

## **Section IV. The Legacy**

## Varnashrama



The reader will find in another column Sjt. Nadkarni's interesting letter on the *Brahmin-Non-Brahmin* question. I gladly respond to his invitation to explain my views on *varnashrama* more fully than I have done in my speeches during the recent Tamil Nad tour, which have been more or less fully reproduced in these columns.

Let me clear the issue by dismissing from consideration the celebrated story of a Sudra said to have had his head cut off by Rama by reason of his having dared to become a *sannyasi*. I do not read Shastras literally, certainly not as history. The story of the decapitation of Shambuka is not in keeping with the general character of Rama. And whatever may be said in the various *Ramayanas*, I hold my Rama to be incapable of having decapitated a Sudra or for that matter anyone else. The story of Shambuka, if it proves anything, proves that in the days when the story arose it was held to be a capital crime for Sudras to perform certain rites. We are in the dark as to the meaning of the word Sudra here. I have heard even an allegorical meaning given to the whole version. But that would not alter the fact of certain unreasonable prohibitions operating against the Sudras at some stage in the evolution of Hinduism. Only I do not need to join Sjt. Nadkarni in doing penance for the alleged decapitation of Shambuka, for I do not believe in a historical person by that name having been decapitated by a historical person called Rama. For the general persecution of the so-called lower orders of Hinduism, especially the so-called untouchables; I am, as a Hindu,

doing penance every moment of my life. In my opinion, illustrations like that of Shambuka have no place in a religious consideration of the question of *varnashrama*. I propose therefore merely to say what I believe to be *varnashrama*, and I should not hesitate to reject the institution if it was proved to me that the interpretation put upon it by me has no warrant in Hinduism. *Varna* and *ashrama* are, as Sjt. Nadkarni says, two different words. The institution of four *ashramas* enables one the better to fulfil the purpose of life for which the law of *varna* is a necessity. The law of *varna* prescribes that a person should, for his living, follow the lawful occupation of his forefathers. I hold this to be a universal law governing the human family. Its breach entails, as it has entailed, serious consequence for us. But the vast majority of men unwittingly follow the hereditary occupation of their fathers. Hinduism rendered a great service to mankind by the discovery of and conscious obedience to this law. If man's, as distinguished from lower animals, function is to know God, it follows that he must not devote the chief part of his life to making experiments in finding out what occupation will best suit him for earning his livelihood. On the contrary, he will recognize that it is best for him to follow his father's occupation, and devote his spare time and talent to qualifying himself for the task to which mankind is called.

Here then the difficulty suggested by my correspondent does not arise. For no one is precluded from rendering multitudinous acts of voluntary service and qualifying oneself for it. Thus Sjt. Nadkarni born of Brahmin parents and I born of Vaisya parents may consistently with the law of *varna* certainly serve as honorary national volunteers or as honorary nurses or honorary scavengers in times of need, though in obe-

282

dience to that law he as a Brahmin would depend for his bread on the charity of his neighbours and I as a Vaisya would be earning my bread by selling drugs or groceries. Everyone is free to render any useful service so long as he does not claim reward for it.

271

In this conception of the law of *varna* no one is superior to any other. All occupations are equal and honourable in so far as they are not in conflict with morals, private or public. A scavenger has the same status as a Brahmin. Was it not Max Muller who said that it was in the Hinduism more than in any other religion that life was no more and no less than Duty?

There is no doubt that at some stage of its evolution Hinduism suffered corruption, and the canker of superiority and inferiority entered and vitiated it. But this notion of inequality seems to me to be wholly against the spirit of sacrifice which dominates everything in Hinduism. There is no room for arrogation of superiority by one class over another in a scheme of life based on *ahimsa* whose active form is undefiled love for all life.

Let it not be said against this law of *varna* that it makes life dull and robs it of all ambition. In my opinion that law of *varna* alone makes life livable by all and restores the only object worthy of it, namely, self-realization. Today we seem to think of and strive for material pursuits which are in their very nature transitory, and we do this almost to the exclusion of the one thing needful.

If I am told that the interpretation put by me upon *varna* is not supported by anything to be found in the *smritis* which are codified Hindu conduct, my answer is that the codes of conduct based upon fundamental invariable maxims of life vary from time to time as we gain fresh experience and make fresh observations. It

is possible to show many rules of the *smritis* which we no longer recognize as binding or even worthy of observance. Invariable maxims are few and common to all religions. The latter vary in their application. And no religion has exhausted the varieties of all possible applications. They must expand with the expansion of ideas and knowledge of new facts. Indeed I believe that the contents of words grow with the growth of human experience. The connotation of the words sacrifice, truth, non-violence, *varnashrama* etc., is infinitely richer today than it was during the known historic past. Applying this principle to the word *varna*, we need not be bound, it would be foolish and wrong to be bound, by the current interpretation, assuming that it is inconsistent with the requirements of the age with our notions of morals. To do otherwise will be suicide.

*Varna* considered in the manner above indicated has nothing in common with caste as we know it today, nor is prohibition as to interdining and intermarriage an essential part of the recognition of the law of *varna*. That these prohibitions were introduced for the conservation of *varnas* is possible. Restrictions against promiscuous marriage are necessary in any scheme of life based on self-restraint. Restraints on promiscuous dining arise either from sanitary considerations or differences in habits. But disregard of these restrictions formerly carried, or what is more, should now carry no social or legal punishment or forfeiture of one's *varna*.

*Varnas* were originally four. It was an intelligent and intelligible division. But the number is no part of the law of *varna*. A tailor for instance may not become a blacksmith although both may be and should be classed as Vaisyas.

The most forcible objection I heard raised in Tamil

Nad was that, however good and innocuous *varnas* might appear under my interpretation, they must either be worked under a different name or destroyed altogether by reason of the evil odour that surrounds them. The objectors feared that my interpretation would be ignored and yet my authority would be freely quoted for supporting under cover of *varna* the hideous inequalities and tyrannies practised at the present day in Hinduism. They further observed that in the popular estimation caste and *varna* were mere synonymous terms and that the restraint of *varna* was nowhere practised, but the tyranny of caste was rampant everywhere. All these objections have no doubt much force in them. But they are objections such as can be advanced against many corrupted institutions that once were good. A reformer's business is to examine the institution itself and to set about reforming it if its abuses can be separated from it. *Varna* is not a mere institution made by man but it is a law discovered by him. It cannot therefore be set aside; its hidden meaning and potentialities should be explored and utilized for the good of society. We have seen that the evil is not in the law or the institution itself, but it lies in the doctrine of superiority and inferiority which are super-added to it.

