

M. K. GANDHI

*

Hind Swaraj

and other writings

edited by

ANTHONY J. PAREL

University of Calgary, Canada



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521574310

© in the editorial matter, Anthony J. Parel 1997

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1997
Thirteenth printing 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Gandhi, Mahatma, 1869–1948

[Selections. 1997]

Hind swaraj and other writings / by M. K. Gandhi; edited by
Anthony J. Parel.

p. cm. – (Cambridge texts in modern politics)
Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 57405 6 (hardcover). — ISBN 0 521 57431 5 (pbk)

1. India — Politics and government — 1919–1947. 2. Nationalism —
India. I. Gandhi, Mahatma, 1869–1948. Hinda Svaraja. English.
II. Parel, Anthony. III. Title. IV. Series.

DS480.45.G242 1997

954.03'5 — dc20

96-13035 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-57405-1 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-57431-0 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy
of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication,
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel timetables and other
factual information given in this work are correct at the time of first printing but
Cambridge University Press does not guarantee the accuracy of such
information thereafter.

Editor's introduction

*

Hind Swaraj is Gandhi's seminal work. It is also a work which he himself translated from Gujarati into English: no other work of his, not even the *Autobiography* (translated by his secretary), enjoys this distinction. As such, the English text of this work, which is being presented here, possesses an authority all of its own. It was this text that Tolstoy and Romain Rolland, Nehru and Rajaji read and commented upon. It was through this, not the Gujarati text, that he hoped, as he put it, 'to use the British race' for transmitting his 'mighty message of *ahimsa*' to the rest of the world (Watson 1969, 176). And it was to this text that he returned throughout his career as if to the source of his inspiration.

Hind Swaraj is the seed from which the tree of Gandhian thought has grown to its full stature. For those interested in Gandhi's thought in a general way, it is the right place to start, for it is here that he presents his basic ideas in their proper relationship to one another. And for those who wish to study his thought more methodically, it remains the norm by which to assess the theoretical significance of his other writings, including the *Autobiography*. It can also save them from the danger of otherwise getting drowned in the vast sea of Gandhian anthologies. No wonder that it has been called 'a very basic document for the study of Gandhi's thought' (M. Chatterjee 1983, 89), his 'confession of faith' (Nanda 1974, 66), 'a rather incendiary manifesto' (Erikson 1969, 217), 'a proclamation of ideological independence' (Dalton 1993, 16), and 'the nearest he came to producing a sustained work of political theory' (Brown 1989, 65). It has been compared to such diverse works as Rousseau's *Social Contract* (Heard 1938, 450), the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola (Catlin 1950, 215), and chapter IV of St Matthew or St Luke (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter cited as CW) 10: viii). This last

comparison, though its allusion to Jesus would have embarrassed Gandhi, still merits attention. Just as it is in these Gospel chapters that we find Jesus first announcing his messianic mission, so it is in *Hind Swaraj* that we find Gandhi first announcing his own life-mission. This is nothing other than showing the way for the moral regeneration of Indians and the political emancipation of India.

The very composition of *Hind Swaraj* has something of the heroic about it. It was written in ten days, between 13 and 22 November 1909, on board the ship *Kildonan Castle* on the author's return trip from England to South Africa, after what proved to be an abortive lobbying mission to London. The whole manuscript was written on the ship's stationery, and the writing went on at such a furious pace that when the right hand got tired, Gandhi continued with the left: forty of the 275 manuscript pages were written by the left hand. And he wrote as if under inspiration. In the entire autograph, only sixteen lines have been scratched out and only a few words changed here and there (Prabhudas Gandhi 1957, 87–8). Critics speak of Gandhi's 'profound experience of illumination' on board the *Kildonan Castle* and compare it to Rousseau's on the road to Vincennes (Murry 1949, 424). At any event, Gandhi himself felt that he had produced 'an original work', for that was how he described it in a letter to his friend Hermann Kallenbach, the first to know about the book's completion (Gandhi 1909–46, I, 94).

GANDHI'S INTENTIONS

The book is addressed to a mixed audience: the expatriate Indians greatly attracted to terrorism and political violence, the Extremists and Moderates of the Indian National Congress, the Indian nation, and 'the English' (ch. xx). By the Indian nation Gandhi means ordinary Indians, irrespective of their religious, linguistic, regional or caste differences, as well as the new emerging middle class, referred to in the text as 'doctors', 'lawyers' and 'the wealthy'. And by 'the English' he means both the British ruling class living in India and Britons living in Great Britain.

As to why he wrote the book, there was first of all the question of an

inner illumination and the consequent urge to communicate. 'The thing was brewing in my mind', he wrote to his friend Henry Polak a month before the actual writing. 'I, therefore feel that I should no longer withhold from you what I call the progressive step I have taken mentally . . . After all they [the ideas] are not new but they have only now assumed such a concrete form and taken a violent possession of me.' The Foreword reflected the same sense of urgency: 'I have written because I could not restrain myself.' Years later he recalled the experience: 'Just as one cannot help speaking out when one's heart is full, so also I had been unable to restrain myself from writing the book since my heart was full' (CW 32: 489).

Secondly, he wanted to clarify the meaning of swaraj, the concept that provides the theoretical framework of the book. This is done by introducing a distinction between swaraj as self-government or the quest for home rule or the good state, and swaraj as self-rule or the quest for self-improvement.

Thirdly, he felt it necessary to respond specifically to the ideology of political terrorism adopted by the expatriates. The book was written in order to show that they were following 'a suicidal policy'. He recalled in 1921 how on his 1909 visit to London he had come into contact with 'every known Indian anarchist' there, and how he had wanted to write a book 'in answer to the Indian school of violence'. 'I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills, and that her civilisation required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection' (CW 19: 277).

Fourthly, Gandhi was anxious to teach the Indians that 'modern civilisation' posed a greater threat to them than did colonialism. They appeared to him to take it for granted that modern civilisation was an unmixed blessing, and colonialism an unmixed evil, forgetting that colonialism itself was a product of modern civilisation. 'My countrymen, therefore, think', states the Preface, 'that they should adopt modern civilisation and modern methods of violence to drive out the English.' This point is further elaborated in the Preface to the second Gujarati edition of 1914: 'it is not the British that are responsible for the misfortunes of India but we who have succumbed to modern civilisation . . .

The key to an understanding of *Hind Swaraj* lies in the idea that worldly pursuits should give way to ethical living. This way of life has no room for violence in any form against any human being, black or white' (CW 12: 412). And in 1929 he came back to the same idea: 'The Western civilisation which passes for civilisation is disgusting to me. I have given a rough picture of it in *Hind Swaraj*. Time has brought no change in it' (CW 40: 300). And in 1939: 'The key to understand that incredibly simple (so simple as to be regarded foolish) booklet is to realise that it is not an attempt to go back to the so-called ignorant, dark ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, [voluntary] poverty and slowness. I have pictured that as my ideal' (CW 70: 242). 'I would ask you to read *Hind Swaraj* with my eyes', he exhorts the reader, 'and see therein the chapter on how to make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilisation, but it can be built on self-contained villages' (CW 70: 296).

Fifthly, he wanted to contribute towards the reconciliation of Indians and Britons. This is evident from the 'exhortation' to 'the English' in chapter xx. Modern civilisation posed as much a problem for them as it did for the Indians. 'At heart you belong to a religious nation', he tells them. And the desire for reconciliation can come about 'only when the root of our relationship is sunk in a religious soil' (ch. xx).

Finally, Gandhi believed that through *Hind Swaraj* he would be able to give Indians a practical philosophy, an updated conception of dharma, that would fit them for life in the modern world. In the past dharma was tied to a hierarchical system of duties and obligations and to the preservation of status. It gave little or no attention to the idea of democratic citizenship. Gandhi felt that the time had come to redefine the scope of dharma to include notions of citizenship, equality, liberty, fraternity and mutual assistance. And in *Hind Swaraj* he presents in simple language his notion of such a redefined dharma, the vision of a new Indian or Gandhian civic humanism, one that the *Gita* and the *Ramayana* had always contained in potentia, but something which Indian civilisation had not actualised fully in practice. In *Hind Swaraj* a conscious attempt is being made to actualise that potential. 'This is not a mere

*Principal events in the life of
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

*

- 1869 Born on 2 October at Probandar, Gujarat, into a Modh Bania family.
- 1883 Marries Kasturbai Makanji.
- 1888 Birth of Harilal, his eldest son; leaves for England to study law.
- 1890 Joins the London Vegetarian Society.
- 1891 Called to the Bar from the Inner Temple (debarred in 1922, reinstated in 1988); returns to India.
- 1893 Arrives in Durban, South Africa, to work for an Indian Muslim trading firm; experiences racial discrimination at the Pietermaritzburg railway station.
- 1894 Becomes the founder-secretary of Natal Indian Congress; enrolled as barrister in the High Court of Natal; starts campaign against anti-Indian racial laws.
- 1895 Visits the Mariannhill Trappist Monastery, outside Durban.
- 1896 Visits India, June–November.
- 1897 Returns to South Africa; at Durban harbour met by an angry mob of white settlers; escapes, with the assistance of local white police, in the guise of an Indian constable.
- 1899 Organises an Indian Ambulance Corps to assist the British in the Second Anglo-Boer War.
- 1901 Returns to India for a year.
- 1902 Returns to South Africa.
- 1903 Settles in Johannesburg; *Indian Opinion* commences publication; work against anti-Indian racial legislation continues.
- 1904 Reads Ruskin's *Unto This Last*; founds an experimental Phoenix Settlement outside Durban.
- 1906 Organises an Indian Ambulance Corps during the Zulu 'Rebellion';

- takes the vow of chastity; at a mass meeting moves the famous resolution IV proposing civil disobedience against anti-Indian racial legislation; visits London on a Transvaal Indian Deputation to lobby for Indian interests.
- 1908 The term 'satyagraha' formally adopted; the mass burning of registration certificates in Johannesburg; first imprisonment (10–30 January); second imprisonment (7 October–12 December).
- 1909 Third imprisonment (25 February–24 May); July–November in London to lobby for South African Indian interests; on the return voyage, 13–22 November, writes *Hind Swaraj* and translates Tolstoy's *Letter to a Hindoo*. [R. Shamasastri publishes the text of the newly discovered *Arthashastra* of Kautilya in *Bibliotheca Sanskrita*, Mysore.]
- 1910 Establishes the Tolstoy Farm, outside Johannesburg, on land donated by his friend Hermann Kallenbach.
- 1913 Leads the 'great march' of satyagrahis (2,037 men, 127 women, and 57 children) from Charlestown to Volksrust to protest against anti-Indian legislation; fourth imprisonment (11 November–18 December).
- 1914 The Gandhi-Smuts agreement reached; leaves South Africa for good; in London August–December; organises an Ambulance Corps of Indians living in England to help in World War I.
- 1915 Arrives in India in January; establishes the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad.
- 1917 Applies principles of satyagraha to settle the grievances of indigo workers in Champaran, Bihar.
- 1918 Applies principles of satyagraha to settle the Ahmedabad textile workers' strike and the Kheda peasants' grievances; actively recruits volunteers for the Indian army to fight in World War I.
- 1919 Leads the all-India satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act; *Hind Swaraj* printed and distributed as the manifesto of the Gandhian revolution; supports the Khilafat movement; becomes editor of the weeklies, *Navajivan* (Gujarati) and *Young India* (English); under arrest, 9–11 April, while on a train journey from Kosi to Bombay.

- 1920 The Indian National Congress adopts Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation.
- 1922 The Chauri Chaura massacre of 21 Indian policemen by unruly mob forces Gandhi to suspend satyagraha; fifth imprisonment (10 March 1922–5 February 1924).
- 1924 President of the Indian National Congress.
- 1927 Publishes *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* Vol. I.
- 1928 Publishes *Satyagraha in South Africa*; visits Kerala in support of Vykom satyagraha.
- 1929 Publishes *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* Vol. II.
- 1930 Leads the 200-mile Salt March, from Ahmedabad to Dandi, 12 March–5 April, and breaks the salt laws; sixth imprisonment (5 May 1930–26 January 1931).
- 1931 The Gandhi-Irwin Pact; attends the Round Table Conference in London.
- 1932 Seventh imprisonment (4 January–20 September); fasts to protest against the proposed separate electorate for the Untouchables.
- 1933 Eighth imprisonment (1–4 August); ninth imprisonment (4–23 August); founds the English weekly, *Harijan*; Sabarmati Ashram closed down permanently.
- 1934 Inaugurates all-India Village Industries Association; resigns formally from the Indian National Congress.
- 1936 Founders the Sevagram Ashram, near Wardha.
- 1937 Inaugurates New Educational Conference at Wardha.
- 1941 Publishes *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*.
- 1942 Launches the Quit India Movement; tenth imprisonment (9 August 1942–6 May 1944).
- 1944 Death of his wife in prison; Gandhi-Jinnah talks on Hindu-Muslim unity.
- 1946 Meets with the Cabinet Mission and attends the Simla Conference; tours the riot-ridden districts of Bengal.
- 1947 The partition of India and Indian independence; in Calcutta, begins a fast as a means to restore Hindu-Muslim peace.

- 1948 Begins a fast in New Delhi as a means to restore Hindu-Muslim-Sikh peace; 29 January writes a draft constitution for the Indian National Congress; 30 January assassinated in New Delhi by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu extremist.

Glossary and abbreviations

*

GLOSSARY

ahimsa	non-violence
anasakti	non-attachment
artha	wealth/power, one of the four ends of human existence
atman	the permanent self underlying human personality
atma	soul
bahadur	courageous, honourable, an honorific title
Bania	third highest caste in social hierarchy – Gandhi's caste
Bapu	'Father'
brahmacharya	celibacy
brahmachari	one who practises celibacy
Brahman	the ultimate reality
brahmin	highest caste in social hierarchy
charkha	spinning-wheel
crore	the sum of 10,000,000
dastur	spiritual leader of Parsees
daya	mercy, compassion
dehin	the embodied self
dharma	duty, natural moral law; religion as ethics and religion as sect
dhurna	a traditional form of 'sit-down strike'
Jain or Jaina	a follower of the Jain religion
kali-yug	an 'era' of corruption
kama	pleasure, one of the four ends of human existence
khadi	home-spun cloth, made famous by Gandhi
khaddar	another name for khadi
Khuda-Ishwar	God
kudharo	uncivilised way of life (opposite of sudharo)

Kshatriya	second highest caste in the social hierarchy
lakh	the sum of 100,000
mullah	spiritual leader of Muslims
moksha	salvation or the ultimate end of life
panchayat	village council
pice	the basic unit of the rupee in Gandhi's time
praja	Gandhi's term for 'nation' in <i>Hind Swaraj</i>
rishi	sage
the Raj	the British regime in India
shastras	traditional, often considered sacred, texts
satya	truth
satyagraha	firmness in adhering to truth
satyagrahi	one who practises satyagraha
shastri	learned in Hindu scriptures
swadeshi	pertaining to one's own country
swaraj	self-rule, self-government
Upas tree	<i>Antiaris toxicaria</i> , whose poisonous latex is used as arrow poison; symbol of any life-destroying entity
vaid	name for 'medical doctors' in pre-modern India
varna	the ideal unit of a functionally divided Hindu society
varnashrama	the four-fold hierarchical division of Hindu society
Vaishnava	a member of the sect who worships Vishnu, a Hindu God
yagna	sacrificial offering

ABBREVIATIONS

HS	<i>Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule</i>
CW	<i>The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</i>
AICC	All-India Congress Committee
AISA	All-India Spinners' Association
AIVIA	All-India Village Industries Association

Indian Home Rule

[or Hind Swaraj]

*

by

M. K. Gandhi

Being a Translation of '*Hind Swaraj*'
(Indian Home Rule), published in the
Gujarati columns of *Indian Opinion*,
11th and 18th Dec., 1909

Contents

	<i>Preface to the English translation</i>	page
	Foreword	5 9
I	The Congress and its officials	13
II	The Partition of Bengal	19
III	Discontent and unrest	24
IV	What is Swaraj?	26
V	The condition of England	30
VI	Civilisation	34
VII	Why was India lost?	39
VIII	The condition of India	42
IX	The conditions of India (cont.): railways	46
X	The condition of India (cont.): the Hindus and the Mahomedans	51
XI	The condition of India (cont.): lawyers	58
XII	The conditions of India (cont.): doctors	62
XIII	What is true civilisation?	66
XIV	How can India become free?	72
XV	Italy and India	75
XVI	Brute force	79
XVII	Passive resistance	88
XVIII	Education	100
XIX	Machinery	107
XX	Conclusion	112

APPENDICES

I Some authorities	120
II Testimonies by eminent men	121

Preface to the English translation

It is not without hesitation that the translation of 'Hind Swaraj' is submitted to the public. A European friend¹ with whom I discussed the contents, wanted to see a translation of it and, during our spare moments, I hurriedly dictated and he took it down. It is not a literal translation but it is a faithful rendering of the original. Several English friends have read it, and whilst opinions were being invited as to the advisability of publishing the work, news was received that the original was seized in India.² This information hastened the decision to publish the translation without a moment's delay. My fellow-workers at the International Printing Press shared my view and, by working overtime – a labour of love – they have enabled me to place the translation before the public in an

¹ Hermann Kallenbach, Gandhi's close friend and donor of the Tolstoy Farm.

² On 10 March 1910 *Hind Swaraj* (HS) was intercepted at Bombay and placed in the hands of the Gujarati interpreter of Madras High Court. On 15 March he submitted a 21-page typed résumé of the book to Sir H. A. Stuart, Secretary of the Home Department. 'I have given sufficient matter to form an opinion whether it is seditious or not', wrote the interpreter. 'Nowhere the author of the book advocates revolt or the use of physical force against the British Government in India. But he openly advocates passive resistance to subvert British supremacy. He advises all people not to cooperate with Government. If this idea takes hold of the mind of young inexperienced men, it might lead to systematic strikes among Government servants of various classes, as well as Public Works such as Railway, Post, Telegraph, etc. Surely a very dangerous thought to the safety of Government. The sooner it is suppressed the better.' On the basis of this recommendation, on 24 March 1910 the Governments of India, Bombay, Madras and Bengal banned the book. For the full text of the report, see Parel (1993, 240–54).

unexpectedly short time. The work is being given to the public at what is practically cost-price. But, without the financial assistance of the many Indians who promised to buy copies for themselves and for distribution, it might never have seen the light of day.

I am quite aware of the many imperfections in the original. The English rendering, besides sharing these, must naturally exaggerate them, owing to my inability to convey the exact meaning of the original. Some of the friends who have read the translation have objected that the subject matter has been dealt with in the form of a dialogue. 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,³ mostly readers of *Indian Opinion*, and myself.

Whilst the views expressed in 'Hind Swaraj' are held by me, I have but endeavoured humbly to follow Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson and other writers, besides the masters of Indian philosophy.⁴ Tolstoy has been one of my teachers for a number of years. Those who want to see a corroboration of the views submitted in the following chapters, will find it in the works of the above named masters. For ready reference, some of the books are mentioned in the Appendices.

³ These include Dr Pranjivan Mehta (CW 71: 238), Shyamji Krishnavarma (CW 6: 28, 40, 73, 83-4) and V. D. Savarkar (CW 32: 102).

⁴ 'the masters of Indian philosophy': during his first jail term in South Africa (January 1908) Gandhi read Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi's *Rajayoga, Commentary on the Gita*. (Dwivedi attended the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago; the other to attend was Swami Vivekananda). During his second incarceration (October–December 1908) he read the *Bhagavad Gita* 'almost every day;' and during the third term (February–May 1909), the *Gita*, *Veda-Shabda-Sangana*, the *Upanishads*, *Manusmriti*, *Ramayana*, *Patanjal-Yoga-Darshan*, *Ahnika-Prakasha*, and Rajchand's *Sandhya-ni Gutika*. ('I memorised a portion of his [Rajchand's] writings and of the book on *Sandhya*. I would repeat them over and over again in my mind whenever I happened to wake up at night, and every morning I spent half an hour meditating on them' CW 9: 241–2).

Had I not known that there was a danger of methods of violence becoming popular, even in South Africa, had I not been called upon by hundreds of my countrymen, and not a few English friends, to express my opinion on the Nationalist movement in India, I would even have refrained, for the sake of the struggle, from reducing my views to writing. But, occupying the position I do, it would have been cowardice on my part to postpone publication under the circumstances just referred to.

M. K. Gandhi

Johannesburg

March 20th, 1910

Foreword

I have written some chapters on the subject of Indian Home Rule which I venture to place before the readers of *Indian Opinion*. I have written because I could not restrain myself.⁵ I have read much,⁶ I have pondered much, during the stay, for four months in London of the Transvaal Indian deputation.⁷ I discussed things with as many of my countrymen as I could. I met, too, as many Englishmen as it was possible for me to meet. I consider it my duty now to place before the readers of *Indian Opinion* the

5 'I could not restrain myself': an indication of the inner intensity that prompted Gandhi to write HS. Writing to Henry Polak a few weeks before the writing of HS, Gandhi confessed how certain ideas were 'brewing in my mind' and how they 'had taken a violent possession of me' (CW 9: 478, 481; see also CW 32: 489).

6 During his first prison term (January 1908), Gandhi read or re-read the Bible, the Koran, Thomas Huxley's lectures, Carlyle's biographies of Burns, Johnson and Scott, Bacon's essays on civil and moral counsel, and the writings of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Plato (CW 8: 159). During his second prison term (October–December 1908) he read or re-read 'two books by the great Ruskin, the essays of the great Thoreau, some portions of the *Bible*, the life of Garibaldi (in Gujarati), essays of Lord Bacon' (CW 9: 181–2). During his third prison term (February–May 1909) he read or re-read Tolstoy, Emerson, Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Mazzini and portions of the Bible (CW 9: 208, 241); for a survey of Gandhi's readings after 1909, see Iyer (1986–7, 1, 66–198).

7 'The Transvaal Indian deputation': in the summer of 1909 the British Parliament was debating a draft bill for the creation of the Union of South Africa. To lobby for their interests, the Transvaal Asians sent a deputation consisting of Hajee Habib and Gandhi to London. The deputation spent four disappointing months (July–November 1909) in London, and returned empty-handed (CW 9: 288–301; Hunt 1978, 105–42).

conclusions, which appear to me to be final. The Gujarati subscribers of *Indian Opinion* number about 800. I am aware that, for every subscriber, there are at least ten persons who read the paper with zest. Those who cannot read Gujarati have the paper read to them. Such persons have often questioned me about the condition of India. Similar questions were addressed to me in London. I felt, therefore, that it might not be improper for me to ventilate publicly the views expressed by me in private.

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 felt received support⁸ from these books.

The views I venture to place before the reader are, needless to say, held by many Indians not touched by what is known as civilisation, but I ask the reader to believe me when I tell him that they are also held by

⁸ A key to the interpretation of the influence of other thinkers on Gandhi. According to George Woodcock, 'Even the influence of Tolstoy and Ruskin can be exaggerated, and Gandhi himself was inclined to do so, partly from a principle of humility that made him reluctant to accept all the credit for his achievements' (Woodcock 1972, 25–6). Of the influences of the Buddha and Buddhism, Mahavira and Jainism, and Christ and Christianity on Gandhi, K. G. Mashruwala, one of his close associates, declared that, of the three, Buddha and Buddhism exerted relatively little influence on Gandhi; as for Mahavira and Jainism, he was attracted more to their doctrine of the many-sidedness of truth (*syadvada*), than to their theory of non-violence; by contrast, Christ and Christianity exerted a relatively strong influence on him. He recognised that there was a 'great difference between Christ's active non-violence coupled with humanitarian service and the retiring, inactive non-violence of Jainism and Buddhism'. The latter two religions did not have a concept of God, which presented him with a theoretical problem in dealing with his Buddhist and Jain friends. According to Mashruwala,

Bapu [Gandhi] was often heckled about this. It led to Bapu's particular interpretation of the term God, by the proposition 'Truth is God' instead of such others as 'God is Truth' or 'God is Love', etc. He thereby sought to make God acceptable not only to Jains and Buddhists but also to Marxists. (Mashruwala 1983, 126–7)

thousands of Europeans.⁹ Those who wish to dive deep, and have time, may read certain books themselves. If time permits me, I hope to translate portions of such books for the benefit of the readers of *Indian Opinion*.

