhi's work and program appear? For years he has served the poor, especially the peasants. He has helped them in times of famine, flood, disease and economic distress. He has developed the work of charkha¹ and khaddar,² and thus given them clothing and bread. He has helped to remove the burdens of the untouchables. He has lived in great simplicity, eating no more than necessary for health, wearing no more than the poorest in the land wear, giving all his time to public service, going to jail again and again for the people's cause, proving by his manner of life his unity with them. Every day he does manual work for the poor. He has tried to serve all groups and all classes, and to bring harmony, unity, freedom and better days to India. Thus he has created an immense fund of trust and faith among the people. By Satyagraha³ and khaddar he has taught the people to have confidence in themselves and in their own strength, ability and power as well as in himself.

Bankers create financial credit; Gandhi creates moral trust, faith and credit. The symbols that the bankers use are coins and paper instruments of obligation. The symbols that Gandhi uses are the wearing of khaddar and simplicity of living. He asks his followers to do likewise. His program can free India only if his followers widely engage in similar social service all over the land. Under this program the future rulers of India cannot be parasitic or relatively idle. They will be those who work most unselfishly and effectively for the general welfare. Under his program, the credit (trustworthiness) of individuals will be much less in control of banks. Each person or group

¹ The charkha is the Indian spinning wheel.

² Khaddar or khadi is hand-woven cloth made of hand-spun yarn.

³ Satyagraha is the Indian name given by Gandhi to the method of nonviolent resistance.

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will create and maintain their own amount of trustworthiness by their own quality and quantity of service.

When Gandhi left prison in 1924, gave up politics and devoted himself entirely to social and economic public service, many British politicians said: "Gandhi has shot his bolt. He will no longer be a force in politics." But his work was building up an immense fund of confidence among the masses. When in 1930 he called upon them—drew upon this fund of moral credit—the world was astounded at the response. Who were the greater politicians and statesmen, the British or Gandhi?

Thus we have evidence that Gandhi's program, if fully carried out by individuals everywhere, will result in constructive work for the poor in villages and cities everywhere. It will generate immense funds of mutual trust and harmony among and between all groups, classes and communities, and thus provide the foundation for a finer, wealthier and greater nation. This explains the remark made by some one that what the Indian National Congress now wants is not leaders but workers. The program lays stress upon the importance of village life. In small groups people can readily know each other well, and mutual trust is easier and more prevalent. In the villages, where 90 per cent of the population of India lives, the traditions of intergroup service and barter and payment in kind are still strong and therefore this new form of trust will be understood and used to its full worth. Thus Gandhi's full program will tend to alter or at least to supplement in India that part of the capitalistic money system which tends to canalize all trust into the form of money credit and tries to put that in the control of financiers and governments. Money, now the most powerful of all modern symbols and schemes of value, will be weakened and will be corrected or supplemented by symbols, values and modes of activity that are nearer to human realities. Money tokens will

remain useful as a medium of exchange and as a partial measure of certain economic values. But Gandhi's full program tends to restore reality to economic, political and social relationships, and to correct a symbolism which has gone wrong. True trust is created not by the issue of coins or pieces of paper by a bank or government, but by unselfish service. In relation to such trust, every man will, so to say, become his own banker, will control the extent to which people trust him. Money can not be a store of such value.

Physical Violence and Gandhism

After money, the next most powerful and frequently used means of government is physical violence, with its appropriate set of symbols—uniforms, martial music, military parades, display of arms, etc.—controlling people by fear of violence and the prestige of its power. Furthermore, the participation of the people in wars or in counter-violence thwarts them as much as the violence used against them by the State. By fully accepting any scheme of values and its symbols, one is at the mercy of those who are most experienced and skilled in the use of those values and their symbols. By being violent themselves, the people tacitly make a fundamental agreement with the ruling class—namely: that violence is the surest way of settling conflict. When they accept the system of violence values, they are thereby bound and restrained by it, and must do the will of those most skilful with the weapons of violence.

