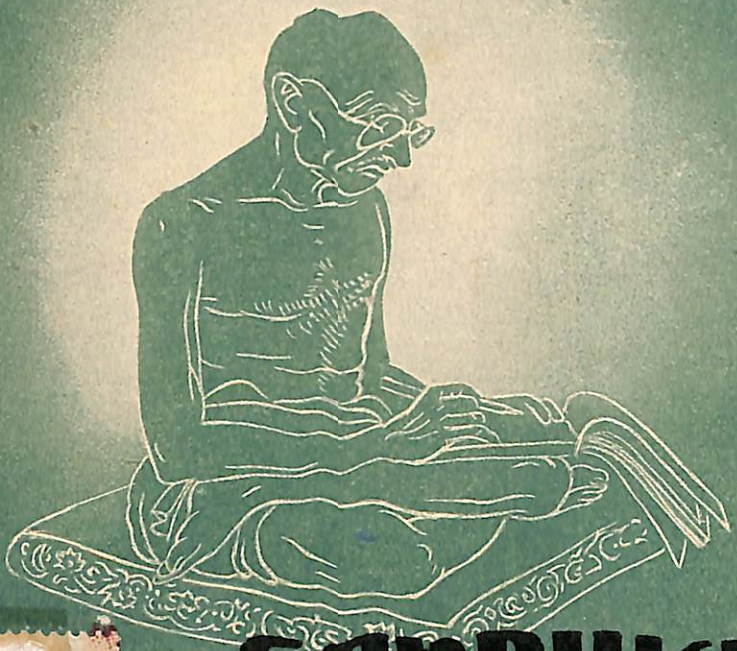

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PROF. M. L. DANTWALA

A PADMA PUBLICATION

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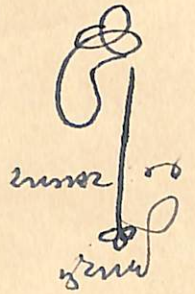

GANDHISM RECONSIDERED

BY
PROFESSOR M. L. DANTWALA

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"The extent of mechanization and size of an industrial plant depends upon the relative scarcity and cost of labour and capital. Under present conditions it is more profitable in China to use more labour power and less capital equipment, not to speak of the importance of building up purchasing power in the market through returning as much in wages to the consumer as possible."

—*China Builds for Democracy*

"Taking into account the fact that while India has plenty of labour, her capital resources are comparatively small, we think that industries should be organised in such a way that over the whole planning period the ratio of capital including land and building, to net product would not be too high."

—*A Plan of Economic Development of India*

PREFACE

It is not without considerable hesitation that I am allowing this small brochure to face the light of publicity. This 'defence,' as it may appear to the reader, of Gandhiji's economic thought is deliberate. I feel that before we find fault or prick holes in it, we must place it in the best possible light. We must avoid the temptation to exploit the inconsistencies and pre-scientific phraseology so obvious in Gandhiji's writings, transcend the prejudice against their all-pervading religious and moral atmosphere, and, with as much scientific detachment as we can lay claim to, dive for the core of Gandhian ideology. I am impelled to emphasise this because I find that reactions favourable or otherwise to Gandhiji's writings are still in the emotional stage, the usual fate of all contemporaneous thought.

It may be admitted that doubts and disillusion about the hundred per cent scientific validity of orthodox Marxism are responsible for a frame of mind which compels a reconsideration of Gandhism. But this need not be taken as a slur either on Marx or Marxism. Philosophies much younger than that of Marx are already either out of date or in the melting pot. It only shows that thought on social questions is taking rapid strides. I think the most fruitful

attitude to take on such occasions is the one which, while accepting certain values as permanent, still manages to keep an open mind. Therefore, though, even today, I accept without hesitation what I consider the basic values of Socialism, I undertake this reassessment of Marxism necessitated by (a) the sheer evolution in the forces of production and the consequent alterations in social relations and (b) recent additions to our knowledge of the social sciences.

Two phenomena which either fell outside the penetrating and far-sighted vision of Marx or emerged subsequently out of the social cauldron are the growth of technology and unemployment and the ever widening disparity between the relative strength of the State to coerce the people and of the people to resist that coercion. Both compel a revision of our blue prints for an egalitarian society and also of the methods of preparing them. In this essay we are primarily concerned with the first though the argument is also influenced by the second.

A third factor, which is not so germane to the present essay, is what Peter Drucker calls the end of the economic man. The accent on the economic motive which looked so appropriate to an age in which capitalism came to full bloom, must soften considerably in an era in which capitalism is dying, or, which is the same thing, living by denying its two basic assumptions: private enterprise and private profit. It is possible that men hereafter will be moved as deeply and as irresistibly by urges and values other than economic or material. Today,

Gandhiji stands forth as the foremost champion of such values.

Marx is the prophet of an age ushered in by the Industrial Revolution, Gandhiji of the age of Fascism and Totalitarianism. WANT (scarcity) was the challenging problem of the former, WORK (unemployment) is that of the latter. Marx suggested the socialisation of the machine, Gandhiji, in addition, suggests its simplification. If you retain the giant machines, you will require giant experts and technicians to manage them. Our dependence upon them will be so complete that it will result in our exchanging one ruling class for another, the capitalist of today giving place to the Manager[1] of the giant industrial state of tomorrow. It is no doubt true that with the socialisation of the instruments of production the *de jure* ownership will pass into the hands of the workers but the very size of those instruments will, as a matter of fact, put the expert manager in complete control of them.

If the contention that the socio-political make up of a society is the reflex of its economic pattern is true, it is inevitable that a society with economic arrangements based on mechanised industry should produce a bureaucratic State. What has atually happened in Russia, inspite of the liquidation of capitalism, provides a good illustration of this. The Russian Revolution, instead of resulting in a society with larger freedom for the common man, created a State which hedged freedom more drastically than

1 The word is suggested by Burnham's *Managerial Revolution.*

is done even in a bourgeois society. To take a single instance, no political party other than the C. P. is allowed to function legally in Soviet Russia. It would be illogical to blame Stalin for these curtailments of freedom and it is possible that when the period of crisis is over, we may perhaps find a relaxation of the present totalitarian rule. But in a society in which production depends upon large and complicated machines, dictatorship—however benevolent—of the expert is inevitable. That is exactly why, instead of witnessing the 'withering away' of the State in Russia or even a tendency in that direction, we notice greater and greater intensification of State life, or, as Burnham would like to call it, its managerianisation.