The question too arises how the law is to be worked in these days when all the four *varnas* or sub-*varnas* break asunder all the restrictions, seeking by all means lawful and otherwise to advance their material welfare, and when some arrogate superiority over others who in their turn are rightly challenging the claim. The law will work itself out even if we ignore it. But that will be the way of punishment. If we will escape destruction, we will submit to it. And seeing that we are just now engaged in applying to ourselves the sub-human

rule of survival of the fittest, meaning the strongest (physically), it would be well to recognize ourselves as one *varna*, viz., Sudras, even though some may be teaching and some may be soldiering and some others may be engaged in commercial pursuits. I remember in 1915 the Chairman at the Social Conference in Nellore suggesting that formerly all were Brahmins, and that now too all should be recognized as such and that the other *varnas* should be abolished. It appeared to be then, as it appears to me now, as a weird suggestion. It is the so-called superior that has to descend from his heights, if the reform is to be peaceful. Those who for ages have been trained to consider themselves as the lowest in the social scale cannot suddenly have the equipment of the so-called higher classes. They can therefore rise to power only by bloodshed, in other words by destroying society itself. In the scheme of reconstruction I have in view, no mention has been made of the untouchables, for I find no place for untouchability in the law of *varna* or otherwise in Hinduism. They in common with the rest will be absorbed in the *Sudra*. Out of these the other three *varnas* will gradually emerge purified and equal in status though differing in occupations. The *Brahmins* will be very few. Fewer still will be the soldier class who will not be the hirelings or the unrestrained rulers of today, but real protectors and trustees of the nation laying down their lives for its service. The fewest will be the *Sudras* for in a well-ordered society a minimum amount of labour will be taken from fellowmen. The most numerous will be the *Vaisyas*—a *varna* that would include all professions—the agriculturists, the traders, the artisans, etc. This scheme may sound Utopian. I however prefer to live in this Utopia of my imagination to trying to live up to the unbridled licence of a society that I see



tottering to its disruption. It is surely given to individuals to live their own Utopias even though they may not be able to see them accepted by society. Every reform has made its beginning with the individual, and that which had inherent vitality and the backing of a stout soul was accepted by the society in whose midst the reformer lived.



A correspondent writes:

"In your recent Madras speech you have re-stated your faith in the four *varnas*. But should the *varnas* be strictly hereditary? Some people think that you favour rigid adherence to the hereditary principle; others that you do not. From a perusal of your writings I am inclined to agree with the former. For instance, what else does your dictum, that the 'untouchables should be classed with Shudras' and that they should enjoy all the rights of non-Brahmins, indicate? Why this constant reiteration of the old arbitrary distinction between Brahmin and non-Brahmin as if the two belonged to biologically different species? If an untouchable can become a non-Brahmin, can he not also become a Brahmin in this very life? Again, if it is possible for an untouchable to become a Shudra, how is it impossible for a Shudra to become a Vaisya, for a Vaisya to become a Kshatriya or for a Kshatriya to become a Brahmin in this very life? Why do you hurl the Law of Karma in the face of those who believe it to be possible? Is there a better Brahmin than Sree Narayana Guru Swami, the Ezhava? I know no better Brahmin than Gandhiji, the Bania. I know also of hundreds of other 'non-Brahmins' who are better Brahmins (in the best sense of that term) than most birth-Brahmins.

If you did not favour strict application of the principle of heredity, you would not seek to prohibit inter-marriages between people of the same race professing the same religion and following the same customs as are several members of the three *Dwija* castes. Nor would you so strenuously oppose interdining between, say, vegetarian Brahmins and vegetarian non-Brahmins.

Of course, heredity is a great law of life, but there are even greater laws controlling its mysterious processes. One of them is the law of variation in the phrasology of Evolutionary Biology. Heredity is the static and variation is the dynamic principle of the universe. The latter is that holds the key to what we call 'Progress' for want of a better name. No social system can ignore the law of heredity with impunity; neither can a social system ignore the law of variation except at its peril. The history of the caste system in India affords enough proof of this. It proves above all that the worst form in which the law of heredity can be applied in any social organization is to create a hereditary clergy to be the sole custodians of its intellectual and spiritual affairs and trustees in perpetuity of its religion.

Even Babu Bhagwan Das, than whom there is no more orthodox Brahmin and who has done some hard thinking on the subject of social reconstruction in India, conceded some years ago that the hereditary principle in *Varnashrama Dharma* must be considerably relaxed. It would be, indeed, strange if you of all men championed rigid adherence to it. As a great many people do not know what exactly you think of it all, I hope it will be possible for you to publish this letter with your reply in your esteemed journal."

I fancy that I have answered all the arguments

advanced by the correspondent against *Varnashrama*. But evidently readers have short memories or only those who are concerned for the moment read what is written for them. Thus, for instance, I have often shown the distinction between *Varnashrama* and untouchability. I have defended the one as a rational scientific fact and condemned the other as an excrescence, an unmitigated evil. It may be that my denseness sees a distinction where none exists. It may be too, that I see science where there is ignorance or superstition. But I do regard *Varnashrama* as a healthy division of work based on birth. The present ideas of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question with me of superiority or inferiority. It is purely a question of duty. I have indeed stated that *varna* is based on birth. But I have also said that it is possible for a Shudra, for instance, to become a Vaisya. But in order to perform the duty of a Vaisya he does not need the label of a Vaisya. Swami Narayan Guru does not need to be called a Brahmin in order to enable him to be, what he is reported to be, a Sanskrit scholar. He who performs the duty of a Brahmin will easily become one in the next incarnation. But a translation from one *varna* to another in the present incarnation must result in a great deal of fraud. The natural consequence must be the obliteration (of) *varna*. I have seen no reason to justify its destruction. It may be a hindrance to material ambition. I must be excused from applying material considerations to an institution that is based on religious considerations.

Nor is the correspondent happy in his analogy. I have asked that a *Panchama* should be regarded as a Shudra because I hold that there is no warrant for belief in a fifth caste. A *Panchama* does the work of a Shudra and he is, therefore naturally classified as such

when he ceases to be regarded as a *Panchama*. I do believe that this constant confusion between untouchability and *Varnashrama* and attack on the latter in the same breath as the former retards the progress of reform regarding untouchability.

It is now clear that the law of variation is left untouched by *Varnashrama*. Nay, it is provided for. Only, types do not vary in a few years or even in a few generations. There is no fundamental difference between a Brahmin and a Pariah, but he who runs may see that class considered, there is a marked and noticeable difference between Brahmins and Pariahs or for that matter all the four castes. What I would like my correspondent to join me in is a fight against an arrogant assumption of superiority whether it is assumed by Brahmins or others. It is the abuse of *Varnashrama* that should be combated, not the thing itself.



## 12 · The Bhoodan-Ganga Flows On

*With Tulsi and Sur as Guides<sup>1</sup>*

AFTER MY TRAVELS in Telangana I stayed at the Paramdham for a few weeks, and then on September 12th 1951, I set out on foot for North India, for Delhi. I had at first thought of starting after the rainy season was over, but as Pandit Nehru invited me to a discussion with the members of the Planning Commission I started somewhat sooner.

If while in Paramdham I had not previously undertaken those experiments in doing without money, and cultivating without bullocks, and if I had not had a full year's experience of working out these ideas, I do not think I should have had the confidence to work in Telangana as I did, nor to deal so frankly and fearlessly with the people there. God in His unbounded grace did not allow me, uncouth fellow that I am, to utter a single word which was lacking in humility. And that I believe, was the fruit of the experiments in Paunar, during which we considered it a privilege to take the peasant as our teacher in the art of cultivating the soil.

I announced that this new pilgrimage would have one main purpose, to get land for the poor. Mother Earth must no longer be separated from her sons, she and they must be brought together again. The winds of generosity, of giving, must be set blowing across the whole nation. If it were true (as some said) that in Telangana people had given land only because of the communist disturbances, there would be no hope of a peaceful revolution. But I for my part felt sure that if the basic idea of the *bhoodan* movement were placed clearly before the people, they *would* give land out of pure goodwill. If this hope of mine should prove to be well-founded, it would give a great impetus to non-violent revolution. If we could not give our principles visible

<sup>1</sup>Tulsidas and Surdas, Hindi poet-saints of Uttar Pradesh through which Vinoba travelled.

form, over a wider area, we should simply be swept away by the current of our times. The times confronted us with a call and with a challenge.

