

### SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM, GANDHISM AND MODERN INDIA

More than twenty years after the tragic death of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a victim of Hindu reaction, an evaluation of what the phenomenon referred to as Gandhism in literature and politics really is, still retains its significance.

Gandhism, the sum total of the political, moral, ethical and philosophical concepts which Gandhi put forward during the liberation struggle of the Indian people, is more than something inseparably connected, in the Indian national consciousness, with the long years of struggle for freedom from British imperialist domination. Gandhism is a factor that still makes itself felt in today's ideological, political and class struggle. It is used to influence the masses by almost all the political parties of contemporary India.

Gandhism is deeply rooted in the popular traditions of India, and its social ideals are in many respects of a peasant, petty-bourgeois character. The most important features of Gandhism, stemming from its close ties with, above all, the peasant traditions of Indian society, are its social ideal, Sarvodaya (the welfare of all), and the method for achieving this, Satyagraha (non-violent struggle).

Gandhi's social ideal was a petty-bourgeois, peasant Utopia, the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The establishment of social justice is presented by Gandhi in the light of a return to the "golden age" of self-contained, self-sufficient peasant communes, an age that refuses to accept the "European" civilisation of the machine age which he hated so vehemently, and the market-based economic relations hostile to the spirit of the patriarchal countryside

which doomed the commune of peasants and artisans to decline and disintegration.

Gandhi's doctrine of Sarvodaya is, primarily, the eternal yearning of peasants, rural artisans, the urban poor oppressed by foreign rulers and their own feudal lords, merchants and moneylenders, for the society of supposedly equitable human relations that is described with such profound and alluring beauty in the sacred writings of Hinduism. Efforts are made to discover what this society was like in cultural and historical monuments and survivals of the tribal and patriarchal traditions to be found among the different peoples of India. These traditions underlie the very thinking based on Hinduism, that to this day is the foundation of the social psychology of tens of millions of Indian peasants, artisans and petty townfolk.

Sarvodaya is, at the same time, a completely natural, honest and sincere protest against the capitalist way of life, a protest by social strata which have not as yet grasped practical, scientifically substantiated ways of making society just, seeking but not finding a way out of the unbearable social and material conditions in which they live. This protest reflects the deep anguish of tens of millions of people crushed by the despicable caste system and enslaved by landowners and moneylenders. It reflects the suffering of people who do not appreciate the implications of their situation and hence cannot understand that escape from it lies through establishment of a firm alliance with the revolutionary working class the hateful "European" capitalist civilisation has produced. Gandhism denies that the appearance of such a civilisation was inevitable and that compared with the societies which preceded it this civilisation was progressive. Gandhism condemns the Indian peasants and artisans to nothing but sad memories of irrevocably vanished and obviously idealised primitive forms of public life.

Despite its obviously utopian and archaic character, however, Gandhi's ideal of Sarvodaya objectively played a positive role in the Indian national liberation movement. It convinced wide sections of the rural and urban population that the fight against alien British rule for independence was their immediate concern because it was also a struggle to attain social justice, and a new society that would be based on

principles whose implementation they yearned for so deeply. Gandhi did not intend to deceive or ensnare the popular masses when he linked the struggle against the colonialists with the attainment of Sarvodaya. His aims were perfectly honest and sincere.

India's independence and the elimination of imperialist domination, those tremendous achievements of the Indian people, are linked with the name of Gandhi, justly enjoying the highest respect. But the political independence won in 1947 did not lead to Sarvodaya. It did not give the working people of India an opportunity to establish a reign of social justice.

Non-violent resistance to colonial oppression is a method based on India's deepest traditions, on the psychology of the Indian peasantry. This tactical method of struggle, like Gandhi's social ideal, is a combination of extreme patience and protest, conservatism and spontaneous revolutionary activity, features typical for Indian peasants who for centuries have been brought up to approach the world from a fatalistic, religious point of view. These features of Gandhism were reflected in the doctrine of Swadeshi. The three aspects of Swadeshi, religious, political and economic, aim at preserving the institutions and customs handed down by history, these to be gradually transformed by non-violent means and lent new content. Here we have deep dissatisfaction with the present and faith in the stability of the past, a refusal to accept anything other than a return to the past and a fear of radical change. These are all classical traits of a mass peasant psychology, in which survivals of a traditional society are still strong, not so much in actual economic affairs though, as in the outlook of the peasants.

A powerful and distinctive feature of Gandhism as an ideology and form of practical politics is its loyalty to national, cultural, historical and religious traditions, its capacity to find in these traditions slogans, memories and images that appeal to the peasant and artisan, its capacity directly and convincingly to link the spiritual life of the peasant and artisan with the requirements of the country's independent development and social change as understood by tens of millions of ordinary people. This loyalty to popular traditions and conceptions of a just life is the secret of the tremendous

influence which Gandhi's ideas and his personality exerted on the Indian people.

The above circumstances allow us to define Gandhism as a profoundly Indian ideology the nature of which is essentially petty-bourgeois. Such an understanding of Gandhism, that is possibly open to question, does not by any means detract from Marxist research of this problem, which has demonstrated the close ties between Gandhism and the interests of the Indian national bourgeoisie and the way the latter has effectively used Gandhism to advance its own class objectives. It is merely important to bear in mind that the connection between the national bourgeoisie and Gandhism was more complex, or at any rate not so direct and immediate, as usually claimed.

The Indian national bourgeoisie would not have made use of the ideology of Gandhism, or such wide use, if it had not been in keeping with its basic class and political interests, its aim to replace British political domination by its own rule through peaceful means relying on the support of the mass movement headed by Gandhi for both nation-wide and, primarily, its own class purposes. Many things brought Gandhism and the Indian bourgeoisie close together besides the nation-wide anti-colonialist struggle for India's independence. There was the community of class interests in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology which, in the final analysis, determines the objectively bourgeois nature of utopian "peasant socialism" in a country developing along capitalist lines.

Certainly the Gandhian ideal of non-violence, firmly linked with the religious beliefs of the peasantry, contributed to the development of a mass liberation struggle and helped to draw the peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie over to the side of the national bourgeoisie. In the principle of non-violent resistance the bourgeoisie found a way of using the popular masses against the colonialists, forcing the latter to leave India, while at the same time preserving their class control over the people. The petty-bourgeois features in the ideology and activity of Gandhi the thinker and politician were to a significant degree hidden from view by his political co-operation with the bourgeois Indian National Congress and his position for many years as the universally recognised leader of the Congress.

The combination of utopian thinker, with roots in the Indian countryside, and sober, far-sighted politician, objectively furthering the interests of the national bourgeoisie, the natural exponent of the nation's aspirations, prevented the peasant features of Gandhi's ideology from consistently coming into their own. This combination often led Gandhi to make compromises that clearly reflected the contradictions peculiar to the different classes and social groups taking part in the nation-wide anti-imperialist struggle. This is why Gandhism should not be reduced merely to an objective expression of the interests of the national bourgeoisie in the Indian liberation movement. It is broader than this and possesses many features that contradict such an assessment. An involved assortment of conditions and social forces in the Indian liberation movement gave rise to Gandhism which embodied the differences and contradictions between those forces as well as their common interests. Gandhism was a phenomenon born of the national life of a peasant country and hence—this should be stressed once again—it could not but reflect in its own way the spontaneous striving of the Indian toiler for social justice, a striving which extends beyond the limits of bourgeois class interests.

Without taking this feature of Gandhism into account it is impossible fully to understand Gandhi's historical role, determined by his remarkable closeness to the Indian people. This closeness was the secret of his influence. Even when cooperating with bourgeois leaders on the ideological and political front Gandhi always strove to maintain his close links with the popular masses. What is more, his leading position and his special role in the Indian National Congress were a direct consequence of this closeness to the people, particularly the working people. Of major importance for an understanding of Gandhi's role and his relations with the Indian bourgeoisie and the peasantry is the principle which Lenin puts forward in his article "Democracy and Narodism in China": "The chief representative, or the chief social bulwark, of this Asian bourgeoisie that is still capable of supporting a historically progressive cause, is the peasant."<sup>\*</sup> Gandhi and Gandhism were a strong connecting link between

\* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 165.

the Indian bourgeoisie and the broad masses of the peasantry.

Literature of the pre-war period sometimes showed a lack of understanding for the diversity of national and historical forms of the mass struggle and their interconnection. In a number of cases some particular method of struggle was proclaimed and advocated to the exclusion of all others. Sectarians and dogmatists in the contemporary national liberation movement stand for only the armed method of struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racialism, rejecting all other forms of struggle, including peaceful, non-violent ones. Because of a one-sided approach to the appraisal and employment of tactical methods of mass struggle and enthusiastic support for the most radical of these forms the dialectics of this important problem has been forgotten. Gandhi, too, was one-sided in his approach to forms of mass struggle. He singled out non-violent resistance to the colonialists and racialists as the only form, a universal form. Many of his opponents at different stages of India's liberation movement were inclined to deny, just as categorically and one-sidedly, the positive significance of these non-violent forms of struggle. Non-violence was not infrequently equated with passivity bordering on reconciliation with the reactionaries and colonialists. Criticism of Gandhism was based on a fundamental rejection of mass non-violent resistance, Gandhi's philosophical credo, which is fully understandable, and correct, but the same indiscriminate rejection was also applied to the method of political struggle against imperialism, which was clearly incorrect.

Scientific socialism does not start out by advocating one particular form of struggle (peaceful or otherwise) to the exclusion of all others. On the contrary, it recognises the need for various forms of struggle to be used, combined and allowed to interact dialectically. It recognises the need constantly to renew and enrich the arsenal of revolutionary means and methods, to check, test and select effective new forms of struggle. Marxist-Leninist revolutionary tactics do not demand blind adherence to forms and methods of struggle established once and for all. They do not commit themselves to any one form of mass struggle, effective though that form may be, but constantly endeavour to achieve a balance be-

tween the chosen forms and methods of struggle and the character, stages and goals of that struggle. Finally, Marxism-Leninism demands that an advanced political party should be ready and able to make a resolute, rapid change in forms and methods of struggle when concrete historical conditions so require.

Scientific socialism is familiar with and Communists have always used the different methods of struggle, including, of course, non-violent resistance. For this reason, Marxists disapprove of Gandhi's principle of Ahimsa, non-violence, when it is set up as the sole correct method. It is impossible not to see that Gandhian non-violence in relation to the colonialists and racialists was highly contradictory, for active protest was combined with tolerance towards the enemy. This was the combination that Gandhi found the only acceptable and possible form of resistance to colonial-racist oppression. In Gandhi's non-violence there is a purely metaphysical aspect following from religious dogmatism and the ascetic approach to life. Inherent in this type of non-violence, however, is undoubtedly the utterly realistic idea of the tactical use of peaceful forms of mass and individual struggle against imperialism, racialism and, less frequently, feudalism.

