



Portrait of Gandhi in London, 1909.  
Taken from Gandhi's *Collected works*, volume IX (Navajivan Trust).

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M. K. GANDHI

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# Hind Swaraj

and other writings

edited by

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To Rolande

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## CHAPTER XIV

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## 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.<sup>140</sup> 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 civilisation<sup>141</sup> 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.<sup>142</sup> It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream.<sup>143</sup> 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.<sup>144</sup> 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.<sup>145</sup> 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 poets<sup>146</sup> 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?<sup>147</sup> 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. VII.

## CHAPTER XV

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### 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.<sup>148</sup> 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 tyranny<sup>149</sup> 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 million<sup>150</sup> 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 act<sup>151</sup> and such other acts in India<sup>152</sup> 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 reforms<sup>153</sup> 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

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Brute force<sup>154</sup>

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 1857<sup>155</sup> 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.<sup>156</sup>

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.<sup>157</sup> 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.<sup>158</sup> 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.<sup>159</sup> 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.<sup>160</sup> The English in 1833<sup>161</sup> 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;<sup>162</sup> 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.<sup>163</sup> 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.<sup>164</sup> 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,<sup>165</sup> 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.<sup>166</sup> 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.<sup>167</sup> 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.'<sup>168</sup> 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.<sup>169</sup> 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.<sup>170</sup> 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.<sup>171</sup> 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 swarth*) 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 resistance<sup>172</sup>

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 evil-doers 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.'<sup>173</sup> This appears to me to be a scientific

<sup>172</sup> The Gujarati title of this chapter is *satyagraha-atmabal*.

<sup>173</sup> 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.<sup>174</sup> 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 universe<sup>175</sup> 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.'<sup>176</sup> 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

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

<sup>175</sup> '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.

<sup>176</sup> 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;<sup>177</sup> 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.<sup>178</sup> 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.<sup>179</sup> 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.<sup>180</sup> That we should obey laws whether good or bad is a new-fangled notion.<sup>181</sup> 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,<sup>182</sup> 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 laws<sup>183</sup> 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 religion<sup>184</sup> 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.<sup>185</sup>

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,<sup>186</sup> 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 mind<sup>187</sup> 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.<sup>188</sup> 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. Peasants<sup>189</sup> 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.<sup>190</sup> 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.<sup>191</sup> 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.<sup>192</sup>

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 country<sup>193</sup> 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.<sup>194</sup>

Just as there is necessity for chastity, so is there for poverty.<sup>195</sup> 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*, 111, 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.<sup>196</sup> 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.<sup>197</sup> 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.<sup>198</sup> 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

<sup>196</sup> 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).

<sup>197</sup> '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.

<sup>198</sup> 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.