Burnham thinks the Managerial State the inevitable and only alternative to capitalism. But there is another which perhaps has yet to discover as able an exponent. That alternative is a society in which the instruments of production are so simplified that the common man can ply them and understand them and of course own them individually or collectively. Such a society will also need its research scholars and expert technicians, but it will not assign to them a role in which they constitute themselves into a new ruling class. Further, this will be the one type of society in which there will be available the requisite pre-conditions for the State to wither away.

I am conscious that in making this claim, I am embarking upon rather an ambitious adventure, and I am equally conscious of my own limitations to

do so. But of late, I have found so much sympathetic material in the writings of several thinkers here and in the West that I am tempted to say publicly what I have been ruminating in my mind during the last two or three years.

I simply cannot write anything, much less see it published, without considerable help from friends. Śri. Kishorelal Mashruwala and Śri. Vaikunth Mehta were kind enough to go through the manuscript very carefully and I received valuable suggestions from them. In Nasik Road Central Prison, Acharya Bhagwat and many other friends showed great sympathy towards the effort. To all these I owe grateful thanks.

M.L.D.

IT is not the intention of this essay to ascribe any well knit system of economic thought to Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji is essentially a thinker and not a theoretician. One can discern a running thread in all his varied thinking on matters economic, but he has not bothered to press these thoughts into the straight jacket of a system or an 'ism.' Secondly, since he is more of a preacher than a professor, his exposition of all questions is in the language of the pulpit and not that of the class-room or the library. This has both an advantage and a disadvantage. The language is such that its content is instinctively grasped by the masses in India to whom any university jargon would be entirely incomprehensible. The educated elite on the other hand, shrugs its shoulders at his foolhardly amateurism and condemns it as dangerous since it is so retrograde. Gandhiji's ideas have, therefore, evoked devotional adoration on the one hand, and angry condemnation on the other. The object of this essay is to show that there can be something more than these emotional reactions to his ideas, that they can be examined on the plane of scientific enquiry.

It is convenient to examine his ideas under five different headings :—

(1) Opposition to Capitalism ;

(2) Opposition to the Machine ;

(3) Neglect of sources of exploitation other than the machine. (lacunae in the Gandhian thought);

(4) Principle of Trusteeship ;

(5) Economic structure of a non-violent Society.

1. Opposition to Capitalism :—Perhaps it will be universally accepted that Gandhiji has no admiration for the economic system that prevails to-day, and that he passionately desires to change it. He has shown his disapproval on many occasions in no uncertain terms. Poverty and unemployment of the vast masses of India are the constant themes of his speeches and writings. He has constantly appealed to the rich to renounce the privileges of property and ownership. He has asked even the Indian Princes to wash off the sin of their 'gigantic autocracy' and to divest themselves of powers "which no human being conscious of his dignity, should possess." On the contrary, he has claimed to be the champion of the Daridranārāyaṇ. At the Round Table Conference he said "The Congress represents in its essence the dumb and semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its seven lakhs of villages. Every interest which is worthy of protection has to subserve to this interest and if there is genuine and real clash I have no hesitation in saying that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interest of the dumb millions."

Economic equality is included in his thirteen—now fourteen—point constructive programme. If we accept Tawney's description of the capitalist society as the 'religion of inequality,' Gandhiji cannot be considered as its upholder. Writing about his constructive programme he made it very clear that 'the whole of this programme will however be a structure on sand if it is not built on the solid foundation of economic equality.' His views on private property further clarify his attitude towards the present economic order. Explaining the principle of Trusteeship in a latter section, we have contended that it is a negation of all known rights and privileges of private property. The A.I.S.A., and the A.I.V.I.A. run their respective industries on a non-profit basis. That, unlike a capitalist, he is guided in price policies not by consideration of larger consumption and higher profits but solely by the principle of decent living conditions for the producers, becomes evident from his insistence on the minimum wages for spinners in the A.I.S.A., in total disregard of its effect on the sales of Khaddar. In his propagation of Khaddar he has courageously resisted the acme of capitalist wisdom of 'buying the cheapest and selling the dearest!' Any one with respect for the capitalist norms of economic propriety and justice, would not have dared to recommend to India so doggedly the adoption of Charkha—perhaps the fittest emblem of uneconomic (!) technique.

One of the aims and objects of the Ahmedabad Majoor Mahajan, working under his inspiration is the ultimate nationalization of the textile industry.

It will be contended that Gandhiji's anti-capitalism arises not so much out of any superior value regarding social justice or hatred of exploitation as from his mediaeval orthodoxy and abhorrence of the machine. Far from being progressive, therefore, it is retrograde. The evils of capitalism are not due to the machine ; capitalism perverts into private profits the gains that the machine brings. Destroy the anti-social frame-work in which the machine operates to-day, and this earth will begin to flow with milk and honey. It is obviously very short-sighted to pour out the baby with the bath. To forego the advantages which the machine can bring, is to return to barbarism. That may provide a source of joy to a mashochist like Gandhi ; to people with a saner attitude to life, it does not constitute any pleasant prospect.

It is undeniable that Gandhiji's opposition to capitalism is not based on any *a priori* logic like that of the Marxists. He has no theory to offer regarding the interpretation of history from which to arrive at the inevitability of socialism. He has also not adopted any theory of value which can explain the accumulation of the ' surplus value.' But one may be permitted to hold concepts of social justice similar to those held by the Marxists without subscribing to the reasoning by which they arrive at it.

This, however, does not meet the charge of ' pouring out the baby with the bath.' Though it is undeniable that Gandhiji is a vehement critic of the machine, to say that his anti-capitalism is a

derivative of his anti-machine ideology is untrue. For, whenever he has been compelled to accept the retention of machinery—e.g. a plant to manufacture the sewing-machine which has received his approval, or the railways—he has advocated its nationalisation. If he were not against capitalism except because it involves the use of the machine, he would not have objected to the continuation of capitalist enterprise in those machine industries which might become unavoidable even in the Charkha society. Even his non-mechanised industries are to run not for profit but for service. Machine or no machine there is no room for profit or exploitation in the Gandhian economy. He is opposed to capitalism because he does not subscribe to the capitalist code of justice. Many of its accepted norms do not fit into his picture of a just society. His anti-capitalism is thus independent of his opposition to the machine.