I found great peace and inspiration at Gandhiji's memorial shrine at Rajghat, and decided to stay there while in Delhi. Though God is to be found in every place—as I myself know from experience—nevertheless there are some places where His glory cannot be effaced, and whose inspiration guides me on my way. It was Gandhi who inspired the *bhoodan* movement; whatever good is to be seen in it is his, and its shortcomings are mine.

In November 1951 I therefore spent eleven days at Rajghat in congenial company. Morning prayers, which began promptly at four o'clock, were attended by people who were in earnest about the spiritual life. During the prayer period I would share with them my thoughts on the nectar of devotion to be found in the *Vinaya-patrika* of Tulsidas. For the rest of the day I had a heavy programme with no time for relaxation, but the *Vinaya-patrika* enabled me to remain inwardly relaxed and quiet throughout. Then during the evening prayers at the Rajghat shrine I would give a brief address on *bhoodan* or other topics.

I held discussions at the Planning Commission and explained my ideas very clearly to those friends, who listened attentively. I had reason to believe that in the light of these discussions it would be feasible to modify the Plan to some extent.

During my journey from Paunar to Delhi about thirty-five thousand acres of land had been received. In Telangana the gifts had averaged two hundred acres a day, but on this journey they averaged three hundred. Thanks to the teachings of Gandhiji, and the cultural traditions of India, this plan for peace received the hearty co-operation of the people.

The total amount of land in the country is about three hundred million acres; I ask for one-sixth of this total. I ask every individual land-owner for a one-sixth share for the landless, on the basis that an average Indian family of five should accept a landless person as a sixth member.

What am I doing in all this? What do I want? I want change: First, change of heart, then change in personal life habits,

followed by change in the structure of society. I aim at a triple change, a triple revolution.

I have been putting these things forward from the first as a matter of law and equity. But by 'law' I do not mean human laws, I mean the law of God. I made this point clear in my book *Swarajya-Shastra* ('Principles of Self-Government'). We shall of course need to frame human laws for land distribution, but laws may be of two kinds. There is a kind of law based on coercion, which is a tool of violence; there is also a kind of law based on non-violence. I want to solve the land problem by non-violence.

I am not going around begging, even though as a *Brahmin* I am entitled to beg—only, however, for my individual needs. When I ask for land as a gift in the name of *Daridra-Narayan*, God in the form of the poor, I am not asking alms. I am asking men to accept initiation into a new way of life. I have come to the conclusion that God has placed on my weak shoulders the same kind of work as he committed to the Lord Buddha.<sup>2</sup> It is, I believe, the work of *Dharmachakra pravartan*, turning the Wheel of the Law.

This Kalasi region has been famous for over two thousand years for the *ashvamedh* sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> Like those dedicated horses I too wander about, dedicated to *bhoodan*. In the *Mahabharata* there is also a description of another sacrifice, the *Rajasuya yajna*, performed for the enthronement of a king. My sacrifice is a *Prajasuya yajna*; I want to see the *praja*, the people, enthroned. I aim at a government which would make the labourer, the tiller of the soil, the scavenger and all such humble people feel that their needs are being cared for. That is what is called Sarvodaya, and the vision of it inspires all my wanderings.

A year had passed since that meeting at Pochampalli in April 1951. I had had a wonderful pilgrimage. I walked alone, and

<sup>2</sup> This passage is taken from a speech delivered on the day of the Buddhist festival of *Buddha Purnima*, the full moon of May 1952.

<sup>3</sup> A sacrifice performed by a king, in which a horse was set free to wander at will for a year. At the end of the year the king claimed sovereignty over all the territory into which it had been allowed to enter by the people. The king had thus sacrificed the desire to conquer by force of arms.

wherever I went I held one meeting each day about *bhoodan*; the appeal was made and the people donated land. During that year one *lakh* (100,000) acres were given. On I walked, without a care in the world. I remembered a line in one of Tagore's songs:

'Walk alone, O thou unfortunate, walk alone.'

I modified it a bit to suit myself:

'Walk alone, O thou most fortunate, walk alone.'

In the *Vedas* there is a question and answer: 'Who goes alone? The Sun, the Sun goes alone.' That saying kept me in good spirits.

During this year of solitary pilgrimage my fellow workers in the Sarva Seva Sangh were following events with much eager interest and sympathy. At the Sevapuri conference held near Varanasi (formerly called Benares) in April 1952, the Sangh adopted a resolution to collect twenty-five *lakh* acres of land within the next two years—a truly superhuman undertaking! It meant obtaining twenty-five times as much land as I had collected during the past year, in only double the time.

While the conference was in progress the workers of Bihar came to see me and asked me to go to Bihar. I told them that I was considering my future programme, and that if Bihar could promise me four lakh acres I would come, otherwise I would go to Vindhya Pradesh or some other area. 'Agreed!' said Laxmi Babu. 'There are seventy-five thousand villages in Bihar; it will need only five acres from each village to make up the total.' So I set out for Bihar.

### *In the Land of Buddha and Mahavir*

I entered Bihar on September 12th, 1952, and from that day forward I began asking for fifty *lakh* acres of land. One day a friend challenged me. 'You say you want one-sixth of the land,' he said. 'One sixth of Bihar is not fifty *lakh* acres but forty.' From the next day therefore I changed my tune, and named forty *lakhs*, but our friend Baidyanath Babu, who is

clever with figures, got me to agree that the correct amount should be thirty-two *lakhs*.

I walked through the holy land of Bihar with the regularity of the sun himself, and with him as my witness. Word spread across the country as if on the wings of the wind, that land would very soon be shared out.

In October 1952 I said the people of Patna: 'Up to now I have been asking for gifts only of land, but from now on I shall accept gifts of money also. The donor will keep the money, but undertake to devote one sixth of his wealth every year to public service. I will simply accept a written pledge, and the donor's own conscience will be witness that the pledge is fulfilled.' This is a novel way of doing things, but if I were to collect a fund I should have to keep accounts, and all my time would go in that. My job is revolution, and part of the revolution, as I see it, is that I say to the donors: 'I don't want you to give your money to me, but I do want you to use it with responsibility and intelligence. I want to bind you over and to remain free myself. I ask for two things, a share of your land and a share of your money.'

I spent two and a half months in flood-stricken country. It once happened that because of the floods our party could not even get a meal—something which has never happened elsewhere in all the three and a half years up to now. But in spite of everything, at one place hundreds of men and women came to the meeting in about two hundred boats. Such was their enthusiasm that they stood there on the wet ground in the pouring rain, and joined quietly in the prayer.

In one place a man made a gift of one-sixth of his land, but some of it was in very poor condition. 'Friend,' I said, 'before you make a gift of it you should make it cultivable,' and he at once agreed. Such things are happening, not in some golden age of the past, but now in this age of darkness! If we can't take advantage of the great goodwill people feel towards us, we shall be called unfortunate indeed.