If the readers of *Indian Opinion* and others who may see the following chapters will pass their criticism on to me, I shall feel obliged to them.

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.

To make it easy reading, the chapters are written in the form of a dialogue between the reader and the editor.

M. K. Gandhi
Kildonan Castle
November 22nd, 1909

⁹ An indication of the fact that Gandhi's criticism of modern Western civilisation is not inspired by any Indocentric animus.

CHAPTER I

*

The Congress¹⁰ and its officials

READER: Just at present there is a Home Rule wave¹¹ passing over India. All our countrymen appear to be pining for National Independence. A similar spirit pervades them even in South Africa. Indians seem to be eager after acquiring rights. Will you explain your views in this matter?

EDITOR: You have well put the question, but the answer is not easy. One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling 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 question.¹² To a certain extent, the people's will has to be expressed; certain sentiments will need to be fostered, and defects will have to be brought to light. But, as you have asked the question, it is my duty to answer it.

READER: Do you then consider that a desire for Home Rule has been created among us?

EDITOR: That desire gave rise to the National Congress. The choice of the word 'National' implies it.

¹⁰ The Indian National Congress, a political 'party' founded in 1885, is referred to as 'the Congress' throughout HS.

¹¹ 'Home Rule wave': in the first decade of the twentieth century, home rule or swaraj had become the focus of Congress nationalism. *Indian Opinion* in 1906 had reported on the Home Rule Movement in India (CW 5: 314).

¹² The three functions mentioned here are also the functions that he had proposed for his newspaper, *Indian Opinion* (CW 4: 320 and CW 5: 289–90).

READER: That, surely, is not the case. Young India¹³ seems to ignore the Congress. It is considered to be an instrument for perpetuating British Rule.

EDITOR: That opinion is not justified. Had not the Grand Old Man of India¹⁴ prepared the soil, our young men could not have even spoken about Home Rule. How can we forget what Mr Hume has written, how he has lashed us into action, and with what effort he has awakened us, in order to achieve the objects of the Congress? Sir William Wedderburn has given his body, mind and money to the same cause. His writings are worthy of perusal to this day. Professor Gokhale, in order to prepare the Nation, embraced poverty and gave twenty years of his life. Even now, he is living in poverty. The late Justice Buddrudin Tyebji was also one of those who, through the Congress, sowed the seed of Home Rule. Similarly, in Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and other places, there have been lovers of India and members of the Congress, both Indian and English.

READER: Stay, stay, you are going too far, you are straying away from my question. I have asked you about Home- or Self-Rule; you are discussing foreign rule. I do not desire to hear English names, and you are giving me such names. In these circumstances, I do not think we can ever meet. I shall be pleased if you will confine yourself to Home Rule. All otherwise talk will not satisfy me.

EDITOR: You are impatient. I cannot afford to be likewise. If you will bear with me for a while, I think you will find that you will obtain what you want. Remember the old proverb that the tree does not grow in one day.¹⁵ The fact that you have checked me, and that you do not want to hear about the well-wishers of India, shows that, for you at any rate, Home Rule is yet far away. If we had many like you, we would never make any advance. This thought is worthy of your attention.

¹³ 'Young India': the Indian revolutionaries associated with India House (1905–9), London, referred to themselves as the 'Young India Party'. The name had its origin in Mazzini's concept of Young Italy. Young India was also the name of the weekly newspaper Gandhi edited in India from 1919 to 1931.

¹⁴ An honorific title given to Dadabhai Naoroji.

¹⁵ A Gujarati proverb: 'mangoes do not ripen in a hurry'.

READER: It seems to me that you simply want to put me off by talking round and round. Those whom you consider to be well-wishers of India are not such in my estimation. Why, then, should I listen to your discourse on such people? What has he whom you consider to be the father of the nation done for it? He says that the English Governors will do justice, and that we should co-operate with them.

EDITOR: I must tell you, with all gentleness, that it must be a matter of shame for us that you should speak about that great man in terms of disrespect. Just look at his work. He has dedicated his life to the service of India. We have learned what we know from him. It was the respected Dadabhai who taught us that the English had sucked our life-blood.¹⁶ What does it matter that, today, his trust is still in the English nation? Is Dadabhai less to be honoured because, in the exuberance of youth, we are prepared to go a step further? Are we, on that account, wiser than he? It is a mark of wisdom not to kick against the very step from which we have risen higher. The removal of a step from a staircase brings down the whole of it. When, out of infancy, we grow into youth, we do not despise infancy, but, on the contrary, we recall with affection the days of our childhood. If, after many years of study, a teacher were to teach me something, and if I were to build a little more on the foundation laid by that teacher, I would not, on that account, be considered wiser than the teacher. He would always command my respect. Such is the case with the Grand Old Man of India. We must admit that he is the author of Nationalism.¹⁷

READER: You have spoken well. I can now understand that we must look upon Mr Dadabhai with respect. Without him and men like him, we would probably not have the spirit that fires us. How can the same be said of Professor Gokhale? He has constituted himself a great friend of the English; he says that we have to learn a great deal from them, that we

¹⁶ A reference to the 'drain theory' made popular by Naoroji's *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.

¹⁷ 'the author of Nationalism': the Gujarati text reads, 'We must say that the Indian nation (*praja*) is behind him.'

have to learn their political wisdom, before we can talk of Home Rule. I am tired of reading his speeches.¹⁸

EDITOR: If you are tired, it only betrays your impatience. We believe that those who are discontented with the slowness of their parents, and are angry because the parents would not run with their children, are considered disrespectful to their parents. Professor Gokhale occupies the place of a parent. What does it matter if he cannot run with us? A nation that is desirous of securing Home Rule cannot afford to despise its ancestors. We shall become useless, if we lack respect for our elders. Only men with mature thoughts are capable of ruling themselves, and not the hasty-tempered. Moreover, how many Indians were there like Professor Gokhale, when he gave himself to Indian education? I verily believe that whatever Professor Gokhale does he does with pure motives and with a view to serving India. His devotion to the Motherland is so great, that he would give his life for it, if necessary. Whatever he says is said not to flatter anyone but because he believes it to be true. We are bound, therefore, to entertain the highest regard for him.

READER: Are we, then, to follow him in every respect?

EDITOR: I never said any such thing. If we conscientiously differed from him,¹⁹ the learned Professor himself would advise us to follow the dictates of our conscience rather than him. Our chief purpose is not to cry down his work, but to believe that he is infinitely greater than we, and to feel assured that compared with his work for India, ours is infinitesimal. Several newspapers²⁰ write disrespectfully of him. It is our duty to protest against such writings. We should consider men like Professor Gokhale to

¹⁸ See Gokhale 1908, *passim*.

¹⁹ Despite Gandhi's deep respect for Gokhale, the two differed on the questions relating to modern technology, Western education, and industrialisation. Although Gokhale allowed for 'certain scope' for village industries, he maintained that 'our main reliance now – exposed as we are to the competition of the whole world – must be on production with the aid of steam and machinery' (Gokhale 1908, 816).

²⁰ *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*, both owned and edited by Tilak, were hostile to Gokhale; *The Indian Sociologist*, edited by Shyamji Krishnavarma (London and Paris), considered Gokhale and the Moderates as 'lackeys' of British imperialism.

be the pillars of Home Rule. It is a bad habit to say that another man's thoughts are bad and ours only are good, and that those holding different views from ours are the enemies of the country.

READER: I now begin to understand somewhat your meaning. I shall have to think the matter over, but what you say about Mr Hume and Sir William Wedderburn is beyond comprehension.

EDITOR: The same rule holds good for the English as for the Indians. I can never subscribe to the statement that all Englishmen are bad. Many Englishmen desire Home Rule for India. That the English people are somewhat more selfish than others is true, but that does not prove that every Englishman is bad. We who seek justice will have to do justice to others. Sir William does not wish ill to India – that should be enough for us. As we proceed, you will see that, if we act justly, India will be sooner free. You will see, too, that, if we shun every Englishman as an enemy, Home Rule will be delayed. But if we are just to them, we shall receive their support in our progress towards the goal.

READER: All this seems to me at present to be simply nonsensical. English support and the obtaining of Home Rule are two contradictory things. How can the English people tolerate Home Rule for us? But I do not want you to decide this question for me just yet. To pass time over it is useless. When you have shown how we can have Home Rule, perhaps I shall understand your views. You have prejudiced me against you by discoursing on English help. I would, therefore, beseech you not to continue this subject.

EDITOR: I have no desire to do so. That you are prejudiced against me is not a matter for much anxiety. It is well that I should say unpleasant things at the commencement, it is my duty patiently to try to remove your prejudice.

READER: I like that last statement. It emboldens me to say what I like. One thing still puzzles me. I do not understand how the Congress laid the foundation of Home Rule.

EDITOR: Let us see. The Congress brought together Indians from different parts of India, and enthused us with the idea of Nationality. The Government used to look upon it with disfavour. The Congress has always

insisted that the Nation should control revenue and expenditure. It has always desired self-government after the Canadian model.²¹ Whether we can get it or not, whether we desire it or not, and whether there is not something more desirable, are different questions. All I have to show is that the Congress gave us a foretaste of Home Rule. To deprive it of the honour is not proper,²² and for us to do so would not only be ungrateful, but retard the fulfilment of our object. To treat the Congress as an institution inimical to our growth as a Nation would disable us from using that body.

²¹ The position originally suggested by A. O. Hume and adopted by the Moderates.

²² The Gujarati text reads: 'It would be improper for others [the Indian revolutionaries] to claim that honour.'

CHAPTER II

*

The Partition of Bengal²³

READER: Considering the matter as you put it, it seems proper to say that the foundation of Home Rule was laid by the Congress. But you will admit that it cannot be considered a real awakening. When and how did the real awakening take place?

EDITOR: The seed is never seen. It works underneath the ground, is itself destroyed, and the tree which rises above the ground is alone seen. Such is the case with the Congress. Yet, what you call the real awakening took place after the Partition of Bengal. For this we have to be thankful to Lord Curzon. At the time of the Partition, the people of Bengal reasoned with Lord Curzon, but, in the pride of power, he disregarded all their prayers – he took it for granted that Indians could only prattle, that they could never take any effective steps. He used insulting language, and, in the teeth of all opposition, partitioned Bengal. That day may be considered to be the day of the partition of the British Empire. The shock that the British power received through the Partition has never been equalled by any other act. This does not mean that the other injustices done to India are less glaring than that done by the Partition. The

²³ The Partition of Bengal (1905–11) was a political step taken by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, by means of which the Province of Bengal was divided into two provinces: (1) West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa with a Hindu majority, and (2) East Bengal and Assam with a Muslim majority. Gandhi was well informed of developments in Bengal; see CW 5: 44, ‘Will India Wake Up?'; CW 5: 114, ‘Brave Bengal'; CW 5: 121–2, ‘Divide and Rule').

salt-tax²⁴ is not a small injustice. We shall see many such things later on. But the people were ready to resist the Partition. At that time, the feeling ran high. Many leading Bengalis were ready to lose their all. They knew their power; hence the conflagration. It is now well nigh unquenchable; it is not necessary to quench it either. Partition will go, Bengal will be re-united, but the rift in the English barque will remain; it must daily widen. India awakened is not likely to fall asleep. Demand for abrogation of Partition is tantamount to demand for Home Rule. Leaders in Bengal know this, British officials realise it. That is why Partition still remains. As time passes, the Nation is being forged. Nations are not formed in a day; the formation requires years.

READER: What, in your opinion, are the results of Partition?

EDITOR: Hitherto we have considered that, for redress of grievances,

²⁴ Salt is mentioned again in ch. xx. In view of the famous salt march of 1930, the reference to a salt tax here is quite significant. As far back as 1905, the salt question had entered Gandhi's political consciousness (CW 5: 9). The duty on salt dated back to Moghul times. Clive in Bengal set up a monopoly of salt for his senior colleagues and himself. In 1780 Warren Hastings put the manufacture of salt in the hands of the government, the price being fixed by the Governor-General in Council. In 1878, a uniform tax policy was adopted throughout India, both British India and Princely India. The private manufacture of salt and the possession of salt not derived from government sources both became illegal. Bengal and Assam got its salt from England; Bombay, Madras and Central Provinces and the Southern Princely states from the sea; and North India from rock-salt mines. Before 1878 duty on salt per maund (82 lb) was Rs. 1-13 in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces and the Southern Princely states; Rs. 3-4 in Bengal and Assam, and Rs. 3-0 in the North. After 1878, it was respectively, Rs. 2-8, 2-14, and 2-8. Net revenue from salt in 1880 was £7 million from a population of 200 million. (See Moon 1989, 857-8, 1039-41; Balfour 1899, 463-75.)

On 6 April 1946, at Gandhi's personal request, Sir Archibald Rowlands, the Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, on his own initiative ordered the abolition of the salt tax. But the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, vetoed the initiative on the grounds that premature abolition of the tax would create a salt famine. He thought that 'vanity' was prompting Gandhi (Moon 1973, 236). Gandhi was greatly upset by this. The salt tax was finally abolished by Nehru's Interim Government in October 1946. For a lively account of the last days of the salt tax, see Ghosh 1967, 122-32.

we must approach the Throne, and, if we get no redress, we must sit still, except that we may still petition. After the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering. This new spirit must be considered to be the chief result of Partition. That spirit was seen in the outspoken writings in the press.²⁵ That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and to be written publicly. The Swadeshi movement²⁶ was inaugurated. People, young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face;

²⁵ Among the prominent extremist papers of the day in Bengal were *The Bande Mataram* and *The Karmayogin* (both edited by Aurobindo Ghose), *The Jugantar*, edited by Barindra Kumar Ghose and Bhupendra Nath Dutta (the brother of Swami Vivekananda), and *The Sandhya*, edited by Brahmo Bandhap Upadhyaya; in Bombay, the extremist papers included *The Kesari* and *The Mahratta* both edited by B. G. Tilak, and *The Kal*, edited by S. M. Paranjpe.

²⁶ *Swadeshi*: things pertaining to one's own country. A many-faceted national movement which arose in reaction to the Partition of Bengal. At the economic level it involved the boycott of British imports. At the educational level, it introduced national educational institutions in Calcutta. In 1906 Aurobindo Ghose resigned his post at Baroda College to take up the post as professor of history and political science and principal of Bengal National College in Calcutta. At the political level, it led to resignations from legislative councils. (See Majumdar 1975, 33–64.) As early as 1905, Gandhi saw the revolutionary potential of the Swadeshi movement: 'The movement in Bengal for the use of swadeshi goods is much like the Russian movement' (CW 5: 132). In 1907 he compared the Swadeshi movement to *Sinn Fein*, which 'literally translated into Gujarati, means exactly our Swadeshi movement' (CW 7: 213).

No cause for unhappiness would remain if *swadeshi* were to replace everything foreign. We can easily attain happiness if we exert ourselves to that end during the year that has just commenced. *Swadeshi* carries a great and profound meaning. It does not mean merely the use of what is produced in one's own country. That meaning is certainly there in *swadeshi*. But there is another meaning implied in it which is far greater and much more important. *Swadeshi* means reliance on our own strength. We should also know what we mean by 'reliance on our own strength'. 'Our strength' means the strength of our body, our mind and our soul. From among these, on which should we depend? The answer is brief. The soul is supreme, and therefore soul-force is the foundation on which man must build. Passive resistance or satyagraha is a mode of fighting which depends on such force. That, then, is the only real key (to success) for the Indians. (CW 9: 118)

it now no longer awed them. They did not fear even a row, or being imprisoned. Some of the best sons of India are at present in banishment.²⁷ This is something different from mere petitioning. Thus are the people moved. The spirit generated in Bengal has spread in the North to the Punjab, and, in the South, to Cape Comorin.

READER: Do you suggest any other striking result?

EDITOR: The Partition has not only made a rift in the English ship, but has made it in ours also. Great events always produce great results. Our leaders are divided into two parties: the moderates²⁸ and the extremists.²⁹ These may be considered as the slow party and the impatient party. Some call the moderates the timid party, and the extremists the bold party. All interpret the two words according to their preconceptions. This much is certain – that there has arisen an enmity between the two. The one distrusts the other, and imputes motives. At the time of the Surat Congress,³⁰ there was almost a fight. I think that this division

For Gandhi 'swadeshi' also meant love of one's own language. The love of the Boers for Dutch, and of the Jews for Yiddish, reflect their versions of swadeshi. 'We do not believe that those who are not proud of their own language, who are not proficient in it, can have the true spirit of *swadeshi*' (*ibid.*, 177–8).

²⁷ The most prominent of those banished at this time was B. G. Tilak, imprisoned in Mandalay from 1908 to 1914.

²⁸ The Moderates: a faction of the Congress which stood for the constitutional method of attaining self-government similar to that enjoyed by Canada. Prominent among them were Dadabhai Naoroji, Dinshaw Wacha, Pherozeshah Mehta, G. K. Gokhale, Surendranath Bannerji and Madan Mohan Malaviya.

²⁹ The Extremists: a faction of the Congress which believed that both constitutional and extra-constitutional methods were necessary for attaining swaraj. Prominent among them were B. G. Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal.

³⁰ The formal split between the Moderates and the Extremists occurred in December 1907 at the Surat session of the Congress which ended in pandemonium. The transition from words to blows did not take long: 'a flying missile, a shoe, hit Pherozeshah Mehta and Surendranath Bannerjee, the Moderate leaders seated on the dais. This was followed by the brandishing of sticks and the unrolling of turbans, the breaking of chairs and bruising of heads; the crowning humiliation occurred when the police came and cleared the hall' (Nanda 1977, 287).

is not a good thing for the country, but I think also that such divisions will not last long. It all depends upon the leaders how long they will last.

CHAPTER III

*

Discontent and unrest

READER: Then you consider Partition to be a cause of the awakening?
Do you welcome the unrest which has resulted from it?

EDITOR: When a man rises from sleep, he twists his limbs and is restless. It takes some time before he is entirely awakened. Similarly, although the Partition has caused an awakening, the comatose state has not yet disappeared. We are still twisting our limbs and still restless, and just as the state between sleep and awakening must be considered to be necessary, so may the present unrest in India be considered a necessary and, therefore, a proper state. The knowledge that there is unrest will, it is highly probable, enable us to outgrow it. Rising from sleep, we do not continue in a comatose state, but, according to our ability, sooner or later, we are completely restored to our senses. So shall we be free from the present unrest which no one likes.

READER: What is the other form of unrest?

EDITOR: Unrest is, in reality, discontent. The latter is only now described as unrest.³¹ During the Congress period it was labelled discontent; Mr Hume always said that the spread of discontent in India was necessary. This discontent is a very useful thing. So long as a man is contented with his present lot, so long is it difficult to persuade him to come out of it. Therefore it is that every reform must be preceded by

³¹ During the 1906–9 period Gandhi was following closely the course of 'discontent and unrest' in India. See for example, 'Indian unrest', *Indian Opinion*, 20 October 1906 and 'Unrest in India', *Indian Opinion*, 1 June 1907.

discontent. We throw away things we have, only when we cease to like them. Such discontent has been produced among us after reading the great works of Indians and Englishmen.³² Discontent has led to unrest, and the latter has brought about many deaths, many imprisonments, many banishments. Such a state of things will still continue. It must be so. All these may be considered good signs, but they may also lead to bad results.

32 'the great works of Indians and Englishmen': these included works of Dadabhai Naoroji and R. C. Dutt, and Allan Octavian Hume.

CHAPTER IV

*

What is Swaraj?³³

READER: I have now learnt what the Congress has done to make India one nation, how the Partition has caused an awakening, and how discontent and unrest have spread through the land. I would now like to know your views on Swaraj. I fear that our interpretation is not the same.

EDITOR: It is quite possible that we do not attach the same meaning to the term. You and I and all Indians are impatient to obtain Swaraj, but we are certainly not decided as to what it is. To drive the English out of India is a thought heard from many mouths, but it does not seem that many have properly considered why it should be so. I must ask you a question. Do you think that it is necessary to drive away the English,³⁴ if we get all we want?

READER: I should ask of them only one thing, that is: 'Please leave our country.' If after they have complied with this request, their withdrawal from India means that they are still in India, I should have no objection. Then we would understand that, in our language, the word 'gone' is equivalent to 'remained'.

EDITOR: Well, then, let us suppose that the English have retired. What will you do then?

READER: That question cannot be answered at this stage. The state after withdrawal will depend largely upon the manner of it. If, as you

³³ This chapter is a critique of the prevailing notions of swaraj.

³⁴ Here Gandhi attacks the revolutionaries' view that physical expulsion of the British from India is the necessary and sufficient condition of swaraj.

assume, they retire, it seems to me we shall still keep their constitution,³⁵ and shall carry on the government. If they simply retire for the asking, we should have an army, etc., ready at hand. We should, therefore, have no difficulty in carrying on the government.

EDITOR: You may think so; I do not. But I will not discuss the matter just now. I have to answer the question, and that I can do well by asking you several questions. Why do we want to drive away the English?

READER: Because India has become impoverished by their Government. They take away our money from year to year. The most important posts are reserved for themselves. We are kept in a state of slavery. They behave insolently towards us, and disregard our feelings.

EDITOR: If they do not take our money away, become gentle, and give us responsible posts, would you still consider their presence to be harmful?

READER: That question is useless. It is similar to the question whether there is any harm in associating with a tiger,³⁶ if he changes his nature. Such a question is sheer waste of time. When a tiger changes his nature, Englishmen will change theirs. This is not possible, and to believe it to be possible is contrary to human experience.

EDITOR: Supposing we get self-government similar to what the Canadians and the South Africans have, will it be good enough?

READER: That question also is useless. We may get it when we have arms and ammunition even as they have. But, when we have the same powers, we shall hoist our own flag. As is Japan, so must India be.³⁷ We

35 Here Gandhi is attacking the meaning of swaraj held by the Extremists: expel the British but keep their political, military and economic institutions.

36 One of the striking metaphors of the book, comparable to the metaphor of the lion found in Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

37 Gandhi rejects the Japanese model of development, to which many Indian at the turn of the century were powerfully attracted. Gandhi's own attitude towards Japan underwent a gradual evolution in the period 1903–9. As a journalist he remained a keen observer of the rise of modern Japan. In 1905 he spoke of 'the epic heroism' exhibited by the Japanese in the 1905 naval victory over Russia, comparing the latter to the British victories over the Spanish Armada and over Napoleon. The secret of the Japanese victory was

must own our navy, our army, and we must have our own splendour, and then will India's voice ring through the world.