It is obvious that in the years of struggle against British colonial rule in India and racialism in South Africa the idea of Ahimsa, as interpreted by Gandhi and in its mass form, possessed considerable revolutionary potential. Gandhi's elaboration and practical implementation of distinctive peaceful forms and methods of struggle against the colonialists are of indisputable value. Gandhi took Ahimsa out of the sphere of individual action, making it a means for long-term and purposeful mass struggle, and linking it up with the anti-imperialist and social demands of the popular masses. He elaborated methods of mass non-violent resistance that had the character of nation-wide offensive action against the practices and laws established by the colonialists, against the constitution they had imposed on a subjugated nation and oppressed people, against the tyrannical despotism of alien rulers. The large-scale campaigns of non-violent resistance which Gandhi led against British imperialism between the twenties and forties demanded great courage from those taking part

and placed the colonialists in an extremely difficult position. These campaigns rapidly revolutionised the situation throughout India.

Gandhi was a brilliant master of mass non-violent resistance. He knew exactly when a campaign should be launched, when calls for non-violent resistance would meet with wide support throughout the entire country and its participants would number tens of millions. While acknowledging Gandhi's qualities as leader and organiser of the liberation movement in its peculiarly Indian forms, attention should be drawn to the fact that no one in India understood more astutely than Gandhi the moment when it was time to end a mass non-violent resistance movement so that it did not develop into the very opposite, and, in the final analysis, into a social revolution directed against the ruling classes and foreign oppressors. Hence Gandhi never utilised to the full the revolutionary potential inherent in mass non-violent resistance. For reasons that require no explanation this potential was played down by Gandhi and the then leaders of the Indian National Congress. Indeed this potential represented the first step of a mass national liberation struggle, during which the elements of a revolutionary crisis take shape, a crisis which gradually develops into an immediately revolutionary situation, opening the doors to a victorious mass uprising against the colonialists.

Thus, criticism by Left opponents of Gandhi's considerable tendency to compromise was correct. It would have been more convincing, however, if it had not denied the potential of anti-imperialist non-violent resistance, as was often done between the twenties and forties, but had insisted that non-violent resistance should not be held up as the only method of struggle against colonialism and racialism, something which was done with the help of religious dogmas and abstract ethical categories, irrespective of the social and class nature of the forces involved in the movement.

It is relevant here to examine the application of Gandhi's principle of non-violence in an international context. The specific nature of international relations makes Gandhi's concepts of non-violence more realistic in relations between countries than in class relations or the struggle for national liberation. Ahimsa in the international sphere, stripped of its

metaphysical element, implies a refusal to resort to force, an outlawing of war, that is to say, an affirmation of the principle of peaceful relations between states. Religious, utopian ideas concerning the renunciation of force as an absolute duty did not prevent Gandhi from reaching fruitful conclusions with regard to the need to strengthen friendship among peoples, establish just inter-state relations based on mutual respect and non-interference, and settle all conflicts through negotiation. In this respect Gandhi's ideas had considerable influence on the foreign policy of the government of the Republic of India, whose creator was Jawaharlal Nehru.

Indians themselves have good reason for rejecting the extremes of Ahimsa, which in international questions led Gandhi more than once to adopt defeatist slogans calling for unilateral sacrifice of national interests in the face of aggression in the name of the non-violent principle, at the very times when the nation's supreme interests required that the entire people should take up arms to resist the aggressor. His abstract, non-historical interpretation of the problems of ensuring peace, irrespective of the aggressive aims of the enemy or direct aggression, proved untenable.

In discussing Gandhi's attitude to the Indian bourgeoisie it would be well to remember the specific features of the historical period in which they closely collaborated. Gandhi was the ideological leader of the Indian National Congress, and the Congress organised and carried out his projects, primarily mass non-violence campaigns under his leadership. That was the period when a bloc of all the anti-imperialist forces, including the national bourgeoisie, was objectively necessary. Characteristic of that period was the existence of a nation-wide anti-imperialist front which not only influenced relations between different classes, including those with conflicting interests, drawing them together by means of common goals in the fight against colonialist rule, but also for a fairly long time determined, to some extent, the political course of the struggle waged by these classes.

Gandhi worked in close collaboration with the national bourgeoisie which headed the national liberation movement.

The idea of attaining full political independence that was put forward by the Indian National Congress party, and its call for an implacable struggle against the colonialists brought the bourgeoisie closer to the rest of the nation. This community of interests among different classes in the fight for political independence was what led to the thirty-year political alliance between Gandhi, essentially a petty-bourgeois democrat and utopian, and the bourgeois leaders of the National Congress, anxious themselves to seize full political power after removing the foreign rulers.

Both sides—Gandhi and the National Congress—recognised that this coincidence of their interests was temporary despite its relatively long duration, and each side naturally needed the other. In Gandhi the Congress found a popular national leader, a brilliant tactician and a man of amazingly strong will, who was capable of rallying together the active, energetic younger generation of fighters and, with their support, of stirring up and leading tens of millions of disinherited men and women. In the National Congress Gandhi had at his disposal a strong, experienced political organisation unlike any other in India. We shall not touch on the history of the relations between Gandhi and the National Congress, but merely note that in the final period of the struggle against British imperialism, when the goal—political independence—was already perceptible, the contradictions between Gandhi and the bourgeois Congress leadership, contradictions which had, of course, always existed beneath the surface, grew serious and dramatically acute.

After attaining power many Congress leaders forgot Gandhi's democratic, humanist ideals. He had fulfilled his mission by bringing the long struggle he had led for political independence to a successful conclusion.

Gandhi thought in terms of a new phase in the struggle after independence. He dreamed of non-violence campaigns for the attainment of still broader social ideals. He was profoundly disappointed by the results of his years of effort: the partition of India and the outbreak of Hindu-Moslem strife, accompanied by wide-scale bloodshed. He was depressed by the ubiquity of bourgeois greed, careerism and egoism. After the winning of political independence Gandhi, with every justification, advanced the task of fighting for

“economic, social and moral” independence, that is, for the principles of social justice, for the triumph of Sarvodaya.

Gandhi's attitude to the caste system, whose influence is still considerable, deserves attention. His views on the caste system and the problem of the Untouchables were influenced, on the one hand, by the spontaneous, democratic aspirations of the peasants, his sympathy for the common people and by his profound awareness that as many sections of the population as possible should be drawn into the anti-imperialist struggle. On the other hand, these views were also coloured by a certain conservatism in Gandhi's thinking, his attachment to religious traditions, and his reformist theory of social evolution.

Gandhi repudiated the spirit of inequality and superiority that permeates caste practices. The multiplicity of castes, with the self-contained isolation that typifies them, and the ban on inter-caste contacts were unacceptable to him. According to Gandhi, however, all that was bad in the caste system as such did not refer to its essence, but to distortions of the system. He felt that the ideal form of social organisation was the ancient system of four Varna: the Brahman (priests), the Kshatriya (warriors), the Vaisya (traders and craftsmen) and the Sudra (tillers of the land). He was convinced that man's place in society was to a significant extent determined by hereditary capabilities. This non-historical, unscientific conception of Varna influenced Gandhi's basic sociological views. Varna substituted analysis of the social relations of a definite class society by abstract arguments about heredity, which also underlies Gandhi's theory of tutelage and paternalism, according to which landowners exist to be the fathers of the peasants, while capitalists possess indispensable gifts of economic management, so that the workers, destined by nature to perform physical work, cannot aspire to economic administration.

Concerning the Untouchables Gandhi was more consistent. He rightly considered the institution of untouchability a disgrace for India and put much effort into his fight for the legal equality of almost one-third of the country's population. Gandhi's admirable democratic stand on this question considerably influenced Indian public opinion, contributed to the legislative proclamation of the civil rights of the Untouch-

ables, and stimulated efforts to improve the intolerable conditions in which they lived.

No matter how petty-bourgeois, peasant and therefore inconsistent the idea of a society of “social justice” may seem, an open, full-scale struggle to achieve it, even by Gandhi's specific methods, would have been a major step forward after the country attained political independence. But the bourgeois-capitalist élite opposed this, and although Gandhi had often opposed this élite with all the power of his will and outstanding intellect he did not raise, and hardly could have raised, a mass movement against it.

Gandhi was the leader of a wide-scale anti-imperialist movement, in which different classes and social strata took part, some representing the working people and others exploiter elements. His ideological and political stand was one of bourgeois nationalism, strongly coloured by petty-bourgeois, Utopian peasant ideas, while his political activity naturally reflected the leading role played by the national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist movement in India. In practical terms, i.e., independently of Gandhi's own subjective aspirations, his political activity helped further the accession to power of the bourgeoisie after the country had gained its political independence.

Yet precisely because of this eclectic character of Gandhi's social ideas, to some degree these echoed the democratic aspirations of the people, above all those of the peasant masses, aspirations born in the midst of the struggle against British imperialism and which therefore to a certain extent are today still important in the context of the struggle of India's progressive social forces for their country's rebirth and social progress.

The religious, philosophical and ethical principles of Gandhism revealed profound contradictions and ambivalence: some of their implications were of a democratic, humanistic nature but at the same time they reflected the weaknesses of the liberation movement and the way in which it was subject to the ideological and political influence of the Indian bourgeoisie. The class purpose of these principles was to provide ideological substantiation for Gandhi's specific tactics in

the anti-imperialist struggle under the leadership of the Indian bourgeoisie, thus making it easier to implement those tactics.

There can be no doubt as to the major historical role Gandhi played in the Indian national liberation movement. In so far as attention is confined to the strictly anti-imperialist aims of that particular movement, this role was a positive one, albeit ambivalent. Gandhi raised and organised the broad popular masses in the struggle for India's independence, and this was an important positive phenomenon, from whichever angle it was approached. No other political or ideological creed in India and no other party enjoyed such mass influence and such an effectively organised following as Gandhism and the National Congress, which were inseparably linked together for the whole of thirty years.

Yet there is another side to this question as well. Gandhism was not only the *ideology* of the national liberation movement; it also introduced into the latter its own specific strategy and *tactics for the anti-imperialist struggle*. Responsible for this among other factors was Gandhi's categorical stipulation that mass action should be of a non-violent character. It was precisely the strategy and tactics of struggle, to which Gandhi's methods of mass action were subordinate, that reflected the other aspect of Gandhism—its historical limitations—which meant that nation-wide pressure brought to bear on the imperialists usually ended in compromises on the part of the national bourgeoisie. In this sense we may safely say that Gandhism, while promoting like no other movement the upsurge of the anti-imperialist struggle, at the same time laid severe limitations on the supreme manifestations of that struggle.

A thorough analysis of the course and character of the national liberation movement of the Indian people in the period between 1918 and 1948 when Gandhism enjoyed almost unchallenged political and organisational influence brings to light a highly important and most interesting feature of the development of the revolutionary process in India. For the whole of that thirty-year period the Indian bourgeoisie succeeded in keeping separate and isolated from each other the movement for independence and the peasants' struggle to gain more land, to achieve a satisfactory solution of the

agrarian question. It would seem at first glance that such separation were impossible, quite unnatural in fact, for the colonial-feudal system, colonial-feudal exploitation were based on the long-standing political alliance of the alien rulers and powerful foreign capitalists, on the one hand, and powerful feudal and semi-feudal Indian landowners, on the other, for precisely these groups together made up the dominant forces in India—a combination of foreign rulers plus their bulwark of local reactionaries—which had to be swept away by a national liberation, agrarian-peasant, bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Yet this did not take place. Agrarian revolution did not become the backbone of the anti-imperialist revolution. The two revolutionary currents did not merge, did not complement each other; they did not achieve that degree of unity and interpenetration providing the necessary prerequisite for the national liberation revolution to be at one and the same time a peasant revolution. Why did the Indian bourgeoisie go out of its way to ensure that the revolutionary process did not develop in that direction?