In Chandil in December 1953 I became seriously ill with malaria. I wondered whether God intended to liberate me from this body, or whether He would restore my body for further work. In 1924 I had had a similar serious illness, and afterwards

felt that I had derived benefit from it. If God willed to set me free from the body, what medicine could avail against His will? And if He willed to keep me in the body, what could prevent His will from being done? I decided therefore that there was no need for any medicine, and I refused to take any.

My friends and well-wishers, however, were worried. Telegrams came from the President Rajendra Babu and from Pandit Nehru. The Chief Minister of Bihar, Shrikrishna Sinha, came urgently to see me. I saw how troubled they all were, so I agreed to take medicine, the fever came down and they were all relieved.

The people in general were very puzzled. First I had refused medicine, afterwards I agreed to take it! A great many people wrote to me about it. Some were of the opinion that I had done right to take medicine. Others declared that I had committed a great sin and lost my faith in God. There was a third party who said that I had certainly done wrong, but that I might be forgiven because I had done it for the sake of public service. It all reminded me of the verse in the *Gita* about the fruits of action being of three kinds. I don't know whether or not these triple consequences will be loaded on to my head, and I have no desire to know. What God willed has come to pass—that is how I look at the matter, so I do not trouble myself about it.

It was in Chandil on another occasion that I urged: 'We must establish the independent power of the people—that is to say, we must demonstrate a power opposed to the power of violence, and other than the power to punish. The people are our God.' I am not making this journey in my own strength; I derive the strength for it from the patient, painful, costly work of all those who labour in mills, in fields, in work-places everywhere, who toil on half-empty stomachs and yet are content, who inflict no injury on anyone yet suffer much themselves. It is this, their holy endeavour, which keeps me alert and on the move.

In Bihar I was given another kind of gift in the name of God. In Baidyanathdham at Deoghar I went along with some Harijans

for *darshan*<sup>4</sup> of the sacred image of Mahadeo. We were not able to have that *darshan*, but we got our *prasads*<sup>5</sup> in the form of a good beating at the hands of the God's devotees. Those who beat us did so in ignorance, so I did not want them to be punished. On the contrary, I was very pleased that the hundreds of brothers and sisters who were with me all remained calm. Not only that, those of my companions who got the worst of the beating all said that they felt no anger at all. I believe that this will prove to be the death-throes of the demon of discrimination.

I had no desire to enter the temple by force or by the authority of the law. It is my custom never to enter any temple into which Harijans are not allowed entry. I had made enquiries, and was told that Harijans were allowed to enter, so after our evening prayer we all went reverently for *darshan*, keeping silence on the way. I myself was meditating inwardly on the Vedic verses in praise of Mahadeo. That being the case, when we were unexpectedly attacked and beaten it was for me a specially moving experience. My companions encircled and protected me, intercepting the blows which were aimed directly at me. Still, I did get some taste of them to complete our 'sacrificial offering.' I remembered how, in this same *dham*, the one whose servant I call myself (Mahatma Gandhi) had received the same kind of treatment. I had experienced the same blessing, the same good fortune, as he did.

I walked through Bihar from September 1952 to the end of December 1954, and I received twenty-three *lakh* acres of land. But more important than that, I can say that as I went about Bihar I had visible tokens of the love of God. Bihar was and is the land of my dreams. I hope that 'the non-violent revolution based on *bhoodan* and spear-headed by village industry' will be brought to pass in this land of Bihar. I count myself greatly blessed that I had the good fortune to spend so many days there, where every moment I enjoyed, with tear-filled eyes, the vision

<sup>4</sup> Literally 'vision', especially the sight of a holy image or person.

<sup>5</sup> Food which has been offered to the God and is distributed to worshippers.



of God. I can never forget those gentle humble-hearted people. I found among them much less of what is called 'provincial spirit' than in other provinces. They accepted me as one of their own, and I had great joy and exceeding peace among them. Joy alone is at the core of the human soul, joy as broad as the broad heavens above. From the land of Bihar I took much of this joy, everywhere I felt the touch of the human heart, as all-embracing as the sky. And therefore I call this journey a journey of joy.

*In the Home of Lord Chaitanya (West Bengal and Orissa)*

Strengthened by the affection given to me in Bihar I next entered Bengal; I left the land of the Lord Buddha for that of Lord Chaitanya, and walked there, a pilgrim of love, for twenty-five days in January 1955. I visited the place where Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa experienced his first *Samadhi*.<sup>6</sup> There I said that from now on what is needed is collective rather than individual *Samadhi*. This great man Sri Ramakrishna had taught us during his lifetime that an individual may rise to a level which transcends suffering, and may likewise be set free from the urge to accumulate wealth. My claim is that I am working for a society where the miseries of discrimination have been rooted out, and where wealth and prosperity are shared by all. Ramakrishna Paramahansa could not bear to touch money; I am following in his footsteps and seeking a way to free the whole of society from bondage to money.

On the twenty-sixth of January, when I set foot in Orissa, I said: 'I am very happy that after visiting Bengal I have come to Utkal, this land of heroes. It was this land that turned the eyes of the emperor Ashoka towards non-violence, that transformed him from Ashoka of the sword to Ashoka of the *dharma*, the eternal law.'

I went to Jagannath Puri for the Sarvodaya Sammelan (in March 1955); and we went to the Jagannath temple, but had

<sup>6</sup> A state of trance, induced by meditation, in which the individual enters a higher state of consciousness.

to turn back without entering. I had gone there in a mood of great devotion, but I had a French lady with me, and it was my principle that if she could not go in, neither could I. I began in early youth to study the Hindu religion, and I have continued to do so to this day; from the *Rigveda* to Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi, I have studied the whole tradition as reverently as I could. I claim with all humility that I have tried my best to practise the Hindu religion as I understand it. In my opinion, it would have been a very unrighteous act for me to enter the temple and leave the French lady outside. I asked the authorities there whether she might enter along with me, and they said No. So instead of making my obeisance to the god, I saluted them respectfully and turned away.

As I said at the time, I did not feel that those who had refused us entry were in any way at fault. I know that they too must have felt sorry about it, but they were enslaved by ingrained ideas and were unable to do the right thing. So I don't blame them much. I say only this: that such an incident bodes ill for our country and for our religion. Baba Nanak<sup>7</sup> was also refused entry into the temple here and was turned away from its doors. But that is an old story, and I hope that it will not again be repeated.

While I was still walking in Uttar Pradesh, in May 1952, I had received a gift of a whole *gram*, the village of Mangroth.<sup>8</sup> It was a totally unexpected happening. After the experience I had had in Bihar, I told the people of Orissa that the Biharis had shown what they could do about *bhodon*; 'now it is for you here to take up the idea of *gramdan*.'

By God's ordering I spent the four months of the rainy season in Koraput District. As I walked, and the clouds showered down rain from heaven, I would recite over and over again a prayer from the *Vedas*, intoning it at the top of my voice, as sonorously and loudly as I could, and asking my companions to join in. The

<sup>7</sup> Guru Nanak (1470-1540), founder of the monotheistic Sikh faith.

<sup>8</sup> This meant that the people were prepared to pool all their land for the benefit of all the villagers, not as individual *bhodon* but as community *gramdan*.

*rishi* (sage) prays first that God will send rain from heaven in abundance, for rain is a token of His grace; let us also greet the rain with ceaseless paeans of welcome.