EDITOR: You have well drawn the picture. In effect it means this: that we want English rule without the Englishman. You want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger; that is to say, you would make India English, and, when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj that I want

READER: I have placed before you my idea of Swaraj as I think it should be. If the education we have received be of any use, if the works of Spencer, Mill³⁸ and others be of any importance, and if the English

unity, patriotism and the resolve to do or die. All the Japanese are animated by the same spirit. No one is considered greater than the other, and there is no rift of any kind between them. They think nothing else but service to the nation . . . This unity and patriotic spirit together with a heroic indifference to life (or death) have created an atmosphere in Japan the like of which is nowhere to be found in the world. (CW 4: 467)

The explanation of the Japanese victory, he wrote, 'deserves to be inscribed in one's mind' (CW 5:32). Writing in 1907, he traced a link between the Japanese sense of self-respect and their political independence; and contrasted the Japanese situation with India's state of bondage and the resulting lack of self-respect. 'When everyone in Japan, the rich as well as the poor, came to believe in self-respect, the country became free. In the same way we too need to feel the spirit of self-respect' (CW 6: 457). But in HS he has become sceptical of the desirability of taking Japan as a model for India.

38 'the works of Spencer, Mill': i.e., Herbert Spencer and J. S. Mill. From available data it is not possible to indicate which works of Spencer and Mill Gandhi might have read by 1909. But we do know that he disapproved of the position of S. Krishnavarma and his colleagues in India House (London) who acted as though what India needed was the philosophy of Spencer. To counteract them he used with approval a witty article by G. K. Chesterton:

They talk about Herbert Spencer's philosophy and other similar matters. What is the good of Indian national spirit if they cannot protect themselves from Herbert Spencer? . . . One of their papers is called *The Indian Sociologist*. Do the Indian youths want to pollute their ancient villages and poison their kindly homes by introducing Spencer's philosophy into them? . . . But Herbert Spencer is not Indian; his philosophy is not Indian philosophy; all this clatter about the science of education and other things is not Indian. I often wish it were not English either. But this is our first difficulty, that the Indian nationalist is not national. (CW 9: 425-7)

Parliament be the Mother of Parliaments, I certainly think that we should copy the English people, and this to such an extent, that, just as they do not allow others to obtain a footing in their country, so should we not allow them or others to obtain it in ours. What they have done in their own country has not been done in any other country. It is, therefore, proper for us to import their institutions. But now I want to know your views.

EDITOR: There is need for patience. My views will develop of themselves in the course of this discourse. It is as difficult for me to understand the true nature of Swaraj as it seems to you to be easy. I shall, therefore, for the time being, content myself with endeavouring to show that what you call Swaraj is not truly Swaraj.

As for J. S. Mill, Gandhi did mention *On Liberty* by name in the 1920s. He told a university audience:

I know that in the West there is a powerful trend towards licence. But I have no desire to see students in India take to such licence . . . I want to tell you that the man who has not received education for freedom – and you may be sure this is not to be had by reading Mill on ‘Liberty’ – cannot be taken to be a free man.
(CW 19: 26,103)

CHAPTER V

*

The condition of England

READER: Then from your statement I deduce that the Government of England is not desirable and not worth copying by us.

EDITOR: Your deduction is justified. The condition of England at present is pitiable. I pray to God that India may never be in that plight. That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliaments is like a sterile woman and a prostitute.³⁹ Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. That Parliament has not yet of its own accord done a single good thing, hence I have compared it to a sterile woman. The natural condition of that Parliament is such that, without outside pressure, it can do nothing. It is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time. Today it is under Mr Asquith, tomorrow it may be under Mr Balfour.

³⁹ 'a sterile woman and a prostitute': Gandhi was criticised by one of his English friends (Mrs Annie Besant?) for using the metaphor of 'prostitute'; and he regretted using it (*CW* 15: 330); this was the only word he was prepared to drop from the book. The word 'prostitute' occurs again in ch. v, and the word 'prostitution' in chs. xi and xiiii. Erikson (1969, 219) exaggerates the point when he writes that the word 'prostitution' is 'a word used rather often' in *HS*.

The criticism of parliament in this chapter and elsewhere may not be interpreted to mean that Gandhi was against the institution of parliament. For example, in 1920 he said that what he wanted for India was 'a parliament chosen by the people with the fullest power over the finance, the police, the military, the navy, the courts and the educational institutions' (*CW* 19: 80). In 1921 he advised the readers of *HS* that his corporate activity was devoted to 'the attainment of parliamentary swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India' (*CW* 19: 277-8).

READER: You have said this sarcastically. The term ‘sterile woman’ is not applicable. The Parliament, being elected by the people, must work under public pressure. This is its quality.

EDITOR: You are mistaken. Let us examine it a little more closely. The best men are supposed to be elected by the people. The members serve without pay⁴⁰ and, therefore, it must be assumed, only for the public weal. The electors are considered to be educated, and, therefore, we should assume that they would not generally make mistakes in their choice. Such a Parliament should not need the spur of petitions or any other pressure. Its work should be so smooth that its effect would be more apparent day by day. But, as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the guiding motive. What is done today may be undone tomorrow. It is not possible to recall a single instance in which finality can be predicated for its work. When the greatest questions are debated, its members have been seen to stretch themselves and to doze.⁴¹ Sometimes the members talk away until the listeners are disgusted. Carlyle has called it the ‘talking-shop of the world’.⁴² Members vote for their party without a thought. Their so-called discipline binds them to it. If any member, by way of exception, gives an independent vote, he is considered a renegade. If the money and the time wasted by the Parliament were entrusted to a few good men, the English nation would be occupying today a much higher platform. The Parliament is simply a costly toy of the nation. These views are by no means peculiar to me. Some great English thinkers have expressed them. One of the members of

⁴⁰ Remuneration for British MPs was introduced only in 1911.

⁴¹ ‘doze’: given as ‘dose’ in original text.

⁴² ‘the talking-shop of the world’: the Gujarati text does not mention Carlyle, referring instead to ‘one of their great writers’. The source of this remark is Carlyle (1907, 319) where he is discussing the inability of the Rump Parliament to give a clear answer to Cromwell: ‘For three years, Cromwell says, this question had been sounded in the ears of the Parliament. They would make no answer; nothing but talk, talk. Perhaps it lies in the nature of parliamentary bodies; perhaps no Parliament could in such case make any answer but even that of talk, talk.’ Professor C. N. Patel of Ahmedabad drew my attention to this passage.

that Parliament recently said that a true Christian⁴³ could not become a member of it. Another said that it was a baby. And, if it has remained a baby after an existence of seven hundred years, when will it outgrow its babyhood?

READER: You have set me thinking; you do not expect me to accept at once all you say. You give me entirely novel views. I shall have to digest them. Will you now explain the epithet 'prostitute'?

EDITOR: That you cannot accept my views at once is only right. If you will read the literature on this subject, you will have some idea of it. The Parliament is without a real master. Under the Prime Minister, its movement is not steady, but it is buffeted about like a prostitute. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power⁴⁴ than about the welfare of the Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party.⁴⁵ His care is not always that the Parliament shall do right. Prime Ministers are known to have made the Parliament do things merely for party advantage. All this is worth thinking over.

READER: Then you are really attacking the very men whom we have hitherto considered to be patriotic and honest?

EDITOR: Yes, that is true; I can have nothing against Prime Ministers, but what I have seen leads me to think that they cannot be considered really patriotic. If they are to be considered honest because they do not take what is generally known as bribery, let them be so considered, but they are open to subtler influences. In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honours. I do not hesitate to say that they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience.

READER: As you express these views about the Parliament, I would like to hear you on the English people, so that I may have your view of their Government.

EDITOR: To the English voters their newspaper is their Bible. They take their cue from their newspapers, which latter are often dishonest. The same fact is differently interpreted by different newspapers, according to

43 'a true Christian': the Gujarati text has *dharmisht*, 'an ethical person'.

44 'power': *satta*. 45 'party': i.e., political party, *paksh*.

the party in whose interests they are edited.⁴⁶ One newspaper would consider a great Englishman to be a paragon of honesty, another would consider him dishonest. What must be the condition of the people whose newspapers are of this type?

READER: You shall describe it.

EDITOR: These people change their views frequently. It is said that they change them every seven years. These views swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast. The people would follow a powerful orator or a man who gives them parties, receptions, etc. As are the people, so is their Parliament. They have certainly one quality very strongly developed. They will never allow their country to be lost. If any person were to cast an evil eye on it, they would pluck out his eyes. But that does not mean that the nation possesses every other virtue or that it should be imitated. If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined.

READER: To what do you ascribe this state of England?

EDITOR: It is not due to any peculiar fault of the English people, but the condition is due to modern civilisation.⁴⁷ It is a civilisation only in name. Under it the nations of Europe are becoming degraded and ruined day by day.

⁴⁶ The Gujarati text adds: 'One party magnifies its own importance while the other party minimises it.'

⁴⁷ The distinction between 'British people' whom Gandhi admired, and 'modern' British civilisation, which Gandhi criticised, is crucial to his argument, which is that modern civilisation has corrupted a basically good people. The root of this corruption he traces back to the de-Christianisation of modern Britain.

CHAPTER VI

*

Civilisation

READER: Now you will have to explain what you mean by civilisation.⁴⁸

EDITOR: It is not a question of what I mean. Several English writers refuse to call that civilisation which passes under that name. Many books have been written upon that subject. Societies⁴⁹ have been formed to cure the nation of the evils of civilisation. A great English writer⁵⁰ has written a work called 'Civilization: its Cause and Cure.' Therein he has called it a disease.

⁴⁸ The Gujarati text adds: 'According to you, [modern] civilisation [sudharo] is not civilisation, but barbarism [kudharo].' The sudharo/kudharo dichotomy adds colour to the Gujarati text.

⁴⁹ In 1906 Gandhi made contacts with officials of the Union of Ethical Societies in London. It had then fourteen member societies in London, and nine elsewhere in England. Henry Polak and his wife Millie Graham were members of the South Place Ethical Society. Miss Florence Winterbottom, who helped Gandhi with his lobbying in London, was the Secretary of the Union of Ethical Societies (Hunt 1986, 8–10). On his 1909 visit to London Gandhi gave a lecture to the Union of Ethical Societies at the Emerson Club (CW 9: 473–4, 475–6). On the same visit he also visited an ex-Tolstoyan Colony at Whiteway, near Stroud (*ibid.*, 369). Gandhi was also familiar with the activities of 'New Crusade Society', a society based on the social teachings of John Ruskin, propagating the values of country life, agriculture, handicrafts, homespun clothes, and opposing the 'increasing dependence on machinery' and 'competitive mechanical production'. The moving spirit behind this society was Godfrey Blount, author of *A New Crusade: An Appeal* (1903). This book is listed in the Appendix to HS. A brief summary of its activities was also published in *Indian Opinion* (1905).

⁵⁰ Edward Carpenter.

READER: Why do we not know this generally?

EDITOR: The answer is very simple. We rarely find people arguing against themselves. Those who are intoxicated by modern civilisation are not likely to write against it. Their care will be to find out facts and arguments in support of it, and this they do unconsciously, believing it to be true. A man, whilst he is dreaming, believes in his dream; he is undeceived only when he is awakened from his sleep. A man labouring under the bane of civilisation is like a dreaming man. What we usually read are the works of defenders of modern civilisation, which undoubtedly claims among its votaries very brilliant and even some very good men. Their writings hypnotise us. And so, one by one, we are drawn into the vortex.

READER: This seems to be very plausible. Now will you tell me something of what you have read and thought of this civilisation?

EDITOR: Let us first consider what state of things is described by the word ‘civilisation’.⁵¹ Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. We will take some examples. The people of Europe today live in better built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilisation, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness. Formerly, they wore skins, and used as their weapons spears. Now, they wear long trousers, and, for embellishing their bodies, they wear a variety of clothing, and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers. If people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilised out of savagery. Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour. Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam-engines, and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilisation. Formerly, the fewest men wrote

⁵¹ ‘Civilisation’: what is meant here is the civilisation produced by the industrial revolution. ‘Let it be remembered that Western civilisation is only a hundred years old, or to be more precise fifty. Within this short span the Western people appear to have been reduced to a state of cultural anarchy. We pray that India may never be reduced to the same state as Europe’ (*CW* 8: 374).

books that were most valuable. Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's mind. Formerly, men travelled in wagons; now they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilisation. It has been stated that, as men progress, they shall be able to travel in airships and reach any part of the world in a few hours. Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button and they will have their clothing by their side. They will press another button and they will have their newspaper. A third, and a motorcar will be in waiting for them. They will have a variety of delicately dished-up food. Everything will be done by machinery. Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilisation. Formerly, men worked in the open air only so much as they liked. Now, thousands of workmen meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion, now⁵² they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases of which people never dreamt before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilisation. Formerly, special messengers were required and much expense was incurred in order to send letters; today, anyone can abuse his fellow by means of a letter for one penny. True, at the same cost, one can send one's thanks also. Formerly, people had two or three meals consisting of homemade bread and vegetables; now, they require something to eat every two hours, so that they have hardly leisure for anything else. What more need I say? All this you can ascertain from several authoritative books. These are all true tests of

⁵² Tolstoy's *The Slavery of Our Times*, and Taylor's *White Slaves of England* (both listed in the Appendix to HS) speak of the 'slavery' created by the new industrial civilisation.

civilisation. And, if anyone speaks to the contrary, know that he is ignorant. This civilisation takes note neither of morality nor of religion.⁵³ Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion. Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. Others put on the cloak of religion, and prate about morality. But, after twenty years' experience, I have come to the conclusion that immorality is often taught in the name of morality. Even a child can understand that in all I have described above there can be no inducement to morality. Civilisation seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails miserably even in doing so.

This civilisation is irreligion,⁵⁴ and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad. They lack real physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy by intoxication. They can hardly be happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets, or they slave away in factories. For the sake of a pittance, half a million women in England alone are labouring under trying circumstances in factories or similar institutions. This awful fact is one of the causes of the daily growing suffragette movement.⁵⁵

This civilisation is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed. According to the teaching of Mahomed this would be considered a Satanic civilisation. Hinduism calls it the Black Age.⁵⁶ I

53 'neither of morality nor of religion': morality = *niti*; religion = *dharma*.

54 'irreligion': *adharma*, contrary to *dharma*.

55 During his 1906 and 1909 visits to London Gandhi established direct contact with the British suffragette movement. *Indian Opinion* carried reports on the arrests of Miss Cobden and Emmeline Pankhurst; while he was very sympathetic to their cause he disapproved of their violent tactics – the attack on the residence of Asquith, disruption of meetings addressed by Balfour and Winston Churchill, harassment of prison officials, hunger strike in jail, destruction of prison property, etc. (CW 9: 303, 324–5).

56 'the Black Age': *kali juga*. According to Hindu mythology the cycle of time is divided into *kalpa*, *mahayuga* and *yuga*. The four yugas – *krita*, *treta*, *dvapara*, and *kali* – constitute one *mahayuga* (supposedly 4,320,000 years); and 1,000 *mahajugas* constitute one *kalpa*. At the end of each *kalpa* the cycle starts again. Humankind at present lives in the *kali yuga*, the worst segment in the entire cycle of time. It is supposed to have started in 3102 BC and is supposed to last a

cannot give you an adequate conception of it. It is eating into the vitals of the English nation.⁵⁷ It must be shunned.⁵⁸ Parliaments are really emblems of slavery. If you will sufficiently think over this, you will entertain the same opinion, and cease to blame the English. They rather deserve our sympathy. They are a shrewd nation and I, therefore, believe that they will cast off the evil. They are enterprising and industrious, and their mode of thought is not inherently immoral. Neither are they bad at heart. I, therefore, respect them. Civilisation is not an incurable disease,⁵⁹ but it should never be forgotten that the English people are at present afflicted by it.

total of 432,000 years. During the *kali yuga* the sway of dharma is the weakest, compared to the other three yugas, and humans are normally led by violence and egoism (Zimmer 1963, 13–19).

57 The Gujarati text adds: ‘This civilisation is destructive, and it is itself bound to perish.’

58 The Gujarati text adds: ‘That is why the British Parliament and other parliaments are ineffective against this civilisation.’

59 ‘Civilisation is not an incurable disease’: the Gujarati text reads, ‘For them [the British] this civilisation is not an incurable disease.’ The metaphor of disease occurs again in chs. viii and ix.

CHAPTER VII

*

Why was India lost?

READER: You have said much about civilisation – enough to make me ponder over it. I do not now know what I should adopt and what I should avoid from the nations of Europe, but one question comes to my lips immediately. If civilisation is a disease, and if it has attacked the English nation, why has she been able to take India, and why is she able to retain it?

EDITOR: Your question is not very difficult to answer, and we shall presently be able to examine the true nature of Swaraj; for I am aware that I have still to answer that question. I will, however, take up your previous question. The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them.⁶⁰ Let us now see whether these propositions can be sustained. They came to our country originally for purposes of trade. Recall the Company Bahadur.⁶¹ Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at

⁶⁰ ‘but because we keep them’: one of the underlying assumptions of HS. It was first expressed in 1908, in the paraphrase of *Unto This Last*: ‘The reason why they [the British] rule over us is to be found in ourselves’ (CW 8: 373); the idea recurs in chs. xiv and xx as well. See also Seeley [1883] 1909, 197–216. Gandhi had read Seeley at least by 1903 (CW 3: 462).

⁶¹ ‘the Company Bahadur’: an honorific title by which the East India Company was known among Indians. ‘Bahadur’ means brave, powerful, sovereign. The Company received its first charter from Queen Elizabeth I on 31 December 1600. In 1613, Jahangir, the Mogul emperor, issued a firman, permitting the English to establish a trading outpost at Surat, Gujarat. The real foundation of British political dominion over India is said to date from the battle of Plassey in 1757.

the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once, we welcomed the Company's officers with open arms. We assisted them. If I am in the habit of drinking Bhang, and a seller thereof sells it to me, am I to blame him or myself? By blaming the seller shall I be able to avoid the habit? And, if a particular retailer is driven away, will not another take his place? A true servant of India will have to go to the root of the matter. If an excess of food has caused me indigestion, I will certainly not avoid it by blaming water. He is a true physician who probes the cause of disease, and, if you pose as a physician for the disease of India, you will have to find out its true cause.

READER: You are right. Now, I think you will not have to argue much with me to drive your conclusions home. I am impatient to know your further views. We are now on a most interesting topic. I shall, therefore, endeavour to follow your thought, and stop you when I am in doubt.

EDITOR: I am afraid that, in spite of your enthusiasm, as we proceed further we shall have differences of opinion. Nevertheless, I shall argue only when you still stop me. We have already seen that the English merchants were able to get a footing in India because we encouraged them. When our princes fought among themselves,⁶² they sought the assistance of Company Bahadur. That corporation was versed alike in commerce and war. It was unhampered by questions of morality. Its object was to increase its commerce and to make money. It accepted our assistance, and increased the number of its warehouses. To protect the latter it employed an army which was utilised by us also. Is it not then useless to blame the English for what we did at that time? The Hindus and the Mahomedans were at daggers drawn. This, too, gave the Company its opportunity, and thus we created the circumstances that gave the

⁶² The eighteenth-century interneceine wars among Indians (the Moghuls, the Mahrattas and the Sikhs) are being identified as major contributing factors to the rise of British power in India.

Company its control over India. Hence it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost.

READER: Will you now tell me how they are able to retain India?

EDITOR: The causes that gave them India enable them to retain it. Some Englishmen state that they took, and they hold, India by the sword. Both these statements are wrong. The sword is entirely useless for holding India. We alone keep them. Napoleon is said to have described the English as a nation of shopkeepers. It is a fitting description. They hold whatever dominions they have for the sake of their commerce. Their army and their navy are intended to protect it. When the Transvaal offered no such attractions, the late Mr Gladstone discovered that it was not right for the English to hold it. When it became a paying proposition, resistance led to war. Mr Chamberlain soon discovered that England enjoyed a suzerainty over the Transvaal. It is related that someone asked the late President Kruger whether there was gold in the moon? He replied that it was highly unlikely, because, if there were, the English would have annexed it. Many problems can be solved by remembering that money is their God. Then it follows that we keep the English in India for our base self-interest. We like their commerce, they please us by their subtle methods, and get what they want from us. To blame them for this is to perpetuate their power. We further strengthen their hold by quarrelling amongst ourselves. If you accept the above statements, it is proved that the English entered India for the purposes of trade. They remain in it for the same purpose, and we help them to do so. Their arms and ammunition are perfectly useless. In this connection, I remind you that it is the British flag which is waving in Japan, and not the Japanese.⁶³ The English have a treaty with Japan for the sake of their commerce, and you will see that, if they can manage it, their commerce will greatly expand in that country. They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods. That they cannot do so is true, but the blame will not be theirs. They will leave no stone unturned to reach the goal.

⁶³ The metaphor of the 'flag' is used here to indicate how Japan achieved modernisation: she followed the British example (CW 5: 41).

CHAPTER VIII

*

The condition of India

READER: I now understand why the English hold India. I should like to know your views about the condition of our country.

EDITOR: It is a sad condition. In thinking of it, my eyes water and my throat gets parched. I have grave doubts whether I shall be able sufficiently to explain what is in my heart. It is my deliberate opinion that India is being ground down not under the English heel but under that of modern civilisation. It is groaning under the monster's terrible weight. There is yet time to escape it, but every day makes it more and more difficult. Religion is dear to me, and my first complaint is that India is becoming irreligious.⁶⁴ Here I am not thinking of the Hindu, the Mahomedan, or the Zoroastrian religion, but of that religion which underlies all religions.⁶⁵ We are turning away from God.

READER: How so?

EDITOR: There is a charge laid against us that we are a lazy people, and that the Europeans are industrious and enterprising. We have accepted the charge and we, therefore, wish to change our condition. Hinduism, Islamism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and all other religions teach that we should remain passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits, that we should set a limit to our worldly ambition, and that our

64 'irreligious': *dharma-bhrasht*, a people without dharma.

65 '... religion which underlies all religions': a very important concept in Gandhi's political philosophy. Throughout HS religion is understood in two different senses: as sect or organised religion, and as ethic, albeit one grounded in some metaphysic.

religious ambition should be illimitable. Our activity should be directed into the latter channel.

READER: You seem to be encouraging religious charlatanism. Many a cheat has by talking in a similar strain led the people astray.

EDITOR: You are bringing an unlawful charge against religion. Humbug there undoubtedly is about all religions. Where there is light, there is also shadow. I am prepared to maintain that humbugs in worldly matters are far worse than the humbugs in religion. The humbug of civilisation⁶⁶ that I endeavour to show to you is not to be found in religion.

READER: How can you say that? In the name of religion Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another. For the same cause Christians fought Christians. Thousands of innocent men have been murdered, thousands have been burned and tortured in its name. Surely, this is much worse than any civilisation.

EDITOR: I certainly submit that the above hardships are far more bearable than those of civilisation. Everybody understands that the cruelties you have named are not part of religion, although they have been practised in its name; therefore, there is no aftermath to these cruelties. They will always happen so long as there are to be found ignorant and credulous people. But there is no end to the victims destroyed in the fire of civilisation. Its deadly effect is that people come under its scorching flames believing it to be all good. They become utterly irreligious and, in reality, derive little advantage from the world. Civilisation is like a mouse gnawing while it is soothing us. When its full effect is realised, we will see that religious superstition is harmless compared to that of modern civilisation.⁶⁷ I am not pleading for a continuance of religious superstitions. We will certainly fight them tooth

⁶⁶ Gandhi takes the offensive now: today the real humbug is the modern secular culture.

⁶⁷ Gandhi is responding to the nineteenth-century rationalist/secularist prejudice that religion promotes superstition; modernity is the superstition of the secularists.

and nail, but we can never do so by disregarding religion. We can only do so by appreciating and conserving the latter.

READER: Then you will contend that the *Pax Britannica* is a useless encumbrance?