(2) Opposition to the Machine :—What about this anti-machine ideology ? Is it merely a moral abhorrence and instinctive revulsion of an orthodox Hindu to all this new fangled modernism ? Is it because he considers the industrial society of the Western type unethical in itself, irrespective of the exploitation on which it is based ?

There have been, it is true, some utterances and writings of Gandhiji which smack of a purist's orthodoxy. The modern mind is rightly distrustful of radicalism born out of religious disposition and moral purism. It is probable that Gandhiji's first reaction to machinery was ethico-religious and not

what many of us would like it to be, ' strictly economic.' The economist however, need not necessarily shun the insight of a saint. It records a sounding which he may well examine, even if with a purely scientific mind. But in his later writings, one discovers an increasing reliance on perfectly rational and economic arguments against the excessive use of machinery. Let us see on what grounds Gandhiji denounces machinery.

It is necessary to point out in the first place that his opposition is neither indiscriminate nor total. Syt. Narhari Parikh has collected Gandhiji's writings on the subject in his book '*Yantrani Maryādā*' —the limitations of machinery. As the title of the book very rightly suggests, what Gandhiji wants essentially is the regulation and not the abolition of machinery. It is possible to find in his earlier writings sentiments which suggest his irreconcilable and total opposition to machinery. For example, in his *Hind Swaraj* (1908) he writes " I can't remember a single merit of the machine, whereas I can write a whole book on its demerits." Further on he says, " Remember the basic point, Machinery is an evil, we shall destroy it gradually." But in his later writings his opposition is not so uncompromising and secondly, against one such occasion of unrelieved opposition or total rejection, one can cite several quotations where one finds that his opposition is not only discriminating, but is based not so much on spiritual grounds as on grounds of practical economic considerations.

The following quotations from his writings will help us to deduce the grounds on which his opposition to machinery is based.

First we quote passages which show that Gandhiji is *not* against *all* machinery:

> " It is not true that I desire the destruction of all machinery or that I am working in that direction."—*Young India*, 19-1-1921.

> " Those who do not know have very much discredited me by saying that I am against machinery."—*Nava Jivan*, 20-4-1924.

> " My object is not to destroy the machine but to impose limitations to it."—*Young India*, 13-11-1924.

> " My objection is not against the machinery, but against the madness for it.....I too desire to economise time and labour, but not that of a particular class, but of the entire mankind."—*Young India*, 13-11-1924.

> " I welcome the machine that lightens the burden of crores of men living in cottages and reduces man labour."—*Young India*, 17-6-1926.

> " The village industry activity will protect any machinery which does not deprive masses of men opportunity to work, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave."

"If we could have electricity in every village home, I shall not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with electricity."—*Harijan*, 22-6-1935.

The above quotations make it clear that Gandhiji is not against all machinery. We shall examine later what type of machinery and under what conditions he is prepared to tolerate.

Next we give quotations which bring out his reasons for opposition to machinery.

"(The machine) does save labour, but lakhs of men are rendered jobless and wander on the streets with hunger."—*Young India*, 13-11-1924.

"I consider it a sin and injustice to use machinery for the purpose of concentrating power and riches in the hands of the few. To-day the machine is used in this way."—*Nava Jivan*, 20-9-1925.

"In a country where crores are without work, to use any power except that of man is to still further increase the unemployment.—*Harijan Bandhu*, 29-10-33.

"In a country where there are more men than can be given employment, it is injurious to use the machine."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 18-11-1934.

"Where crores of men are idle for want of work, what is the point in thinking about labour saving machinery."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 19-5-1935.

"We should not substitute life-less machines for the living machines scattered over the seven lakhs villages of India. The machine is well used if it aids men's labour and simplifies it. To-day it is used to pour wealth in the pockets of the chosen few. Little attention is paid to crores of people from whom the machine snatches away their bread."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 15-9-1935.

"I have no objection if all things required by my country could be produced with the labour of 30,000 instead of that of 3 crores. But those three crores must not be rendered idle or unemployed."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 27-2-1938.

It may be noted that Gandhiji's objection to the machine arises from two different sets of reasons. One is based on the evils arising out of the capitalist exploitation of the machine and the other on the evils of the industrial civilisation itself. The latter is the more fundamental of the two. The former is only a functional disorder while the latter is organic. He is not only opposed to the manner in which the machine is utilised in the present economic order but also believes that its unrestrained use will not be compatible with his concept of a free and just society. It is this second belief that brings him the attribute of a quack and a reactionary.

Looking from another point of view, his objections could be classified as economic and social or sociological and philosophical. Since both Gandhiji and the Socialists agree as to the evils of capitalist use of the machine, nothing more need be said on

that point. It is the validity or otherwise of the second proposition viz: that an unlimited use of the machine is not compatible with human welfare conceived in its broadest terms, by which Gandhism must stand or fall. Let us therefore examine the three sets of objections, economic, sociological and philosophical to the full use of machinery without mixing up the evils which are strictly due to the capitalist manner in which the machine is utilised to-day.

The economic objection.—In a nut-shell this can be expressed in the following proposition. Neither the increase in the standard of life nor the reduction in the hours of work, will be able to ensure the employment of the entire 'effective' population of a country if no limit is placed on the use of the machine. In other words, we have to sacrifice either the full employment of machinery or the full employment of men. Let us see how far this objection is valid.

That, other things remaining equal, utilisation of machinery will cause unemployment no one will dispute. But both the classical economists and socialists point out that other things do not or need not remain equal. The classists, for example, contend that the utilisation of the machine reduces the cost of production, which in its turn stimulates consumption giving rise to increased demand, increased production and therefore increased employment. Thus the reduction in employment in an industry where

machine is employed will be more than compensated for by a rise in employment in industries in general. Statistical record, however, shows that the growth of employment does not keep pace with the growth of industries. In the first stage of growth after the Industrial Revolution new production did employ those thrown out from the old. That was the stage in which reduction in cost was achieved by the economies of large scale production i.e. by extensification. But now a stage has arrived when the industries seek new economies mainly in internal organization often achieved by increasing mechanization. Hence production increases without a corresponding increase in employment.