Under Gandhi's program, Satyagraha does away with such fear and prestige and deprives that system of values and symbols of its former power. The ruling classes may control guns, soldiers, navy, airplanes, poison gas, police and courts, but disciplined mass Satyagraha abolishes the customary results of those things and lowers the morale of

the violent attackers. Gandhi believes that real popular political power does not consist of control over the legislatures but lies in the ability of the masses to say no and to stick to it resolutely with disciplined nonviolent mass resistance. Leaders initiate measures; the people can say only yes or no. The substance of popular political power is the ability to use disciplined, continuous mass Satyagraha. Satyagraha will enable the people to control not only political governments but also industrialists and financiers. It is more powerful and creative than the strike. It compels industrialists and financiers to realize that domineering methods and control by money symbols will no longer work. It will bring about a fundamental change of inner attitude by psychological influences which are too complex to be discussed here.¹

Some conservatives may say that Satyagraha is sedition. But modern Great Britain grew from the sedition of Oliver Cromwell. The United States grew from the sedition of George Washington. Probably every modern State is the result of sedition. When sedition is successful, it is considered heroism. Sedition is wicked only if unsuccessful. Nonviolent sedition has none of the moral stigma applicable to violent sedition. Sedition and violence are different. Therefore the use of the word sedition as a term of general moral reproach is simply evidence of lack of discrimination and of prejudice and anger.

Some may say that Satyagraha means anarchy. Anarchy means lack of any government or control. But Satyagraha requires, and in practice secures, very great self-control, steadiness, discipline, order and coöperation from its users. These qualities do not spell anarchy. They may spell new and different principles, new and different

¹ They have been discussed in my *Gandhiji's Satyagraha*, published by Ganesan, Madras, 1930.

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kinds of order, new and different government; but they do not mean absence of all order or government.

Thus we see that Gandhi's program ends one of the oldest forms of social control, and establishes a new and finer type of order and control, based not on fear but on service and love. Satyagraha establishes an entirely new system of values and their appropriate symbols. By resolutely saying no, by disciplined mass Satyagraha, the people of India have learned in only a few months that they can check the most powerful of governments. This gives the masses new hope and self-confidence. Further use of the same method with all thoroughness will bring complete self-government. Not only does Satyagraha do away with fear, but it tends to create harmony and mutual trust among all people. Hence it also tends to weaken the money system by creating funds of trust outside the control of banks and governments.

Social Rank and Flattery

Probably the next most powerful method of social and political control is that of prestige, social grades and distinctions, playing upon vanity and pride by means of social ranks, ceremonial, glamour, invidious display, titles and the like. What is called "doing honor" to some one of ability is often a part of this. This device is used especially to corrupt and wean away the men and women of ability who rise to leadership of the working class, and thus to deprive the masses of strength and guidance. It is a clever and subtle art and far more powerful and effective than is generally realized. It is used in all countries. Lord Passfield—once Sidney Webb!—has said: "Popular leaders are no longer ruthlessly suppressed when they are too ambitious to be bought off by anything less than parliamentary leadership. . . . The emerging leaders of the

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common people are neither pilloried nor bribed. As soon as they show evidence of political power they are embraced. . . . The willingness to use the weapon of seduction will be the last ditch in the defensive position of the British *rentier* class.”¹

We know how in England titles are so prized that they have been purchased by wealthy men contributing money to political party funds. Possibly a considerable part of Britain’s control of her dominions and colonies is secured by playing upon the social ambitions of leading men and women. This process is one of the “invisible bonds of empire.” Even among Americans who are supposed to be relatively free from such snobbery, wives and daughters of wealthy families are usually much flattered if they can be presented at the British royal court. It is safe to say that a considerable number of those Americans who are either rich or university graduates would feel gratified if they were asked to dine or have tea with an English lord or knight. The British ruling classes are aware of the situation and use this flattery of prestige, this creation and manipulation of superiority and inferiority complexes, to influence American attitudes toward international affairs. The person who is flattered is apt to believe what the flatterer in high position says, to imitate him in one way or another, to look favorably upon what the flatterer suggests, whether it be using influence to get something accomplished, withholding approval or action, or what not. The same thing is done in India.

Herein lies the political importance of khadi. In all countries for ages the cut and kind of clothing worn by men or women has denoted their social and economic status. The British insistence upon a special formal dress for evening dinner among people who make any pretense to social

¹ *What Happened in 1931* by Lord Passfield—The Political Quarterly, London, Jan.-Mar., 1932.

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position is a stock example. In Western countries the absence of a collar and necktie, except at play, denotes the laboring man, as do also certain kinds of clothing. In India the length and quality of the dhoti¹ has social connotation.