A considerable section of the Indian bourgeoisie was "territorialised" and this applied not only to the big bourgeoisie but also to the middle and small urban bourgeoisie. As a result of the fact that British capitalists had constantly gone out of their way to hold in check India's independent industrial development, the country's emergent bourgeoisie had to varying extents turned their sights to landownership and bought up estates. This investment in land is a factor of prime importance: what is more they invested not so much in *modern large-scale agriculture* as in *landownership* as such, which often proved more advantageous and reliable during the era of British rule.

This of course does not mean that the heterogeneous Indian bourgeoisie confined itself purely to this particular type of investment. As Indian capital developed, more and more was invested in industry, trade, banks, the infrastructure and large plantations. Yet there was hardly any doubt as to the fact that all types of Indian national capital—from retail and usury capital, that in many respects constituted medieval embryonic forms of capital, to industrial, banking and even monopoly capital—were, and indeed have remained so

up to the present day, bound up with landownership, with the exploitation of the enslaved small peasants, which was consolidated and guaranteed by the state power of the colonialists, their powerful coercive apparatus and virtually military occupation of the country.

This feature of the Indian bourgeoisie gave rise to the specific tactics adopted in a situation where feudal traditions and practices still predominated in rural areas. The nature of the oppressed people's political development and above all the role of bourgeois nationalism serving to blur the contradictions between the classes, and also those within the propertied classes themselves, helped to shape the correlation of political forces in the struggle against the imperialists, giving the bourgeoisie considerable scope for manoeuvring in their dealings with the peasantry. The bourgeoisie made use of the peasantry in the national liberation anti-imperialist struggle while having no truck with any simultaneous promotion of the anti-feudal peasant movement.

All this enabled the bourgeoisie to renounce any active struggle against feudal rulers and landowners, who oppressed the Indian peasants, and led it to compromise with that stratum of society and opt for a reformist course of gradual elimination of feudal practices in rural life after it had assumed power, a course that would be long and excruciating for the peasantry. Indeed, could the Indian bourgeoisie have committed itself to an uprising against the feudal-landowner system, seeing that even before the First World War and particularly so afterwards it was confronted by the emergence of an Indian proletariat and subsequently of a politically aware working class, which led by a politically astute and organised vanguard began to challenge the bourgeoisie's leading role in the liberation movement, albeit at a distance?

Where was the political leader who enjoyed sufficient political influence and had at his disposal a sufficiently strong mass political organisation to lead the peasantry drawing it into the anti-imperialist struggle without fanning the flame of its anti-feudal aspirations?

Gandhi provided just such a leader. There was no other political figure so close to the peasantry, who had a better knowledge of India's five hundred thousand villages than he. The peasants saw in Gandhi a spiritual leader, they virtual-

ly worshipped him. Yet, although his ideas in their own way gave expression to the mounting tide of the peasants' social protest and their social aspirations, and what Lenin referred to as the spinelessness of the patriarchal countryside, when it came to his basic ideological and political stand Gandhi remained undoubtedly a national-bourgeois leader. This explains the situation in which Gandhi and the National Congress were able to channel the social awakening of the peasantry so as to make use of its revolutionary potential in the movement for independence without letting the anti-imperialist struggle grow over into an agrarian social revolution.

Meanwhile it should be remembered that India is a country where the rural population accounts for almost 80 per cent of the total. The transformation of the semi-medieval social structure the bourgeoisie decided to procrastinate until after it had assumed power and to implement these changes in its own way, not so much in the interests of the peasants as in its own interests. The bourgeoisie calculated that precisely at that juncture it would be able to embark on a gradual restructuring of rural life in keeping with its own interests through the bourgeoisification of the landowners and the accelerated cultivation of an entrepreneur stratum of more prosperous peasants at the expense of the masses of poor toilers. The extent to which the bourgeoisie succeeded in accomplishing this and by what methods is another issue all of its own on which a number of articles and books have already been written. Suffice it to point out here that although capitalism in rural India has made conspicuous advances, the bourgeois reform has by no means solved all aspects of the agrarian question. The poor peasants deprived of virtually any rights—those who own or rent tiny plots—still predominate in rural areas; at the same time the numbers of the rural proletariat have grown considerably, a factor which introduces essentially new features to life in these areas.

Developments in India have provided confirmation for the Marxist-Leninist tenet to the effect that there exist within the national liberation movement two trends—on the one hand, the revolutionary-democratic trend, and on the other, the bourgeois-nationalist, reformist trend—and that the national bourgeoisie plays an ambivalent political role. Both trends work towards the elimination of foreign domination



(and in this sense they have common objectives) and this explains the natural alliance that takes shape between the two. A united anti-imperialist front of all forces involved in the national liberation struggle was and remains a vital prerequisite for the attainment and consolidation of national independence. Yet in cases where the revolutionary democrats set themselves the task of accomplishing an agrarian revolution in the course of the national liberation struggle and later also attempt to introduce other social changes in the interests of the people, the representatives of the bourgeois-nationalist, reformist trend adopt, as a rule, a negative attitude towards these and go out of their way to draw a sharp dividing line between the question of power and agrarian and social issues.

Political independence in India led to significant changes in the alignment of class forces in the country, to qualitative changes in the framework of national unity. Gandhism gradually ceased to be the only ideological and political means of uniting different classes. It lost this function because of objective conditions (the country's transition to independent bourgeois development with all the ensuing consequences) and because this turning-point in India's contemporary history almost coincided\* with the assassination of the man whose personal qualities, perhaps as much as his philosophical and political doctrine and activity, did so much towards consolidating India's national forces. In the quarter of a century since India's independence was proclaimed, the trend towards the emergence, ideological separation and independent political organisation of opposing class forces has become more marked and developed considerably. This trend has progressed so far that there is no longer the former foundation, or the former constancy and stability of a united nation-wide front, although the historical inertia of its influence still affects many classes and social strata of contemporary Indian society.

Since India is still often subjected to imperialist pressure,

\* India's independence was proclaimed on August 15, 1947, and Gandhi was killed on January 30, 1948.

national unity to resist this pressure not only plays a historically positive role but also temporarily galvanises, as it were, the emerging interest of all the anti-imperialist, national-revolutionary, national-reformist and proletarian forces in resisting this imperialist pressure. Today the initiative in resisting imperialist pressure is more and more often taken by Left democratic and progressive sections of India. Although the latter are still scattered they are growing stronger and present a serious obstacle to big monopoly capital and feudal Hindu reaction in their drive for power. The parties of Right-wing reaction, whose extremism Gandhi attacked on several occasions, represent a most dangerous alternative to the more influential Centrist current in the Congress, which is still the country's strongest party.

The above-mentioned qualitative changes in the alignment of class forces in India have not, of course, led to the disappearance of Gandhism from the political scene. Gandhi's prestige was too great, and his influence too strong, particularly among the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie, for the concepts of Gandhism no longer to be used in the political struggle, the more so in India's political vocabulary. Gandhian concepts are widely used in the propaganda of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties of different shades. To a certain extent, Gandhism shares the same fate as the former national anti-imperialist unity that developed during the fight for independence. Just like this unity produced cracks and revealed more and more class contradictions, there took place an ideological weakening of Gandhism. Parties to both the Right and the Left of the National Congress have contributed to this ideological weakening. Today bourgeois and petty-bourgeois trends, many of which are rivals, are making use only of isolated Gandhian concepts and ideas in their own interests, usually interpreting them in a tendentious, dogmatic light. But even in the National Congress itself the moral and political values of Gandhism and its economic and social doctrine are now viewed differently.

Gandhism, with its eternal, abstract, Utopian categories that lack dialectical logic, was always inclined to proclaim religious and moral postulates as universal truths in the political struggle. It has become something of a Holy Writ. It has not escaped the sad fate of all such doctrines: groups and

parties with widely differing, mutually exclusive interests, which sometimes have nothing in common with the spirit of the original and the historical activities of its creator, resort to them for corroboration.

Indian reactionaries are trying to take maximum advantage of Gandhi's prestige and the popularity of Gandhism. Both the Right-wing forces within the National Congress and the reactionary Jan Sangh and Swatantra parties seek in Gandhi's social and economic concepts support for their criticism of the sometimes inconsistent, but historically progressive socio-economic changes carried out by the Congress and for attacks on state planning, the state sector, the industrialisation policy, partial restriction of the monopolies and even the essentially half-hearted bourgeois agrarian reform. Reaction is using the name of Gandhi to further evil objectives—to undermine confidence between the peoples of India, even to justify the essentially harmful centrifugal aspirations that are cultivated in certain Indian states by irresponsible elements more interested in weakening and undermining a united multi-national India than in consolidating its unity and might. The forces of reaction are trying to disrupt India's friendly relations with the socialist countries and are kindling enmity towards Indian democrats, progressive forces, the working class and the Communist Party.

Centrist groups in the Indian National Congress refer to Gandhi's idea of non-violence to justify the inconsistency and delays in elaborating and carrying through democratic reforms, as a result of which the very idea of Gandhian non-violence, which was energetic and mobile, and was an appeal to the masses in the period of struggle against imperialism, is being distorted as an unwarrantedly persistent acceptance of chronic and blatant social evils.

It is natural that bourgeois politicians of all shades should find Gandhi's ideas of tutelage, fully understandable in an underdeveloped class society waging a nation-wide struggle against alien rule, an active means for blunting the class consciousness of the working people in a new historical context, when the working class and the toiling peasantry must contend first with big monopoly capital and then with the national bourgeoisie and capitalist landowners who have grown rich and powerful.

Sincere, honest men, of whom there are many, who have remained true to Gandhi's anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, democratic ideals, are subjecting to thorough criticism hypocritical attempts by the bourgeoisie to use Gandhi's prestige to conceal their pursuit of narrowly selfish class interests. Even Gandhi's most faithful pupils and followers, however, men such as Vinoba Bhave, have made a far-reaching reappraisal of values in the framework of Gandhian concepts. On the one hand, they are inclined to narrow the social aspects of Gandhism. On the other, they are afraid to use the proven method of mass non-violent resistance against today's propertied exploiter classes and are gradually replacing the principle of non-violent resistance to social evils with appeals for non-resistance in general. The active social character of Gandhi's ideas and his intervention in social and political life on the side of the masses, even in those specific forms which he employed, are being buried in oblivion by Indian bourgeois politicians and ideologists. Imitators of Gandhism tend to present it exclusively as a path of individual moral perfection and as a categorical demand for reconciliation among all classes.

It should be borne in mind that not everything labelled Gandhism really comes under that heading. There are now fairly widespread attempts in India to use Gandhi's name to further interests which run contrary to the essence of his doctrine. That is why a one-sided notion of Gandhism as the ideology of the Indian bourgeoisie exclusively does not provide a reliable foundation for opposing these attempts and bringing out their truly speculative significance—that of assimilating a popular ideology and placing it completely at the service of capitalism and reaction.