The socialists maintain on the other hand that there is so much poverty and starvation at one end and so much sweating and over work at the other that it is preposterous to entertain the fear of over production leading to unemployment. Why cannot we have a perpetually rising standard of life and a perpetual shortening of the hours of work. Such reduction in the hours of work will provide employment to three times the present number.

Sociological objection.—Carried to its logical end the question ceases to be economic and assumes a partly philosophical and sociological significance. How much of material goods a man may possess and why should not every man possess five motor cars, three aeroplanes and half a dozen luxury cruisers are not strictly economic questions. Similarly if it is suggested that the hours of work may be

reduced to one or less than one, the objection that so much leisure will demoralise society is not an economic one.

We do not wish to enter into discussion over these issues. But a few statistics from the occupational distribution of the Indian population (1931 Census) are given below to bring out the relation between employment and production.

The total population of India	... 352·83	million.
,, ,, British India	... 271·52	,,
The number of persons occupied	... 168·83	,,
Leaving aside the number whose occupations were subsidiary we get the number	... 153·92	,,
Out of this Agriculture absorbed	... 103·29	,,
Minerals	... ·34	,,
Industry	... 15·35	,,
Trade	... 7·91	,,
Transport	... 2·34	,,
Public administration and Liberal arts ...	... 4·15	,,
Domestic Service ...	... 10·9	,,
Insufficiently described	... 7·78	,,
Unproductive	... 1·63	,,
Living on their Incomes	... ·22	,,
Total	... 153·92	,,

Out of the population of 353 million, approximately 170 million belonged to the working age-group *i.e.* of 15 to 55. It should be the aim of any economic order to provide employment to this entire effective section of the population.

The number of people fully and productively employed according to 1931 Census, is less than 15 crores. That is, there are at least 2 crores of totally unemployed persons in India. But there is a much larger number of under or superfluously employed. Agriculture is its best illustration. Agriculture today absorbs the largest percentage, 72% of this employed section, employing as many as 103 million people. Even the most casual student of Indian economics knows that a large part of this is entirely superfluous. We have in India, in round figures, 300 million acres of land available for cultivation. On any estimate not more than 50 million people are required for the most efficient cultivation of this land under the system of peasant proprietorship. If we resort to mechanised collective agriculture, the number of people who could be usefully employed would be smaller still. Any way, under Swaraj Government we will have to provide non-agricultural employment to at least 70 million (50 million superfluous on land plus 20 totally unemployed) more people. It may also be remembered that during the decade 1930-40 there has been an addition to this working section of at least 20 million people.

The remedy promptly suggested is Industrialization. Now our contention is that industrialization based on the factory system—large scale production by machines—will not be able to absorb this surplus, inspite of socialisation of the factories with the consequent increase in the standard of life and reduction in the hours of work. The Report of the Bombay Economic and Industrial Survey Committee supports

the contention. It observes, "All the same it is a matter deserving of serious attention that in what is considered to be the most industrial province of India, the population engaged in industrial occupation appears to have fallen both absolutely and relative to other occupations." It then goes on to make a very pertinent remark, "Thus the industrial evolution and modernization of the Province has seen the agricultural community suffering in two ways, namely, increasing pressure on land and increase in under employment due to loss of subsidiary occupations."

In the face of such authoritative evidence, it would be too bold to pin our faith in industrialization or mechanisation to reduce unemployment and relieve the pressure from agriculture.*

* The following table showing the total number of persons "Gainfully occupied" and the percentage of persons so occupied in Industry to the total number of persons "Gainfully occupied" reproduced from Mr. B. G. Ghate's "Changes in the occupational distribution of the population" (Govt. of India Press) should prove of interest.

Country & year to which the figures relate.	Total population gainfully occupied.	Total population so occupied in Industry.	The percentage of the Industrial Population to the total working population.
U.S.A.	Lakhs	Lakhs	
1910	328	107	27.9
1920	416	128	30.8
1930	488	141	28.9
ENGLAND & WALES			
1911	163	69	42.1
1921	172	55	32.3
1931	189	60	31.7
GERMANY			
1925	320	122	38 1
1933	323	117	36.2
JAPAN			
1920	273	53	19.4
1930	292	53	18.1
CANADA			
1921	32	8	23.8
1931	39	7	17.3

At present, out of 15·35 million people industrially employed only 3·5 million are employed in factories using mechanical power. As we know, after the War of 1914 there has been a rapid development of factory industries in India. Textile and Iron & Steel industries are already full grown. The cloth production has increased by 400% and that of iron and steel by 300%. During this period the Sugar industry was born and is already displaying symptoms of flabbiness. The cement industry is also full grown. Paper and Chemical industries are fast developing. Between 1911 and 1936 the number of factories increased from 2700 to 9300, yet during these 30 years the percentage of industrially occupied people—factory and non-factory—to working population fell from 11 to 9·4 and from 4·5% to 4% of the total population in 1941.* The above statistics show that increasing production is not necessarily accompanied by increased employment. In technical language the employment index has not been able to keep pace with the production index. Thanks to technology, we require proportionately fewer men to produce additional wealth.

*	1911	1921	1931	1941	per cent variation 1911—1931
Population (in millions)...	315	319	353	389	+ 12.1
Working Population in millions) ...	149	146	154	170	+ 4.0
Persons employed in Industry (in millions)	17.5	15.7	15.3	16.3	— 12.6
Percentage of workers in Industry to working population ...	11.0	11.0	10.5	9.0	— 9.1
Percentage of workers in Industry to total population ...	5.5	4.9	4.3	4.2	— 21.8

Estimates.
"Food Planning for 400 million" by Radha Kamal Mukerji.

This will reduce employment only by 3·5 millions. According to our calculations the number of unemployed persons in India at present is in the neighbourhood of 70 million. Let us also not forget that during the decade or two that we will require to achieve this industrialisation, millions will have been born.