EDITOR: You may see peace if you like; I see none.⁶⁸

READER: You make light of the terror that the Thugs, the Pindaris, the Bhils were to the country.⁶⁹

EDITOR: If you will give the matter some thought, you will see that the terror was by no means such a mighty thing. If it had been a very substantial thing, the other people would have died away before the English advent. Moreover, the present peace is only nominal, for by it we have become emasculated and cowardly. We are not to assume that the English have changed the nature of the Pindaris and the Bhils. It is, therefore, better to suffer the Pindari peril than that someone else should protect us from it, and thus render us effeminate. I should prefer to be killed by the arrow of a Bhil than to seek unmanly protection. India without such protection was an India full of valour. Macaulay betrayed gross ignorance when he libelled Indians as being practically cowards. They never merited the charge. Cowards living in a country inhabited by hardy mountaineers, infested by wolves and tigers must surely find an early grave. Have you ever visited our fields? I assure you that our

68 Gandhi here challenges the arguments of Utilitarians such as Fitzjames Stephen that *Pax Britannica* was an unmixed blessing for India (see Stephen 1883, 541–68).

69 'the Thugs': gangs of murderers inhabiting parts of Central India who made their living by plundering and murdering travellers. They practised a corrupt mixture of Islam and Hinduism, their principal deities being Devi, Bhavani, Durga and Kali. They were suppressed by the British between 1830 and 1850.

'the Pindaris': a professional class of free-booters, inhabiting parts of Central India. Good horsemen, they made their living by looting the cattle and property of their victims; what they could not carry, they burned and destroyed. Like the Thugs, they too practised a corrupt mixture of Islam and Hinduism; suppressed by the British in the first half of the nineteenth century.

'the Bhils': an aboriginal tribe, found mostly in Gujarat and Rajasthan, numbering about 600,000 at the turn of the twentieth century. Their religious practices were borrowed from primitive nature worship and certain forms of popular Hinduism.

agriculturists sleep fearlessly on their farms even today, and the English, you and I, would hesitate to sleep where they sleep. Strength lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies. Moreover, I must remind you who desire Home Rule that, after all, the Bhils, the Pindaris, the Assamese⁷⁰ and the Thugs are our own countrymen. To conquer them⁷¹ is your and my work. So long as we fear our own brethren, we are unfit to reach the goal.

⁷⁰ In 1921 Gandhi apologised to the Assamese for listing them among the 'uncivilised' tribes of India:

It was certainly on my part a grave injustice done to the great Assamese people, who are every whit as civilised as any other part of India . . . My stupidity about the Assamese rose, when about 1890 I read an account of the Manipur expedition, when the late Sir John Gorst defended the conduct of the officials towards the late Senapati, saying that governments always liked to lop off tall poppies. Being an indifferent reader of history, I retained with me the impression that the Assamese were *jungli* [uncivilised] and committed it to writing in 1908 [sic]. (CW 21: 30)

⁷¹ 'To conquer them': in the Gujarati text this reads 'To win them over'.

CHAPTER IX

*

The condition of India (cont.): railways⁷²

READER: You have deprived me of the consolation I used to have regarding peace in India.⁷³

EDITOR: I have merely given you my opinion on the religious aspect, but, when I give you my views as to the poverty⁷⁴ of India, you will perhaps begin to dislike me, because what you and I have hitherto considered beneficial for India no longer appears to me to be so.

72 The original Gujarati text does not have 'Railways' in the chapter heading; instead it has *Vishesha Vichar* (Additional Thoughts). The railways were first introduced into India in 1853; at the time of the writing of HS there were about 26,000 miles of railways in India.

73 The Gujarati text reads: 'You have shattered my illusions about the value of peace in India. You have left me with nothing that I can think of.'

74 Gandhi's criticism of the Indian railways takes place within the context of his views on Indian poverty, derived mainly from Naoroji and R. C. Dutt. The latter had argued that for the reduction of poverty in India, the development of irrigation was more important than that of the railways. But neither British private capital nor the colonial government saw the problem in this way. In the eyes of British investors the railways were more attractive, especially since in the early decades (1850–80) there was a guaranteed profit of 5 per cent charged on Indian revenue. It is true that the railways facilitated the movement of food in times of famine; but it is equally true that the railways did not produce food. For the production of more food, irrigation was crucial. Railways without irrigation did not solve the problem of poverty and famines; in a sense it aggravated them in that capital that could have been spent on irrigation was spent instead on the railways, which proved to be both extravagant and wasteful (R. C. Dutt 1904, 166–79, 353–71, 545–55). Naoroji also used the example of the railways to demonstrate his drain theory (Naoroji 1901, 170–3).

READER: What may that be?

EDITOR: Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country, so much so that, if we do not wake up in time, we shall be ruined.

READER: I do now, indeed, fear that we are not likely to agree at all. You are attacking the very institutions which we have hitherto considered to be good.

EDITOR: It is necessary to exercise patience. The true inwardness of the evils of civilisation you will understand with difficulty. Doctors assure us that a consumptive clings to life even when he is about to die. Consumption does not produce apparent hurt – it even produces a seductive colour about a patient's face, so as to induce the belief that all is well. Civilisation is such a disease,⁷⁵ and we have to be very wary.

READER: Very well, then, I shall hear you on the railways.

EDITOR: It must be manifest to you that, but for the railways, the English could not have such a hold on India as they have. The railways, too, have spread the bubonic plague. Without them, masses could not move from place to place. They are the carriers of plague germs. Formerly we had natural segregation. Railways have also increased the frequency of famines, because, owing to facility of means of locomotion, people sell out their grain, and it is sent to the dearest markets. People become careless, and so the pressure of famine increases. They accentuate the evil nature of man. Bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity. The holy places of India have become unholy. Formerly, people went to these places with very great difficulty. Generally, therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Nowadays, rogues visit them in order to practise their roguery.

READER: You have given a one-sided account. Good men can visit these places as well as bad men. Why do they not take the fullest advantage of the railways?

EDITOR: Good travels at a snail's pace – it can, therefore, have little to do with the railways. Those who want to do good are not selfish, they are not in a hurry, they know that to impregnate people with good requires a

75 'such a disease': modernity is a hidden, but curable, disease.

long time. But evil has wings. To build a house takes time. Its destruction takes none. So the railways can become a distributing agency for the evil one only. It may be a debatable matter whether railways spread famines, but it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil.

READER: Be that as it may, all the disadvantages of railways are more than counterbalanced by the fact that it is due to them that we see in India the new spirit of nationalism.

EDITOR: I hold this to be a mistake.⁷⁶ The English have taught us that we were not one nation before, and that it will require centuries before we become one nation. This is without foundation. We were one nation before they came to India. One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. It was because we were one nation that they were able to establish one kingdom. Subsequently they divided us.

READER: This requires an explanation.

EDITOR: I do not wish to suggest that because we were one nation we had no differences, but it is submitted that our leading men travelled throughout India either on foot or in bullock-carts.⁷⁷ They learned one another's languages, and there was no aloofness between them. What do you think could have been the intention of those far-seeing ancestors of ours who established Shevetbindu Rameshwar in the South, Juggernaut in the South-East, and Hardwar in the North as places of pilgrimage?⁷⁸ You

⁷⁶ Gandhi rejects here an explanation of the rise of Indian nationalism purely in terms of the development of the modern means of communication. He asserts that a sense of Indian identity antedates the introduction of the railways. For Gandhi's notion of nation in HS, see Parel 1991, 261–82.

⁷⁷ By contrasting the railways with the bullock-carts Gandhi drives home the point that speed by itself is not a value to be cherished. Here his ideas were influenced by early twentieth-century critics of the cult of speed, such as Thomas F. Taylor, whose *The Fallacy of Speed* is listed in the Appendix. Gandhi had Maganlal Gandhi of *Indian Opinion* translate this work into Gujarati (CW 10: 379).

⁷⁸ The reference is to the traditional places of pilgrimage said to have been established in the East and West, South and North of India, by Shankaracharya (788–820). Gandhi claims that such places of pilgrimage have contributed greatly towards the forging of a common Indian identity. 'Shevetbindu Rameshwar' is Rameswaram in present-day Tamil Nadu. According to legend the

will admit they were no fools. They knew that worship of God could have been performed just as well at home. They taught us that those whose hearts were aglow with righteousness had the Ganges in their own homes. But they saw that India was one undivided land so made by nature. They, therefore, argued that it must be one nation. Arguing thus, they established holy places in various parts of India, and fired the people with an idea of nationality in a manner unknown in other parts of the world. Any two Indians are one as no two Englishmen are. Only you and I and others who consider ourselves civilised and superior persons imagine that we are many nations. It was after the advent of railways that we began to believe in distinctions, and you are at liberty now to say that it is through the railways that we are beginning to abolish those distinctions. An opium-eater may argue the advantage of opium-eating from the fact that he began to understand the evil of the opium habit after having eaten it. I would ask you to consider well what I have said on the railways.⁷⁹

READER: I will gladly do so, but one question occurs to me even now. You have described to me the India of the pre-Mahomedan period, but now we have Mahomedans, Parsees and Christians. How can they be one nation? Hindus and Mahomedans are old enemies. Our very proverbs prove it.⁸⁰ Mahomedans turn to the West for worship, whilst Hindus turn to the East. The former look down on the Hindus as idolaters.⁸¹ The Hindus worship the cow, the Mahomedans kill her. The Hindus believe in

town is said to have been founded by Rama, the hero of the epic *Ramayana*. After slaying the wicked Ravana, Rama purified himself here. 'Juggernaut in the South-East' refers to the Temple of Jaganaath ('world-lord') in Jagannath Puri, Orissa, which is in the East, not South-East, as the text has it here – an example of Gandhi's limited knowledge, in 1909, of Indian geography.

⁷⁹ The Gujarati text adds: 'Doubts will still occur to you. But you will be able to resolve them yourself.'

⁸⁰ The proverb, cited in the Gujarati text but omitted here, is as follows: 'A Miyan [Muslim] has no use for a Mahadev [Hindu].' Compared to the Gujarati text, the English text is especially careful not to exacerbate Muslim sensibilities.

⁸¹ The Gujarati text adds: 'Hindus worship images; Mahomedans are iconoclasts.'

the doctrine of non-killing, the Mahomedans do not. We thus meet with differences at every step. How can India be one nation?⁸²

⁸² The Gujarati text reads: 'How can these differences at every step disappear and how can India be one?'

CHAPTER X

*

The condition of India (cont.): the Hindus and the Mahomedans

EDITOR: Your last question is a serious one, and yet, on careful consideration, it will be found to be easy of solution. The question arises because of the presence of the railways, of the lawyers, and of the doctors. We shall presently examine the last two. We have already considered the railways. I should, however, like to add that man is so made by nature as to require him to restrict his movements as far as his hands and feet will take him. If we did not rush about from place to place by means of railways and such other maddening conveniences, much of the confusion that arises would be obviated. Our difficulties are of our own creation. God set a limit to a man's locomotive ambition in the construction of his body. Man immediately proceeded to discover means of overriding the limit. God gifted man with intellect that he might know his Maker. Man abused it, so that he might forget his Maker. I am so constructed that I can only serve my immediate neighbours, but, in my conceit, I pretend to have discovered that I must with my body serve every individual in the Universe. In thus attempting the impossible, man comes in contact with different natures, different religions, and is utterly confounded. According to this reasoning, it must be apparent to you that railways are a most dangerous institution. Man has therethrough gone further away from his Maker.

READER: But I am impatient to hear your answer to my question. Has the introduction of Mahomedanism not unmade the nation?⁸³

⁸³ The answer to this question forms an important part of his theory of nationalism. The spread of Muslim political power in India took place in three stages:

EDITOR: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions⁸⁴ live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation.⁸⁵ India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions⁸⁶ as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion.⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸ The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsees⁸⁹ and the Christians⁹⁰ who have made India their country are fellow country-

(1) The conquest of Sind and parts of the Punjab by the close of the tenth century; (2) the Delhi Sultanate from thirteenth to the sixteenth century; (3) the Moghul empire from sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century. The battle of Plassey (1757) saw the practical end of the Moghul empire and the formal beginning of British rule. The partition of India in 1947 answers Gandhi's question.

84 'religions': (dharma) used here in the sense of sect, not ethics.

85 'faculty for assimilation': the word used is *samas*. *Samas* is a grammatical technique of forming a new word by integrating two or more pre-existing words. For example the word *mahatma* is formed from *maha* and *atma*. Something of the old identity is retained in the new compound word, but the latter has a new identity of its own. When Gandhi says that the Indian nation has been created by a process of *samas* he means that though the nation is formed out of distinct ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, the new identity that emerges has an identity of its own. India in this sense is a nation. Gandhi is a cultural assimilationist in that all Indians, while retaining their sub-national identities, are supposed to share certain common values and symbols.

86 'religions': (dharma) used in the sense of ethics.

87 'religion': (dharma) used in the sense of sect.

88 The Gujarati text adds: 'The Mohamedans also live in a dreamland if they believe that there should be only Mohamedans here.'

89 'Parsees': descendants of Zoroastrians who, fleeing Muslim persecution in Persia, sought refuge in India in the eighth century. They settled mostly in what is today Bombay and Gujarat. The most distinguished Indian at the turn of the century, Dadabhai Naoroji, 'the Grand Old Man of India', was a Parsee.

90 The introduction of Christianity into India antedates that of Islam, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism. According to tradition Christianity is said to have been

men, and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion⁹¹ synonymous terms: nor has it ever been so in India.

READER: But what about the inborn enmity between Hindus and Mahomedans?

EDITOR: That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy. When the Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight. How, then, can there be any inborn enmity? Pray remember this too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Moslem sovereigns, and Moslems under the Hindu. Each party recognised that mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion⁹² by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent the quarrels recommenced.

The proverbs you have quoted were coined when both were fighting; to quote them now is obviously harmful. Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mahomedans own the same ancestors, and the same blood runs through their veins⁹³? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mahomedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions⁹⁴ are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarrelling?

Moreover, there are deadly proverbs as between the followers of Shiva and those of Vishnu, yet nobody suggests that these two do not belong

introduced into Kerala by St Thomas the Apostle; Indian Christianity received a new impetus in the sixteenth century through the preaching of St Francis Xavier who arrived in Goa in 1542; and it received an additional impetus in the nineteenth century through the educational and social service activities of both Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

91 'religion': (dharma) used in the sense of sect.

92 'religion': (dharma) used in the sense of sect.

93 In his 1944 talks with Jinnah, the Indian Muslim leader and the future founder of Pakistan, Gandhi returned to the arguments based on the notions of 'same ancestors' and 'same blood'. (See Merriam 1980, 78, 96.)

94 'religions': (dharma) used in the sense of sect.

to the same nation. It is said that the Vedic religion⁹⁵ is different from Jainism,⁹⁶ but the followers of the respective faiths are not different nations. The fact is that we have become enslaved, and, therefore, quarrel and like to have our quarrels decided by a third party. There are Hindu iconoclasts as there are Mahomedan. The more we advance in true knowledge, the better we shall understand that we need not be at war with those whose religion we may not follow.

READER: Now I would like to know your views about cow protection.⁹⁷

EDITOR: I myself respect the cow, that is, I look upon her with affectionate reverence. The cow is the protector of India, because it, being an agricultural country, is dependent on the cow's progeny. She is a most useful animal in hundreds of ways. Our Mahomedan brethren will admit this.

But, just as I respect the cow, so do I respect my fellow-men. A man is just as useful as a cow, no matter whether he be a Mahomedan or a Hindu. Am I, then, to fight with or kill a Mahomedan in order to save a cow? In doing so, I would become an enemy as well of the cow as of the Mahomedan. Therefore, the only method I know of protecting the cow is that I should approach my Mahomedan brother and urge him for the sake of the country to join me in protecting her. If he would not listen to me, I should let the cow go for the simple reason that the matter is beyond my ability. If I were overfull of pity for the cow, I should sacrifice my life to save her, but not take my brother's. This, I hold, is the law of our religion.⁹⁸

When men become obstinate, it is a difficult thing. If I pull one way, my Moslem brother will pull another. If I put on a superior air, he will

95 'Vedic religion': the original, pure Hinduism based on the Vedas.

96 'Jainism': a religion founded by Mahavira Vardhamana Jnatiputra, (fl. sixth century BC), a contemporary of Buddha. Rajchandbhai, Gandhi's spiritual adviser in the 1890s, was a Jain.

97 Cow protection societies were established in 1875 by Swami Dayananda. The sacrificial killing of cows by Muslims became a cause of Hindu-Muslim riots (Parel 1969,179–203).

98 'the law of our religion': (*dharmaic kaida*) religion in the sense of ethics.

return the compliment. If I bow to him gently, he will do it much more so, and, if he does not, I shall not be considered to have done wrong in having bowed. When the Hindus became insistent, the killing of cows increased. In my opinion, cow-protection societies may be considered cow-killing societies. It is a disgrace to us that we should need such societies. When we forgot how to protect cows, I suppose we needed such societies.

What am I to do when a blood-brother is on the point of killing a cow? Am I to kill him, or to fall down at his feet and implore him? If you admit that I should adopt the latter course, I must do the same to my Moslem brother.

Who protects the cow from destruction by Hindus when they cruelly ill-treat her? Who ever reasons with the Hindus when they mercilessly belabour the progeny of the cow with their sticks? But this has not prevented us from remaining one nation.

Lastly, if it be true that the Hindus⁹⁹ believe in the doctrine of non-killing and the Mahomedans do not, what, I pray, is the duty of the former? It is not written that a follower of the religion of Ahimsa¹⁰⁰ (non-killing) may kill a fellow-man. For him the way is straight. In order to save one being, he may not kill another. He can only plead – therein lies his sole duty.

But does every Hindu believe in Ahimsa? Going to the root of the matter, not one man really practises such a religion, because we do destroy life. We are said to follow that religion because we want to obtain freedom from liability to kill any kind of life.¹⁰¹ Generally speaking, we may observe that many Hindus partake of meat and are not, therefore, followers of Ahimsa. It is, therefore, preposterous to suggest that the two

⁹⁹ Gandhi here overstates the case of the Hindus. Neither Tilak nor Savarkar nor Aurobindo Ghose would agree with Gandhi on ‘non-killing’ as an essential Hindu teaching. See, for example, Aurobindo 1950, 36–42.

¹⁰⁰ Although the modern spelling is ‘Ahimsa’, Gandhi consistently spelt it ‘Ahimsa’ and this latter spelling has been retained for authenticity.

¹⁰¹ This is a crucial point in interpreting Gandhi’s position on *ahimsa*: ‘religion’ (*dharma*) is used here in the sense of ethics.

cannot live together amicably because the Hindus believe in Ahinsa and the Mahomedans do not.

These thoughts are put into our minds by selfish and false religious teachers.¹⁰² The English put the finishing touch. They have a habit of writing history; they pretend to study the manners and customs of all peoples. God has given us a limited mental capacity, but they usurp the function of the Godhead and indulge in novel experiments. They write about their own researches in most laudatory terms and hypnotise us into believing them. We, in our ignorance, then fall at their feet.¹⁰³

Those who do not wish to misunderstand things may read up the Koran, and will find therein hundreds of passages acceptable to the Hindus; and the Bhagavad-Gita contains passages to which not a Mahomedan can take exception. Am I to dislike a Mahomedan because there are passages in the Koran I do not understand or like? It takes two to make a quarrel. If I do not want to quarrel with a Mahomedan, the latter will be powerless to foist a quarrel on me, and, similarly, I should be powerless if a Mahomedan refuses his assistance to quarrel with me. An arm striking the air will become disjointed. If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion¹⁰⁴ and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers¹⁰⁵ to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling.

READER: But will the English ever allow the two bodies to join hands?

EDITOR: This question arises out of your timidity. It betrays our shallowness. If two brothers want to live in peace, is it possible for a third party to separate them? If they were to listen to evil counsels, we would consider them to be foolish. Similarly, we Hindus and Mahomedans would have to blame our folly rather than the English, if we allowed them to put us asunder. A clay-pot would break through impact; if not with one

¹⁰² 'selfish and false religious teachers': the Gujarati text adds *shastris* and *mullahs* (respectively Hindu and Muslim religious teachers) to this list.

¹⁰³ The Gujarati text has: 'We in our credulity believe all that they say.'

¹⁰⁴ 'the core of his own religion': (*dharmanu swaroop*), the ethical core of religion considered as sect.

¹⁰⁵ 'false teachers': in the Gujarati text, *shastris* and *mullahs*.

stone, then with another. The way to save the pot is not to keep it away from the danger point, but to bake it so that no stone would break it. We have then to make our hearts of perfectly baked clay. Then we shall be steeled against all danger. This can be easily done by the Hindus. They are superior in numbers, they pretend that they are more educated, they are, therefore, better able to shield themselves from attack on their amicable relations with the Mahomedans.

There is mutual distrust between the two communities. The Mahomedans, therefore, ask for certain concessions from Lord Morley.¹⁰⁶ Why should the Hindus oppose this? If the Hindus desisted, the English would notice it, the Mahomedans would gradually begin to trust the Hindus, and brotherliness would be the outcome. We should be ashamed to take our quarrels to the English. Everyone can find out for himself that the Hindus can lose nothing by desisting. That man who has inspired confidence in another has never lost anything in this world.

I do not suggest that the Hindus and the Mahomedans will never fight. Two brothers living together often do so. We shall sometimes have our heads broken. Such a thing ought not to be necessary, but all men are not equi-minded. When people are in a rage, they do many foolish things. These we have to put up with. But, when we do quarrel, we certainly do not want to engage counsel and to resort to English or any law courts. Two men fight; both have their heads broken, or one only. How shall a third party distribute justice amongst them? Those who fight may expect to be injured.

¹⁰⁶ The Minto–Morley Reforms (1909) were introduced by John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, and Lord Minto, the Viceroy. Among other things, they gave Muslims a separate electorate.

CHAPTER XI

*

The condition of India (cont.): lawyers¹⁰⁷

READER: You tell me that, when two men quarrel, they should not go to a law court. This is astonishing.

EDITOR: Whether you call it astonishing or not, it is the truth. And your question introduces us to the lawyers and the doctors. My firm opinion is that the lawyers have enslaved India, and they have accentuated the Hindu-Mahomedan dissensions, and have confirmed English authority.

READER: It is easy enough to bring these charges, but it will be difficult for you to prove them. But for the lawyers, who would have shown us the road to independence? Who would have protected the poor? Who would have secured justice? For instance, the late Mr Manomohan Ghose defended many a poor man free of charge. The Congress, which you have praised so much, is dependent for its existence and activity upon the work of the lawyers. To denounce such an estimable class of men is to spell justice injustice, and you are abusing the liberty of the press by decrying lawyers.

EDITOR: At one time I used to think exactly like you. I have no desire to convince you that they have never done a single good thing. I honour

¹⁰⁷ By training Gandhi was a lawyer. He was admitted to the Inner Temple (London) in 1888, and called to the Bar in 1891. After an uncertain start in a legal career in India, he was hired in 1893 as legal counsel to an Indian Muslim trading firm operating in South Africa. From 1894 until 1914 he practised law in South Africa, his income being 'five to six thousand pounds a year' (Fischer 1951, 74). He was disbarred from Inner Temple in 1922, but reinstated posthumously in 1988.

Mr Ghose's memory. It is quite true that he helped the poor. That the Congress owes the lawyers something is believable. Lawyers are also men, and there is something good in every man. Whenever instances of lawyers having done good can be brought forward, it will be found that the good is due to them as men rather than as lawyers. All I am concerned with is to show you that the profession teaches immorality;¹⁰⁸ it is exposed to temptations from which few are saved.