Because of this long and close association between clothing and social position, the wearing of khaddar in India has real significance, both social and political. It means that the wearer is either a poor peasant or is in sympathy with the poor masses through the Indian National Congress. The wearing of it is a declaration of independence, a sign of inner strength, self-reliance and humility. It is equivalent to saying, "No, I am not open to social flatteries or briberies. I do not care to curry favor with government or with socially influential people. I prefer to work with and for the humble, poor and despised. I am a Gandhite, a Congressman. I prefer Indian culture to that of the West. I do not believe in social distinctions. I will not be separated from the peasants. I want real Swaraj."²

But if, on the other hand, a man is greatly impressed by Western civilization or British power and looks up to it with admiration, he is apt to want to copy or associate with Europeans, and is apt to wear mill cloth produced by those Western-made machines which he respects. By wearing fine mill cloth he is apt to feel more at ease in the presence of Westerners. So his hopes and preferences, conscious or unconscious, or his subtle social aims or inferiority complexes tend to find expression in the clothing he wears.

Because khadi thus has a real meaning, no Indian should feel surprise if European employers or Government officials look with disfavor upon khadi. Khadi is not

¹ The part of the Indian man's clothing that covers the waist and legs.

² Self-government.

an empty gesture but a real symbol, as are also the charkha and its regular daily use. This element of Gandhi's program definitely cuts one of the controls by which the British have maintained their power. This is one of the reasons, I think, why Gandhi said, on emerging from prison in 1931, that if the nation would only wholeheartedly adopt khaddar and the charkha, it would bring Swaraj.

The failure to recognize the subtle power of social influence of this sort is one reason why so many labor leaders in many countries have become corrupted and weaned away from their fellow-workers. This desire to associate with socially influential people, to feel a little superior, to seem to be a little more than respectable, has corrupted many leaders of the British Labor party, of the German Socialists, and of the American labor unions. Let no man think that without aid he is immune to such influence. His very idea that he is incorruptible is an indication of a pride that may sooner or later trip him up.

Gandhi's use and promotion of the use of charkha, his wearing of khadi and his great simplicity of life have been powerful symbols of his unity with the Indian masses. His asceticism is not barren or negative. It is a true sign of human unity and of the dignity of the poor and humble. It is a powerful social and political symbol, and has done much to generate and maintain the trust of the masses in him.

Parliamentarism

Still another form of political control, used with perhaps greater skill by Great Britain than by any other country, is what may be called parliamentarism—the use of talk and discussion to delay action, to tire or split opposition, to exhaust the energy of resentment and discontent, to divert or confuse men's minds. Consider for

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example how much has been obstructed and prevented, not alone in England but also in America, and particularly under President Hoover, by commissions, legislative committees, investigations, conferences and by legislatures themselves. As long as political life can be confined to talk, most of the steam is blown off or used up by devious procedure and thus no action is taken to disturb the status quo. Of course the affairs of all large organizations are very complex. Of course knowledge, discussion and planning are necessary. Of course there must be legislatures. Nevertheless discussion is often abused and used as a trap and a blind. The principle of "divide and rule" applies to people themselves and to their ideas and feelings. Many a desirable public reform has been defeated by splitting it into many minor issues and examining and debating these separately and thwarting, obscuring or burying one at a time. By referring matters to committees that often sit in private, intrigue and corruption are made easier. Or, while the matter is being delayed by discussion, one of the other three devices of control is being used to modify the situation in favor of the rulers.

Most intellectuals tend to have too great faith in the efficacy of talk. Educated people therefore easily succumb to parliamentarism. Members of a legislature discuss not what *they* will do, but what they will have others do or permit others to do.

The word "constitutional" as applied to methods of reform, usually means an attempt to gain a political majority by means of discussion and persuasion of words, in the press and on the platform, and to register and make effective the wishes of that majority through the legislative and executive branches of the government, among the permanent administrative staff of officials, and also through the financial and other economic controlling forces of the country.