The period that separates us from the Indian people's struggle for independence enables us to appraise Gandhism more objectively today. It is now clear that Gandhism, the ideological and political doctrine which Gandhi created and put into practice, was still, despite its tendency towards frequent compromise with the all-powerful colonial rulers, implacably hostile to colonialism and unswervingly bent on achieving its ultimate goal, national independence. Gandhi's compromises led to a temporary curtailment of the mass movement, but each time, under Gandhi's leadership, the

liberation movement took a new lease of life at a higher level, putting forward more clear-cut demands. Gandhi's life and work show irrefutably that he always remained true to the anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, anti-racialist fight, true to the humanistic, although not in every way realistic ideal of social justice comprehensible to the peasant masses and the people as a whole.

There is still clearly much truth in the description of the social importance of Gandhi's work provided by his outstanding associate Jawaharlal Nehru. "It should be remembered," wrote Nehru, "that the nationalist movement in India, like all nationalist movements, was essentially a bourgeois movement. It represented the natural historical stage of development, and to consider it or to criticise it as a working-class movement is wrong. Gandhi represented that movement and the Indian masses in relation to that movement to a supreme degree, and he became the voice of the Indian people to that extent. He functioned inevitably within the orbit of nationalist ideology, but the dominating passion that consumed him was a desire to raise the masses. In this respect he was always ahead of the nationalist movement, and he gradually made it, within the limits of his own ideology, turn in this direction. . . ."

"It is perfectly true that Gandhi, functioning in the nationalist plane, does not think in terms of the conflict of classes, and tries to compose their differences. But the action he has indulged in and taught the people has inevitably raised mass consciousness tremendously and made social issues vital. And his insistence on the raising of the masses at the cost, wherever necessary, of vested interests has given a strong orientation to the national movement in favour of the masses."\*

Progressive circles in India are anxious to prevent the democratic content of Gandhi's doctrine from being emasculated. Gandhi's name and ideas must not be appropriated by the reactionary bourgeoisie and landowners, who are acting against the interests of the people and ignoring Gandhi's anti-imperialist democratic humanism.

There have always been fundamental ideological and tactical differences between Gandhi's followers and India's

\* J. Nehru, *India and the World*, London, 1936, pp. 172, 175.

consistent progressives, revolutionaries and champions of scientific socialism. But these are the people with the most sincere and deepest respect for Gandhi's activity and noble objectives. It is they who take up Gandhi's democratic and social ideal, lending it meaningful, scientific content, in their fight for a better future for the Indian people. It is they who are using his methods to inspire the masses and rally together a mass movement, appreciating that Gandhi's tactics is one of the universal forms of mass-scale national liberation and class struggle evolved by the world revolutionary movement.

Unity of all the democratic Left forces of India is an urgent priority at the present time. Those who have remained true to the memory of the great champion of India's independence and the best that he introduced into the national liberation movement have a vital part to play in that united stand.

When speaking of trends in ideological and political development, if Gandhism is approached as a political philosophy which the Indian bourgeoisie has adapted to its class needs, then it emerges that two socio-political trends—Gandhism and scientific socialism—are the most widespread in India in a specific social environment, sometimes embracing divergent groups—the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia—and sometimes those of similar social environment—the working class, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie. Although the influence of the ideas of Gandhism, on the one hand, and that of scientific socialism, on the other, were on very different scales in view of the enormous prevalence of Gandhism, taken all in all, the main struggle for influence on the masses has been and still is being waged between these two ideological trends. The Indian bourgeoisie is well aware of this. It welcomed Gandhism back in the years of struggle for independence precisely because it was an ideology that could be used against scientific socialism, which was spreading rapidly in India, especially in educated urban revolutionary circles and among Left-wing democratic youth. The national bourgeoisie, as represented by the Indian National Congress, sought in Gandhism a guarantee against the spread of the ideas of scientific socialism among the working people

while using it at the same time to express nation-wide anti-imperialist interests.

Today too, Gandhism and scientific socialism are the two main trends in the ideological life of Indian society.

What actually is the attitude to Gandhism and scientific socialism in India? Gandhism in modern India is understood in two ways. There is the orthodox understanding of it as a system of Gandhi's anti-imperialist and peasant-socialist views, and there is Gandhism as interpreted by a large number of bourgeois schools which contradict one another (even when it comes to the basic concepts of Gandhism), and which adopt only a few of Gandhi's ideas and refashion them in accordance with their own specific class interests. Gandhism in the first sense—a product of the national liberation struggle of the Indian people—possesses important elements of a democratic nature. This makes it possible to speak of its affinity, in a certain respect, with any genuinely democratic, progressive movement. It could well serve to pave the way for an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-racist, anti-war, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly struggle by all the democratic and progressive forces in India that uphold the interests of the broad popular masses. Supporters of scientific socialism and supporters of Gandhism in a single national-democratic front could constitute a powerful force in the fight for peace, consolidation of national independence, democracy and social progress. All democratic and progressive social movements today, including those in India, have certain goals in common. One of these goals, which Indian Marxists have put forward in recent years, is the restriction and eventual elimination of foreign and local monopoly capitalism and the preparation of conditions for India's gradual abandonment of the path of capitalist development. This grandiose prospect calls for joint efforts; it will give rise to further differentiation among followers of Gandhism but rally together all the more closely all dedicated supporters of social progress.

When it comes to an interpretation of Gandhism that places it at the service of the narrow class interests of India's big bourgeoisie and reactionary forces trying to set Gandhi's social ideals off against the democratic movement, in order to emasculate their anti-capitalist content, any attempt to

find common goals with scientific socialism is utterly pointless. There is no point of contact between them, only a conflict of opposites.

There are features, however, in the genuine, politically untainted understanding of Gandhism which made it easy in the past, and still make it easy, for representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie and Indian reaction to use Gandhism in their own interests. If it had not been for this, the Indian bourgeoisie would never have been able to utilise Gandhism.

An analysis of Gandhism from the standpoint of scientific socialism reveals not only a definite organic link between Gandhism and bourgeois interests and ideas, which is perfectly natural and inevitable in any type of nationalistic reformism and utopian socialism, but also the fact that Gandhism is acceptable to a certain degree from the viewpoint of bourgeois class interests. The combination in Gandhism of a trenchant exposure of capitalist society from moral, religious and ethical positions with the advancement of methods for changing capitalist society that guarantee the stability of its foundations and preserve it, in so far as that is possible, from being brought down by revolution, left no room for doubt that the Indian bourgeoisie would view it with sympathy despite Gandhi's critical attitude to bourgeois morality and the bourgeois way of life.

There are certain affinities in spheres other than the fight for national independence between Gandhism and scientific socialism. Sincere concern for the welfare of the masses and a desire to improve the position of the working people and establish a society of social justice are reflected in Gandhism in its proclamation of the utopian and archaic ideal of *Sarvodaya*. Gandhism, like any other version of utopian socialism or national socialism, reflects a number of principles which scientific socialism advanced more than a hundred years ago: the obligation for all to work, an end to the exploitation of man by man and the division of society into classes, public ownership of the chief means of production, the distribution of material wealth according to work, and a number of other principles. These appear to be the only points of contact between Gandhism and scientific socialism in their approach to the major problems facing Indian society. In all else differences predominate: in criticism of capitalist society,

in the socialist ideal, in methods of fighting to achieve socialism, concepts of classes and the class struggle, the state of the future, and the social and party-political forces destined by history to bring about social justice on earth and which are really in a position to do so. On all these basic questions of the theory and practice of transforming contemporary society scientific socialism stands in opposition to Gandhism, as science does to utopia, materialism to idealism and dialectics to metaphysics.

At times Gandhi came forward with brilliant exposure of capitalist and feudal oppression:

"How exactly do you think the Indian princes, landlords, millowners and moneylenders and other profiteers are enriched?"

"At the present moment, by exploiting the masses," was Gandhi's reply.

"Have these classes any social justification to live more comfortably than the ordinary worker and peasant who does the work which provides the wealth?"

"No justification," replied Gandhi categorically.\* But these were not the all-important motifs in Gandhi's criticism of modern exploiter society. Gandhi's condemnation of "European" civilisation lacks clear-cut social orientation and a knowledge of the real ways and methods of overcoming the social evils he correctly noted. The fact that Gandhi made "European" civilisation the object of his criticism highlighted his censure of European (machine) civilisation, not bourgeois civilisation. Hence, Gandhi's criticism centres around not the capitalist mode of production but machine production in general, whose development the ancestors of the modern Indians categorically opposed. It was in machines that Gandhi saw the source of social evils: unemployment, exploitation, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, and so on. Gandhi does not say that all these consequences of large-scale industry have a historically transitory, class character. The enemy is not the exploiter classes but the machine.

As to the relations between classes in the process of the "cursed machine production", Gandhi did not

\* M. K. Gandhi, *Towards Non-Violent Socialism*, Ahmadabad, 1951, p. 155.

see them as the material, objective foundation of the evils of the exploiter society he castigated. Gandhi saw that class contradictions existed, but he did not attach decisive importance to them, considering them a superstructure on naturally healthy human relations. Conflicts arise and are aggravated by man's greed, self-love, moral degradation and delusions. The normal state of relations between the landowners and the peasants, between the capitalists and the workers should be harmonious co-operation. Gandhi ignored the class-based economic laws of social development. His philosophy of history is idealistic and ignores the political and economic laws governing the historical process. Consequently, Gandhi's ideas about the best and most equitable social changes have a subjective and voluntaristic ring about them. According to Gandhi, people must be filled with a sense of noble morality and then, in time, social justice is certain to prevail. Class peace and the paternalism of the propertied classes in relation to the poor are inherent in Gandhism. If a class struggle does arise it is only because the capitalists and the landowners have ceased to feel responsible, to realise they are the fathers of a big family, that they themselves are part of this family. Of the workers' struggle against the Indian capitalists Gandhi had the following to say: "In the West an eternal conflict has set up between capital and labour. Each party considers the other as his natural enemy. That spirit seems to have entered India also, and if it finds a permanent lodgement it would be the end of our industry and of our peace. If both the parties were to realise that each is dependent on the other, there will be little cause for quarrel."\*

Gandhi did not reckon with the fact that the social and economic conditions of man's public and private life and his bourgeois or feudal mode of producing material wealth and cultural values represent an insurmountable barrier to the universal adherence to lofty moral principles in a class society. Gandhi's non-violent method of changing the world is an old, honest and sincere method, but many years of history, including Indian history, have shown that to appeal to the exploited not to use violence against their exploiters and to the exploiters to be kind to the people they exploit is

\* *Ibid.*, p. 42.

fruitless. Jawaharlal Nehru, one of Gandhi's closest associates, presented and solved such problems in a much more realistic way. In *An Autobiography* he wrote: "If there is one thing that history shows it is this: that economic interests shape the political views of groups and classes. . . . Non-violence . . . can, I think, carry us a long way, but I doubt if it can take us to the final goal. . . . The present conflicts in society, national as well as class conflicts, can never be resolved except by coercion."<sup>\*</sup>

Such, in the most general of outlines, is Gandhi's criticism of "European" civilisation. Such are the concepts which Gandhi advanced almost one hundred years after the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto* and Marx's *Capital*. After the emergence of the world's first socialist country, and in the midst of an incipient revolutionary overthrow of Gandhi's hated "machine civilisation", that is, capitalism, such doctrines sounded utopian, while Gandhi's criticism of capitalism in opposition to the scientific theory of Marxism was simply inept.