The Hindus and the Mahomedans have quarrelled. An ordinary man will ask them to forget all about it, he will tell them that both must be more or less at fault, and will advise them no longer to quarrel. They go to lawyers. The latter's duty is to side with their clients, and to find out ways and arguments in favour of the clients to which they (the clients) are often strangers. If they do not do so, they will be considered to have degraded their profession. The lawyers, therefore, will as a rule, advance quarrels, instead of repressing them. Moreover, men take up that profession, not in order to help others out of their miseries, but to enrich themselves. It is one of the avenues of becoming wealthy, and their interest exists in multiplying disputes. It is within my knowledge that they are glad when men have disputes. Petty pleaders actually manufacture them. Their touts, like so many leeches, suck the blood of the poor people.¹⁰⁹ Lawyers are men who have little to do. Lazy people, in order to indulge in luxuries, take up such professions. This is a true statement.

¹⁰⁸ 'immorality': *aniti*. In South Africa he discovered that 'when we go to court of law, some of us are only concerned how to win the case at any cost, and not how truth may prevail. In any case, it never does, so we think, in courts of law. But there are some in the Indian community who just do a little play-acting and make courts swallow any story that they choose. There is no doubt that this happens. It would be a great boon to the community if this habit disappeared' (CW 10: 147–8). Again, 'I realised that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. The lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during the twenty years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about private compromises of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby – not even money, certainly not my soul' (CW 39: 111).

¹⁰⁹ The Gujarati text adds: 'It is a profession which cannot but result in the encouragement of quarrels.'

Any other argument is a mere pretension. It is the lawyers who have discovered that theirs is an honourable profession. They frame laws as they frame their own praises. They decide what fees they will charge, and they put on so much side that poor people almost consider them to be heaven-born.

Why do they want more fees than common labourers?¹¹⁰ Why are their requirements greater? In what way are they more profitable to the country than the labourers? Are those who do good entitled to greater payment? And, if they have done anything for the country for the sake of money, how shall it be counted as good?

Those who know anything of the Hindu-Mahomedan quarrels know that they have been often due to the intervention of lawyers.¹¹¹ Some families have been ruined through them; they have made brothers enemies. Principalities, having come under lawyers' power, have become loaded with debt. Many have been robbed of their all. Such instances can be multiplied.

But the greatest injury¹¹² they have done to the country is that they

¹¹⁰ The inspiration for this idea comes from Ruskin: 'The teachings of Unto This Last I understood to be: . . . That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work' (CW 39: 239). In 1928, replying to a correspondent from Texas, Gandhi stated:

The question of reform of the legal profession is a big one. It does not admit of tinkering. I am strongly of opinion that lawyers and doctors should not be able to charge any fees but that they should be paid a certain fixed sum by the State and the public should receive their services free. They will have paid for them through the taxation that they would have paid for such services rendered to citizens automatically. The poor will be untaxed but the rich and the poor will have then the same amount of attention and skill. Today the best legal talents and the best medical advice are unobtainable by the poor. (CW 36: 84)

In 1938, addressing the Bar Association in Peshawar, he reminded his audience of his 'peculiar views' about lawyers and doctors which he had recorded in HS. 'A true lawyer,' he told them, 'was one who placed truth and service in the first place and the emoluments of the profession in the next place only' (CW 68: 97).

¹¹¹ The introduction of the modern notion of rights-based modern law exacerbated Hindu–Muslim relations.

¹¹² Gandhi's most severe criticism of the modern legal system is that it had become the handmaid of colonial rule.

have tightened the English grip. Do you think that it would be possible for the English to carry on their government without law courts? It is wrong to consider that courts are established for the benefit of the people. Those who want to perpetuate their power do so through the courts. If people were to settle their own quarrels, a third party would not be able to exercise any authority over them. Truly, men were less unmanly when they settled their disputes either by fighting or by asking their relatives to decide upon them. They became more unmanly and cowardly when they resorted to the courts of law. It was certainly a sign of savagery when they settled their disputes by fighting. Is it any the less so if I ask a third party to decide between you and me? Surely, the decision of a third party is not always right. The parties alone know who is right. We, in our simplicity and ignorance, imagine that a stranger, by taking our money, gives us justice.

The chief thing, however, to be remembered is that, without lawyers, courts could not have been established or conducted, and without the latter the English could not rule. Supposing that there were only English judges, English pleaders and English police, they could only rule over the English. The English could not do without Indian judges and Indian pleaders. How the pleaders were made in the first instance and how they were favoured you should understand well. Then you will have the same abhorrence for the profession that I have.¹¹³ If pleaders were to abandon their profession and consider it just as degrading as prostitution, English rule would break up in a day. They have been instrumental in having the charge laid against us that we love quarrels and courts, as fish love water. What I have said with reference to the pleaders necessarily applies to the judges; they are first cousins, and the one gives strength to the other.

¹¹³ The Gujarati text adds: 'The main key to British power is the law court, and the key to the law court is the lawyer.' For the history of the legal revolution introduced into India by British rule, see Stokes (1959) and Maine (1876).

CHAPTER XII

*

The condition of India (cont.): doctors

READER: I now understand the lawyers; the good they may have done is accidental. I feel that the profession is certainly hateful. You, however, drag in the doctors also, how is that?

EDITOR: The views I submit to you are those I have adopted. They are not original. Western writers have used stronger terms regarding both lawyers and doctors. One writer has likened the whole modern system to the Upas tree.¹¹⁴ Its branches are represented by parasitical professions, including those of law and medicine, and over the trunk has been raised the axe of true religion. Immorality is the root of the tree. So you will see that the views do not come right out of my mind, but they represent the combined experiences of many. I was at one time a great lover of the medical profession. It was my intention to become a doctor for the sake of the country.¹¹⁵ I no longer hold that opinion. I now understand why the medicine men (the vaidas) among us have not occupied a very honourable status.

The English have certainly effectively used the medical profession for

¹¹⁴ 'the Upas tree': *Antiaris toxicaria*: 'a fabulous Javanese tree so poisonous as to destroy life for many miles round . . . A baleful power or influence' (OED). Madame Blavatsky (1891, 178) mentions the Upas tree, but she does not expand on the meaning of the metaphor as Gandhi does here. *Unto This Last* also mentions the Upas tree.

¹¹⁵ This is discussed at some length in the *Autobiography* (CW 39: 35).

holding us. English physicians are known to have used the profession with several Asiatic potentates for political gain.¹¹⁶

Doctors have almost unhinged us. Sometimes I think that quacks are better than highly qualified doctors. Let us consider: the business of a doctor is to take care of the body, or, properly speaking, not even that. Their business is really to rid the body of diseases that may afflict it. How do these diseases arise? Surely by our negligence or indulgence. I over-eat, I have indigestion, I go to a doctor, he gives me medicine, I am cured, I over-eat again, and I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishment deserved by me, and I would not have over-eaten again. The doctor intervened and helped me to indulge myself. My body thereby certainly felt more at ease, but my mind became weakened. A continuance of a course of a medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind.

I have indulged in vice,¹¹⁷ I contract a disease, a doctor cures me, the odds are that I shall repeat the vice. Had the doctor not intervened, nature would have done its work, and I would have acquired mastery over myself, would have been freed from vice, and would have become happy.

Hospitals are institutions for propagating sin.¹¹⁸ Men take less care of

¹¹⁶ Here the Gujarati text reads differently: 'The pretensions of physicians also know no bounds. It was a British physician who played upon the credulity of the Moghul emperor. He was successful in treating an illness in the emperor's family and was in consequence honoured. It was again a physician who ingratiated himself with the Ameer (of Afghanistan).'

¹¹⁷ 'vice': (*vishay*) meaning lust.

¹¹⁸ 'Hospitals are institutions for propagating sin': surely one of the most intemperate statements in the entire book. Gandhi later tried to assure critics that he had not written in ignorance of the facts concerning the great positive contributions that modern medicine had made to humanity, and that in writing HS he had sought the advice of 'precious medical friends' (among them Dr Pranjivan Mehta). Though he regretted the 'language' with which he chose to express his 'views', he was prepared to change only the language, not the views (CW 23: 347-8; CW 26: 389). The views in question concerned the tendency of modern medicine to neglect the soul – i.e., the spiritual and moral foundations of bodily health. 'Medicine does often benumb the soul of the patient' (CW 23: 348). 'The advertisements that I see of medicines make me sick. I feel that

their bodies, and immorality increases. European doctors are the worst of all. For the sake of a mistaken care of the human body, they kill annually thousands of animals. They practise vivisection. No religion sanctions this. All say that it is not necessary to take so many lives for the sake of our bodies.

These doctors violate our religious instinct. Most of their medical preparations contain either animal fat or spirituous liquors; both of these are tabooed by Hindus and Mahomedans. We may pretend to be civilised, call religious prohibitions a superstition and wantonly indulge in what we like. The fact remains that the doctors induce us to indulge, and the result is that we have become deprived of self-control and have become effeminate.¹¹⁹ In these circumstances, we are unfit to serve the country. To study European medicine is to deepen our slavery.

It is worth considering why we take up the profession of medicine. It is certainly not taken up for the purpose of serving humanity. We become doctors so that we may obtain honours and riches.¹²⁰ I have endeavoured

physicians are rendering no service to humanity whatsoever but the greatest disservice by claiming every medicine as the panacea for all ills of life. I plead for humility, simplicity and truth' (CW 26: 389).

My quarrel with the medical profession in general is that it ignores the soul altogether and strains at nothing in seeking merely to repair such a fragile instrument as the body. Thus ignoring the soul, the profession puts men at its mercy and contributes to the diminution of human dignity and self-control. I note with thankfulness that in the West a school of thought is rising slowly but surely which takes account of the soul in trying to repair a diseased body and which, therefore, relies less on drugs and more on nature as a powerful healing agent. (CW 27: 222)

It should be remembered in this context that (1) Gandhi had undertaken nursing training in South Africa; (2) he had voluntarily entered hospital and undergone surgery in 1924; (3) he took quinine to fight malaria; and (4) his *A Guide to Health* (1921) was his most widely read work for several decades.

¹¹⁹ The moral basis of this criticism is that modern medicine, taking a purely bodily view of health, ignores need for the health of the soul (the virtue of temperance), which is necessary for the maintenance of even bodily health.

¹²⁰ Gandhi's criticism is that the modern medical profession was in alliance with modern pharmaceutical industries, and as such was becoming a 'profit'-driven profession. He would like to see it remain an 'honour'- or 'vocation'-driven profession, like that of the soldier.

to show that there is no real service of humanity in the profession, and that it is injurious to mankind. Doctors make a show of their knowledge, and charge exorbitant fees. Their preparations, which are intrinsically worth a few pennies, cost shillings. The populace in its credulity and in the hope of ridding itself of some disease, allows itself to be cheated. Are not quacks then, whom we know, better than the doctors who put on an air of humaneness?

CHAPTER XIII

*

What is true civilisation?

READER: You have denounced railways, lawyers and doctors. I can see that you will discard all machinery.¹²¹ What, then, is civilisation?

EDITOR: The answer to that question is not difficult. I believe that the civilisation India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors. Rome went, Greece shared the same fate, the might of the Pharaohs was broken, Japan has become westernised, of China nothing can be said, but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation.¹²² The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. In the midst of all this, India remains immovable, and that is her glory. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilised, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change.

¹²¹ 'machinery': ch. xix deals with this topic. By introducing it here Gandhi alerts the reader to the tension that exists between 'true civilisation' and a civilisation based on machinery.

¹²² 'India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation': this is the bedrock of Gandhi's defence of Indian civilisation in HS. That foundation is that *artha* and *kama* should be pursued within the framework of dharma. In modern civilisation *artha* and *kama*, according to Gandhi, assert their autonomy from dharma.

Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty; it is the sheet-anchor of our hope.

Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves.¹²³ The Gujarati equivalent for civilisation means 'good conduct'.¹²⁴

If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers¹²⁵ have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else,¹²⁶ and this is as it should

¹²³ In this definition of true civilisation, central to the argument of the book, Gandhi connects the notions of self-knowledge, duty (*farajj*), morality (*niti*), mastery over the mind (*man*) and the senses (*indriyo*).

¹²⁴ In 1911, in response to a question as to whether it would not have been more accurate to write 'The Gujarati equivalent for civilisation is good conduct (*sudharo*)', Gandhi wrote the following reply:

If 'is' were to be used, the meaning would change. 'Is' is implied in 'equivalent' ... the Gujarati word generally used for 'civilisation' means 'a good way of life'. That is what I had meant to say. The sentence 'The Gujarati equivalent for civilisation is *sudharo*' is quite correct. But it is not what I intended to say. Were we to say, 'The Gujarati equivalent for civilisation is "good conduct"', according to the rules of grammar, 'good conduct' would have to be taken as a Gujarati phrase ... Please let me know whether it was for this reason or for any other reasons that you concluded that 'means' was the right word. (CW 11: 153)

¹²⁵ 'as so many writers': in the Gujarati text this reads: 'as so many British writers'. See HS, Appendix II.

¹²⁶ 'India . . . has nothing to learn from anybody else': an obvious hyperbole, to be corrected by his other statements. Thus in 1911 he recommended that Chhaganlal Gandhi, his right-hand man at Phoenix Settlement, should go to London and 'imbibe' its particular atmosphere: 'My own idea was that you should live in London for a year and gather whatever experience and knowledge you could . . . if you imbibe the particular kind of atmosphere that obtains there, the voyage to England will have, to my mind, fulfilled its purpose' (CW 10: 401–2). In 1929 he wrote: 'The "Western civilisation" which passes for civilisation is disgusting to me. I have given a rough picture of it in *Hind Swaraj*. Time has brought no change in it. It is not my purpose even to imply that everything Western is bad. I have learnt a lot from the West' (CW 40: 300). And in 1931 he wrote:

European civilisation is no doubt suited for the Europeans but it will mean ruin for India, if we endeavour to copy it. This is not to say that we may not

be. We notice that mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition.¹²⁷ A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as it existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times, and our indigenous education remains the same as before. We have had no system of life-corroding competition.¹²⁸ Each followed his own occupation or trade,¹²⁹ and charged a regulation wage. It was not that we

adopt and assimilate whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us as it does not also mean that even the Europeans will not have to part with whatever evil might have crept into it. The incessant search for comforts and their multiplication is such an evil, and I make bold to say that the Europeans themselves will have to remodel their outlook, if they are not to perish under the weight of the comforts to which they are becoming slaves. It may be that my reading is wrong, but I know that for India to run after the Golden Fleece is to court certain death. Let us engrave on our hearts the motto of a Western philosopher, 'plain living and high thinking'. (CW 46: 55–6)

As late as 1936, Gandhi thought of London as being 'our Mecca or Kashi [Benares]'. In a letter of recommendation for Kamalnayan Bajaj written to H. S. L. Polak, he stated the following: 'However much we may fight Great Britain, London is increasingly becoming our Mecca or Kashi. Kamalnayan is no exception. I have advised him to take up a course in the London School of Economics. Perhaps you will put him in touch with Professor Laski who may not mind guiding young Bajaj. Muriel [Lester] has undertaken to mother him' (CW 63: 122).

¹²⁷ The psychology of the mind adumbrated here is basic to Gandhi's moral theory and is derived from *The Bhagavad Gita*. Swaraj, or self-control, means control over the mind. On the *Gita*'s teachings on the relationship of the mind to the body and the senses, and on how one may attain control over the mind, see Zaehner 1973, 423–5.

¹²⁸ 'life-corroding competition': following Ruskin, Gandhi wants to moderate competition by introducing 'social affections' into economic relations.

¹²⁹ Here Gandhi defends the 'idea' of *varna* and rejects the 'historical' institutions of caste. This quasi-'platonic' approach to *varna* has not convinced critics such as B. R. Ambedkar and the more recent Dalit elite.

did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They therefore, after due deliberation, decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and feet. They saw that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands¹³⁰ and feet. They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance,¹³¹ and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them, and that poor men would be robbed by rich men. They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages. They saw that kings and their swords were inferior to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and the Fakirs.¹³² A nation with a constitution like this is fitter to teach others than to learn from others. This nation had courts, lawyers and doctors, but they were all within bounds.¹³³ Everybody knew that these professions were not particularly superior; moreover, these *vakils* and *vaidis*¹³⁴ did not rob people; they were considered people's dependants, not their masters. Justice was tolerably fair. The ordinary rule was to avoid courts. There were no touts to lure people into them. This evil, too, was noticeable only in and around capitals. The common people lived independently,

¹³⁰ Manual labour, extolled here, is not a valued activity according to the norms of traditional Indian civilisation. Gandhi came to appreciate it from his reading of Ruskin, Tolstoy and Bondareff. Promotion of manual labour became an integral part of the Gandhian revolution.

¹³¹ Gandhi saw in modern Indian cities a real threat to civilised living (*CW* 9: 476); 'Bombay, Calcutta, and the other chief cities of India are the real plague spots' (*ibid.*, 479); 'To me the rise of the cities like Calcutta and Bombay is a matter for sorrow rather than congratulations' (*ibid.*, 509). He idealised and romanticised the Indian village and hoped to reinstate it in a Gandhian India.

¹³² 'Rishis and Fakirs': *rishis* are sages according to Hindu culture; *fakirs*, according to Muslim culture, are religious mendicants of great moral authority.

¹³³ 'within bounds': the bounds of dharma. This passage throws light on the real point of his earlier criticism of lawyers and doctors: modernity has 'freed' these professions from the restraints required by traditional morality.

¹³⁴ 'vakils and vaidis': lawyers and doctors, respectively, of pre-modern Indian culture.

and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true Home Rule.

And where this cursed modern civilisation has not reached, India remains as it was before. The inhabitants of that part of India will very properly laugh at your new-fangled notions. The English do not rule over them, nor will you ever rule over them. Those in whose name we speak we do not know, nor do they know us. I would certainly advise you and those like you who love the motherland to go into the interior that has yet not been polluted by the railways, and to live there for six months;¹³⁵ you might then be patriotic and speak of Home Rule.

Now you see what I consider to be real civilisation. Those who want to change conditions such as I have described are enemies of the country and are sinners.

READER: It would be all right if India were exactly as you have described it, but it is also India where there are hundreds of child widows, where two-year-old babies are married, where twelve-year-old girls are mothers and housewives, where women practise polyandry, where the practice of Niyog¹³⁶ obtains, where, in the name of religion, girls dedicate themselves to prostitution, and where, in the name of religion, sheep and

¹³⁵ '... go into the interior ... for six months': Gandhi believed that home rule would mean something only if it improved the lot of the villagers. This is a belief that the modern Indian elite has not understood or accepted. Writing to Henry Polak from Wardha in 1936 he stated: 'I am trying to become a villager. The place where I am writing this has a population of about 600 – no roads, no post-office, no shop' (CW 63:122).

¹³⁶ 'Niyog': a custom permitting a man to have sexual intercourse with his brother's childless widow, or with the wife of an impotent kinsman, in order to raise children, without committing the sin of incest. Children born out of such unions were regarded as the issue of the woman's husband. Originally intended to provide legitimate heirs for childless relatives, in course of time the custom became corrupted, and became part of the 'privileges' of brahmins. While in some regions brahmins claimed the right to provide the issue upon a childless widow, in others they offered their 'services' even when the woman had other children and the husband was alive. Over the centuries, Niyoga remained a great affront to the dignity of Indian women.

goats are killed.¹³⁷ Do you consider these also symbols of the civilisation that you have described?¹³⁸

EDITOR: You make a mistake. The defects that you have shown are defects. Nobody mistakes them for ancient civilisation. They remain in spite of it. Attempts have always been made, and will be made, to remove them. We may utilise the new spirit that is born in us¹³⁹ for purging ourselves of these evils. But what I have described to you as emblems of modern civilisation are accepted as such by its votaries. The Indian civilisation as described by me has been so described by its votaries. In no part of the world, and under no civilisation, have all men attained perfection. The tendency of Indian civilisation is to elevate the moral being, that of the Western civilisation is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God. So understanding and so believing, it behoves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian civilisation even as a child clings to its mother's breast.

¹³⁷ Gandhi gives a gruesome account of his 1902 visit to the Kali temple in Calcutta: 'On the way I saw a stream of sheep going to be sacrificed to Kali . . . We were greeted by rivers of blood. I could not bear to stand there. I was exasperated and restless. I have never forgotten that sight' (CW 39: 190).

¹³⁸ The social evils enumerated in this paragraph constitute the subject matter of Gandhi's critique of Indian civilisation in HS.

¹³⁹ 'the new spirit that is born in us': a very important point . Gandhi does recognise the positive contributions made by colonialism. It made Indians self-critical and creative.

CHAPTER XIV

*

How can India become free?

READER: I appreciate your views about civilisation. I will have to think over them. I cannot take in all at once. What, then, holding the views you do, would you suggest for freeing India?

EDITOR: I do not expect my views to be accepted all of a sudden. My duty is to place them before readers like yourself. Time can be trusted to do the rest. We have already examined the conditions for freeing India, but we have done so indirectly; we will now do so directly.¹⁴⁰ It is a world-known maxim that the removal of the cause of a disease results in the removal of the disease itself. Similarly, if the cause of India's slavery be removed, India can become free.

READER: If Indian civilisation is, as you say, the best of all, how do you account for India's slavery?

EDITOR: This civilisation is unquestionably the best, but it is to be observed that all civilisations have been on their trial. That civilisation which is permanent outlives it. Because the sons of India were found wanting, its civilisation has been placed in jeopardy. But its strength is to be seen in its ability to survive the shock. Moreover, the whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by western civilisation¹⁴¹ have become enslaved. We measure the universe by our own miserable foot-rule. When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe

¹⁴⁰ 'indirectly...directly': an important turning point in the argument of the book.

Chs. I–XIII prepare the background for understanding the more positive ideas contained in chs. XIV–XX.

¹⁴¹ 'western civilisation': meaning modern Western civilisation.

is enslaved. Because we are in an abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition. As a matter of fact, it is not so, but it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India. But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that, if we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of Swaraj. It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves.¹⁴² It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream.¹⁴³ Here there is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture before you and me is such that, after we have once realised it, we will endeavour to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced by each one for himself.¹⁴⁴ One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others. Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianised, we can accommodate them.¹⁴⁵ If they wish to remain in India along with their civilisation, there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things.

READER: It is impossible that Englishmen should ever become Indianised.

EDITOR: To say that is equivalent to saying that the English have no

¹⁴² This is the first time that true swaraj has been defined in the book.

¹⁴³ Swaraj, in so far as it requires self-rule, is not, and cannot be a utopia; it is something that can be achieved by the individual here and now.

¹⁴⁴ Swaraj for Gandhi is more than an object of research; it is something that has to be experienced internally, giving rise to an internal moral transformation of the individual. Without such an experience, swaraj would remain a mere theory or doctrine; it would never become an internal principle of action in the external political sphere. 'Experience' here has the Tolstoyan meaning, as found in *What is Art?* Compare Gandhi's comment to Joan Bondurant (who was conducting research on satyagraha): 'but satyagraha is not a subject for research – you must experience it, use it, live by it' (Bondurant 1965, 146). Inner experience in this context involves an awareness that *artha* and *kama* should be pursued only within the framework of dharma.

¹⁴⁵ Here Gandhi answers the question raised in ch. iv: the physical expulsion of the British from India is not of the essence of swaraj; self-transformation is. Gandhi the assimilationist is prepared to welcome 'Indianised' Britons as true Indians.

humanity in them. And it is really beside the point whether they become so or not. If we keep our own house in order, only those who are fit to live in it will remain, others will leave of their own accord. Such things occur within the experience of all of us.

READER: But it has not occurred in history.

EDITOR: To believe that what has not occurred in history will not occur at all is to argue disbelief in the dignity of man. At any rate, it behoves us to try what appeals to our reason. All countries are not similarly conditioned. The condition of India is unique. Its strength is immeasurable. We need not, therefore, refer to the history of other countries. I have drawn attention to the fact that, when other civilisations have succumbed, the Indian has survived many a shock.