Secondly, prays the *rishi*, may there be no hindrance to our speed. We were not hindered in our travels by the rain, and the workers gained much in self-confidence. We might well have been held up, and our work slackened, during the rains; and especially in Koraput, famous as it is for malaria, we had not expected to accomplish much. But in spite of it all the speaking tour went on without a hitch, and six hundred villages were offered as *gramdan*.

The *rishi*'s third prayer is that just as we may feel in the thousands of raindrops the thousand-fold caresses of God's hand, so may the power of our desire be multiplied a thousand-fold. The experience we had in this district certainly increased a thousand-fold the power of our goodwill, because it was communicated to and shared by thousands of people, and also because we as individuals found the power of our goodwill to be greatly strengthened.

#### *In the Land of the Great Teachers (Southern India)*

In olden days, those who undertook a religious pilgrimage took water from the Ganges, carried it to Rameshwaram, and there used it to bathe the divine image. When they had done that, half of the pilgrimage was over. They then took sea-water from Rameshwaram and carried it to Kashi (Benares), where they bathed with it the image of Kashi Viswanath. Only then was their pilgrimage complete.

In similar fashion I travelled from North to South. I reached Andhra in October 1955, and Tamilnadu in May 1956, bringing my gifts: *lakhs* of acres of land from *lakhs* of donors in Bihar, the thousand villages given as *gramdan* in Orissa. Bihar had shown that *lakhs* of acres might be given in a single State; Orissa had shown that thousands of villages might be offered as *gramdan*. So that from one point of view my work was finished; I had proved that such methods would work. What more could one man do?

The time had come, I thought, to add a new programme to that of *bhoodan* and to carry it with me back to my starting point in the north.

I had now been engaged in this pilgrimage for five years. During the first year (1952) I had interrupted it for two months of the rainy season and spent them in Kashi. But I found in practice that there were only thirteen days of really heavy rain, and it did not seem right to interrupt my journey for two months or more for the sake of thirteen days, so in the following years I went on with my pilgrimage even during the rains.

Up to that time I had walked one stage daily, but after I entered Tamilnadu I began to cover two stages a day, camping at one place at midday and at a second overnight. This was not because I had any ambition to visit every one of India's five *lakh* villages. That kind of self-centred vanity would have made the work one of *rajoguna*.<sup>9</sup> That does not attract me, it does not lead to works of righteousness. The fact is that I began to walk two stages a day simply because I had an inward urge to do so, a compulsion to work as hard as I could. Much hard work is needed to increase *sattvaguna*, that quality of goodness. I know very well that the *bhoodan* offering will not be made complete by anything that I do, but only when the whole community takes up the task. One of my friends asked me what impact would be made on the villages now that I am spending so much time merely in travelling. I answered that what he called travelling was for me prayer.

I had a letter about this from Charu Babu in Bengal. 'Now that you have doubled your distance,' he wrote, 'it seems to me that you are changing your 'gentle *satyagraha*' into an even more gentle *satyagraha*, and we are all deriving strength from it.' I liked that phrase 'more gentle *satyagraha*' very much. I cannot say that I had thought of it in those terms, but the longing to become 'more gentle' is certainly there, and moreover it is

<sup>9</sup> Indian thought recognizes three properties as present in all creatures in varying proportions. They are *sattvaguna*, *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*, characterized respectively by purity and goodness, by energy and activity, and by inertia and ignorance.

happening. If I had gone on spending the whole day in one village, I should certainly have done some work there, and it would have had some impact. But now that I go two stages a day what happens is that I simply explain my ideas and then move on. In practice, that means that the work takes a 'more gentle' form.

I do not feel elated when I get large gifts of land, nor discouraged when they are small. While I was in Bihar the average daily gift was three thousand acres, and three hundred or three hundred and fifty pledges of gifts. When a lawyer's practice grows his fees also grow, but here in Tamilnadu the people have 'degraded' me. I spent thirty-three days in Salem District and received only four or four and a half acres a day. But although the river has, as it were, dried up, the river in my heart does not fail. Even though the visible Kaveri<sup>10</sup> itself were to dry up, the inward springs would never cease to flow.

In November 1956, at a meeting of our workers at Palni, I put forward the idea of *nidhi-mukti*.<sup>11</sup> 'Nowadays,' I said, 'many people make the mistake of thinking that the *bhoodan* movement is being carried on by salaried workers. They are not altogether wrong, there is *some* truth in it, but it is a mistake all the same. Here in Tamilnadu, as I have seen, there are about five hundred workers, and only about fifty of them are getting a salary. Nevertheless we ourselves are responsible for this mistake, because we think that our work cannot be done without *some* paid staff, in other words, that the work *does* depend on them. So let us get rid of this idea, and resolve that from the end of this year we shall stop all salaries. Don't prepare any budget for next year, and let some other way suggest itself. People are afraid that that would mean that all the work everywhere would come to a standstill. But I tell you that nothing will be lost or spoiled. Let us all decide to look after one another, to leave no one uncared for, to share whatever food we have.'

<sup>10</sup> The great river of South India, one of India's seven river-goddesses.

<sup>11</sup> Freedom from dependence on trust or organizational funds.

Along with this *nidhi-mukti* there was also *tantra-mukti*.<sup>12</sup> Throughout India *bhoodan* committees had been set up in every district to direct the *bhoodan* work. In two hundred and fifty of the three hundred districts of India such committees were at work, and they were getting some help from the Gandhi Memorial Trust. The trustees were very glad to give money for *bhoodan* work, for they believed that the message of Gandhi could be spread better in this way than in any other.

But after people had begun to donate whole villages as *gramdan*, it seemed to me that we should take another revolutionary step. Let us therefore cease to take any help from the Gandhi Memorial Trust for *bhoodan* work. Let us disband all the *bhoodan* committees. Any party which begins to operate on a large scale aims at strengthening its own organisation, but I aim at doing just the opposite. Future students of the history of the development of ideas will attach great importance to this concept. Indeed that *is* real history—the story of the successive stages in the development of human thought.

Why did I get rid of all this organisation? Because, though organisations may give ordinary kinds of service, and acquire some power, they cannot bring about a revolution in society. Revolutions are a thing of the mind, they cannot be made to order!

The dissolution of the *bhoodan* committees had two results. In some States, where there had been forty to fifty workers, there were now hundreds. In other States, where there had also been forty or fifty workers, even these disappeared. I had foreseen both results. But even if the disbanding of the committees had brought the work to a standstill all over India, I would still have regarded it as a right step. It is my basic principle that organisations can never create revolutions. An organisation is a mould, it is a method of maintaining control. Within it one has to work, and get others to work, in accordance with a fixed pattern. There is no freedom for the mind in that.

<sup>12</sup> *Tantra-mukti*: freedom from organization.

In Tamilnadu I met the Shankaracharya<sup>13</sup> of Kanchi (Conjeevaram), who is an old man. The Shankaracharya is always a *sannyasi*, one who has given up all his possessions, but this man, after spending some years in the seat of authority, felt that he should give up this also. He therefore installed a disciple in his place and withdrew himself to a village not far away. There was nothing to be seen in his hut except an earthen pot for drinking water, two or three books and two or three grass mats. He was completely divested of possessions, and a great scholar. Thirteen hundred years after the death of the original Shankaracharya, a man like this, greatly revered throughout Tamilnadu, still carries on the tradition. I wondered about the basis of this ancient 'organization', still active after so many centuries.