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Satyagraha includes all that, but it goes further. To the persuasion of words it adds the persuasion of deeds and example, the persuasive force of the sight of courageous men and women so fully convinced of the rightness of their cause that they seek arrest and quietly go to prison or death for their faith. Modern psychologists tell us that much the greater part of our mind is subconscious. If the mind may be likened to a log floating in water, the conscious mind is like the small portion above the level of the water; the subconscious mind is like the greater bulk under the water. Psychologists also tell us that example and suggestion act mainly upon the subconsciousness of the beholder. If this be so, the persuasive power of example by action is much greater than the persuasion of words addressed to the smaller conscious mind. The persuasion of Satyagraha is just as peaceful as that of so-called "constitutional agitation," and it is more potent, swifter, simpler (and therefore better understood by the masses), more direct, more responsible, more sincere and more lasting. It is less capable of perversion by sinister forces acting in the darkness of legislative committee rooms, or by bureaucratic intrigue. It is less apt to produce a whittling down of public feeling and thwarting of public desire. It is more likely to lead to ultimate mutual respect and trust by and among all parties to any given issue, and to eliminate mistakes on all sides. Mass Satyagraha does not abolish legislatures, committees, investigating bodies and conferences. But it controls them, puts them in their proper place, and renders them less capable of doing harm.

Gandhi's program is more of action than of talk. It calls for regular daily spinning and other social service from every one of those who profess it. It is concrete and psychologically sound. Thought, talk, planning and feeling without corresponding action are psychologically de-

ilitating. Gandhi is himself a man of action, and he asks action from all his followers.

Large-Scale Organization

There is another value prevalent all through the West, in Communist Russia as well as in capitalist Europe and America. It is the idea of large size. People highly value great size in all sorts of organizations. They strive for vastness in all enterprises. They aim to create bigger and bigger associations of all sorts—cities, churches, industrial corporations, newspapers, farms, universities, railroads, banks, states and empires. This is more than mere greed. People feel comforted merely to associate with some large organization. This emphasis on size is probably largely a result of the growth of modern credit and the development of power-driven machinery and science. It is perhaps also a form of megalomania.

Gandhi mistrusts these huge aggregations and the bureaucracies they inevitably entail. He believes instead that life is best when lived in small groups such as villages.¹ He recognizes that the villages must be integrated into larger units—political, economic and social. But he would have that integration much looser and freer than that to which we are accustomed in the West.

It seems probable that Western people believe strongly in large, closely-knit, highly centralized political organizations partly because Western States are all based on military violence. In a crisis the Western States all rely on guns, poison gas and bayonets as the ultimate control. They all spend a large part of their income on armament. Indeed it seems that, although large-scale organization in some ways tends toward security and stability, large size

¹ Cf. In accord, Graham Wallas, *The Great Society* (Macmillan, 1916), pp. 297-302, 309, 314, 332-334, 337, 350, 368.

itself is sometimes an influence toward violence in political and economic organizations. In a huge association it is psychologically impossible for the few who manage it to know the detailed facts about distant localities. They have not the time, and the reports that reach them are inadequate and biased. Therefore the managers cannot help issuing unjust orders, and the inevitable bureaucracy naturally desires to control. With the general prepossession toward violence anyhow, the difficult situations caused by the ignorance of those in command will be controlled by the military and the police. This is true in disputes between industrial corporations and their workers as well as in disputes between governments and people. Many weaknesses attributed to modern democracy are really due only to immensity of organization.

But Asiatic civilization has traditionally been founded on village life, only loosely integrated into larger district and national units. Two facts indicate that there must be considerable validity in this form of political, social and economic organization. One is the great permanence and stability of those civilizations, despite many invasions, wars and famines. Another is the fact that all the great religions have come from Asia, although Communists and some others consider this a weakness rather than a strength.

Small-scale organization would considerably affect the problems of social control. Village populations are so small that every one knows every one else. Therefore the trust that evolves in such surroundings is far more real and complete than the trust that exists in huge organizations where so much is necessarily based on hearsay. Public opinion counts so greatly in a village that there is less need to rely on physical force to control the people. In villages there are, no doubt, distinct and often hard social divisions, but the gaps between people are not so great as among city folk and people in large organizations. In vil-

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large councils the evils of parliamentarism are reduced to a minimum. The councillors are known personally by practically all the inhabitants. The discussion and planning are healthier and more responsible because the problems are usually simpler, the details are usually matters of direct personal knowledge of all who discuss them, the real aim is action, and those who discuss will themselves take part in the resultant action. On the other hand, large-scale organization is a value which enhances the power of all the other four controls which we have mentioned—money, physical violence, social divisions and parliamentarism.

By way of summary, we now see that Gandhi's program tends strongly to weaken the five chief devices by which the ruling classes have been able to govern, restrain and thwart the masses; namely:

- (1) Money.
- (2) Physical violence.
- (3) Social divisions and flatteries.
- (4) Parliamentarism.
- (5) Large-scale organization.