READER: I cannot follow this. There seems little doubt that we shall have to expel the English by force of arms. So long as they are in the country, we cannot rest. One of our poets¹⁴⁶ says that slaves cannot even dream of happiness. We are day by day becoming weakened owing to the presence of the English. Our greatness is gone; our people look like terrified men. The English are in the country like a blight which we must remove by every means.

EDITOR: In your excitement, you have forgotten all we have been considering. We brought the English, and we keep them. Why do you forget that our adoption of their civilisation makes their presence in India at all possible?¹⁴⁷ Your hatred against them ought to be transferred to their civilisation. But let us assume that we have to drive away the English by fighting, how is that to be done?

READER: In the same way as Italy did it. What it was possible for Mazzini and Garibaldi to do, is possible for us. You cannot deny that they were very great men.

¹⁴⁶ 'One of our poets': there is no reference to poets in the Gujarati text, which only states, 'It appears that slaves cannot even dream of happiness.' The poet in question is Tulsidas; the verse, *paradheen sapnehu sukh nahin*, is taken from his famous *Ramcharitmanas* (Tulsidas 1952, 115).

¹⁴⁷ This point was raised earlier in ch. viii.

CHAPTER XV

*

Italy and India

EDITOR: It is well that you have instanced Italy. Mazzini was a great and good man; Garibaldi was a great warrior. Both are adorable; from their lives we can learn much. But the condition of Italy was different from that of India. In the first instance, the difference between Mazzini and Garibaldi is worth noting. Mazzini's ambition was not, and has not yet been, realised regarding Italy. Mazzini has shown in his writings on the duty of man that every man must learn how to rule himself.¹⁴⁸ This has not happened in Italy. Garibaldi did not hold this view of Mazzini's. Garibaldi gave, and every Italian took, arms. Italy and Austria had the same civilisation; they were cousins in this respect. It was a matter of tit for tat. Garibaldi simply wanted Italy to be free from the Austrian yoke. The machinations of Minister Cavour disgrace that portion of the history of Italy. And what has been the result? If you believe that, because Italians rule Italy, the Italian nation is happy, you are groping in darkness. Mazzini has shown conclusively that Italy did not become free. Victor Emanuel gave one meaning to the expression; Mazzini gave another. According to Emanuel, Cavour, and even Garibaldi, Italy meant the King of Italy and his henchmen. According to Mazzini, it meant the whole of the Italian people, that is, its agriculturists. Emanuel was only its servant.

148 In presenting Mazzini as a non-violent moral reformer, Gandhi is responding to Savarkar's interpretation of him as a violent revolutionary. (For Gandhi's short essay on Mazzini, see CW 5: 27–8.) In early 1909 he was reading Mazzini in jail (CW 9: 208).

The Italy of Mazzini still remains in a state of slavery. At the time of the so-called national war, it was a game of chess between two rival kings, with the people of Italy as pawns. The working classes in that land are still unhappy. They, therefore, indulge in assassination, rise in revolt, and rebellion on their part is always expected. What substantial gain did Italy obtain after the withdrawal of the Austrian troops? The gain was only nominal. The reforms for the sake of which the war was supposed to have been undertaken have not yet been granted. The condition of the people in general still remains the same. I am sure you do not wish to reproduce such a condition in India. I believe that you want the millions of India to be happy, not that you want the reins of Government in your hands. If that be so, we have to consider only one thing: how can the millions obtain self-rule? You will admit that people under several Indian princes are being ground down. The latter mercilessly crush them. Their tyranny¹⁴⁹ is greater than that of the English; and, if you want such tyranny in India, then we shall never agree. My patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian

¹⁴⁹ 'Their tyranny': Gandhi, whose father was a 'prime minister' of an Indian state, remained a life-long critic of the princely order. The point of his criticism was that Indian princes had delegitimised themselves as rulers of India both because of the autocratic nature of their regimes and the wanton manner in which they used public money for private opulence. In 1907 he published with approval an account of the King of Afghanistan's criticism of the dissolute life-style of Indian princes. Such state of affairs, Gandhi commented, was 'a powerful cause of our miserable plight' (*CW* 7: 7–8). But his most famous criticism of the princes was made in 1916 in the inaugural lecture he delivered at the opening of Banares Hindu University. He told 'the richly bedecked noblemen' that there was no salvation for India unless they stripped themselves of their jewellery and held it in trust for their people. He reminded them that the public wealth that they so lavishly spent on themselves was created by poor peasants – 'men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one' – and that there could be no swaraj for India 'if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour'. The lecture so offended the large numbers of princes who were in the audience that the chair had to stop Gandhi and adjourn the meeting abruptly. (For the full text of this speech, see *CW* 13: 210–16.)

princes, if only the English retire. If I have the power, I should resist the tyranny of Indian princes just as much as that of the English. By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people, and, if I could secure it at the hands of the English, I should bow down my head to them. If any Englishman dedicated his life to securing the freedom of India, resisting tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishman as an Indian.

Again, India can fight like Italy only when she has arms. You have not considered this problem at all. The English are splendidly armed; that does not frighten me, but it is clear that, to pit ourselves against them in arms, thousands of Indians must be armed. If such a thing be possible, how many years will it take? Moreover, to arm India on a large scale is to Europeanise it. Then her condition will be just as pitiable as that of Europe. This means, in short, that India must accept European civilisation, and, if that is what we want, the best thing is that we have among us those who are so well trained in that civilisation. We will then fight for a few rights, will get what we can, and so pass our days. But the fact is that the Indian nation will not adopt arms, and it is well that it does not.

READER: You are over-assuming facts. All need not be armed. At first, we will assassinate a few Englishmen and strike terror; then, a few men who will have been armed will fight openly. We may have to lose a quarter of a million¹⁵⁰ men, more or less, but we will regain our land. We will undertake guerrilla warfare, and defeat the English.

EDITOR: That is to say, you want to make the holy land of India unholy. Do you not tremble to think of freeing India by assassination? What we need to do is to kill ourselves. It is a cowardly thought, that of killing others. Whom do you suppose to free by assassination? The millions of India do not desire it. Those who are intoxicated by the wretched modern civilisation think these things. Those who will rise to power by murder will certainly not make the nation happy. Those who

¹⁵⁰ 'a quarter of a million': the Gujarati text reads '20 or 25 lakhs', i.e., 2 or 2.5 million.

believe that India has gained by Dhingra's act¹⁵¹ and such other acts in India¹⁵² make a serious mistake. Dhingra was a patriot, but his love was blind. He gave his body in a wrong way; its ultimate result can only be mischievous.

READER: But you will admit that the English have been frightened by these murders, and that Lord Morley's reforms¹⁵³ are due to fear.

EDITOR: The English are both a timid and a brave nation. She is, I believe, easily influenced by the use of gunpowder. It is possible that Lord Morley has granted the reforms through fear, but what is granted under fear can be retained only so long as the fear lasts.

¹⁵¹ On 1 July 1909, Madan Lal Dhingra, an Indian student, assassinated Sir William Curzon-Wyllie, political aide-de-camp to Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, at a reception held by the National Indian Association at the Imperial Institute in South Kensington, London. Gandhi's assessment of the event appeared in *Indian Opinion*. He said, *inter alia*,

I must say that those who believe and argue that such murders may do good for India are ignorant men indeed. No act of treachery can ever profit a nation. Even should the British leave in consequence of such murderous acts, who will rule in their place? The only answer is: the murderers. Who will then be happy? Is the Englishman bad because he is an Englishman? Is it that everyone with an Indian skin is good? If that is so, we can claim no rights in South Africa, nor should there be any angry protest against oppression by Indian princes. India can gain nothing from the rule of murderers – no matter whether they are black or white. (CW 9: 302–3, at 303)

¹⁵² 'and such other acts in India': a clear indication that Gandhi was quite well informed about the activities of secret societies in India. Already in 1908 he had written:

Many people exult at the explosion of bombs. This only shows ignorance and lack of understanding. If all the British were to be killed, those who kill them would become the masters of India, and as a result India would continue in a state of slavery. The bombs with which the British will have been killed will fall on India after the British leave. (CW 8: 374)

¹⁵³ Minto–Morley Reforms, see ch. x (footnote 106).

CHAPTER XVI

*

Brute force¹⁵⁴

READER: This is a new doctrine: that what is gained through fear is retained only while the fear lasts. Surely, what is given will not be withdrawn?

EDITOR: Not so. The Proclamation of 1857¹⁵⁵ was given at the end of a

¹⁵⁴ In the Gujarati text the chapter title is *darugolo*. Earlier in ch. iv the same word was translated as ‘arms and ammunition’, and in ch. xv, as ‘gunpowder’. Gandhi also uses other terms to refer to the same concept: ‘body-force’ (*sharirbal*), ‘gun-force’ (*topbal*) and ‘force of arms’ (*hatyarbal*). What is conveyed by means of these terms is that there is an ethical difference between the use of ‘soul-force’ and that of ‘brute force.’

¹⁵⁵ ‘The Proclamation of 1857’: Queen Victoria’s Proclamation of 1858. It read in part:

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects; and those obligations, by the blessings of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil . . . And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge. (Philips and Pandey 1962, 11)

There are two points to be noted here. The first is Gandhi’s interpretation of the Proclamation as enunciating a principle of political equality between Indians and Britons, an interpretation that colonial administrators in later decades did not accept – to Gandhi’s great disillusionment. The second point is Gandhi’s appreciation of Queen Victoria’s personal involvement in the drafting of the Proclamation. He had reported in *Indian Opinion* that the Queen was not satisfied with the first draft submitted to her, considering it to be ‘too tame, and not in

revolt, and for the purpose of preserving peace. When peace was secured and people became simple-minded, its full effect was toned down. If I ceased stealing for fear of punishment, I would recommence the operation so soon as the fear is withdrawn from me. This is almost a universal experience. We have assumed that we can get men to do things by force and, therefore, we use force.

READER: Will you not admit that you are arguing against yourself? You know that what the English obtained in their own country they have obtained by using brute force. I know you have argued that what they have obtained is useless, but that does not affect my argument. They wanted useless things, and they got them. My point is that their desire was fulfilled. What does it matter what means they adopted? Why should we not obtain our goal, which is good, by any means whatsoever, even by using violence? Shall I think of the means when I have to deal with a thief in the house? My duty is to drive him out anyhow. You seem to admit that we have received nothing, and that we shall receive nothing by petitioning. Why, then, may we not do so by using brute force? And, to retain what we may receive, we shall keep up the fear by using the same force to the extent that it may be necessary. You will not find fault with a continuance of force to prevent a child from thrusting its foot into fire? Somehow or other, we have to gain our end.¹⁵⁶

EDITOR: Your reasoning is plausible. It has deluded many. I have used similar arguments before now. But I think I know better now, and I shall endeavour to undeceive you. Let us first take the argument that we are justified in gaining our end by using brute force, because the English

keeping with the events that had taken place in India in connection with the Mutiny', and that she had asked Lord Derby, the prime minister, to redraft it, '*laying stress upon the fact that it was a female Sovereign speaking*' (CW 3: 432, emphasis added). She had insisted that the document should 'breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence, and religious toleration, and point to the privileges which the Indian will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown . . .' (CW 5: 326).

¹⁵⁶ The two metaphors introduced in this paragraph – those of the thief and the child – are crucial to this argument.

gained theirs by using similar means.¹⁵⁷ It is perfectly true that they used brute force, and that it is possible for us to do likewise, but, by using similar means, we can get only the same thing that they got. You will admit that we do not want that. Your belief that there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake.¹⁵⁸ Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes. Your reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed.¹⁵⁹ If I want to cross the ocean, I can do so only by means of a vessel; if I were to use a cart for that purpose, both the cart and I would soon find the bottom. 'As is the God, so is the votary' is a maxim worth considering. Its meaning has been distorted, and men have gone astray. The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. I am not likely to obtain the result flowing from the worship of God by laying myself prostrate before Satan. If, therefore, anyone were to say: 'I want to worship God, it does not matter that I do so by means of Satan' it would be set down as ignorant folly. We reap exactly as we sow.¹⁶⁰ The English in 1833¹⁶¹ obtained greater voting power by violence. Did they by using brute force better appreciate their duty? They wanted the right of voting, which they obtained by using physical force. But real rights are a result

¹⁵⁷ The reference is to the Reform Act of 1832. Gandhi is responding to the argument of the Indian revolutionaries that if the British people obtained their rights by using violent means, the Indians also may use similar means to obtain their rights.

¹⁵⁸ Gandhi's response is based on the supposition that there is an inviolable connection between ends (*sadhya*) and means (*sadhan*).

¹⁵⁹ Here Gandhi uses several examples to illustrate his point: those of a rose, a boat, Hindu liturgy, the seed and the tree, and proper worship of God.

¹⁶⁰ ' . . . whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.' (St Paul's 'Letter to the Galatians', ch. 6, v. 7).

¹⁶¹ 'The English in 1833' refers to the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1832. Gandhi has in mind such acts of violence as those associated with this reform, as well as those associated with the 1819 riots of St Peter's Fields, Manchester, the so-called 'Peterloo massacre'.

of performance of duty;¹⁶² these rights they have not obtained. We, therefore, have before us in England the farce of everybody wanting and insisting on his rights, nobody thinking of his duty. And, where everybody wants rights, who shall give them to whom? I do not wish to imply that they never perform their duty, but I do wish to imply that they do not perform the duty to which those rights should correspond; and, as they do not perform that particular duty, namely, acquire fitness, their rights have proved a burden to them. In other words, what they have obtained is an exact result of the means they adopted. They used the means corresponding to the end. 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 different results from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter?

Now we shall take the example given by you of the thief to be driven out. I do not agree with you that the thief may be driven out by any means. If it is my father who has come to steal, I shall use one kind of means. If it is an acquaintance, I shall use another, and, in the case of a perfect stranger, I shall use a third. If it is a white man, you will perhaps say, you will use means different from those you will adopt with an Indian thief. If it is a weakling, the means will be different from those to be adopted for dealing with an equal in physical strength; and, if the thief is armed from tip to toe, I shall simply remain quiet. Thus we have a variety of means between the father and the armed man. Again, I fancy that I should pretend to be sleeping whether the thief was my father or that strong armed man. The reason for this is that my father would also be armed, and I should succumb to the strength possessed by either, and allow my things to be stolen. The strength of my father would make me weep with pity; the strength of the armed man would rouse in me anger, and we

¹⁶² Gandhi explains his theory of rights: *real* rights, in his view, ought to be based on *satya* (truth) and dharma, the sources of duty. Real rights flow from duty. This contrasts with the modern theory of rights which asserts the priority of rights over duties.

should become enemies. Such is the curious situation. From these examples, we may not be able to agree as to the means to be adopted in each case. I myself seem clearly to see what should be done in all these cases, but the remedy may frighten you. I, therefore, hesitate to place it before you. For the time being, I will leave you to guess it, and, if you cannot, it is clear that you will have to adopt different means in each case. You will also have seen that any means will not avail to drive away the thief. You will have to adopt means to fit each case. Hence it follows that your duty is *not* to drive away the thief by any means you like.

Let us proceed a little further. That well-armed man has stolen your property, you have harboured the thought, you are filled with anger; you argue that you want to punish that rogue, not for your own sake, but for the good of your neighbours; you have collected a number of armed men, you want to take his house by assault, he is duly informed of it, he runs away; he, too, is incensed. He collects his brother-robbers, and sends you a defiant message that he will commit robbery in broad daylight. You are strong, you do not fear him, you are prepared to receive him. Meanwhile, the robber pesters your neighbours. They complain before you, you reply that you are doing all for their sake, you do not mind that your own goods have been stolen. Your neighbours reply that the robber never pestered them before, and that he commenced his depredations only after you declared hostilities against him. You are between Scylla and Charybdis. You are full of pity for the poor men. What they say is true. What are you to do? You will be disgraced if you now leave the robber alone. You, therefore, tell the poor men: 'Never mind. Come, my wealth is yours, I will give you arms, I will teach you how to use them; you should belabour the rogue; don't you leave him alone.' And so the battle grows; the robbers increase in numbers; your neighbours have deliberately put themselves to inconvenience. Thus the result of wanting to take revenge upon the robber is that you have disturbed your own peace; you are in perpetual fear of being robbed and assaulted; your courage has given place to cowardice. If you will patiently examine the argument, you will see that I have not overdrawn the picture. This is one of the means. Now let us

examine the other.¹⁶³ You set this armed robber down as an ignorant brother; you intend to reason with him at a suitable opportunity; you argue that he is, after all, a fellow-man; you do not know what prompted him to steal. You, therefore, decide that, when you can, you will destroy the man's motive for stealing. Whilst you are thus reasoning with yourself, the man comes again to steal. Instead of being angry with him, you take pity on him. You think that this stealing habit must be a disease with him. Henceforth, you, therefore, keep your doors and windows open; you change your sleeping-place, and you keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again, and is confused, as all this is new to him; nevertheless, he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He inquires about you in the village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart, he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit.¹⁶⁴ He becomes your servant, and you find for him honourable employment. This is the second method. Thus, you see different means have brought about totally different results. I do not wish to deduce from this that all robbers will act in the above manner, or that all will have the same pity and love like you, but I wish only to show that only fair means can produce fair results, and that, at least in the majority of cases,¹⁶⁵ if not, indeed, in all, the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms. There is harm in the exercise of brute force, never in that of pity.

Now we will take the question of petitioning.¹⁶⁶ It is a fact beyond dispute that a petition, without the backing of force, is useless. However,

¹⁶³ 'the other': i.e., the principle of compassion (*daya*).

¹⁶⁴ *Daya* prompts the use of different means – instead of trying to restrain the thief by violent means, it seeks to restrain him by non-violent means, and if possible to bring about a change in his character. When only violence was applied to the thief, his behaviour did not improve; but when *daya* was applied, it did improve. One of the aims of non-violence is the moral regeneration of the culprit.

¹⁶⁵ 'in the majority of cases': this is a very important caveat. The application of the principle of non-violence allows for exceptions.

¹⁶⁶ 'petitioning': the method adopted by the Moderates of the Indian National Congress. Gandhi, following Ranade, endorses it as an effective means of the political education of the masses.

the late Justice Ranade used to say that petitions served a useful purpose because they were a means of educating people. They give the latter an idea of their condition, and warn the rulers. From this point of view, they are not altogether useless. A petition of an equal is a sign of courtesy; a petition from a slave is a symbol of his slavery. A petition backed by force is a petition from an equal and, when he transmits his demand in the form of a petition, it testifies to his nobility. Two kinds of force can back petitions. 'We will hurt you if you do not give this' is one kind of force; it is the force of arms, whose evil results we have already examined. The second kind of force can thus be stated: 'If you do not concede our demand, we will 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 may be described as love-force, soul-force or, more popularly but less accurately, passive resistance.¹⁶⁷ This force is indestructible. He who uses it perfectly understands his position. We have an ancient proverb which literally means: 'One negative cures thirty-six diseases.'¹⁶⁸ The force of arms is powerless when matched against the force of love or the soul.

Now we shall take your last illustration, that of the child thrusting its foot into fire. It will not avail you. What do you really do to the child?

¹⁶⁷ 'passive resistance': the Gujarati word used here is *satyagraha*. The account of how Gandhi came to coin this word is given in CW 8: 131. *Indian Opinion* called for submission of a suitable word for the new movement Gandhi had introduced. Among the words submitted were *pratyupaya* (counter-measure); *kashtadhin prativartan* (resistance through submission to hardship); *dridha pratipaksha* (firmness in resistance); *sadagraha* (firmness in a good cause). Gandhi preferred the last word, but modified it by changing *sada* into *satya*. Note that *Unto This Last* also speaks of the Soul and its force: 'But he [the worker] being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist's equations . . .' (Ruskin, ed. Yarker, 1978, 30–1). Gandhi takes note of this point in his paraphrase of this work (CW 8: 258).

¹⁶⁸ The word for 'negative' in the Gujarati text is *nanno*, which carries the meaning of a firm 'no'. The proverb may be interpreted as follows: 'The ability to say a firm "no" will save you from many diseases.' I thank Prof. Bhikhu Parekh for clarifying the meaning of this proverb.

Supposing that it can exert so much physical force that it renders you powerless and rushes into fire, then you cannot prevent it. There are only two remedies open to you – either you must kill it in order to prevent it from perishing in the flames, or you must give your own life, because you do not wish to see it perish before your very eyes. You will not kill it. If your heart is not quite full of pity, it is possible that you will not surrender yourself by preceding the child and going into the fire yourself. You, therefore, helplessly allow it to go into the flames. Thus, at any rate, you are not using physical force. I hope you will not consider that it is still physical force, though of a low order, when you would forcibly prevent the child from rushing towards the fire if you could.¹⁶⁹ That force is of a different order, and we have to understand what it is.

Remember that, in thus preventing the child, you are minding entirely its own interest, you are exercising authority for its sole benefit.¹⁷⁰ Your example does not apply to the English. In using brute force against the

¹⁶⁹ Here we find Gandhi attaching an important qualification to the meaning of non-violence. The physical restraining of a child rushing to self-destruction is a non-violent act in Gandhi's sense of non-violence, for the physical restraining here results in the well-being of the child; besides it is not motivated by self-interest. Non-violence requires 'active resistance to evil' (Brock 1972, 468).

¹⁷⁰ 'sole benefit': This is one instance of the use of physical force being consistent with Gandhi's theory of non-violence. Mrs Graham Polak narrates the case of a young boy being ordered by Gandhi to undergo corporal punishment (Polak 1931, 135–6). He also saw no inconsistency between non-violence and the use of physical force in collective self-defence. Thus in 1918 he actively recruited for the Indian army to fight in World War I, and in 1938 he seemed to defend the use of force against Nazism: 'If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war. A discussion of the pros and cons of such a war is therefore outside my horizon or province' (CW 68: 138). And in 1947, Gandhi seemed to acquiesce in the Indian use of force in Kashmir (Woodcock 1972, 97). According to Madeleine Slade, one of Gandhi's devoted disciples, he saw no inconsistency between his notion of non-violence and the violence involved in shooting mad dogs and the mercy-killing of badly wounded animals (Slade 1960, 98–9).

English, you consult entirely your own, that is, the national interest.¹⁷¹ There is no question here either of pity or of love. If you say that the actions of the English, being evil, represent fire, and that they proceed to their actions through ignorance, and that, therefore, they occupy the position of a child, and that you want to protect such a child, then you will have to overtake every such evil action by whomsoever committed, and, as in the case of the child, you will have to sacrifice yourself. If you are capable of such immeasurable pity, I wish you well in its exercise.

¹⁷¹ One of the high points of the entire work: here Gandhi rejects the modern principle of reason of state or national interest (*prajano swartha*) as a legitimate principle of international politics. Even against colonial rule, Indians may not invoke that principle, much less employ violence in its application. What he advocates is a non-violent, mutual accommodation between Indians and Britons.

CHAPTER XVII

*

Passive resistance¹⁷²

READER: Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force. I still think that the evildoers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.

EDITOR: The poet Tulsidas has said 'Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive.'¹⁷³ This appears to me to be a scientific

¹⁷² The Gujarati title of this chapter is *satyagraha-atmabali*.

¹⁷³ Next to *Bhagavad Gita*, Tulsidas' *Ramayana* had the strongest influence on Gandhi's religio-ethical development. As he states in his *Autobiography*, he regarded it 'as the greatest book in all devotional literature' (CW 39: 32). One of the first books published by his International Press, Phoenix, Natal, was an abridged version of this work; in introducing the work to the public he wrote, 'We wish that every Indian goes devoutly through the summary which we are placing before the public, reflect over it, and assimilate the ethical principles so vividly set out in it' (CW 9: 98).