Marx, too, passionately exposed the evils of "European" civilisation, not only passionately but also profoundly. However, to Marx the point at issue was not European civilisation but capitalist civilisation. With scientific irrefutability he demonstrated to the world the calamities which machine production had brought the toiling masses. But, said Marx, the fault lies not in machines but in capitalist methods of industrialisation. In exposing these methods he also singled out the historical laws underlying capitalism's colonial seizures, including the British conquest of India with all the horrors committed by "European civilisers" in that country. Marx exposed the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, and the class nature of the introduction of machinery.

Precisely the scientific nature of Marx's criticism of capitalist society led him on to the equally well-grounded and convincing definition of socialism as a society which resolves all the contradictions of the capitalist system. But a socialist society comes into being on the foundations of the material culture of capitalism and uses all the values of technological

\* Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, London, 1940, pp. 544, 551.

progress, first and foremost, large-scale industry, machine production of producer and consumer goods, that capitalism brings in its wake. Gandhi's emotional and romantic approach to his criticism of bourgeois civilisation naturally leads him to an illusory, utopian conception of socialism.

Gandhi was continuing the tradition of the early utopians, who viewed the triumph of abstract ideals of justice as a return to the "golden age". As Gandhi painted it, Sarvodaya, a society of the welfare of all, is an idealised picture of the Indian peasant commune with its closed, self-contained economy, a combination of handicrafts and agriculture, with extremely primitive implements. This commune, which never saved its members from oppression by Asiatic despot, conqueror or feudalistic clan-cum-tribal clique, was always based on the cruel laws of the caste system, and for centuries had isolated the country and its people from the outside world. This idyllic commune has long since vanished from the face of India; it disintegrated, its ancient communal principles inexorably undermined by the spread of a commodity economy and then capitalism, first headed by the British colonialists, and then by India's own bourgeoisie, capitalist landowners and increasing numbers of rich peasants.

Gandhi's Sarvodaya is not so much a reflection of Indian reality in which, it goes without saying, there are no elements of Sarvodaya, as a yearning for the past. Only Gandhi's insufficiently clear idea of the march of history and the inevitable evolution of human society from a lower to a higher stage could present an archaic picture of Sarvodaya as an ideal for the future. Since, according to Gandhi, all movement forward and modern machine civilisation give rise to social calamities and moral torment and suffering for the people, the only way out is a return, by an effort of its power, to the simple morals and manners of the patriarchal past. Gandhi bids men look not to the future but to the past. Support for a new society, he proposes, should be sought not in the increasingly stronger elements of social progress that capitalism unwittingly produces, but in preserving the survivals of doomed forms of production and social practices.

Even if we assume something that is quite impossible—that a society of the Sarvodaya type could be artificially created, this would by no means lead to the establishment of

the principles of socialism. The extreme technical backwardness of such a society would be a great hindrance to economic, cultural and moral progress. Slogans about universal plenty, a rise in cultural standards and other appeals would cease to have any bearing on reality. What is more, in this artificial social unit, re-created and isolated from its natural environment, the implacable internal laws of social development would begin to operate and produce the same elements of decay and disintegration that once before in the course of a long period of historical change caused the Indian commune to degenerate into an archaic institution sanctifying, through ancient customs (now of a pseudo-democratic nature), feudal and capitalist exploitation, and more often than not a mixture of both.

Any analysis of Gandhism from the standpoint of scientific socialism usually devotes particular attention, and quite correctly so, to the problem of ways and methods of achieving social change. Gandhism made non-violent resistance to evil its rallying standard. The discovery and implementation of this method are ascribed to Gandhi. Marxism is described by some of its critics, including a number of Gandhi's followers who obtained their information about Marxism second-hand, often from unreliable sources, as a resolute denial of the very principle of non-violence, as a synonym for exclusively sanguinary armed struggle and an intrinsically violent armed movement. Such notions and such an interpretation of the difference between the Gandhian and scientific socialist stand on the question of force and non-violence naturally suit the ideological opponents of scientific socialism. However they have no factual basis and nothing to do with the real attitude of scientific socialism to the forms, methods, means and paths of struggle for national and social liberation.

Few people today believe that supporters of scientific socialism, true revolutionaries, as opposed to dogmatists and adventurists, always support violent struggle everywhere. Such views are completely at variance with the historical truth; they contradict both the theory and revolutionary practice of Marxism.

Marxists-Leninists have always been ready to take advantage of any opportunity, no matter how small, to advance the

national liberation movement and social revolution by peaceful means, and have always believed that the basic interests of the working class and all working people make peaceful methods preferable to armed struggle. Gandhi's non-violence methods, stripped of their metaphysical and religious basis, are in fact nothing other than peaceful, unarmed methods of struggle. Gandhi did not discover them, although it is obvious that he played an outstanding role in developing them and applying them against the rule of the British colonialists and South African racialists and in lending them a genuinely mass character, which made them infinitely more effective. Long before Gandhi appeared on the Indian political scene all, or almost all the methods from the arsenal of Satyagraha, from hunger-strikes, demonstrations, local and general strikes, and non-payment of taxes to the boycott of colonialist and racialist authorities, had been widely used by all manner of peoples, the international working-class and the national liberation movement. Moreover, the peasant movement in Western Europe, Russia, Latin America and many Asian countries in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and the working-class movement from the 18th century onwards were all familiar with the above-mentioned forms and methods of struggle. Gandhi was not the first to invent and use these means and methods of mass struggle, but he was the first to use them widely in the struggle against the British colonialists and, at the same time, to present them as the only moral means and methods conforming with religious tradition.

The history of the national liberation struggle in India includes powerful anti-colonialist revolts, general strikes by the proletariat, mass peasant movements and a widespread student and youth movement. It includes armed uprisings by workers, peasants, sailors of the Indian fleet and soldiers of the Anglo-Indian army. In the history of the Indian liberation movement we find great examples of courage and self-sacrifice. Specifically proletarian, revolutionary methods of struggle played an enormous part in the movement, sometimes shaping its overall nature (as in 1947). But the backbone of the most mass forms of the movement was, of course, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie who followed Gandhi.

Gandhism made non-violence the only and the universal method of struggle, one that would supposedly solve with the least pain all the national and social contradictions in a class society or an oppressed country. Experience showed, however, that this is not so. Scientific socialism correctly refuses, in full accordance with mankind's practical experience gleaned over the centuries, and primarily the experience of the struggle waged by the working class and the peasantry of all countries, to make any particular methods of struggle absolute, turn them into dogma, or impose them on the masses uncritically, ignoring the specific demands of given periods, political situations and historical and national conditions.

When the fierce resistance of foreign colonialists or a country's own bourgeoisie and landowners renders peaceful methods ineffective and when an armed struggle is unleashed, that is, a war against the people, Marxists propose, with due regard for the concrete situation, a transition to more decisive methods of struggle, right up to the highest form of the class struggle, armed uprising and civil war. When the followers of Gandhi are forced to recognise that they cannot achieve their demands and ideals through non-violent methods because of the violence of the colonialists, they put forward the argument that the popular masses are not ready for victory because they have not adhered to the religious-ethical principles of non-violent resistance and because they have rather often justly used force in reply to the force used by the colonialists. Gandhi's followers then urge the masses not to take an interest in the final results of the movement, to abandon it, and demand that the masses reconcile themselves to the impossibility of attaining the goals of the struggle and seek consolation in the knowledge that they have performed their moral and religious duty. This is the real difference between Gandhism and scientific socialism on the question of methods of mass struggle.

Nehru's attitude to the problem of methods of struggle is of interest. Paying a deeply respectful tribute to Gandhi, he declared: "... for us and for the National Congress as a whole the non-violent method was not, and could not be a religion or an unchallengeable creed or dogma. It could only be a policy and a method promising certain results, and by those

results it would have to be finally judged. Individuals might make of it a religion or incontrovertible creed. But no political organisation, so long as it remained political, could do so."<sup>\*</sup> Nehru's words require no explanation. Methods of mass struggle can never be universally applicable once and for all. They evolve from a particular situation, the objectives and results of the struggle and, in addition, the conduct of the enemy. If he does not surrender but uses violence against the people, he must be made to surrender by arms being taken up against him, when the situation calls for it, in the name of humanism.

Political organisation is of tremendous importance for the forces of democracy and peace. Therefore, the question of a vanguard political party and a socialist state, and the attitude adopted towards them by fighters for national freedom and social justice is of paramount importance. In this matter Gandhism cannot provide a reliable guide for the working people, although Gandhi had much just, trenchant criticism to make of the bourgeois state, bourgeois democracy and, in particular, colonialism and racialism.

Scientific socialism regards the socialist state as the main instrument for rebuilding society, and the party as the most reliable and only possible political organisation of like-minded people that can prepare for and carry out revolutionary changes. Scientific socialism confronts the working people with the complex, galvanising task of organising themselves politically, relying on the party, and under its leadership settling in their own favour the question of state power, the basic question in any revolution, and thus gaining possession of a powerful instrument with which to shape the life and structure of society for the benefit of the exploited working people.

Gandhism proceeds from the anarchistic concept of the state as an absolute evil, and even when Gandhi was forced to admit that the independent national state can and should be used to further progress, he still chose to have no truck with power since, in his opinion, all power corrupts. This is the position from which some modern followers of Gandhi appeal to the working people, proposing that the latter should

\* Jawaharlal Nehru, *Mahatma Gandhi*, Bombay, 1966, pp. 49-50.



reconcile themselves to seeing representatives of the privileged classes stand at the helm of power. Gandhism does not suggest that the working people should create their own political parties, but it is not against men of labour having comparatively low forms of organisation. The political arena is thus left to experienced members of the educated class, the bourgeois intelligentsia, and the bourgeoisie itself. This leaves the working people disarmed in the face of their class enemy, who is fully armed with state power and a party organisation.

Gandhi was always in favour of the masses being involved in social movements. This is one of his greatest merits. It can be said without exaggeration that Gandhi's name, his anti-imperialist policy and tactics and his bold appeal to the people are connected with the transition of the Indian liberation movement from bourgeois loyalty to the colonialists, deference to British civilisation (such a marked feature of the National Congress before Gandhi) and petty-bourgeois terrorism of the extremists, to a genuinely popular movement for independence. Nevertheless, Gandhism and scientific socialism differ in their understanding of the role of the masses. Supporters of scientific socialism try to awaken and develop the revolutionary potential of the working people and make full use of it. They try to stimulate the initiative of the masses and give their revolutionary energy an outlet in diverse and purposeful forms of struggle. They have faith in the masses and their revolutionary creativity, their ability not only to destroy what has outlived itself and is hindering progress, but to build a new and better society. Gandhism always keeps the masses within the bounds of non-violent resistance. It needs the masses to carry out the leaders' will, but they can be allowed to act only within the strictly defined limits of peaceful resistance. Gandhism has always contained an element of deep distrust of the independent revolutionary creativity of the masses in the liberation movement. From this it is clear why the attitude of Gandhism to the masses is based on the tutelage formula.