These five controls are used in different ways and degrees and in different combinations in different countries, but they may all be found in all nations, and to a greater or less degree they have weakened and corrupted the masses as well as the middle classes in all nations. Leaders of reform movements need to realize more clearly how these systems of value and symbols operate.

Herein lies the importance of Gandhi's program. It uses symbols which heretofore have been little used in political and social movements, and values which are better understood by the masses than by the old ruling classes. For the old symbols the new program substitutes new symbols that are closer to our modern vision of social realities, and are more adequate to modern purposes. For the old values it substitutes new values that are more true and useful to all

mankind. These are but a few of the implications of Gandhi's program, but they are very important. The depth and power of the people's response is proof of the soundness of the program.

Comparison Between Gandhism and Socialism

Socialism resembles Gandhism in having as its motive the service of the common man and the producing of more social and economic justice and equality than has generally prevailed in the world. Both movements call for devoted hard work from every one. Neither is merely palliative. Socialism, like Gandhism, is a fresh system of values. Furthermore, the most successful leaders of Socialism, such as Lenin, Trotzky and Stalin, have like Gandhi, led lives of austere simplicity, and thus, as well as by their work for the common good, have created trust among the common people.

Socialism has weakened the money system, just as Gandhism is doing, by tending to create sources and modes of trust and credit outside the money system. Socialism, through its doctrine of equality, seeks to end the divisions of society and the social flatteries. In this respect also it resembles Gandhism. In Russia the Soviet form of organization and the intense activity of every one have perhaps reduced the evils of parliamentarism to a minimum. But parliamentarism is not a device much used in a dictatorship, nor was it much used in old Tsarist Russia. Both Gandhism and Socialism have released and given expression to the repressed hopes of many generations, of hundreds of millions of submerged people. Both movements have enabled the masses to feel their own power and have thus increased their self-confidence. Hence these two movements have vast appeal and momentum.

But Gandhism is, in my judgment, more effective, more

powerful and in other ways superior to Socialism. It alters the old controls more efficiently and completely and offers a finer basis for a new society.

In the first place, Socialism, especially as exemplified in Russia, clings to military and police violence and their symbols, as a prime control of society. Gandhism would abolish this control, and by so doing will create more trust and a finer quality of trust than Socialism or Communism has done.¹ Despite the immense fund of trust evolved within the Soviet system, that system has aroused, from its beginning, both in Russia and in other countries, more fears and hatred of itself than has Gandhism in its own and other countries. That is chiefly due to the violence of the Communists, I believe, though they would say it is because of the efficiency of the Soviets in destroying capitalism in Russia. Some Socialists may protest that they do not believe in violence, but no Socialist party in power has yet given adequate proof of such belief.

Secondly, Gandhism, through the weaving of khaddar and the use of charkha, attacks the old social gradations and controls of flattery and distinction more subtly and directly and powerfully, because it employs symbolism, than does Socialism. It is true that all people in Russia dress simply. Yet we have not heard of simple, coarse clothing being advocated as a conscious symbol of social unity in Russia. Simple clothing seems to have been worn there from poverty and dire necessity, but apparently its symbolic value is not fully appreciated. And among the Socialists of Germany and Great Britain there has been apparently little or no recognition of the connection between clothing and social position, between clothing and social flattery and control by the “upper” classes. This oversight has been one element in the failure of Socialism

¹This point has been developed at more length in my *Gandhi's Satyagraha*, published by Ganesan, Madras, 1980.

in those countries. Indeed, in Germany and England, Socialists have made no effective changes in any of the old four forms of control described above—money, violence, social rank and parliamentarism. I believe it is for this reason that Socialism, outside of Russia, has been so weak. The Russian Communists have preached hatred of the old ruling classes, and have used that hatred as a means of aiding in the abolition of classes. Khadi is superior, in that it operates through love and pity of the poor, rather than through hatred of the rich. Love is more productive of social trust than is hatred.