The couplet cited here is popularly attributed to Tulsidas. The popular version reads as follows:

*Daya dharma ka mool hain, pap mool abhiman
Tulsi daya na chandiye, jab lag ghatmen pran*

('Of dharma pity is the root, as egotism is of sin. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive.' [Editor's translation; emphasis added.])

Gandhi here either modifies the first line of the popular version by substituting *body* for *sin*, or uses another version of the couplet familiar to him. According to a letter to the present editor from Prof. T. N. Bali, professor of Hindi at Delhi University, this couplet cannot be found in any of Tulsidas' known works.

truth.¹⁷⁴ I believe in it as much as I believe in two and two being four. The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe¹⁷⁵ would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: 'It so happened.' If that is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence. But, if it means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul-force or passive resistance in such history. You cannot expect silver-ore in a tin-mine. History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world, and so there is a proverb among Englishmen that a nation which has no history, that is, no wars, is a happy nation. How kings played, how they became enemies of one another, and how they murdered one another is found accurately recorded in history, and, if this were all that had happened in the world, it would have been ended long ago. If the story of the universe had commenced with wars, not a man would have been found alive today. Those people who have been warred against have disappeared, as, for instance, the natives of Australia, of whom hardly a man was left alive by the intruders. Mark, please, that these natives did not use soul-force in self-defence, and it does not require much foresight to know that the Australians will share the same fate as their victims. 'Those that wield the sword shall perish by the sword.'¹⁷⁶ With us, the proverb is that professional swimmers will find a watery grave.

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 or love. Therefore, the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a

¹⁷⁴ 'scientific truth': in Gujarati, *shastra wachan*; scientific according to the science of morals, not according to the modern notion of science.

¹⁷⁵ 'The universe': i.e., the human universe. Without *daya*, the human universe would become as horrible as *rasatal*, one of the seven 'hells' of Hindu mythology.

¹⁷⁶ Gospel of St Matthew, ch. 26, v. 52.

very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not, and cannot, take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel; one of them repents and re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him;¹⁷⁷ the two again begin to live in peace; nobody takes note of this. But, if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some other reason, take up arms or go to law – which is another form of the exhibition of brute force – their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours, and would probably go down to history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

READER: According to what you say, it is plain that instances of this kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to understand this passive resistance more fully. It will be better, therefore, if you enlarge upon it.

EDITOR: Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force.¹⁷⁸ For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law, and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

¹⁷⁷ The Gujarati text has: 'one of them practises satyagraha against the other.' Omitted from the English text.

¹⁷⁸ The Gujarati version of this definition is as follows: 'Satyagraha or soul-force is called passive resistance in English. That word is applicable to a method by which men, enduring pain, secure their rights. Its purpose is the opposite of the purpose of using force of arms (*ladaibal*). When something is not acceptable to me, I do not do that work. In so acting I use satyagraha or soul-force.'

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim to be absolutely in the right, or that a particular thing is wrong, because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgement. It is, therefore, meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul-force.

READER: You would then disregard laws – this is rank disloyalty. We have always been considered a law-abiding nation. You seem to be going even beyond the extremists.¹⁷⁹ They say that we must obey the laws that have been passed, but that, if the laws be bad, we must drive out the law-givers even by force.

EDITOR: Whether I go beyond them or whether I do not is a matter of no consequence to either of us. We simply want to find out what is right, and to act accordingly. The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters. When we do not like certain laws, we do not break the heads of law-givers, but we suffer and do not submit to the laws.¹⁸⁰ That we should obey laws whether good or bad is a new-fangled notion.¹⁸¹ There was no such thing in former days. The people disregarded those laws they did not like, and suffered the penalties for their breach. It is contrary to our manhood, if we obey laws repugnant to our conscience. Such teaching is opposed to religion,¹⁸² and means slavery. If the government were to ask us to go about without any

¹⁷⁹ The implication here is that satyagraha, though not a violent form of action, is even more revolutionary than the revolution advocated by the Reader.

¹⁸⁰ The Gujarati text here links satyagraha with the ritual of fasting: ‘but in order to annul that law we observe fast’. This is the only time that HS links satyagraha and fast.

¹⁸¹ ‘a new-fangled notion’. The reference is to the utilitarian jurisprudence introduced into India in the nineteenth century. Utility replaced dharma as the ethical basis of law. For a full account of this see Stokes 1959.

¹⁸² ‘religion’: dharma, in the sense of ethics.

clothing, should we do so? If I were a passive resister, I would say to them that I would have nothing to do with their law. But we have so forgotten ourselves and become so compliant, that we do not mind any degrading law.

A man who has realised his manhood, who fears only God, will fear no one else. Man-made laws¹⁸³ are not necessarily binding on him. Even the government do not expect any such thing from us. They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing' but they say: 'If you do not do it, we will punish you.' We are sunk so low, that we fancy that it is our duty and our religion¹⁸⁴ to do what the law lays down. If man will only realise that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self-rule or home-rule.¹⁸⁵

It is a superstition and an ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority. Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong, and those of minorities to have been right. All reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities. If among a band of robbers, a knowledge of robbing is obligatory, is a pious man to accept the obligation? So long as the superstition that men should obey unjust laws exists, so long will their slavery exist. And a passive resister alone can remove such a superstition.

To use brute force, to use gunpowder is contrary to passive resistance, for it means that we want our opponent to do by force that which we desire but he does not. And, if such a use of force is justifiable, surely he

¹⁸³ 'Man-made laws': this terminology suggests the distinction between positive law and the higher law of dharma. Note the parallel between Gandhi's legal philosophy and that branch of Western legal philosophy which distinguishes between positive law and natural law.

¹⁸⁴ 'our duty and our religion': in Gujarati, *farajj* and *dharma* respectively. Modern legal positivism, according to Gandhi, corrupts the notion of law in that it makes obedience to positive law a political and a moral duty, independently of the question of whether such law is in harmony with dharma or not.

¹⁸⁵ There is thus an ethical link between courage, satyagraha, and the practice of dharma. Gandhi's swaraj requires that the positive legal system recognises the validity of dharma.

is entitled to do likewise by us. And so we should never come to an agreement. We may simply fancy, like the blind horse moving in a circle round a mill, that we are making progress. Those who believe that they are not bound to obey laws which are repugnant to their conscience have only the remedy of passive resistance open to them. Any other must lead to disaster.

READER: From what you say, I deduce that passive resistance is a splendid weapon of the weak,¹⁸⁶ but that, when they are strong, they may take up arms.

EDITOR: This is gross ignorance. Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms. How, then, can it be considered only a weapon of the weak? Physical-force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister. Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? Extremists are considered to be advocates of brute force. Why do they, then, talk about obeying laws? I do not blame them. They can say nothing else. When they succeed in driving out the English, and they themselves become governors, they will want you and me to obey their laws. And that is a fitting thing for their constitution. But a passive resister will say he will not obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon.

What do you think? Wherein is courage required – in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and to be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior – he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

¹⁸⁶ Gandhi is defending satyagraha against the opinion of some of his South African friends who thought that it was the same as passive resistance practised in England recently by the suffragettes and by the opponents of the Education Act of 1902. Whereas passive resistance was compatible with mild forms of physical violence, satyagraha, Gandhi pointed out, was not. For a full account of Gandhi's distinction between passive resistance and satyagraha, see *Satyagraha in South Africa*, ch. 13 (CW 29: 93–7).

This, however, I will admit: that even a man weak in body is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs no Jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind¹⁸⁷ is alone necessary, and, when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest, and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts, and cannot be stolen. Competition between passive resisters does not exhaust. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard. It is strange indeed that you should consider such a weapon to be a weapon merely of the weak.

READER: You have said that passive resistance is a speciality of India. Have cannons never been used in India?

EDITOR: Evidently, in your opinion, India means its few princes.¹⁸⁸ To me, it means its teeming millions, on whom depends the existence of its princes and our own.

Kings will always use their kingly weapons. To use force is bred in them. They want to command, but those who have to obey commands, do not want guns; and these are in a majority throughout the world. They have to learn either body-force or soul-force. Where they learn the former, both the rulers and the ruled become like so many mad men, but, where they learn soul-force, the commands of the rulers do not go beyond the point of their swords, for true men disregard unjust commands. Peasants¹⁸⁹ have never been subdued by the sword, and never will be. They do not know the use of the sword, and they are not frightened by the use of it by others. That nation is great which rests its head upon death as its

¹⁸⁷ On 'mind' see chs. xiii and xx.

¹⁸⁸ For Gandhi's critique of the Indian princes see ch. xv.

¹⁸⁹ Peasants: *khedut* - those who actually cultivated the land. These constituted only a small percentage of the village population, and did not always include the untouchables.

pillow. Those who defy death are free from all fear.¹⁹⁰ For those who are labouring under the delusive charms of brute force, this picture is not over-drawn. The fact is that, in India, the nation at large has generally used passive resistance in all departments of life. We cease to co-operate with our rulers when they displease us. This is passive resistance.

I remember an instance when, in a small principality, the villagers were offended by some command issued by the prince. The former immediately began vacating the village. The prince became nervous, apologised to his subjects and withdrew his command. Many such instances can be found in India.¹⁹¹ Real home rule is possible only where

¹⁹⁰ Gandhi has terrorists like Dhingra in mind here, terrorists who are willing to die for a cause. But satyagraha, he implies, requires even greater courage than that required of the terrorists.

¹⁹¹ The reference here is to the traditional practice of *dhurna*. Joseph Doke's biography of Gandhi gives the following accounts of *dhurna*. 'The idea of passive resistance as a means of opposing evil is inherent in Indian philosophy. In old time, it was called "to sit *dhurna*". Sometimes a whole community would adopt this method towards their Prince. It has been so in the history of Porbandar; then trade was dislocated and force helpless before the might of passive resistance.'

Doke cites from Bishop Heber's account of *dhurna*: 'To sit *dhurna*, or mourning, is to remain motionless in that posture, without food, and exposed to the weather, till the person against whom it is employed consents to the request offered, and the Hindus believe that whoever dies under such a process becomes a tormenting spirit to haunt and afflict his inflexible antagonist.' Heber narrates how on one occasion 'above three hundred thousand persons' around Benares practised mass *dhurna* – 'deserted their houses, shut up their shops, suspended the labour of their farms, forbore to light fires, dress victuals, many of them even to eat, and sat down with folded arms and drooping heads, like so many sheep, on the plain which surrounds Benares' (Doke 1909, 132–3). As practised traditionally, *dhurna* was a form of coercion plain and simple. Under the Indian Penal Code the practice was outlawed by the middle of the nineteenth century (Bose 1962, 80–2; Devanesan 1969, 45).

In a *Young India* article of 2 February 1922, Gandhi severely condemned the revival of 'sitting *dhurna*' in connection with satyagraha, calling it an 'ancient form of barbarity'. Some students in Calcutta had used this 'crude' and 'cowardly' method to block the passage of their fellow students. Gandhi stated emphatically that *dhurna* had nothing to do with satyagraha.

passive resistance is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule.¹⁹²

READER: Then you will say that it is not at all necessary for us to train the body?

EDITOR: I will certainly not say any such thing. It is difficult to become a passive resister, unless the body is trained. As a rule, the mind, residing in a body that has become weakened by pampering, is also weak, and, where there is no strength of mind, there can be no strength of soul. We will have to improve our physique by getting rid of infant marriages and luxurious living. If I were to ask a man having a shattered body to face a cannon's mouth, I would make of myself a laughing-stock.

READER: From what you say, then, it would appear that it is not a small thing to become a passive resister, and, if that is so, I would like you to explain how a man may become a passive resister.

EDITOR: To become a passive resister is easy enough, but it is also equally difficult. I have known a lad of fourteen years become a passive resister; I have known also sick people doing likewise; and I have also known physically strong and otherwise happy people being unable to take up passive resistance. After a great deal of experience, it seems to me that those who want to become passive resisters for the service of the country¹⁹³ have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness.

192 'foreign rule': in Gujarati *ku-raj* (misrule).

193 'for the service of the country': Gandhi converts the four traditional *moral* virtues mentioned here into new *civic* virtues. According to tradition, these virtues were considered to be the means of *individual* self-realisation; Gandhi points out, however, that the practice of the same virtues can also become the means of national regeneration. In a letter written to his son, Manilal, on 24 November 1909 he explains how the activity of achieving individual self-realisation can contribute to national regeneration as well:

First of all, we shall have to consider how we can realise the self and how serve our country . . . For realising the self, the first essential thing is to cultivate a strong moral sense. Morality means acquisition of virtues such as fearlessness, truth, *brahmacharya* (celibacy) and so on. Service is automatically rendered to the country in this process of cultivating morality. (CW 10: 70)

The idea recurs in Gandhi's letter to Maganlal Gandhi (CW 10: 206–7).

Chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. A man who is unchaste loses stamina, become emasculated and cowardly. He whose mind is given over to animal passions is not capable of any great effort. This can be proved by innumerable instances. What, then, is a married person to do, is the question that arises naturally; and yet it need not. When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, except for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited. But a passive resister has to avoid even that very limited indulgence, because he can have no desire for progeny. A married man, therefore, can observe perfect chastity. This subject is not capable of being treated at greater length. Several questions arise: How is one to carry one's wife with one? What are her rights, and other such questions? Yet those who wish to take part in a great work are bound to solve these puzzles.¹⁹⁴

Just as there is necessity for chastity, so is there for poverty.¹⁹⁵ Pecuniary ambition and passive resistance cannot well go together. Those who have money are not expected to throw it away, but they are expected to be indifferent about it. They must be prepared to lose every penny rather than give up passive resistance.

Passive resistance has been described in the course of our discussion as

¹⁹⁴ In 1906 Gandhi took the vow of *brahmacharya*. The heroic stage of *satyagraha* can be reached only by those who are chaste in word, deed and thought. For Gandhi's thoughts on chastity, see *Autobiography*, III, chs. 7, 8; IV, chs. 25–30 (CW 39: 165–71, 252–64). For a critical analysis of Gandhi's approach to *brahmacharya* see Erikson 1969; Parekh 1989b, 172–206; and Mehta 1977, 179–213. Cf. Tolstoy, who understood chastity in married life to mean abstention from adultery: 'The ideal [proposed by the Sermon on the Mount] is perfect chastity, even in thought. The commandment indicating the level below which it is quite possible not to descend is man's progress towards this ideal, is that of a pure married life, refraining from adultery' (Tolstoy 1935, 121).

¹⁹⁵ 'poverty': i.e., voluntary poverty or simplicity of life or freedom from possessiveness. Gandhi is not at all glorifying involuntary poverty here (*pace* Keer 1973, 782). What he is arguing is that, paradoxical though it may appear to some, the virtue of detachment has a great deal to contribute towards making India economically prosperous.

truth-force.¹⁹⁶ Truth, therefore, has necessarily to be followed, and that at any cost. In this connection, academic questions such as whether a man may not lie in order to save a life, etc., arise, but these questions occur only to those who wish to justify lying. Those who want to follow truth every time are not placed in such a quandary, and, if they are, they are still saved from a false position.

Passive resistance cannot proceed a step without fearlessness.¹⁹⁷ Those alone can follow the path of passive resistance who are free from fear, whether as to their possessions, false honour, their relatives, the government, bodily injuries, death.

These observances are not to be abandoned in the belief that they are difficult. Nature has implanted in the human breast ability to cope with any difficulty or suffering that may come to man unprovoked. These qualities are worth having, even for those who do not wish to serve the country. Let there be no mistake as those who want to train themselves in the use of arms are also obliged to have these qualities more or less.¹⁹⁸ Everybody does not become a warrior for the wish. A would-be warrior will have to observe chastity, and to be satisfied with poverty as his lot. A warrior without fearlessness cannot be conceived of. It may be thought that he would not need to be exactly truthful, but that quality follows real fearlessness. When a man abandons truth, he does so owing to fear in some shape or form. The above four attributes, then, need not frighten

¹⁹⁶ Since satyagraha proceeds from truth-force, it follows that a satyagrahi cannot hide the truth from his or her 'opponent.' Satyagraha requires frankness and openness. This point is stressed in the Gujarati text, where he takes aim at the Indian anarchists and their secret societies. The relevant Gujarati text reads as follows: 'How can anyone demonstrate the power or force of truth unless he dedicates himself to truth? Truth, therefore, is absolutely necessary. It cannot be abandoned, whatever the cost. Truth has nothing to hide. There is no question, therefore, of satyagrahis maintaining a secret army' (emphasis added).

¹⁹⁷ 'fearlessness': *abhayata*, lack of cowardice. Compare the virtue of courage needed for the practice of non-violence with the virtue of courage discussed in classical Western political theory.

¹⁹⁸ Gandhi's point is that the practice of the four virtues required for satyagraha calls for true heroism; satyagrahis, not anarchists such as Dhingra, are the true heroes.

anyone. It may be as well here to note that a physical-force man has to have many other useless qualities which a passive resister never needs. And you will find that whatever extra effort a swordsman needs is due to lack of fearlessness. If he is an embodiment of the latter, the sword will drop from his hand that very moment. He does not need its support. One who is free from hatred requires no sword. A man with a stick suddenly came face to face with a lion, and instinctively raised his weapon in self-defence. The man saw that he had only prated about fearlessness when there was none in him. That moment he dropped the stick, and found himself free from all fear.

CHAPTER XVIII

*

Education¹⁹⁹

READER: In the whole of our discussion, you have not demonstrated the necessity for education; we always complain of its absence among us. We notice a movement for compulsory education in our country. The Maharaja Gaekwar has introduced it in his territories.²⁰⁰ Every eye is directed towards them. We bless the Maharaja for it. Is all this effort, then, of no use?

EDITOR: If we consider our civilisation to be the highest, I have regretfully to say that much of the effort you have described is of no use. The motive of the Maharaja and other great leaders who have been working in this direction is perfectly pure. They, therefore, undoubtedly deserve great praise. But we cannot conceal from ourselves the result that is likely to flow from their effort.

What is the meaning of education?²⁰¹ If it simply means a knowledge of letters, it is merely an instrument, and an instrument may be well used or abused. The same instrument that may be used to cure a patient may

¹⁹⁹ Prior to writing HS Gandhi had experimented with educational reform by establishing the Phoenix School at Phoenix Settlement. It failed due to lack of funds (*CW* 9: 135–9). A second attempt was made on Tolstoy Farm between 1911 and 1913. About 25 boys and girls from different castes and religions were enrolled. The curriculum included arithmetic, languages, Indian history and geography, religious instruction, manual work and sandal-making (*CW* 11: 251–2; 39: 266–73). For information on Gandhi's educational experiments in India, see *CW* 14: 8–36.

²⁰⁰ In 1905, Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, Sir Sayaji Rao III, introduced compulsory primary education in Baroda state, the first to do so in India.

²⁰¹ Education for Gandhi involved the training of mind, will and desires (*CW* 9: 208).

be used to take his life, and so may a knowledge of letters. We daily observe that many men abuse it, and very few make good use of it, and, if this is a correct statement, we have proved that more harm has been done by it than good.

The ordinary meaning of education is a knowledge of letters. To teach boys reading, writing and arithmetic is called primary education. A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow-villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot? And even if you want to do that, he will not need such an education. Carried away by the flood of Western thought, we came to the conclusion, without weighing pros and cons, that we should give this kind of education to the people.

Now let us take higher education. I have learned Geography, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry, etc. What of that? In what way have I benefited myself or those around me? Why have I learned these things? Professor Huxley has thus defined education: 'That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order . . . whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature . . . whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience . . . who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her and she of him.'²⁰²

If this be true education, I must emphatically say that the sciences I

²⁰² This quotation is taken from an 1869 essay by Thomas Huxley, 'A liberal education: and where to find it' (Huxley 1893, 86).

have enumerated above I have never been able to use for controlling my senses. Therefore, whether you take elementary education or higher education, it is not required for the main thing. It does not make of us men. It does not enable us to do our duty.

READER: If that is so, I shall have to ask you another question. What enables you to tell all these things to me? If you had not received higher education, how would you have been able to explain to me the things that you have?

EDITOR: You have spoken well. But my answer is simple: I do not for one moment believe that my life would have been wasted, had I not received higher or lower education. Nor do I consider that I necessarily serve because I speak. But I do desire to serve and, in endeavouring to fulfil that desire, I make use of the education I have received. And, if I am making good use of it, even then it is not for the millions, but I can use it only for such as you, and this supports my contention. Both you and I have come under the bane of what is mainly false education. I claim to have become free from its ill effects, and I am trying to give you the benefit of my experience, and, in doing so, I am demonstrating the rottenness of this education.

Moreover, I have not run down a knowledge of letters under all circumstances. All I have shown is that we must not make of it a fetish. It is not our Kamadhuk.²⁰³ In its place it can be of use, and it has its place when we have brought our senses under subjection, and put our ethics on a firm foundation. And then, if we feel inclined to receive that education, we may make good use of it. As an ornament it is likely to sit well on us. It now follows that it is not necessary to make this education compulsory. Our ancient school system is enough.²⁰⁴ Character-building has the first

²⁰³ 'Kamadhuk': the mythical cow that fulfils all one's wishes. ('Kamdhuk' in Gandhi's original text.)

²⁰⁴ The Phoenix School planned to incorporate certain features of the ancient system: 'Those in Phoenix who live with their families can take in up to eight boarders. It is intended that the boys who may be accepted as boarders will be treated as one's own children. This practice prevailed in India in olden days, and it should be revived as far as possible' (CW 9: 135).

place in it, and that is primary education. A building erected on that foundation will last.

READER: Do I then understand that you do not consider English education necessary for obtaining Home Rule?

EDITOR: My answer is yes and no. To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us.²⁰⁵ I do not suggest that he had any such intention, but that has been the result. Is it not a sad commentary that we should have to speak of Home Rule in a foreign tongue?

And it is worthy of note that the systems which the Europeans have discarded are the systems in vogue among us. Their learned men continually make changes. We ignorantly adhere to their cast-off systems. They are trying, each division, to improve its own status. Wales is a small portion of England. Great efforts are being made to revive a knowledge of Welsh among Welshmen. The English Chancellor, Mr Lloyd George is taking a leading part in the movement to make Welsh children speak Welsh.²⁰⁶ And what is our condition? We write to each other in faulty English, and from this even our M.A.'s are not free; our best thoughts are expressed in English; the proceedings of our Congress are conducted in English; our best newspapers are printed in English. If this state of things continues for a long time, posterity will – it is my firm opinion – condemn and curse us.

²⁰⁵ 'The foundation that Macaulay laid': this refers to Macaulay's 'Minute on Education' of 1835. It laid down, among other things, the policy of providing public funds for education in the English language and of withdrawing public support for education in Arabic and Sanskrit. It was not Macaulay's intention to make English the lingua franca of the Indian masses but only of the Indian elite.

²⁰⁶ During his 1909 stay in London, Gandhi became acquainted with Lloyd George's language policy and drew from it certain conclusions for India:

India will be aroused when we touch all the Indian languages with the spirit of patriotism. Mr. Lloyd George, about whom I have already written, was born in Wales, a principality in Great Britain. It has a dialect of its own and Mr. Lloyd George is taking steps to ensure that Welsh children do not forget their language. How much more need is there for Indians to preserve their languages than for the Welsh to preserve theirs, and how much more keen should we be? (CW 9: 492)

It is worth noting that, by receiving English education, we have enslaved the nation. Hypocrisy, tyranny, etc., have increased; English-knowing Indians have not hesitated to cheat and strike terror into the people. Now, if we are doing anything for the people at all, we are paying only a portion of the debt due to them.