We have further assumed that the increased industrial activity will create more employment in trade, transport and clerical jobs, and that a higher standard of life will demand more teachers and doctors. What shall we then do with the 50 million men without work, plus another 20 million added between 1931 and 1941 and another 70 million who will be born by the time Swaraj and socialism come to this country. We must give them work. Hands must have precedence over the machine, employment over plenty.

If we are pleading for the sacrifice of all the plenty and relief that the machine brings to man, we do so only when the machine transgresses its purposes and leaves the man without work and hungry. For the 50 million men without work, unless they prefer to live on charity, the machine is no blessing, because being without work, they will have no honourable way left of sharing the plenty that the machine will bring. It is but right that the machine should make way for them. From a purely technological point of view, typical of a capitalist or a way faring state, such a replacement of the machine by man may be considered retrograde;

but if human welfare is the criterion, if it leads to the employment of the unemployed, it will indicate a more progressive outlook on human society.

Socialization of instruments of production is no magic. Technology has undergone a revolution undreamt of by Marx. Socialization can, under proper management, prevent economic exploitation and will have to be adopted by the Gandhian thinkers if they would remain true to Gandhi. But socialization cannot create employment; the two palliatives, reduction of hours of work and increase in the standard of life will be found inadequate for securing full employment. There is nothing humiliating in the admission. New ills require new remedies. Socialization is no specific against the onslaught of technology. That onslaught may compel us to consider a voluntary, rational and enlightened renunciation of the machine. To-day it is too much of a good thing. Human ingenuity will have to find out ways and means of synthesising the major conflict of the 20th century, that between man and the machine. Till that is done machine will have to yield place to man. Unfortunately a large number of persons have not yet been able to out-live their 19th century ideas. They still consider human progress to be synonymous with machinery, and all contrary beliefs as anti-deluvian if not reactionary.

Let us now turn to certain non-economic considerations. The question of the psychological effect of machinery on the worker and its sociological effect on society is more difficult because it is not capable

of categorical or statistical formulation. Here is what Marx who was by no means a machine-baiter, has to say on the question.

"If it develops a one-sided speciality into perfection at the expense of man's working capacity as a whole it also begins to make speciality of the absence of all development. The value of labour falls....." "And further.....

"Made now unfit in his natural capacities to make anything independently the manufacturing labourer developes a productive activity as a mere appendage of the workshop." In our zeal to enrich the total "productive power each labourer must be made poor in individual productive power."

The sociological consequences of the machine are much too complex to admit of any simple formulation. But that the coming of the machine has had a profound influence on the organised life of the people, is a fact which is not in dispute. Literary artists have brought it out as effectively as social scientists. How the machine has disintegrated the lives of the people could not have been better described than has been done by the talented authors of 'Grapes of Wrath,' 'How Green was my Valley' and 'After Many a Summer' or by the master comedian Charlie Chaplin through his film 'Modern Times.' The scientists are also becoming increasingly aware of the problems created by the impact of machinery on the various sectors of our social existence. The 1937 International Conference of Agricultural Scientists also refers to this fact.

The social maladjustments caused by the advent of machine in India are well-known to all students of India's social history. The agrarian-cum-handicraft economy of India gave her a balanced social and economic life. The decay of indigenous industries brought about by the coming of the machine—or machine-made goods—from the West is mainly responsible both for the occupational disequilibrium among the population and the isolation of the rural areas, the root causes of the poverty and ignorance of our masses. The cities of modern India owe their birth and growth to the trade in foreign manufactured goods after the Industrial Revolution in England and the growth of factory industry in India itself. The effect of such concentration of productive power, wealth, population and intelligentsia on the welfare of the people of India as a whole also needs a thorough sociological investigation.

The point is that in the balance-sheet of good and evil resulting from the machine, the entries should not be only under the head 'economic'. Social institutions must be examined from much wider point of view. The ease and rapidity with which the machine has enabled us to bring out large quantities of goods need not hustle us into the conclusion that the machine has been an unmixed blessing. It is the totality of social welfare which must determine the merit of an institution. The economic—speed and quantities of production—criterion is a typically capitalist one. Unfortunately, due to an assimilation of a century it has infected even the

socialist thought. The latter has discarded its institutions, but not fully as yet, all its values.

We shall quote one more authority. Professor Mannheim in his most thought provoking book, *Man in Society* attributes the growth of irrationality —a most striking feature of the modern age—to the machine technique. He maintains that whereas the machine technique promotes functional rationalization in man; *vis a vis* the world problems he becomes more and more ignorant and irrational. The technique requires great care and intelligence in the performance of a single piece of labour, but his work is so isolated from the rest of the economic structure that he never gets a synthetic picture of the working of the entire economy. To a common labourer this working appears as mysterious as rain and lightning appeared to our Vedic ancestors. This inability to comprehend the shape of things, breeds superstitions, irrationality and the Fuehrer principle.

3. Neglect of Exploitation through Other Economic Evils:—But it will be a great mistake to believe that all exploitation will cease, the moment we do away with the machine. There are evils in our economic system which are wholly independent of the machine. As some one has said 'exploitation may begin with the Rickshaw and vanish with the air plane economy.' It appears that the Gandhian economists have not given as much thought to them as they have done to the condemnation of the machine. Much of the rural exploitation to-day goes on without the machine having anything to do with it. For example, farmers

suffer a devastating drain from the manner in which prices of agricultural commodities are determined. The Gandhian economists have not probed into the mystery of the iniquitous price mechanism. The absence of any official view on such vital sources of economic drain is interpreted and represented as an absence of any objection to the evil itself. It is necessary, in order to enlist the intellectual allegiance of a large number of people, to present a complete critique of the existing system and an adequate picture of the future. In this connection the work done by the socialist thinkers will prove very useful.*

It is contended that since these problems are of no immediate import, Gandhiji does not like to waste thought on them. But such a defence is hardly valid, for though the closing of the Cotton Mills and their substitution by the Charkha is a distant prospect, yet Gandhiji has written about it on several occasions. It is further contended that as the solution of these problems is inconceivable till the acquisition of political power, discussion about them is an idle and futile pastime. To many such an attitude appears as at least an indication of mental lethargy if not a proof of deliberate evasion. Further, to seek solution through state action is hardly consistent with Gandhian non-violence.