Better than anyone else Gandhi knew how to stir up the masses of the Indian people against the colonialists, but at the same time he knew better than anyone else how to hold the masses back from open revolution, from revolutionary

action, thereby leaving himself the possibility of conducting negotiations with the colonial authorities. It is obvious that these tactics made Gandhi the most outstanding leader of a liberation movement led by the bourgeoisie.

Here we have the starting-point of two different approaches to the working class. For Marxists-Leninists the working class is the advanced class, destined by history to play the leading role in the struggle for a just society. To Gandhi it was a product of "satanic, European civilisation", a class which was still too immature for political life and did not yet understand either its place in political life or the needs of the nation. Scientific socialism stakes its all on the industrial proletariat. Gandhism views the industrial proletariat as a potential opponent of the implementation of the principles of non-violence, fears its political activity, and seeks to limit its efforts to a reformist fight for higher living standards. "I don't deny that such strikes can serve political ends. But they do not fall within the plan of non-violent non-co-operation. It does not require much effort to perceive that it is a most dangerous thing to make political use of labour until labourers understand the political conditions of the country and are prepared to work for the common good. This is hardly to be expected of them all of a sudden and until they have bettered their own condition so as to enable them to keep body and soul together in a decent manner. The greatest political contribution, therefore, that labourers can make is to improve their own condition."\* From this follows Gandhi's negative attitude to the idea of setting up an advanced political party of the proletariat.

All the above-mentioned features, fundamental to Gandhism, also come to the fore in the attitude to the social system that exists in India today and to the classes which dominate it. The attitude of these classes to scientific socialism is irreconcilable, for they see it as uncompromisingly hostile to the very foundations of capitalist life. The ruling classes have always regarded Gandhism with definite sympathy. In popularising Gandhism many ideologists of the Indian bourgeoisie endeavour to establish it as the world outlook of the Indian people. This despite the fact that Gandhi and his faithful

\* Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India 1919-1922*, Madras, 1922, p. 736.

followers were subjectively sincerely opposed to capitalism. Why is this happening? The fact of the matter is that although Gandhism is anti-capitalistic, the fundamental characteristics of Gandhism already discussed do not threaten India's capitalist development in any way. Gandhism has become, as it were, an organic part of the bourgeois order in contemporary India, which in a number of economic spheres has reached the stage of monopoly capitalism. Bourgeois ideologists are trying to find a new way of using Gandhism to protect the present social system from encroachment on the part of the exploited classes.

Gandhi's non-violence methods proved to be sufficiently effective in the struggle against the colonialists for national independence. Combined with non-Gandhian methods, at times with extreme, violent methods of struggle to which the masses resorted despite Gandhi, Gandhi's non-violent resistance led to the establishment of an independent Indian state. But ever since the establishment of independence Gandhi's doctrine has proved powerless to change in any substantial way the position of hundreds of millions of working people.

The objective task of the ruling classes in India today is to splinter the working-class movement and weaken the influence of Left circles and the ideology of scientific socialism. Hence their flexible combination of diverse means of class struggle, ranging from political manoeuvring to brutal repression, from popularisation of the utopian ideas of Gandhism, "Indian socialism", to the terror of the Shiv Sena, the latter-day fascist organisation set up by Bombay monopolists to frighten the working people. The only really significant application of Gandhian methods in India today is when they are used to further the interests of the working people, against the interests of the bourgeoisie, when Left circles use them in mass Satyagraha campaigns conducted to back up the socio-economic and socio-political demands of the working people.

Modern Gandhism has preserved its general-democratic features. These have not lost their importance, especially in view of the intensive penetration of American capital and its ideology into India and the offensive of the Indian monopolies. On this foundation—an anti-imperialist, anti-mo-

nopoly movement—broad co-operation among democratic, progressive forces is still possible.

In the post-war period and especially in the past few years a number of non-Marxist ideological trends in the national liberation movement have been developing in the direction of a rapprochement with scientific socialism (national democracy). Gandhism has not developed along this path. While stressing the democratic content of Gandhism, we cannot ignore the fact that Gandhism as represented by the majority of its contemporary followers is tending to veer further and further away from scientific socialism.

Gandhism has long been a subject of investigation by Soviet scholars. In the past, mistakes have been made in Soviet literature on this subject, stemming from a somewhat one-sided approach, which has been justly and tellingly criticised. The mistakes were due to many factors, among them the long period during which India was isolated from the Soviet Union and the international working-class movement, an inadequate knowledge of India and of the specific conditions obtaining there and profoundly unique national traditions so vividly reflected in Gandhism. A sectarian approach to a number of major questions of the general-democratic stage in the Indian national liberation revolution, including an underestimation of the anti-imperialist role of the Indian national bourgeoisie, also considerably influenced Soviet research into Indian affairs in the thirties and forties. Appraisals of Gandhism in Soviet Marxist literature were also shaped by the lack of unity in the tactics advocated within the national liberation movement in India, which sometimes resulted in political forces, objectively destined to fight together against imperialism, fighting imperialism separately at various periods, and sometimes even fighting amongst themselves. Finally, the objective difficulty of studying a phenomenon as complex and contradictory as Gandhism should also be taken into account. In the ardour of anti-imperialist struggle and ideological polemics between Marxists and national-reformists not everyone succeeded in fully comprehending the phenomenon and its many facets.

During the last twenty years friendly ties with India have grown much closer and now extend to a wide range of fields.

This means that Soviet specialists have much better opportunities for profound and creative study of India's recent history.

Latter works of historical research have introduced us to political and ideological developments in India at the turn of the century when Gandhi first came into his own as a thinker and public figure while leading the Indian movement in South Africa against racial oppression. During that period Gandhi kept in close contact with his native country where despite the seemingly indestructible rule of the British colonialists a national liberation movement was taking shape. Two main trends had already emerged in that movement—the liberal trend associated mainly with the upper echelons of the propertied classes that were embarking on bourgeois development, and the democratic radical-nationalist trend that gave voice to the tide of protest against India's enslavement that was mounting among the people including wide circles of the emergent Indian bourgeoisie.

Progressive figures in the movement for national liberation appealed to the people to embark on a decisive struggle against colonial rule and voiced the mounting indignation of the popular masses against the medieval social oppression, against the yoke of landowners and moneylenders, against ruthless exploitation in the capitalist industry that was appearing on the Indian horizon. However, as a rule, their democratism was actually confined to the bourgeois nationalism of an oppressed nation which inevitably blurred and concealed class contradictions and at best gave rise to a striving for social compromise.

Nevertheless dreams of a society free of exploitation and oppression, although of a profoundly utopian character, were taking shape as a result of social processes such as the awakening of national consciousness and deepening of social contradictions as bourgeois relations started to develop, as patriarchal patterns of life were disrupted and the peasant masses impoverished in the light of the merciless advance of foreign capital, as "Indian" capitalism started to spread rapidly throughout the country, as the people's indignation against national and medieval social oppression approached breaking-point, and, last but not least, as certain sections of the Indian intelligentsia started to acquaint themselves not

only with enlightened liberal-bourgeois social thought but also with criticism of bourgeois society; all this determined the trends of thought to be found among progressive leaders lending their ideological searchings a democratic slant. Their social views had certain elements in common with Russian Narodism and the ideas of Lev Tolstoi. However a socio-historical comparison of the ideas that linked Gandhi and Tolstoi starting out from Lenin's analysis of the great Russian writer's world outlook reveals major differences between the essentially bourgeois-nationalist political stand adopted by Gandhi and Tolstoi's position.

Gandhi's national liberation and democratic aspirations explain the important fact that as leader of the anti-imperialist movement in India he was greatly influenced by the first Russian revolution, which stimulated the awakening of the peoples of Asia, including the Indian people. Among other aspects of the momentum this revolution lent the Indian struggle was Gandhi's embracing of Tolstoi's critical approach, and of the experience (naturally within the limits of his own overall attitudes) of organised mass liberation struggle; Gandhi regarded the all-Russia political strike in October 1905 as a "great lesson" for Indian patriots and appealed to them to manifest "the same strength" as the Russians on that occasion.

Gandhi did not have an adequate grasp of scientific socialism and could not embrace its principles. Yet not only his destiny as leader of the Indian national liberation movement but also the subsequent evolution of his social ideas showed undeniable traces of the influence of the victorious Great October Socialist Revolution which, over several decades, was to leave its mark on the development of the Indian people's anti-imperialist struggle and create important pre-conditions for its upsurge. Without abandoning his nationalist outlook and while criticising Bolshevism on account of its atheistic character and its adherence to class struggle, Gandhi nevertheless acknowledged the greatness of the "Bolshevik ideal" and looked upon Lenin as a great spirit and was full of admiration for the selflessness of the Russian Communists. At the time when the liberation struggle in India was particularly intense and its fighters were being subjected to cruel repression by the British, Gandhi often

referred to the experience of the Soviet people and their moral integrity; he saw the Soviet Union as the defender of the working people and the exploited masses throughout the whole world. Another significant point is that as the national liberation movement developed a good number of its foremost participants adopted a scientific socialist stand and many Indian patriots, regardless of their political views, gleaned inspiration from the achievements of socialism in the USSR. Gandhi's views on a number of important aspects of the democratic transformation of Indian society gradually evolved in a progressive direction.

At the present time any ideological or political trend of significance that has won recognition and can claim to be acknowledged as democratic or progressive is inevitably held up against the greatest social movement of the modern age, against the most advanced world outlook—Marxism-Leninism. This reflects the profound respect in which scientific socialism is held: it has become an irresistible material force which through the experience and action of hundreds of millions of people has demonstrated the possibility of an effectual and just transformation of society by means of class struggle and social revolution.

Many Indians who honestly and sincerely share Gandhi's outlook attempt to compare Gandhism with Marxism in order to promote their influence among the masses. Usually they point out that Gandhism took up the finest principles of scientific socialism, but outstripped the latter from a humanist point of view and went on to adapt these principles to India's needs. In adopting this approach Gandhi's followers acknowledge the power of the impact produced on the popular masses by socialist ideas, an impact all the greater in view of the fact that these ideas are backed up by the obvious and incontestable successes scored by the socialist countries in comparison with the record of the developing countries who are still following the capitalist path. There are of course other supporters of Gandhism who are less objective and who oppose communism. For them any comparison between Gandhism and Marxism is merely used to brand the ideas of Marx and Lenin and scientific socialism as obsolete and declare that these ideas have been overtaken by this or that new doctrine including up-dated bourgeois Gandhism. For

Marxists-Leninists a scientific comparison of these two ideologies provides a criterion for an assessment of the theory and practice of Gandhism.

When considering Gandhism in comparison with scientific socialism fundamental differences come to light, including diametrically opposed solutions for central philosophical and sociological problems. Yet these differences between the two systems and the two methods of social transformation should not conceal the fact that the two ideologies have objectively been, remain and can still be allies in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism, war and reaction.