Is it not a most painful thing that, if I want to go to a court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium; that, when I become a barrister, I may not speak my mother-tongue, and that someone else should have to translate to me from my own language? Is not this absolutely absurd? Is it not a sign of slavery? Am I to blame the English for it or myself? It is we, the English-knowing men, that have enslaved India. The curse of the nation will rest not upon the English but upon us.

I have told you that my answer to your last question is both yes and no. I have explained to you why it is yes. I shall now explain why it is no.

We are so much beset by the disease of civilisation, that we cannot altogether do without English education. Those who have already received it may make good use of it wherever necessary. In our dealings with the English people, in our dealings with our own people, when we can only correspond with them through that language, and for the purpose of knowing how much disgusted they (the English) have themselves become with their civilisation, we may use or learn English, as the case may be. Those who have studied English will have to teach morality to their progeny through their mother-tongue,²⁰⁷ and to teach them another Indian language; but when they have grown up, they may learn English, the ultimate aim being that we should not need it. The object of making money thereby should be eschewed. Even in learning English to such a limited extent, we will have to consider what we should learn through it and what we should not. It will be necessary to know what sciences we should learn. A little thought should show you that

²⁰⁷ Gandhi makes a noteworthy distinction here between using English for the acquisition of secular knowledge and using the mother-tongue for the acquisition of ethical knowledge.

immediately we cease to care for English degrees, the rulers will prick up their ears.

READER: Then what education shall we give?

EDITOR: This has been somewhat considered above, but we will consider it a little more. I think that we have to improve all our languages. What subjects we should learn through them need not be elaborated here. Those English books which are valuable we should translate into the various Indian languages. We should abandon the pretension of learning many sciences. Religious, that is ethical, education²⁰⁸ will occupy the first place. Every cultured Indian will know in addition to his own provincial language, if a Hindu, Sanskrit; if a Mahomedan, Arabic; if a Parsee, Persian; and all Hindi. Some Hindus should know Arabic and Persian; some Mahomedans and Parsees, Sanskrit. Several Northerners and Westerners should learn Tamil. A universal language for India should be Hindi, with the option of writing it in Persian or Nagri characters.²⁰⁹ In order that the Hindus and the Mahomedans may have closer relations, it

208 'Religious, that is ethical, education': in Gujarati, 'dharma-based or *niti*-based education.'

209 This is the first time that an Indian leader proposes a language policy for the whole of India. The basic idea expressed here was restated by Gandhi in 1920 and accepted by the Congress as its official policy:

We believe that the present distribution made from time to time to meet the exigencies of a conquering power is unscientific and is calculated to retard the political and social progress of the respective communities speaking a common vernacular and therefore the growth of India as a whole. We therefore feel that so far as the Congress is concerned, we should redivide India into provinces on a linguistic basis . . . So far as recognition of Urdu is concerned we have used the common term Hindustani which includes both Hindi and Urdu and we have recognised both scripts, Devanagari and Persian. (CW 18: 289–90)

Ironically, his own thoughts were best expressed either in Gujarati or in English, but not in Hindi. For an example, see his letter of 13 November 1945 to Nehru, in which he writes: 'I have had Rajkumari [Amrit Kaur] translate the letter which I wrote to you earlier. I am getting this also translated and will send the translation along with this. I serve two purposes by getting the letters translated. First I can explain to you more clearly in English what I want to say and secondly I shall be able to know better whether I have understood you fully or not' (CW 82: 72; emphasis added).

is necessary to know both the characters. And, if we can do this, we can drive the English language out of the field in a short time. All this is necessary for us slaves. Through our slavery the nation has been enslaved, and it will be free with our freedom.

READER: The question of religious education is very difficult.

EDITOR: Yet we cannot do without it. India will never be godless. Rank atheism cannot flourish in that land. The task is indeed difficult. My head begins to turn as I think of religious education. Our religious teachers are hypocritical and selfish; they will have to be approached. The Mallas, the Dasturs, and the Brahmins²¹⁰ hold the key in their hands, but, if they will not have the good sense, the energy that we have derived from English education will have to be devoted to religious education.²¹¹ This is not very difficult. Only the fringe of the ocean has been polluted, and it is those who are within the fringe who alone need cleansing. We who come under this category can even cleanse ourselves, because my remarks do not apply to the millions. In order to restore India to its pristine condition, we have to return to it. In our own civilisation, there will naturally be progress, retrogression, reforms and reactions; but one effort is required, and that is to drive out Western civilisation.²¹² All else will follow.

²¹⁰ 'The Mallas, the Dasturs, and the Brahmins': respectively the traditional teachers of ethics in Islam, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism.

²¹¹ 'religious education': *nitini kelwani* (ethical education). Gandhi sees the danger inherent in religious education given by 'hypocritical and selfish' religious teachers; he does not propose or endorse such a system of religious education; what he proposes is education in ethics which, though drawn ultimately from religious texts, can still be taught in a non-fundamentalist fashion.

²¹² 'Western civilisation': i.e., modern Western civilisation.

CHAPTER XIX

*

Machinery

READER: When you speak of driving out Western civilisation, I suppose you will also say that we want no machinery.

EDITOR: By raising this question you have opened the wound I had received. When I read Mr Dutt's Economic History of India,²¹³ I wept; and, as I think of it again, my heart sickens. It is machinery that has impoverished India. It is difficult to measure the harm that Manchester²¹⁴ has done to us. It is due to Manchester that Indian handicraft has all but disappeared.

But I make a mistake. How can Manchester be blamed? We wore Manchester cloth, and that is why Manchester wove it. I was delighted when I read about the bravery of Bengal. There are no cloth-mills in that Presidency. They were, therefore, able to restore the original hand-weaving occupation. It is true, Bengal encourages the mill industry of Bombay. If Bengal had proclaimed a boycott of *all* machine-made goods, it would have been much better.²¹⁵

Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates.²¹⁶ Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilisation; it represents a great sin.

²¹³ Listed in Appendix I.

²¹⁴ The cotton industry of Manchester.

²¹⁵ During the 1905 Swadeshi movement in Bengal only British goods were boycotted.

²¹⁶ 'the English gates': There is an error in the translation here. There is no mention of England or 'the English gates' in the Gujarati text; instead it mentions that

The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves. The condition of the women working in the mills is shocking. When there were no mills, these women were not starving. If the machinery craze²¹⁷ grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land.²¹⁸ It may be considered a heresy, but I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester and to use flimsy Manchester cloth, than to multiply mills in India.²¹⁹ By using Manchester cloth, we would only waste our money, but, by reproducing Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood, because our very moral being will be sapped, and I call in support of my statement the very mill-hands as witnesses. And those who have amassed wealth out of factories are not likely to be better than other rich men. It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than the American Rockefeller. Impoverished India can become free, but it will be hard for an India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom. I fear we will have to admit that moneyed men support British rule; their interest is bound up with its stability. Money renders a man helpless. The other thing as harmful is sexual vice. Both are poison. A snake-bite is a lesser poison than these two, because the former merely destroys the body, but the latter destroy body, mind and soul. We need not, therefore, be pleased with the prospect of the growth of the mill industry.

READER: Are the mills, then, to be closed down?

EDITOR: That is difficult. It is no easy task to do away with a thing that

machinery is threatening India: 'Machinery has begun to desolate Europe, and that whirlwind is now sweeping over India.' Instead of 'the English gates', the correct translation should read 'the Indian gates'.

²¹⁷ 'craze' : in the Gujarati text the word used is *wayaro* (whirlwind).

²¹⁸ 'unhappy hand' in the original.

²¹⁹ In 1921 in the Preface to the Hindi translation of *HS*, Gandhi significantly modified the position taken here: 'My views in regard to mills have undergone this much change. In view of the present predicament of India, we should produce in our own country all the cloth that we need even by supporting, if necessary, mills in India rather than by cloth made in Manchester' (CW 31: 399, n.4). For more on Gandhi's changing attitude towards machinery, see pp. 164–70 below.

is established. We, therefore, say that the non-beginning of a thing is supreme wisdom. We cannot condemn mill-owners; we can but pity them. It would be too much to expect them to give up the mills, but we may implore them not to increase them. If they would be good, they would gradually contract their business. They can establish in thousands of households the ancient and sacred hand-looms,²²⁰ and they can buy out the cloth that may be thus woven. Whether the mill-owners do this or not, people can cease to use machine-made goods.

READER: You have so far spoken about machine-made cloth, but there are innumerable machine-made things. We have either to import them or to introduce machinery into our country.

EDITOR: Indeed, our goods even are made in Germany. What need, then, to speak of matches, pins and glassware? My answer can be only one. What did India do before these articles were introduced? Precisely the same should be done today. As long as we cannot make pins without machinery, so long will we do without them. The tinsel splendour of glassware we will have nothing to do with, and we will make wicks, as of old, with home-grown cotton, and use hand-made earthen saucers for

²²⁰ 'the ancient and sacred hand-looms': when he wrote this he did not know the difference between a loom and a spinning-wheel (*charkha*). The idea of the spinning-wheel which was to become such a powerful symbol of the Gandhian revolution came to him in a flash of insight rather than from empirical knowledge of the merits or demerits of the handloom industry. As he stated in 1925: '... I had put forward my arguments in its [the spinning-wheel's] favour in *Hind Swaraj* before ever having set my eyes on the spinning-wheel' (CW 25: 600). And in 1928: 'It was in London in 1909 that I discovered the wheel. I had gone there leading a deputation from South Africa. It was then that I came in close touch with many earnest Indians - students and others. We had many long conversations about the condition of India and I saw as in a flash that without the spinning-wheel there was no swaraj. I knew at once that everyone had to spin. But I did not then know the distinction between the loom and the wheel and in *Hind Swaraj* used the word loom to mean the wheel' (CW 37: 288). 'Even in 1915, when I returned to India from South Africa, I had not actually seen a spinning-wheel' (CW 39: 389). It was in Bagasara, Gujarat, that Gandhi first saw a loom (CW 26: 458).

lamps.²²¹ So doing, we shall save our eyes and money, and will support Swadeshi, and so shall we attain Home Rule.

It is not to be conceived that all men will do all these things at one time, or that some men will give up all machine-made things at once. But, if the thought is sound, we will always find out what we can give up, and will gradually cease to use this. What a few may do, others will copy, and the movement will grow like the coconut of the mathematical problem.²²² What the leaders do, the populace will gladly follow. The matter is neither complicated nor difficult. You and I shall not wait until we can carry others with us. Those will be the losers who will not do it; and those who will not do it, although they appreciate the truth, will deserve to be called cowards.

READER: What, then, of the tram-cars and electricity?

EDITOR: This question is now too late. It signifies nothing. If we are to do without the railways, we shall have to do without the tram-cars. Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery there are large cities; and where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways; and there only does one see electric light. English villages do not boast any of these things. Honest physicians will tell you that, where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. I remember that, when in a European town there was a scarcity of money, the receipts of the tram-way company, of the lawyers and of the doctors, went down, and the people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery. Books can be written to demonstrate its evils.

READER: Is it a good point or a bad one that all you are saying will be printed through machinery?

²²¹ Savarkar selected this passage for special ridicule, when he wrote that under the light of the wick lamps only ignorance and poverty would flourish (Keer 1966, 471).

²²² 'the coconut of the mathematical problem': the Gujarati text reads as follows: 'First one person will do, then ten, then a hundred, and so on, it will keep increasing, as in the story of the coconut.'

EDITOR: This is one of those instances which demonstrate that sometimes poison is used to kill poison. This, then, will not be a good point regarding machinery. As it expires, the machinery, as it were, says to us: 'Beware and avoid me. You will derive no benefit from me, and the benefit that may accrue from printing will avail only those who are infected with the machinery craze.'²²³ Do not, therefore, forget the main thing. It is necessary to realise that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it. Nature has not provided any way whereby we may reach a desired goal all of a sudden. If, instead of welcoming machinery as a boon, we would look upon it as an evil, it would ultimately go.

²²³ 'machinery craze': the Gujarati text uses a different metaphor: 'the net of machinery' (*sanchani jal*).

CHAPTER XX

*

Conclusion²²⁴

READER: From your views I gather that you would form a third party. You are neither an extremist nor a moderate.²²⁵

EDITOR: That is a mistake. I do not think of a third party at all. We do not all think alike. We cannot say that all the moderates hold identical views. And how can those who want to serve only, have a party?²²⁶ I would serve both the moderates and the extremists. Where I should differ from them, I would respectfully place my position before them, and continue my service.

READER: What, then, would you say to both the parties?

EDITOR: I would say to the extremists:²²⁷ – ‘I know that you want Home Rule for India; it is not to be had for your asking. Everyone will have to take it for himself. What others get for me is not Home Rule but foreign rule; therefore, it would not be proper for you to say that you have obtained Home Rule, if you expelled the English. I have already described the true nature of Home Rule. This you would never obtain by force of arms. Brute force is not natural to the Indian soil. You will have, therefore, to rely wholly on soul-force. You must not consider that violence is necessary at any stage for reaching our goal.’

²²⁴ The title of this chapter in Gujarati is *chhutcaro*, ‘emancipation’.

²²⁵ The reference is to the two factions in the Congress, already referred to in ch. II.

²²⁶ ‘party’: *paksh*. Gandhi looks upon politics more as a form of *service* to the community than as a form of struggle for power.

²²⁷ What follows constitutes Gandhi’s critique of the Extremists.

I would say to the moderates:²²⁸ 'Mere petitioning is derogatory; we thereby confess inferiority. To say that British rule is indispensable is almost a denial of the Godhead. We cannot say that anybody or anything is indispensable except God. Moreover, common sense should tell us that to state that, for the time being, the presence of the English in India is a necessity, is to make them conceited.

'If the English vacated India bag and baggage, it must not be supposed that she would be widowed. It is possible that those who are forced to observe peace under their pressure would fight after their withdrawal. There can be no advantage in suppressing an eruption; it must have its vent. If, therefore, before we can remain at peace, we must fight amongst ourselves, it is better that we do so. There is no occasion for a third party to protect the weak. It is this so-called protection which has unnerved us. Such protection can only make the weak weaker. Unless we realise this, we cannot have Home Rule. I would paraphrase the thought of an English divine and say that anarchy under home rule were better than orderly foreign rule. Only, the meaning that the learned divine attached to home rule is different from Indian Home Rule according to my conception. We have to learn, and to teach others, that we do not want the tyranny of either English rule or Indian rule.'²²⁹

If this idea were carried out, both the extremists and the moderates could join hands. There is no occasion to fear or distrust one another.

READER: What, then, would you say to the English.²³⁰

EDITOR: To them I would respectfully say: 'I admit you are my rulers. It is not necessary to debate the question whether you hold India by the sword or by my consent. I have no objection to your remaining in my country, but, although you are the rulers, you will have to remain as servants of the people. It is not we who have to do as you wish, but it is you who have to do as we wish. You may keep the riches that you have drained

228 This constitutes Gandhi's critique of the Moderates.

229 Gandhi does not see any real moral difference between British colonial rule and the sort of home rule proposed by the Reader.

230 What follows constitutes Gandhi's critique of colonial rule in India.

away from this land, but you may not drain riches henceforth. Your function will be, if you so wish, to police India; you must abandon the idea of deriving any commercial benefit from us. We hold the civilisation that you support, to be the reverse of civilisation. We consider our civilisation to be far superior to yours. If you realise this truth, it will be to your advantage; and, if you do not, according to your own proverb, you should only live in our country in the same manner as we do. You must not do anything that is contrary to our religions. It is your duty as rulers that, for the sake of the Hindus, you should eschew beef, and for the sake of the Mahomedans, you should avoid bacon and ham. We have hitherto said nothing, because we have been cowed down, but you need not consider that you have not hurt our feelings by your conduct. We are not expressing our sentiments either through base selfishness or fear, but because it is our duty now to speak out boldly. We consider your schools and law courts to be useless. We want our own ancient schools and courts to be restored. The common language of India is not English but Hindi. You should, therefore, learn it. We can hold communication with you only in our national language.

'We cannot tolerate the idea of your spending money on railways and the military. We see no occasion for either. You may fear Russia; we do not. When she comes we will look after her. If you are with us, we will then receive her jointly. We do not need any European cloth. We will manage with articles produced and manufactured at home. You may not keep one eye on Manchester, and the other on India. We can work together only if our interests are identical.'

'This has not been said to you in arrogance. You have great military resources. Your naval power is matchless. If we wanted to fight with you on your own ground, we should be unable to do so; but, if the above submissions be not acceptable to you, we cease to play the ruled. You may, if you like, cut us to pieces. You may shatter us at the cannon's mouth. If you act contrary to our will, we will not help you, and, without our help, we know that you cannot move one step forward.'

'It is likely that you will laugh at all this in the intoxication of your power. We may not be able to disillusion you at once, but, if there be any

manliness in us, you will see shortly that your intoxication is suicidal, and that your laugh at our expense is an aberration of intellect. We believe that, at heart, you belong to a religious nation.²³¹ We are living in a land which is the source of religions. How we came together need not be considered, but we can make mutual good use of our relations.

'You English who have come to India are not a good specimen of the English nation, nor can we, almost half-Anglicised Indians, be considered a good specimen of the real Indian nation. If the English nation were to know all you have done, it would oppose many of your actions. The mass of the Indians have had few dealings with you. If you will abandon your so-called civilisation, and search into your own scriptures, you will find that our demands are just. Only on condition of our demands being fully satisfied may you remain in India, and if you remain under those conditions, we shall learn several things from you, and you will learn many from us. So doing, we shall benefit each other and the world. But that will happen only when the root of our relationship is sunk in a religious soil.'²³²

READER: What will you say to the nation?

EDITOR: Who is the nation?²³³

READER: For our purposes it is the nation that you and I have been thinking of, that is, those of us who are affected by European civilisation, and who are eager to have Home Rule.

²³¹ Perhaps the most important point in Gandhi's critique of colonialism is that it is inconsistent with the teachings of Christianity. The suggestion here is that Great Britain should recover its Christian culture.

²³² 'in a religious soil': the original Gujarati is *dharmakshetra* (in the field of dharma), a very evocative term, because it is also the very first word of *Bhagavad Gita*. When the British will integrate their modern culture within the framework of their traditional culture, and when Indians will integrate their modern culture within the framework of their traditional culture, both will be able to contribute significantly to universal culture.

²³³ In HS Gandhi uses the idea of nation (*praja*) in two senses: the first refers to the Indian people as a whole composed of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees, Buddhists and others. The second refers to the modern educated elite – the lawyers, the doctors, the wealthy, etc.

EDITOR: To these I would say:²³⁴ 'It is only those Indians who are imbued with real love who will be able to speak to the English in the above strain without being frightened, and those only can be said to be so imbued who conscientiously believe that Indian civilisation is the best, and that European is a nine days' wonder. Such ephemeral civilisations have often come and gone, and will continue to do so. Those only can be considered to be so imbued, who, having experienced²³⁵ the force of the soul within themselves, will not cower before brute force, and will not, on any account, desire to use brute force. Those only can be considered to have been so imbued who are intensely dissatisfied with the present pitiable condition, having already drunk the cup of poison.'²³⁶

If there be only one such Indian, he will speak as above to the English, and the English will have to listen to him.²³⁷

These demands are not demands, but they show our mental state. We will get nothing by asking; we shall have to take what we want, and we need the requisite strength for the effort, and that strength will be available to him only who

- 1 will only on rare occasions make use of the English language;
- 2 if a lawyer, will give up his profession, and take up a hand-loom;
- 3 if a lawyer, will devote his knowledge to enlightening both his people and the English;
- 4 if a lawyer, will not meddle with the quarrels between parties, but will give up the courts and from his experience induce the people to do likewise;
- 5 if a lawyer, will refuse to be a judge, as he will give up his profession;

²³⁴ The nineteen points that follow are addressed to the modern educated elite. Implementation of these points would make them fit for true home rule.

²³⁵ The importance of 'experiencing' soul-force is stressed again. See ch. xiv.

²³⁶ The true Indian nationalist would have to become self-critical, especially with respect to his/her attitude towards modernity.

²³⁷ Cf: 'The great Thoreau has said that a worthy cause should never be deemed lost, that it is bound to triumph, so long as there is at least one sincere man to fight for it' (CW 10: 386).

- 6 if a doctor, will give up medicine, and understand that, rather than mending bodies, he should mend souls;
- 7 if a doctor, he will understand that, no matter to what religion he belong, it is better that bodies remain diseased rather than that they are cured through the instrumentality of the diabolical vivisection that is practised in European schools of medicine;
- 8 although a doctor, will take up a hand-loom, and, if any patients come to him, will tell them the cause of their diseases, and will advise them to remove the cause rather than pamper them by giving useless drugs; he will understand that, if by not taking drugs, perchance the patient dies, the world will not come to grief, and that he will have been really merciful to him;
- 9 although a wealthy man, regardless of his wealth, will speak out his mind and fear no one;
- 10 if a wealthy man, will devote his money to establishing hand-looms, and encourage others to use hand-made goods by wearing them himself;
- 11 like every other Indian, will know that this is a time for repentance, expiation and mourning;
- 12 like every other Indian, will know that to blame the English is useless, that they came because of us, and remain also for the same reason, and that they will either go or change their nature only when we reform ourselves;²³⁸
- 13 like others, will understand that, at a time of mourning, there can be no indulgence, and that, whilst we are in a fallen state, to be in gaol or in banishment is much the best;
- 14 like others, will know that it is superstition to imagine it necessary that we should guard against being imprisoned in order that we may deal with the people;
- 15 like others, will know that action is much better than speech; that it is our duty to say exactly what we think and face the consequences, and that it will be only then that we shall be able to impress anybody with our speech;

²³⁸ A theme underlying HS.

- 16 like others, will understand that we will become free only through suffering;
- 17 like others, will understand that deportation for life to the Andamans²³⁹ is not enough expiation for the sin of encouraging European civilisation;
- 18 like others, will know that no nation has risen without suffering; that, even in physical warfare, the true test is suffering and not the killing of others, much more so in the warfare of passive resistance;
- 19 like others, will know that it is an idle excuse to say that we will do a thing when the others also do it; that we should do what we know to be right, and that others will do it when they see the way; that, when I fancy a particular delicacy, I do not wait till others taste it; that to make a national effort and to suffer are in the nature of delicacies; and that to suffer under pressure is no suffering.

READER: This is a large order. When will all carry it out?

EDITOR: You make a mistake. You and I have nothing to do with the others. Let each do his duty. If I do my duty, that is, serve myself, I shall be able to serve others. Before I leave you, I will take the liberty of repeating:

- 1 Real home-rule is self-rule or self-control.²⁴⁰
- 2 The way to it is passive resistance: that is soul-force or love-force.
- 3 In order to exert this force, Swadeshi in every sense is necessary.
- 4 What we want to do should be done, not because we object to the English or that we want to retaliate, but because it is our duty to do so. Thus, supposing that the English remove the salt-tax, restore our money, give the highest posts to Indians, withdraw the English troops, we shall certainly not use their machine-made goods, nor use the English language, nor many of their industries. It is worth noting that

²³⁹ The Andaman Islands were India's penal colony, and many terrorists, including Ganesh Savarkar, the brother of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, were in the Andamans at the time of the writing of HS.

²⁴⁰ The Gujarati text reads: 'One's rule over one's own mind is real swaraj.' The mind, again, is shown to be the key faculty in Gandhi's ethics.

these things are, in their nature, harmful; hence we do not want them. I bear no enmity towards the English, but I do towards their civilisation.

In my opinion, we have used the term 'Swaraj' without understanding its real significance. I have endeavoured to explain it as I understand it, and my conscience testifies that my life henceforth is dedicated to its attainment.