4. The Principle of Trusteeship:—Here is another of Gandhiji's principles which has a vital bearing on the economic arrangement of society.

* Since the above was written I have come across a good discussion on the point in Vinobaji's '*Madhukar*,' published by the Navajivan Press.

From the times of Rig Veda in India and Plato in European thought, ownership of wealth has been a subject matter of profound thinking. With the development of Society there have been revolutionary changes in the norms and values associated with the function of ownership, its use for individual and the society, and the rights, privileges and the duties of an owner. The advent of capitalism introduced one such revolutionary change in our concepts regarding wealth. It is now widely accepted that whatever wonders might have been achieved in the field of production by new position assigned to wealth in social evaluation, it created several phenomena of social injustice like glaring economic inequalities, poverty, unemployment, insecurity and a class of privileged persons enjoying power and prestige entirely out of proportion to the social functions they performed.

My point is that, as pointed out before, Gandhiji's approach to economic injustice is mainly ethical and therefore non-scientific. Both the analysis and the remedies, as a result, are confined more to ideas and do not extend sufficiently to institutions. My plea is for such extension.

The Socialist thought exposed much of the injustice which in due course was receiving the imprimatur of law and ethics of an acquisitive society. Proudhon started by saying that 'all property was theft' and it was left to the penetrating genius of Karl Marx to suggest an institutional structure of an egalitarian society in which property (instruments

of production) and therefore the whole economic structure was to be socialised. The progressive thought of the 19th and 20th century accepted the analysis as correct and is increasingly becoming inclined to accept the remedy, at least in its broad outlines. The recurrent economic crises—not to speak of the terrible wars as their inevitable consequence—of the 20th century, shook off the last vestige of faith in the virtue of the Capitalist assignment of wealth and the marvels in production achieved by Soviet Russia gained numerous converts to socialised economics. Thus the radical intellectuals were getting settled down and beginning to feel comfortable in the thought of the new panacea.

At a time like this when Gandhiji came out with his principle of trusteeship, smacking so much of feudal revivalism, he could persuade few intellectuals to listen to him. The religious and moral fervour with which he propagated the idea did make a great impression on the Indian mind which has not yet lost its susceptibility to such an appeal. What is more significant, he considerably influenced the old and traditional rich, as distinct from the 'new rich,' and even got a few converts. But among the University educated intellectuals, and especially those who had arrived at Marxism after bitter disillusionment, considered the Mahatma as a quack at best with the insincerity of a zealous social reformer.

Like all new ideas, the theory of Trusteeship was vague in the beginning. After twenty years of attack and inquiry it has now taken a more concrete

shape and it is possible to examine it from various aspects. Our first task should be to examine its content, *i.e.*, the rights, privileges and functions of a Trustee. How far, if at all, does he differ from a capitalist owner? What is the essential difference between trust ownership and socialised ownership? These are some of the questions that must be answered in order to clarify our ideas of the principle of Trusteeship.

The essence of capitalist ownership is that subject to the state laws of taxation, the owner retains all the profits of his enterprise. The owner can undertake almost any enterprise he likes, no matter whether it constitutes a social necessity and is conducive to social welfare. To give one extreme example, he may manufacture poison gas if it pays him to do so purely from the monetary point of view. Thirdly, in the processes of production he possesses what is called 'freedom of contract,' a little modified, may be, by labour legislation. That is to say, he can employ a man and pay him a wage determined by the so-called laws of demand and supply. But this may have no relevance either to the merit of the employee or his need. The result is well known. At one end we get a poverty stricken proletariat in perpetual fear of unemployment and economic insecurity, and, at the other, the rich few wallowing in wealth. With the economic condition went social status and political power. Such a lop-sided arrangement gave rise to recurrent crises, imperialism and war.

The socialist remedy to the above ills is the abolition of private property and socialisation of all

instruments of production. The entire economic life of the country will be planned. Production will be guided by social necessity and not private profit, class distinctions will be abolished and economic equality will be the ruling principle. In the process of production there will be no room for exploitation. It is generally admitted that these principles are inspired by high ideals of social justice and their workability is also fairly established by the Soviet experiment. Yet none but the blind devotee will deny that the scheme is not free from objections and difficulties both on the score of theory and practice. It is important to remember this because critics are apt to insist on perfection, even in the smallest detail, while examining any suggestion which is new, particularly if they happen to be already prejudiced against it. New ideas must be first examined in their broad outline. If then something worth while is discovered in them, one must help in perfecting the details and not seek to wreck them merely because they happen to be a little vague.

With a clearer conception of capitalist and socialist ownership we shall be better equipped to appraise Gandhiji's idea of trust ownership. A person must consider himself a trustee of all wealth which he collects. What wealth or income he retains for himself does not depend on his own sweet will. The maximum is fixed at twelve times the minimum. This method of fixing the limit is more scientific than absolute fixing in as much as the maximum can vary with the economic conditions in the country.

Before clarifying further ideas about trusteeship, let us see where the above enunciation leads us. Firstly, unlike the capitalist owner, the trustee has no right to use or misuse his wealth as he likes. The only portion to whose free use he is entitled, is the one which is necessary for his own existence, this maximum being determined not by himself but by the State. Under a socialist dispensation his entire property will be confiscated. Under both the schemes the underlying idea is that property, that is, the instruments of production, should not belong to, and its use must not be under the control of, any individual. More positively its use should be determined by social necessity and its management must be in keeping with the egalitarian ideas of social justice. It may be repeated that by confining the inequality within the narrow range of 1 to 12, the Gandhian concept definitely subscribes to the egalitarian idea of social justice. In the Soviet Union, according to Burnham,[1] "the upper 11 p.c. to 12 p.c. of the Soviet population receives approximately 50 p.c. of the national income."

In the last analysis, for all practical purposes the concept of trust ownership is not very different from that of socialised ownership. In neither case can the ownership be exploited for private benefit. In neither case will its direction and management depend on the whims and interests of the trustee or the manager. Both will be controlled in the interest of Society. When we look into the schedules of the

1. See "Managerial Revolution."

rights and obligations of the trustee, we find that he very much resembles the manager of a socialised farm or factory, both in the matter of personal gain —remuneration—and freedom in the working of the plant.