My travels took me to Kanyakumari<sup>14</sup> where I stayed two days. On the second morning, the sixteenth of April 1957 I went to the seashore as the sun was rising, and watched the sea bathing Kanyakumari's feet. I felt the touch of the sea water, I saw the glory of the sun, I remembered Kanyakumari, and I renewed the pledge I had taken in 1954 at the Sarvodaya Conference at Bodhgaya:

'We will work without ceasing, as heretofore, until such time as the freedom of India be realised and transformed in the freedom of every village community.'

I planned to stay there for two days specially in order to renew this pledge. I had a few friends with me at the time. Had I wished, I could have told them all and asked them to take the pledge also, but I did not, I took it alone. But when I did so I used the word 'we' instead of the singular 'I'. That in fact is now a habit of mine. I do not think of myself as a separate individual, so 'we' instead of 'I' comes naturally to me. The pledge can certainly be

<sup>13</sup> The original Shankaracharya, the great philosopher of the seventh century, founded *maths* (religious houses) in different parts of India, the heads of which are known as Shankaracharyas.

<sup>14</sup> The southernmost point of India—anglicized as 'Cape Comorin'. In Indian tradition a virgin goddess who stands with her feet in the sea.

taken by an individual but I would like such a pledge to be in the minds of all.

From Tamilnadu I went on to Kerala. There had been 'village gifts' in Orissa and likewise in Tamilnadu, and in Kerala I soon found that the people were no less large-hearted than elsewhere; there too hundreds of villages declared *gramdan*. That task, it seemed to me, was now completed.

# the time for nonviolence has come

Michael N. Nagler



The horrors of the 20th century sank to shocking depths and the 21st is off to a terrifying start. Yet even as violence reaches new levels, the science of nonviolence is growing as well. Nonviolence is now a global force to reckon with

Anyone who has seen *Bowling for Columbine* will recall the scene when Michael Moore is interviewing James Nichols, whose younger brother is in prison as an accomplice in the Oklahoma City bombing. As Nichols raves on about the need to overthrow the government with force, Moore suddenly interjects, "What about Gandhi?" Stunned to silence, Nichols hears Moore say, "He threw out the British without firing a shot." After a long pause, Nichols quietly answers, "I'm not familiar with that." When I saw *Bowling for Columbine* in Berkeley, the whole audience gasped.

When I am asked, as I often am, "Can nonviolence possibly work in times like these?" my answer is, "Can anything else?"

It is not that I am unaware of the problem. I

know what right-wing radio talk-show hosts are doing to the minds of millions of people, how corporate forces are dehumanizing an entire civilization—and how this dehumanization is making itself felt in the streets of Baghdad and Gaza. Nor am I making a prediction; I have no idea how things will turn out. But I am optimistic about what could be, because I am aware of the yet-to-be-unleashed power in the human individual—the power of nonviolence—and because I am aware of how that power has been growing.

Jonathan Schell recently wrote that, despite a lot of noise to the contrary, the latter half of the 20th century saw brute force become increasingly futile and the power of the human will correspondingly more significant. This seems to me entirely correct.

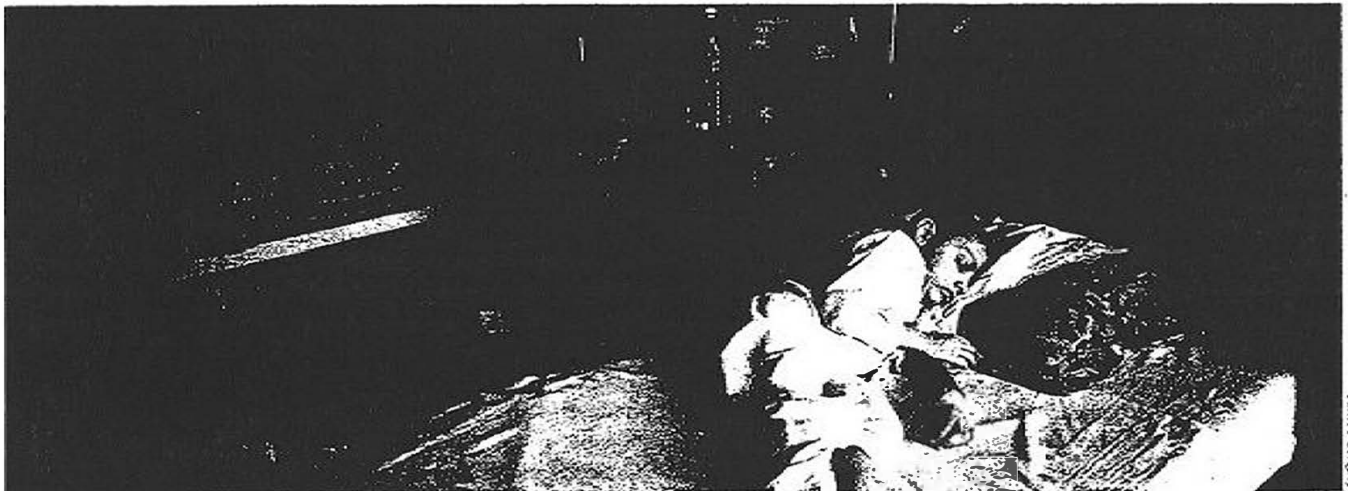


Despite, or in part because of, the appalling rise of violence, we are now experiencing the third wave of global nonviolence to uplift the modern world.

The first wave consisted of the struggles of Mahatma Gandhi, whose movement brought down a corrupt and outmoded imperial system, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose struggle uprooted an equally outmoded ideology of racialism.

seemingly invincible regime, delegitimize it in the eyes of the public, and precipitate its downfall. While some of these movements were violent—sometimes brutally so—as Schell said, the key to their victories against overwhelming military force was the commitment of a community's will. A discovery had been made: physical force could be overpowered by will.

At the same time, will needs intelligence and



The second wave was a rash of insurrectionary movements around the world, among them the defeat of dictator Pinochet in Chile, the "People Power" revolution in the Philippines, and the first Palestinian 'intifada' (shaking-off), which, while the follow-up has been thwarted, did lead to the Oslo peace accords. Various other 'intifadas' shrugged the Soviet mantle off Eastern Europe. While not all of these uprisings were nonviolent, many were, including in Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, whose 1968 "Prague Spring" uprising thwarted a Warsaw Pact repression for eight glorious months; the country later freed itself in a "Velvet Revolution."

There were similarly popular and nonviolent uprisings elsewhere, along with less ambitious movements: The peasant-led struggle around Larzac, France, in the 1970s, thwarted government plans to enlarge an army base at the expense of grazing and farmland; European anti-nuclearism made the Green Party a force to reckon with, at least in Germany; and the Landless Rural Worker's Movement has provided over a million Brazilians with land and new forms of self-sustaining community.

In all these varied movements, oppressed people discovered they could organize resistance against a

strategy. Some of these movements began developing an art whose importance cannot be overstated: non-violence training. As Gandhi said, the training for a *satyagrahi*, or nonviolent activist, has to be more rigorous than the training for a conventional soldier. Civil Rights activists in the 1960s used "hassle lines" and role playing to evoke and then control the anger and fear they would face on the marches, picket lines and sit-ins. Like soldiers learning to stay cool in combat by having guns trained on them, nonviolence trainees learn to stay cool while emotions are trained on them, and how to avoid triggering one's opponents' rage. Groups like Global Exchange and the Ruckus Society began to use this training in preparation for the Seattle anti-WTO demonstrations in 1999, and harnessed the loose-knit, democratic "affinity group" structure, which first arose, appropriately, in the early struggles against fascism in Spain and was developed further in U.S. anti-nuclear campaigns.