Lenin was well aware that the world revolutionary process could gain powerful irresistible momentum from the objective and irreconcilable clash of interests between a wide range of social forces, on the one hand, and the forces of imperialism and bourgeois reaction, on the other. Hence his appeal for a close alliance and interaction of the proletarian vanguard in the West with the peasant masses, the oppressed peoples of the East. Precisely this tenet of Lenin's concerning the unity of all anti-imperialist forces underlies the strategy adopted today by the international working-class and communist movement in the struggle against imperialism as mankind's principal enemy and against the imperialists' allies in the newly liberated countries. Lenin was convinced that the proletariat standing at the head of the world revolutionary struggle would not form or make arbitrary random choice of its allies. These allies would emerge in the course of the development of society and of the struggles within that society, and any genuinely popular movement aspiring after ideals of national freedom and social justice, regardless of the stand it adopted to scientific socialism, in view of its democratic or anti-imperialist implications would provide an ally in the international proletarian class struggle.

Lenin's attitude to Gandhism exemplifies this approach in the context of the movement against the rule of the British imperialists in India. Since the very beginning of the twentieth century India had attracted his attention and in the years when socialist rule was asserting itself in Russia, Lenin paid particularly close attention to that great country seeing the liberation struggle of the Indian people as a force capable of inflicting defeat on the British imperialists who at that time

appeared unassailable. Lenin revealed profound insight into all the internal contradictions of Gandhism, the illusory nature of the ideas put forward by this "Tolstoian-Indian" concerning progress and of his well-intentioned dreams of setting up the Kingdom of God on earth by appealing to the colonialists' and exploiters' sense of moral duty. It was none other than Lenin in his debate with M. N. Roy, trying at the beginning of the twenties to foist upon the Comintern his concept of the national bourgeoisie as a counter-revolutionary force, who upheld his interpretation of Gandhi's ideas and methods as a revolutionising factor in the Indian national liberation movement and who came out in favour of supporting Gandhi's anti-imperialist objectives and co-operating with him.

Lenin, while remaining an irreconcilable opponent of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist ideology and campaigning for the organisational and political independence of the proletarian vanguard, succeeded in encouraging, supporting and making maximum use of all anti-imperialist, democratic, humanist, subjective-socialist elements inherent in such ideology in the interests of the world revolutionary movement. When evaluating Gandhism Lenin ascribed decisive importance to its democratic and anti-imperialist character. Marxists-Leninists did not push into the background their fundamental differences with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism, differences that were quite apparent to the Marxists-Leninists. Yet Lenin meanwhile did not make of these differences an insuperable barrier to the cohesion of all anti-imperialist forces. Leaving all dogmatic prejudice to one side, basing his attitudes on the concrete historical situation and acknowledging the actual conditions and scope of the movement, Lenin called upon those forces in the plebeian, peasant, petty-bourgeois masses in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, whose counterparts had played a revolutionary role in Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, to become actively involved in the national liberation movement. Most revealing in this connection is Lenin's attitude to the "subjective socialism" of Sun Yat-sen. Methodologically Lenin's assessment of Sun Yat-sen's work has a direct bearing on Gandhi's ideas for these also embody the spontaneous aspirations of the peasant and

petty-bourgeois masses who have not yet abandoned the illusion that it is possible to attain social justice without class struggle without working-class leadership.

The world communist movement and national liberation struggle of the Indian people developed at one and the same time, profoundly interacting and influencing one another. The main stages of the struggle for national liberation in India inevitably reflected the course of the struggle of the Indian working class to assert its class and national interests.

The wide-scale non-co-operation campaign against the British (1919-1922) in India, which made Gandhi a national leader, provided, as it were, an echo of the October Revolution in Russia, and bore the imprint of the mass action of the, as yet young, Indian working class that took the form of general strikes and hartals among the urban poor and the peasants. This campaign was in keeping with the spirit of Russia's October Revolution since it was of a genuinely popular character and furthered the political awakening of tens of millions of Indians. It was precisely in this connection that Gandhi's role was such a great one. Post-war successes scored in the Indian people's national liberation struggle also drew strength from the heightened activity of the democratic movement throughout the world that followed on the rout of the most aggressive detachment of the world imperialist camp and to which the world's first socialist country had made the all-important contribution. In their turn the victories scored by the national liberation forces in India that were undermining the imperialist system provided support and inspiration for the most consistent and uncompromising champions of the fight against imperialism, namely, the Communists. For years the international working-class and communist movement had been marching alongside the fighters for national liberation and this made possible the collapse of the imperialist colonial system. The cherished dream of the colonialists has always been to disrupt that alliance.

In the past and to this day the imperialists have been going out of their way to prevent the international working-class, communist and national liberation movements from setting up a united front, making wide use of subtle methods of anti-communist propaganda. Imperialist and reactionary ideologists present as "communist infiltration and subversion"

all instances of boldness and consistency in the struggle for anti-imperialist unity, national interests, and social progress. Gandhi has also come in for attack from these quarters: he has been accused of entertaining communist sympathies even by some public figures who supported Indian nationalist aspirations. The first nation-wide non-co-operation campaign in India (1919-1922) led even some of the Congress moderates to fear that it might promote the spread of Bolshevism in India.

However, consistent and far-sighted representatives of the national movement in no way shared these fears. While adhering to their original ideological stand they nevertheless saw in the October Revolution and the successful socialist transformations implemented in the USSR a source of inspiration, an example for development and powerful support for the struggle against imperialism. "I had no doubt," wrote Jawaharlal Nehru, "that the Soviet revolution had advanced human society by a great leap and had laid the foundations for the 'new civilisation' toward which the world would advance."<sup>\*</sup> Nehru also noted that Rabindranath Tagore "became an admirer of the great achievements of the Russian revolution, especially in the spread of education, culture, health, and the spirit of equality."<sup>\*\*</sup>

Gandhi's attitude to socialist transformations in the USSR was more complex and contradictory. This can be explained by his unusual conceptions of progress and absolutising of the principle of non-violence. There can be no denying that Gandhi numbered among those representatives of the Indian national movement who adopted a positive attitude to the achievements of the world's first socialist revolution and appreciated how fruitful had been its influence for the anti-imperialist struggle.

Gandhi's scope for theory and action being limited by his refusal to recognise any doctrine other than non-violence, which he set up as the universal and eternal principle for relations between men, regardless of the social or class structure of the society in which they lived, this led him to underline first and foremost his negative attitude to violence

<sup>\*</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, New York, 1946, p. 16.

<sup>\*\*</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

when assessing the fundamental differences between himself and the Bolsheviks. Yet despite this Gandhi paid due tribute to the communist ideal maintaining that communism meant a model society, an ideal worth fighting for. Gandhi did not deny the merits and achievements of the Soviet Union, in particular the elimination of private ownership of land; he deeply admired the heroism and diligence of Soviet men and women and the sacrifices which they had made in the name of the revolution and the victory over nazism, and he entertained profound respect for Lenin. On a number of occasions Gandhi acknowledged the positive impact which Indian revolutionaries, opponents of his non-violent tactics, had produced on the course of the national liberation movement, rallying its members to take bold steps against the imperialists. While failing to agree in principle with the methods of anti-imperialist struggle extending beyond the limits of non-violent resistance, Gandhi was to declare in 1944 that in the historical perspective all forms of struggle advanced the country's independence.

The fundamental ideological differences between scientific socialism and Gandhism remain valid to this day. However the objective interests of the international working class and the national liberation movement make it imperative that all anti-imperialist forces should unite. The finest representatives of the Indian working-class and national liberation movement have always been convinced that this unity was necessary. This appeal for unity of the anti-imperialist forces acquires particular significance at the present time when the imperialists, relying on the support of their old and new allies in the recently liberated countries, India among them, are going out of their way to retain their economic and political influence and to this end are working hand in hand with the local bourgeois-landowner and communalist reactionaries against those honest followers of Gandhi in the Indian National Congress who are anxious to help the country out of the cul-de-sac, into which it has been led by the adherents of neo-colonialist capitalism, and on to the path of social progress. Precisely these followers of Gandhi's, in accordance with their leader's teaching, are opposing the domination of big capital, Indian and foreign monopolies and their enslavement of the Indian people.

The voice of the selfless champion of India's independence and convinced campaigner for equality and social justice echoes through the masses of the Indian people deeply anxious to achieve a brighter future and progress in their interests, not the selfish interests of the big bourgeoisie and landowners.

Soviet men and women hold in deep respect the outstanding son of the Indian people, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, in view of the enormous contribution he made to the anti-imperialist struggle against colonialism in general, and to the cause of his own country's liberation from the domination of alien rulers. Soviet people are fully aware of the fact that Gandhi was always in the very midst of the people of India, led the life of the people and voiced their hopes and aspirations. He always drew inspiration from the bitter struggle that he waged against the British rulers, from the dedication and courage of the common people. He tried honestly and sincerely to lighten their lot, protect them from disaster, and inspire them to seek a new and more perfect society.

Decades of stubborn struggle against British imperialism ended in victory for the Indian people. In the memory of the Indian people Gandhi's name will always enjoy the deepest respect. The Soviet people, who have always felt the greatest sympathy for the revolutionary and creative efforts of the masses, sincerely join them in this.

Never before since Indian independence have political developments been so intense as in the recent period. Since July-August 1969 a fierce political struggle has been going on between the patriotic, progressive forces and the reactionaries who closely collaborate with the Indian monopolies and imperialist circles. This struggle which assumes a variety of forms, some of them most unexpected, is spreading to more and more parts of the country and involving wide sections of the Indian population. The basic question at issue is the path of development which India should follow.

Political leaders of various shades agree as a rule on one point: in many respects the outcome of the present struggle will determine whether the country shall take the path of national rebirth and genuine social progress bringing a new,

better life to tens and hundreds of millions of working people, or the nation's interests and the interests of the broad popular masses will be sacrificed to the selfish designs of Indian big monopoly capital, that collaborates with American and British capital, and the old feudal and new semi-feudal elements in the countryside.

Undeniable success has been scored by independent India in setting up a new economy of its own. The state sector is gradually becoming more powerful and is coming to dominate in a number of branches. It has played an important part in undermining the power of the monopolies, the influence of foreign capital and closing the gap between levels of economic development in different parts of the country. Cultural facilities and the health and education services are being expanded effectively. Tangible improvements have also been made in the training of personnel for industry, science and technology, in the building up of national statehood and in the implementation, albeit at a very slow pace, of partial bourgeois agrarian reform. During the last ten years industrial production has increased by almost 200 per cent and agricultural production by 50 per cent.

The agrarian reforms that have already been introduced in India, despite their inconsistency (they have not fully solved the land problem in the interests of the peasant and neither have they eliminated outdated production relations in the Indian village), have dealt an appreciable blow at the feudal landowners, the princes and zamindars. With government support large agrotechnical schemes have been set under way that are generally referred to as the "green revolution". Although it is mainly the rural entrepreneur, the landowner-cum-capitalist and the more prosperous peasant who have gained the maximum benefit from these reforms, they have nevertheless made possible a certain rise in grain production (110 million tons were available for 550 million inhabitants in 1971). This enabled India to curtail its grain imports from the United States that were such a burden on the country's economy.

In point of fact Indian agriculture is going through a period of accelerated capitalist development. Goaded on by high prices for agricultural produce against the background of a constant shortage of grain, rural entrepreneurs make the

most of agrarian reforms, which are by no means really satisfactory from the point of view of the toiling peasantry, buying tractors, fertilisers and using improved seed and implements. As a result they are able, on the one hand, to achieve considerably increased yields and commodity output, and, on the other, to drive off the land poor tenant-farmers, turning some of the latter into hired labourers.