Having seen the points of similarity between the content and concept of trust property and socialised property, let us see where the difference lies. The trustee is a self-appointed manager. Under the Gandhian scheme the former owner is converted into a trustee irrespective of his ability as a manager. In a socialist revolution, the best he may expect is a concentration camp. The manager will be appointed on merit and all former titles to ownership will be considered as evidence of social sin rather than qualifications for managership. Here is a difference which is very germane to the technique of social change of the two rival philosophies. No useful purpose will be served by dismissing the one as 'Utopian if not reactionary' and other as 'brutal.' Without some amount of intellectual de-conditioning a dispassionate evaluation of the two methods is not possible. All our knowledge of the sociology of revolution will have to be requisitioned for the purpose of evaluation.

It may be suggested that Gandhiji's choice of the principle of trusteeship was determined not so much by its economic implications as by his method of bringing about a social change. Consistent with his method of non-violence, he must give a chance to the wrong-doer to improve before he is asked to

quit or put in a concentration camp. Gandhiji has made no secret of his strong disapproval of all exploitation by zamindars and capitalists. Angered by their misbehaviour we at once think of liquidating them. But according to the non-violent technique we miss a step. Effort is to be made to do away with the wrong before we do away with the wrong-doer. Gandhiji, therefore, pleads and argues with the zamindars and capitalists voluntarily to submit themselves to the discipline and restraints of trusteeship. Show them the right course. Impress upon them the justice of your scheme. Give them a chance to mend their way. If that succeeds evil will be ended and we will have gained a valuable citizen. Negatively there will be one less enemy. The technique which announces *a priori* expropriation gives an invitation for the organization of counter-revolution. The experience of all attempted revolutions shows that immensely more difficult than the *coup-d'-etat* is the problem of resisting counter-revolutionary sabotage and intervention. The non-violent revolution is brought about in a more favourable atmosphere. It does not throw up hatred and violence which may undo the achievements of the revolution. With this technique therefore, the work of post-revolution reconstruction will be easier. We may need fewer concentration camps and fewer mass treason trials. It is a method of change which may be given a fair trial. But the chances are we may not succeed. Even then, nothing would be lost. The trustee will have to be deposed, because our

non-violence does not mean toleration of an evil. In conformity with the Gandhian method even this deposition will be enforced as far as possible with the sanction of the community concerned and not that of the state. That the alternative method of immediate suppression does not achieve quicker results is patently demonstrated by the socialist experiment in the U.S.S.R., where sabotage and treason were causing constant troubles as late as 1939, two decades after the revolution.

Examining this question of State sanction against communal sanction, it may be suggested that Gandhiji's preference for the latter arises logically from the application of the non-violent technique. In this connection, Gandhiji's position is more like that of anarchists, with a distrust of all constituted authority. To the usual argument that this involves a confusion between the immediate and the ultimate, that the State can wither away but slowly, and that it is sheer irresponsible romanticism to do away with its sanction from the very start, Gandhiji's reply will be that since in a non-violent revolution power is not 'seized' by but gradually accrues to the people, there will be no need for the transitional period of dictatorship, for by the time the revolution has run the last lap, the community will have gathered considerable strength for the enforcement of sanctions. The non-violent technique permits the fruit (new order) to ripen on the tree itself, while if you pluck the fruit when it is yet raw you will have to keep it in artificial heat (of state sanctions). To change

the metaphor, it does not involve any mopping up process and the work of reconstruction can start at once. The post-revolutionary society will be in a much more advanced state than the one which may confront us after a revolutionary *coup-d'-etat*. Since power is not 'captured', the revolutionary achievement does not need to be 'preserved' from foreign or counter-revolutionary intervention. Since there was no resort to 'necessary evils,' no treatment is necessary.

One may or may not believe in the efficiency or practicability of this method of bringing about revolutionary change, but one can understand why in the Gandhian scheme of society there is no reliance on the power and authority of the state for ushering changes or for preserving the New Order.

5. Economic Structure of a Non-Violent Society:—The character of Gandhian economy reflects Gandhiji's social philosophy, whose basic principle is non-violence. A democratic society is for him a non-violent society. Gandhiji believes that the failure of Western democracy is due not so much to its institutional shortcomings, as to its failure to adopt non-violence as its basic social value. Political exploitation and economic inequality are but inevitable concomitants of this vital neglect. Democracy is bound to degenerate into an instrument of tyranny, through imperialism abroad and denial of purchasing power to the masses at home, unless it eschews appeal to force as a method of arriving at truth and justice. The socialists have hitherto maintained—and rightly

—that true democracy is not possible without socialism. Gandhiji goes further and says that neither true democracy nor true socialism are conceivable in any but a non-violent society. One may add that even non-violence will be a farce without democracy and socialism, but it cannot be denied that Gandhiji with the perspicacity of a prophet, discovered the vital deficiency of all social Utopias, modern as well as ancient. Marx supplied an antidote to the 19th century capitalism; Gandhiji, possessing the advantage of having witnessed the 20th century, prescribes a remedy for a later disease, capitalism plus totalitarianism. Socialism alone may not be able to restore democracy to the pedestal of a great ideal, it will require the aid of a New Man, imbued with the love and trust, not of a recluse, but that of a mna of action.

For a variety of reasons, which no sociologist can overlook, Gandhiji believes that this non-violent society will have to be less complex than the one at present. The world has become too vast to be intelligently comprehended by an average man. In order to hide his ignorance, the average man prefers to accept manufactured opinions. And the vendors of opinions, in order to make them marketable, label them with plausible prejudices. Many, therefore, have begun to feel that the complexity of the modern world must be reduced. The complexity may be a matter of pride to the scientists and the capitalists, it spells slavery and blindness for the masses. The work-a-day world must be made understandable to the common man. The circumscribing of its ambit

will enable him to live in it more intelligently and resist evil more effectively. To-day he is at the mercy of Fuehrers and demagogues, and on those few occasions when he decides to fight, he resembles Don Quixote striking at the wind-mill.