We are now in the third wave of nonviolence, consisting of the world-wide movement against corporate globalization and, of course, the global anti-war movement that has sprung up with astonishing speed and effectiveness to meet the equally astonishing new arrogance of the U.S. government.

LEFT: A U.S. soldier in Vietnam, 1971. Right: An Iraqi boy suffering from cancer is attended by his mother at a teaching hospital in Baghdad

What marks this third wave is that it is self-consciously global and, while the movement may not yet have fully articulated a positive vision, the millions who turned out to oppose war were aware that they possessed a different kind of force from that of the world's military powers. This dawning awareness that there is another kind of force strengthens the tendency to nonviolence. That will become clearer, I think, as both the militarism and the resistance wear on, confronting the world with a stark choice.

### Violence undermines itself

When necessary, this is just what nonviolence does: It forces violence into the open, causing violent regimes to undergo the "paradox of repression," increasing the naked force they must exert to maintain control until it is unacceptable—to the oppressed, to the community that must maintain the force, and to the watching world. The crushing to death of Rachel Corrie by an American-made bulldozer in Gaza last March might be forgotten in the focus on Iraq, but now two others from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), Brian Avery and Tom Hurndall, have been shot. The very violence of the militarism that caused these crimes, especially in a time of global communications, will prove its undoing.

The power of nonviolence is insistently surfacing now, even where resistance movements seem to have lost sight of it. An image comes to mind from recent protests in San Francisco: tension was building along a street where a sprinkling of "black bloc" demonstrators were taunting the police, much to the dismay of the majority of protesters. At first no one noticed a Buddhist monk standing at the back of the crowd, but he slowly made his way forward (despite his own considerable fear, I learned later) and stood, a dramatic figure in yellow robes and shaved head, before each policeman in turn, smiling at him or her and bowing with folded hands. Even before he reached the Asian officer who involuntarily greeted him in turn, the tension had melted.

At the heart of nonviolent action is the power of the individual, a model for revolution expressed in Mother Teresa's Bengali formula, *ek ek ek* ("one by one by one"). Yet I have just been describing the growth of institutions of nonviolence. What has been discovered is that organizations can be designed to draw forth the energy and creativity of the individual, rather than suppress them as cogs in the corporate machine. This is democracy in the deepest sense.

Among the structures that are building on the power of each individual is the Nonviolent Peace-

force (which I reported on in *YES!* Fall 2002), which plans an international army of nonviolence.

The ISM, too, even as some of its members have died, has been demonstrating the power of moral courage and clear vision. Jennifer Kuiper, who was in Palestine with the ISM when the recent killings of internationals occurred, said, "We aren't simply fighting against violence but for an alternative vision of the world. A world that rejects weapons in favor of intellect and heart. If we can't imagine it, how can we create it? If we don't create it, how will we transform our dreams into substance? If not us, then whom?"

In a Native American story that has become current of late, a grandfather tells his grandson that two wolves are battling inside him; one ferocious and destructive, the other gentle and powerful. When the child anxiously asks, "Grandfather, which of them will win?" he replies, "Whichever one I feed."

Gandhi and King's movements roused the hidden power of the downtrodden, leading to a wave of insurrections against specific regimes. Over time, awareness of this power has percolated through the globe, spreading exponentially faster as communications grew, until now we have reached a global awareness of nonviolence and of the interconnectedness of global problems that I'm calling the third wave. It presents us with a hope and a challenge. If the first two waves showed that communities united in will could overcome brute force, the third wave shows a tantalizing vision of what the whole world community, united in will, could achieve.

As Robert Muller has said, there is not one superpower in the world today, but two: the militarized United States on the one hand, and the millions of ordinary people, including many Americans, who yearn to devote their energies to a humane future. Which will win? Militarism, with its thinly disguised imperial agenda, or the awakening power of human will and consciousness? Fear or love? If we feed the new awareness of nonviolent action, with its spiritual dimension, its focus on empowering individuals, its grassroots forms of organizing, and the knowledge that each of us possesses what Gandhi called "the greatest force humankind has been endowed with," there is no question that it will be love.

Michael Nagler is professor emeritus of classics and comparative literature at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-founder of its Peace and Conflict Studies Program. He is the author of *Is There No Other Way? The Search for a Nonviolent Future*, which won a 2002 American Book Award.



*Criminology as Peacemaking*

EDITED BY

*Harold E. Pepinsky*

AND

*Richard Quinney*

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS  
*Bloomington and Indianapolis*

287

298

*Richard Quinney*

---

O N B

## **The Way of Peace**

*On Crime, Suffering, and Service*

Let us begin with a fundamental realization: No amount of thinking and no amount of public policy have brought us any closer to understanding and solving the problem of crime. The more we have reacted to crime, the farther we have removed ourselves from any understanding and any reduction of the problem. In recent years, we have floundered desperately in reformulating the law, punishing the offender, and quantifying our knowledge. Yet this country remains one of the most crime-ridden nations. In spite of all its wealth, economic development, and scientific advances, this country has one of the worst crime records in the world.

With such realization, we return once again—as if starting anew—to the subject of crime, a subject that remains one of our most critical indicators of the state of our personal and collective being. If what is to be said seems outrageous and heretical, it is only because it is necessarily outside the conventional wisdom both of our understanding of the problem and of our attempt to solve it. Only by entering another world—yet one that is very simple and ultimately true—can we become aware of our own condition.

A few elementary observations serve as the basis for our understanding: (1) Thought of the Western rational mode is conditional, limiting knowledge to what is already known. (2) The truth of reality is emptiness; all that is real is beyond human conception. (3) Each life is a spiritual journey into

the unknown and the unknowable, beyond the egocentric self. (4) Human existence is characterized by suffering; crime is suffering; and the sources of suffering are within each of us. (5) Through love and compassion, beyond the egocentric self, we can end suffering and live in peace, personally and collectively. (6) The ending of suffering can be attained in a quieting of the mind and an opening of the heart, in being aware. (7) Crime can be ended only with the ending of suffering, only when there is peace—through the love and compassion found in awareness. (8) Understanding, service, justice: all these flow naturally from love and compassion, from mindful attention to the reality of all that is, here and now. (9) A *criminology of peacemaking*, the nonviolent criminology of compassion and service, seeks to end suffering and thereby eliminate crime. Let us elaborate on this understanding.

### Awareness of Human Suffering

Suffering is the condition of our existence. The forms of suffering are all around us. In our personal lives, there are tensions and anxieties. Each day we experience the physical pains in our bodies and the psychological hurts in our hearts and minds. Our interpersonal relations often are carried out in violence of one kind or another, if only in the withholding of what might be offered. We have created societies that are filled with the sufferings of poverty, hunger, homelessness, pollution, and destruction of the environment. Globally, nations are at war and threaten not only one another, but all of earthly life, with nuclear destruction. All these human problems, or forms of suffering, are a result of how we have lived our lives, moment by moment, day by day. The threat of nuclear war began as suffering on a very personal level and elevated gradually and systematically to the collective condition (see Walsh, 1984). The forms of suffering are symptoms of the sufferings within each of us.