Thus it can be seen how India's economic development is being subjected to far-reaching changes. In recent years the transition from an economy on colonial patterns to the implementation of bourgeois reforms has been proceeding particularly rapidly. Major strides towards economic progress have been accompanied by rapid growth and concentration of wealth and control exerted over the economy by a small exploiting minority, while the position of the masses of the Indian working people has remained virtually the same. Only a small stratum of highly qualified blue- and white-collar workers and the more prosperous peasants have attained improved material standards; the living standards of the bulk of the working people in town and country, who number hundreds of millions, have if anything deteriorated. The polarisation of social classes, the rich and the poor, has continued apace.

By the mid-sixties in the context of India's so-called mixed economy (that embraces a state sector, monopolies, large-, medium- and small-scale private enterprise) the economic power of a small group of Indian monopolies had consolidated considerably. Seventy-five enormous monopolistic trading-cum-industrial and banking concerns and firms were controlling almost 55 per cent of the total holding of the 25,000 non-government joint-stock companies and banks. India presented a classical example of concentration of industry and centralisation of capital: a handful of large monopolies on the strength of their economic power was virtually controlling the whole private sector and endeavouring to set it up in opposition to the state sector, slow down the pace of the latter's development and assert its domination over it.

To avert the concentration of economic power in private hands and the emergence of new monopolies was one of the main reasons for the state regulation of the economy that was introduced by the country's ruling party, the Indian Na-

tional Congress. The credit for the elaboration and initial implementation of the anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist policy both at home and abroad goes to Nehru. Even before him Gandhi had drawn attention to the need to carry on the struggle against foreign imperialism and big Indian capital.

In their turn the Indian monopolies, hand in glove with foreign capitalists, openly opposed official state policy in their economic programme. Their programme was based on the demand for all-round unrestricted co-operation with foreign capital, for confining public ownership to the narrow limits of the infrastructure, i.e., to the task of setting up auxiliary branches of the economy (power, transport, etc.), so that large-scale capital need not invest in these capital-intensive branches where no large profits were to be had, and for a minimum of planned state regulation and control of the economy. In the socio-political sphere the Indian monopolies demanded restrictions on democratic freedoms, the trade union rights of the working people, a halting of agrarian reforms and the banning of the Communist Party, etc.

In the second half of the sixties by virtue of the laws inherent in capitalist development, Indian monopoly capital succeeded in substantially consolidating its economic strength. After the death of Nehru the influence it exerted on the Indian National Congress leadership grew considerably stronger: this influence was used against the working people in both town and country. During the economic crisis of 1965-1968 Indian monopoly capital succeeded in pushing through a number of concessions vital to its own interests. These dealt a tangible blow at the interests of wide strata of the population, including the petty and middle bourgeoisie on whose shoulders the monopolies went out of their way to shift the whole burden of the difficulties then facing the Indian economy.

Meanwhile opposition to the monopolies among the working class, peasantry, petty and middle bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia grew apace. Even the big bourgeoisie outside the monopolies expressed their concern at the situation which had taken shape. The struggle between the supporters of monopoly capital and those social groups which were opposing it from a general-democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-monop-



olist stand began to dominate political life in India. This struggle was rife even within the actual ruling party. The monopolies had already long since found their obedient henchmen within that party in the Right-wing group known as the "Syndicate".

After the general elections of 1967 and the by-elections in a number of states in 1969 the struggle between anti-monopolist, Left-Centrist forces in the Congress and the Right-wing reactionary elements which were aligning themselves more and more openly with the chauvinist parties Jan Sangh and Swatantra became particularly fierce. These elections served to bring to the public attention the crisis that had been mounting within the National Congress for a long time, they pointed to the Congress's declining influence in democratic strata. A real danger that the veteran anti-imperialist party might be ousted from power was in the air.

In this situation the National Congress leadership was well aware that new steps were vital in order to consolidate the party's position that had been shaken. Yet there was no agreement among the party leaders as to how this should best be done. Discussion of this question served to exacerbate the struggle between the Right elements, on the one hand, and the Left and the Centre, on the other.

The Left-Centrist forces in the National Congress led by Indira Gandhi were in favour of introducing progressive anti-monopoly measures, such as nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies and certain vital branches of industry and accelerating agrarian reform, etc. They also promised to ensure wider scope for the activities of the petty and middle bourgeoisie and introduce certain measures designed to improve the lot of the working people, including the most unfortunate sector of Indian society—the agricultural labourers and the poor.

Supporters of monopoly business in the ruling party, in collaboration with the reactionary parties Jan Sangh and Swatantra, launched a political offensive aimed at seizing leading positions in government and party. Left and Centrist forces in the Indian National Congress party and the government led by Indira Gandhi foiled these attempts and responded to them by announcing a number of anti-monopoly,

democratic, socio-economic measures (nationalisation of private commercial banks, etc.). The fierce political struggle in the ruling party which resulted led to a split into two new parties—the Indian National Congress uniting Indira Gandhi's supporters, and the Congress Organisation or the "Syndicate" consisting of the Right-wing Congress members opposed to the National Congress.

In its struggle against Right-wing elements the Indian National Congress was naturally assured of mass support from the people. The Congress programme directed against the monopolies was also approved of by Left and democratic parties, including the Communist Party of India. The Communist Party's National Council announced that favourable conditions now existed in India for campaigning against monopoly capital, imperialist and feudal reaction on a broader front. It also stressed that the new situation demanded closer co-operation between Left and democratic forces and their joint action. The party of the working class appealed for unity and cohesion of all anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly forces so as actively to withstand the policies of the monopolies and the reactionaries.

Observers of the Indian scene have drawn attention to a new phenomenon in that country's political life, namely, the involvement of broad strata of the people on an unprecedented scale in the struggle against the forces of the Right, in active politics. Moreover, as a rule, it is the democratic forces that the working masses support.

The struggle being waged by the working people in the towns and villages is gaining ground. This can be seen from the mass campaign of agricultural labourers and landless peasants anxious to take over abandoned state land and surplus acreage belonging to the landowners in excess of the legal maximum laid down for their estates. Demands for rapid nation-wide completion of the agrarian reforms, for lowering the "ceiling" for the extent of landownership and abolition of the land tax for small peasant holdings have been put forward and have the support of the masses, who are exerting pressure for them to be met. These recent mass movements have served to strengthen the position of the democratic forces, whose authority and influence are increasing accordingly.

The most important aspect of the activity of all India's progressive forces is that they have come to appreciate the need for unity of Left and democratic forces, not only in the individual states, but on a nation-wide scale in the course of this struggle to avert the threat from the Right. India has been waiting for these forces to unite for so long: her progressives have long been appealing for cohesion of the forces of independence, democracy and social progress.

The Communist Party is actively working to bring about a united front of all Left, democratic and national-patriotic forces. As the Communists see it, the present mass struggle of the working people to defend their rights and interests and to implement progressive socio-economic programmes, including that put forward by the ruling National Congress at its Bombay conference, provides opportunity for setting up such a front. Democratic circles in India approved the statements made at the meeting of the National Congress's All-India Committee in June 1970 in Delhi to the effect that it was essential for the Congress party to embark on joint action with other democratic and Left parties in the country to implement socio-economic reforms in the interests of the people, and to hold the monopolies in check.

The need for united action on the part of Left and democratic, national-patriotic forces in India is dictated by the very course of the country's development. The fruitful results of this unity have been demonstrated by actual developments on more than one occasion. New objective opportunities for achieving this unity have emerged that did not exist in the past.

The Indian public shows concern at the stand adopted by certain democratic parties who, in order to promote their narrow party interests, sometimes indulge in unprincipled collaboration with conservative and Right-wing forces in their struggle against the Indian National Congress and the government. Disregarding the changes that are now taking place the leaders of these parties attempt in various ways to justify their actions. Some use as an argument the notorious policy of blind "anti-congressism" although major changes have taken place within the ruling party. Others refuse to see as the underlying factor in the present political struggle the deep division within the ranks of the Indian bourgeoisie itself

and are unwilling to accept the fact that their natural allies are the non-monopolistic middle and petty bourgeoisie, who today oppose the monopolies, feudal landowners and foreign capitalists. Politicians of this stamp oversimplify complex social processes now at work in India and reduce everything to a "power struggle between two groups of the Indian big bourgeoisie", an explanation as unconvincing as it is brief.

In this connection the most far-sighted political observers in India point out that given the constant efforts of the Right to consolidate their forces, to create a bloc of the Right-wing parties so as actively to oppose the forces of progress, any fragmentation of democratic and Left-wing parties, reckless action by any such groups, struggle between them and disregard of the Communist Party's appeal for unification and cohesion of all progressive forces of the working class and the whole of the working people have suicidal implications. Such action is fraught with serious consequences not only for the future of the particular parties, which put their sectarian interests before those of the people, but also endanger prospects for the country's national renaissance.

Right-wing forces in India backed up by big business, that is hand in glove with foreign capitalists, big landowners and feudal lords, show no readiness to abandon the struggle. In the light of their recent failures and setbacks a tendency has come into the open for them to surmount internal inter-party differences in the camp of the Right and join forces in the struggle against the Left and the democratic forces. At the end of June 1970 the All-India Committee of the "Syndicate" held a meeting in Delhi: the main resolution to attract public attention was the appeal for the setting up of a united front or "great alliance" of the Right-wing parties—the "Syndicate", the Jan Sangh and Swatantra parties.

In itself this appeal for a united stand of the parties of the Right is nothing new in Indian politics. After the general elections of 1967 it was to be heard particularly frequently and insistently in one form or another from the leaders of all three of the above-mentioned parties as S. K. Patil, and also by representatives of Indian monopoly capital such as J. R. D. Tata. Slogans such as the need to "defend democracy", "save the country from chaos and disaster", or alternatively "communist subversion", are being used to rally

together the parties of the Right now, just as in the past. The day-to-day struggle in modern Indian politics shows that the parties of the Right have by no means lost hope of uniting to oppose the National Congress party and all India's democratic forces.

The possibility of depriving Right-wing reaction of the chance of success depends upon whether or not the democratic forces unite. The community of interests of the forces of progress and democracy, finding themselves face to face with the menace of reaction, is being appreciated by ever wider circles of popular, democratic India. These circles also see such unity as a guarantee of success in their country's advance along the path to national renaissance and social progress. The impressive victory scored by the National Congress party in the election campaign of 1971 demonstrated the degree to which all sound, democratic forces in the country have thrown in their lot with each other in the struggle against the monopolies and the landowners.

A time of change has dawned in India which is destined to determine the course of the country's subsequent development. It is now recognised by the whole people that the foreign imperialists (although stripped of political power), in alliance with leading local monopolists and the reactionary bourgeois and landowning élite, are responsible for all the people's suffering and deprivation and no amount of effort will be able to conceal this fact.

Warm sincere friendship has always united the Soviet and Indian peoples. Soviet men and women are anxious that India find a solution to the complex economic and socio-political problems now facing the subcontinent.