The non-violent society of the Gandhian pattern, therefore, aims at drawing the frontiers of the common man's world closer to him. It thus aims at localising all factors which have a bearing on the basic aspects of his life. The factors which affect his well being must be compressed within the ken of his mental vision. Only then will he be able to govern himself and realise true democracy. As long as he has no comprehension or control of the factors which affect his life, self-government in the true sense of the word will be, at best, only an illusion. This lack of comprehension in the common man provides temptations to ambitious individuals, groups, or nations to assume responsibility for his governance. And the experience of all known history is that the torch of disinterestedness is before long extinguished and those who come to serve remain to rule.

The mechanical inventions which opened up the frontiers for commercial and political adventurers, made the world mysterious for the common man. The railway and the steamship which connected continents made the intellectual horizon of the common man more hazy. They exposed him to unknown storms and left him more vulnerable to total apathy at one extreme or irrational enthusiasm at the other.

The choice to-day is between being governed by experts or by adventurers. The latter, as we all know, have preponderated.

It is true that Gandhiji wants a smaller world for the common man, but that is not with a view to denying him the luxury of exotic articles or keeping him poor and uncivilised. We know today as a matter of fact that even with open frontiers he has no access to plenty or civilization. Gandhiji wants narrower frontiers in order that the common man may live more and more intelligently and save himself from the depredations of experts and adventurers who very often masquerade as saviours and liberators. Wider frontiers have meant a narrower margin of freedom and a narrower range of initiative, though, judged purely by an economic criterion a wide world is an advantage. In the days of scarcity the adoption of the economic criterion was perhaps a progressive step. But in an age in which technique has made abundance possible, further progress must consist in the adoption of other values besides the supply of material goods. In the days of Marx the problem of plenty was still unsolved. Besides, he wanted that plenty for the masses. Gandhiji has accepted the equalitarian values of socialism. But he prefers to judge human happiness not by the quantity of goods that every one can possess—though he accepts the necessity of a very liberal minimum—but by the range of genuine freedom that every one enjoys. He will not like to work for an abundance of goods

if for acquiring it man has to sacrifice his freedom and rationality. Political and economic freedoms are not enough. Freedom and liberty lose their value if they are made articles of presentation by well intentioned leaders and political parties. They must form the ingredients of the very ethos of our civic existence. Men will not feel free if they have to live in a society whose working remains mysterious to them. Even if such a society is free from poverty and exploitation, the feeling of being free will not come as long as that freedom depends on the wisdom of experts and political leaders. In Gandhiji's smaller world freedom will be sustained by the common man and will be for the first time freed from the monopolies of the intellectual aristocracy.

In the economic sphere this baffling vastness was created by the annihilation of the parochial walls around the village market. World markets sprang up, fed by articles produced at one end of the earth and consumed at the other. Farmers remained parochial and prices became universal. This lag in growth, caused by the advance of technology, and commercially exploited by capitalist adventurers, caused misery to millions of masses all over the world. Moved by this tragedy, Marx suggested socialization of ownership of the instruments of production and their utilization not for private profit but in the service of the masses. Though now benevolent, the socialized economic world will still remain incomprehensible to the masses at large. Bureaucrats may now take the place of self-seeking capitalists. Economically the masses will

be better off but they will now be at the mercy of a political and managerial aristocracy and therefore, essentially unfree. They produce but only what others plan; the new masters are better, but still they are masters. The new masters will even honour them by naming the system the dictatorship of the proletariat, yet in all major political and economic decisions, the masses will receive and not give orders, will not dictate but be dictated to. Such dependence is no freedom.

In Gandhiji's scheme markets once again retire within parish walls and the producers regain their freedom. For the new market will be a producers' market and not that of a speculator or a finance capitalist, or a state official. Essential goods, bought and sold, will be produced within a range which a common man can mentally reach. The limit of this range cannot be arbitrarily determined, but the guiding principle will be the mental reach of the masses of men. They will not only produce, they will also plan; others may advise but they will decide. They will certainly own the instruments of production, but the instruments will not be the ambitious giants of to-day, pretending to create plenty but in fact robbing the producer and the consumer of their independence. True, they will produce less, but the purpose of production will be neither profit nor power. True, again, that their productive power will be less but so will be their greed to seek empires. The workers will know to what purpose they are worked, and will need no telling from professional rulers. The choice perhaps is between freedom and plenty.

The hungry ones may perhaps be tempted immediately to choose the latter, but by and by they will realise that plenty without freedom creates new hungers.

Publisher's Note

The author was in jail when the Mss. was in the Press. After his release he glanced through the book and found that inadvertently some mistakes had crept in. He also felt like deleting one or two paragraphs and adding some new matter. We have allowed the author to do this in the interest of the valuable book that he has so brilliantly produced.

We owe an apology to the readers for adding such a big errata and promise that this will be eliminated in the 2nd Edition.

Page.	Line.		
5	(2)	For *depend*	Read *depends*
7	(17)	,, *disillusion*	,, *disillusionment*
10	(16)	,, *State*	,, *State is*
10	(29)	Delete *in making this claim*	
13	(16)	For *foolhardly*	Read *foolhardy*
16	(3)	,, *Value*	,, *Values*
19	(22)	,, *man*	,, *man's*
22	(25)	,, *classists*	,, *classicists*
27	(16)	,, 4.5%	,, 5.5%
28	...	Delete first 12 lines and read—	

Now let us assume—against our experience in this country and elsewhere—that in India industrialization will bring about a hundred percent rise in the number of people employed in large scale factories. Let us further assume that the increased industrial activity will create more employment in trade, transport and clerical jobs and that a higher standard of life will demand more teachers and doctors. All this at best, will give employment to 20 million more people. According to our calculation the number of unemployed persons in India at present is approximately 70 million. What shall we then do with the 50 million.....

Page.	Line.		
28	(30)	For *way faring*	Read *war fearing*
29	(27)	,, *anti-deluvian*	,, *anti-diluvial*
34	(12)	,, *by new*	,, *by the new*
34		Delete paragraph two	
35	(24)	Delete *among*	
42	(9)	Before *treatment*	Add *purging*
43	(16)	For *mna*	Read *man*