Gandhiism is superior to Socialism in providing for every person a common daily form of social service to help directly toward creating a new social and economic order; namely, hand spinning and its associated activities. Old and young, men and women, rich and poor, city folk and country folk, educated and ignorant—all can and are urged to take part in this. If Socialism is primarily a program for the manual workers who make up the mass of the people, then those who profess it ought all to do some manual work, both as a symbol and so as to develop, through a common experience, a unity of attitude and understanding. This common activity of Gandhiism is psychologically wise. It recognizes that new habits and attitudes must be built up gradually by small stimuli regularly repeated for many months at least. This is the organic law of all growth. Action as well as talk is necessary to a full and strong understanding and to the development of the implications of any idea. For instance, one cannot really understand algebra or the activities that use algebra until one has actually and painstakingly, with his own fingers and pencil, written all the little figures involved in hundreds or thousands of algebraic problems. Gandhi's program provides an immediate channel for the social good will of every one, without interfering at all with other

forms of social service. It supplies a method by which the women who cannot leave their homes (who form a large part of every nation), can yet help greatly toward the establishment of the new order. It provides a common bond between all groups. It tends to heal the deepest of all social divisions, between the rich and the poor. It is more than a mere gesture or symbol; it has definite, concrete and momentous economic value also.¹ For the vast mass of people outside Russia the only way to work for Socialism is to talk or write, or to go to meetings and listen. Gandhism provides more directly creative channels for action.

Again, the khaddar and charkha program surpasses Socialism for India because it provides immediate economic relief to the masses of poor among whom there is an appalling amount of unemployment every year, and paves the way for many other forms of economic relief, whereas the changes contemplated by Socialism would take longer to get into action.² This is not to decry the great importance and value of reforms in land laws, taxation, industry, conditions of labor, education and government organization, all of which are inherent in Socialism and which are now a part of the Indian Congress program.

Socialism stresses the abolition of certain kinds of private property. No doubt, private property is a system of values which is very powerful and divisive in operation, and perhaps it ought to be added to our list of controls. But Gandhi himself seems to advocate strict regulation of industrial private property, and dedication to public use rather than its abolition. Apparently he relies upon mass Satyagraha to control those who try to misuse private property. Furthermore, much of the evil resulting from private property arises because there is no limit to the

¹ and ² These points are fully discussed in my *Economics of Khaddar* (2nd edition) Ganesan, Madras, 1981.

extent of private property held by one person. The vast size of modern corporations and governments adds greatly to their power for evil and to the difficulty of preventing abuses.

Gandhi wants all large or expensive machinery limited in amount, controlled and probably owned by the State and operated only for the welfare of the workers and of society. He has no objection to small, inexpensive machinery that is adapted to family or individual use and obtainable by all.¹ Such a rule, if made effective, would go far toward ending the present evils of private ownership of the huge centres of production.

The emphasis of Gandhism on the value of smallness, on the superiority of quality over quantity, and on simplicity of living, tends to control private property and to prevent its excessive modern evils. People can have most of the real advantages of science without enormous machines or huge corporations. Though private property needs limitation and reform, the evils of modern capitalism perhaps come more from the defects and misuse of money than from private property. We may admit the value of all the Socialist proposals, and yet add that they alone are not enough, and indeed probably cannot be attained and preserved without these other and subtler psychological changes.

It seems to me that Gandhi's emphasis on small-scale, largely autonomous organizations (villages) is in the long run sounder, at least for India, than the large, highly centralized governmental organizations of the Russian

¹ In a conversation reported in *Young India* for Nov. 18, 1924, Gandhi said he would be glad for people to have many such machines as the Singer sewing machine, and in regard to the factories necessary to make such machines he said: "I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized or State controlled. They ought to be working under only the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive."

type. Socialism in general relies on large, strongly centralized organizations. Gandhi's whole program tends to promote a sound balance between industry and agriculture, and steady employment for all.

Communists profess to aim at ultimate small, autonomous groups (the communes), but the means the Communists are taking—the creation of a vast, highly centralized State owning and controlling everything—cannot lead to small-scale organization. The means chosen qualifies and determines the end that will be reached. A huge Socialist State cannot bring decentralized, small, autonomous village life except by causing another revolution.

Gandhiism is more effective than Socialism because Gandhi's program involves specific, practical economic organization and work along with and even before political organization and work. The full development of the khaddar program implies a giving up—that is to say, a boycott of mill-made cloth. This means a partial escape from the meshes of capitalistic industry and trade, a control by each family over one of its own economic necessities. In the Socialist program, on the other hand, essential economic reforms mostly have to wait until after the attainment of political power, and so up to that time the chief efforts of Socialists are political. What economic changes they have achieved in Great Britain and Germany are palliatives only. Inasmuch as Marxians insist and others are admitting that a large part of political power grows out of and depends upon economic power, this feature of Gandhi's program is important.

An Indian friend ¹ has recently pointed out another difference between the two programs, which to many would seem a merit in Gandhiism. "Gandhiism never gives to the State the paramount power accorded to it by Socialism. The freedom of the human conscience is a priceless treas-

¹ Nirmal Kumar Bose.

ure which Gandhiji is not prepared to barter for anything else on earth. If he gives to the State a certain measure of obedience it is never with regard to the fundamentals." The Socialists, it seems, do not trust the nature of the individual man but insist on an exterior supreme authority; whereas Gandhi is hopeful that in reasonably short time the mass of men can attain a far greater degree of self-control and can largely develop their mutual goodwill—enough to live together without violence and without forceful coercion by the State.

Lastly, Gandhism is, for India, superior to Socialism because it is an indigenous Indian growth, evolved by an Indian mind and heart, truly Swadeshi.¹ Its concepts, symbolism and methods are more closely adapted than Socialism to the circumstances and habitual modes of feeling, thinking and action of the great mass of Indian people. In the end, it is the Indian masses who must adopt and use any social system whatever in India.

Perhaps it will be said that Socialism, because it recognizes class control of society, is clearer-sighted than Gandhism which seems to lay so little stress on that point.

But, as I have said, society is ultimately controlled not by a class but by values. Gandhism does not talk of the expropriation of the ruling class. Instead, it proceeds to demolish the values and symbols which are the source and inner strength of the ruling class. Because it so completely alters inner values, Gandhism does not need to rely on exterior confiscation of goods, power and positions.

There are three factors which Lenin declared to be basic in this stage of capitalism. They are ownership of the means of production, production for profit and export of surplus production.

As we have seen, the evil of private control of the means of production is vastly diminished as soon as the scale of

¹ Of the country's own self.

association is greatly diminished and the masses learn to use Satyagraha. Gandhism would alter production for profit by altering the money valuation. Under Gandhi's valuations the motive for production naturally becomes need and use. The factor of export of surplus production would, in India, be largely controlled by Gandhi's doctrine of Swadeshi—each district and each country relying as far as possible on its own indigenous products. As far as cloth is concerned, the hand spinning wheel and hand loom will control that factor. Under that mode of cloth production there would not be much surplus for export. What little is exported would be a true surplus. Small-scale operation of industry would also act as a control.

It might be urged that Socialism is superior because it has a definite, concrete plan for the organization of society. But organization or structure is a resultant, exterior expression of inner purpose. In society, as in any growing organism, each stage or attainment grows organically out of the preceding stage with all its factors, and necessarily partakes of the character of the preceding stage and the means used in making the change. This is because people's thinking and feeling and attitudes are continuous and cannot suddenly and completely change their character. I do not mean by this that exterior social, political or economic changes must therefore always be slow. They are sometimes swift. But it is of enormous importance that right methods and means should be used in making a change, because they will largely determine the character of the result. They determine the character of the result far more than does any intellectual plan of organization evolved in advance. If a revolution is attained by violence, the old violence values and use of violence as a control will be found in the resulting government, and will eventually find their way into the hands of the group which is specially skilled in the use of violence. The same holds true of

all the other four devices of social control. New methods are needed even more than a new plan.

Hence, the eventual structure of the State under Gandhism will and must grow out of the circumstances at the time when India attains freedom, and out of the nature of the methods and means used in attaining that end. These circumstances cannot be predicted in advance. To try to create a detailed, rigid form and structure ahead of time and to hope to get the country to adopt it after freedom is attained, would be a waste of energy.

Hence, to sum up, it seems to me that the valuations, methods and symbols of Gandhi's program are more important and valuable than the more definite and rigid plan of organization proposed by Socialism. Appropriate symbols rouse and carry more energy than any plan of organization by itself. The control exercised by a system of values and symbols is more profound, powerful and lasting, especially among Indian peasants, than the exterior control of press, radio, telegraphs, railways and other mechanical means of communication and transport. Systems of value will control even propaganda, because they determine to whom the people will listen and give credence.

Lincoln Steffens believes that economic privilege has been the arch-corrupter of governments and of society. But false values and inadequate, unstable and ambiguous symbols seem to me to lie deeper and to be more powerful even than economic privilege. Gandhism is psychologically wiser and more effective than Socialism, not only as a means of revolution, but also as a long-time mode of life and social organization.

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