If the social and global sufferings ever are to be ended, we must deal with the suffering of personal existence. What is involved, finally, is no less than the transformation of our human being. Political and economic solutions without this transformation inevitably fail. The solution is very near to us. There is no shortcut to the ending of suffering.

Our suffering, then, and our ending of this suffering, begins in the human mind. *The Dhammapadam*, the ancient text of Buddhism, states: "All that we are is a result of what we have thought" (1936: 3). We act out of our thoughts, and we create social worlds out of these thoughts. Being human, we have constructed webs of meaning; and with these shared meanings we have constructed our interpersonal relations, our social structures, and our societies. All is a result of what we have thought.

The reconstruction of our existence—the ending of suffering—thus begins by giving attention to the mind. It is this mind, a modern mind that is busy and scattered, that creates its own suffering. To be able to observe the

mind as it is, to be able to see clearly with the mind, we begin with what must seem at first a paradox: letting go. The author of *A Ground of Awakening* observes: "In letting go of who we imagine ourselves to be, letting go of our thinking, our attempt to control the world, we come upon our natural being which has been waiting patiently all these years for us to come home" (Levine, 1979: 39). This open state of mind is what one Zen master calls a "beginner's mind." He (Suzuki, 1970: 21) writes: "If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few." We are ready to see things as they really are—beyond concepts and theories—when we have no thought of achievement, no thought of self. When our mind is open and thus compassionate toward all things, it is boundless in its understanding.

Without empty mind—without mindfulness—we are attached to our ideas, our thoughts, our mental constructions; and we take these productions to be reality itself. Many of our concepts are so deeply ingrained in our minds, in our education, and in our culture, that we forget that they completely condition our perceptions of reality (see Krishnamurti, 1975). In attachment to these mental productions, we are chained in the cave, observing merely the shadows of appearance on the wall before us. Awareness is a breaking of the chains of conditioned thought and a viewing of the reality beyond the shadows.

Without awareness, we humans are bound to the suffering caused by a grasping mind. Being attached to our thoughts, we take the thoughts to be our true selves. The mind that is attached to its own thoughts is the mind of a self-centered and possessive being. All conditioned and attached thought arises from the discursive mind of the egocentric self. That is why the sacred texts of the esoteric traditions, such as the wisdom literature of early Hinduism as found in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, suggest that truth can be known only through union with Brahman, through that which is beyond the ego-self and its attempt at purely rational thought. In contemplation and meditation, we can see the essence of all things as they are and pass away.

The higher wisdom, the awareness of reality, can be attained only with the loss of the conditioned ego and with the realization of the transcendental Self. In other words, the essence of our existence is the interpretation of ourselves with all things. In *Saundhya*, a treatise on self development in Zen Buddhism, Mike Sayama (1986: 12) writes: "The task before us is no longer to differentiate from nature and develop the ego, but transcend the ego and realize true Self that is one with the universe." Only then can one be at home. Peace and harmony come with the awareness of the oneness of all things and the transcendence of this small self to the wholeness of reality. All of this is to be found outside of the abstracting interpretations of the rational mind.

As we mature, we move beyond the rational and linear mode of thought

to a more intuitive and transcendent mode. We lose the grasping and craving self of the individualized ego and find ourselves in the realm of the universal Self. It is not natural—it is unhealthy—for the academic and the intellectual (sociologist, criminologist) to continue strictly in the rational mode of speculative and dualistic thought as he or she matures, although this is the approved and rewarded form for the modern academic. To continue solely in the rational mode of thought is retrogressive for the maturing person, and for a discipline as well.

The author of *Samadhi* concludes: "At the most mature level of human being, a person realizes the true self which is one with the universe and experiences a meaning beyond question and articulation. Such a person transcends anxiety, is fearless and is moved by compassion" (Sayama, 1986: 98). Rather than a life primarily of acquisition and scholarly production, life now demands an inner awakening, a spiritual development. One no longer clings to rationality and the ego as the final realities; one is not trapped in the world of interpretive abstractions taking form according to attachments of an egocentric existence. Once we have mastered rationality and moved to the possibilities of perennial wisdom, we can begin to live in compassionate oneness with all that is; we can begin to understand the world by fully being aware of it.

The truth is that no amount of theorizing and rational thinking can tell us much about reality. To enter into the essential realm requires a mind that is unattached and compassionate. In a book on perennial wisdom, Aldous Huxley (1983: x) writes: "It is a fact, confirmed and re-confirmed during two or three thousand years of religious history, that the ultimate Reality is not clearly and immediately apprehended, except by those who have made themselves loving, pure in heart and poor in spirit." When we allow the higher Self to dwell in the depth of the particular self—when the egocentric, rational self is lost—we can attend to the unknown and unknowable mysteries of the world.

And the final expression of this realization may not be in more talk and more words, but in silence. Saint John of the Cross observed, "For whereas speaking distracts, silence and work collect thoughts and strengthen the spirit" (quoted in Huxley, 1970: 218). With the wisdom gained by awareness, there may be no further need to talk and to write discursively. One then practices what is realized—with attention and silence, in charity and humility, in the service of others.

### Right Understanding

The way to awareness, and thus the ending of suffering, begins with right understanding. An understanding of the true nature of reality involves the recognition that everything is impermanent, that nothing remains the same. Within the flux of reality is the fact that every action brings a certain result. For instance, whenever our actions are motivated by greed, hatred,

or delusion, the inevitable result is suffering. All of this occurs within a reality that is beyond the abstractions of a grasping and craving mind.

The true reality, beyond human conception, is what Zen Buddhism refers to as *Sunyata*: nothingness, emptiness, the void. In a recognition of the fullness of the unnameable, of emptiness, we may begin to see clearly and compassionately the concrete reality of our existence. With this understanding, as Alan Watts (1957: 125) notes, we are "at the point where there is nothing further to seek, nothing to be gained." When we are empty—within the emptiness of all—we are in the realm of ultimate reality.

Beyond Western scientism, there is liberated action freed of the separation of ourselves from the world. Watts (1957: 131) quotes a Zen line: "Only when you have nothing in your mind and no mind in things are you vacant and spiritual, empty and marvelous." This takes us beyond the products of Western thought, beyond the making and destruction that have resulted from being separated from the ineffable reality of our existence. By a "dropping off of body and mind," as Keiji Nishitani (1982) of the Kyoto School of Japanese Zen terms it, we allow ourselves to live in the wonder of absolute nothingness. We return to a home—we arrive at the "home-ground"—where all things are in harmony with what they actually are and ought to be. It is a "coming home with empty hands," and each being has found its place among all other things. But let us beware. Even this talk takes us into the place of mental abstractions, the place where we again lose touch with reality.

It is the presumed objectivity and rationality of modern science that we hope to avoid in a new criminology. We hope to avoid the personal and social consequences of positive science because, as one humanistic philosopher (Skolimowski, 1986: 306) has noted: The mind trained in objective science "over a number of years becomes cold, dry, uncaring, always atomized, cutting, analyzing. This kind of mind has lost the capacity for empathy, compassion, love." Our mode of thinking affects the way we live, and in the meantime we have not gotten any closer to understanding. We seek a mind that, instead of producing conflict and violence, heals—a compassionate mind rather than an objective mind. The compassionate mind is found beyond the boundaries of Western scientific rationality.

Being on the simple path of right understanding, we create thought, words, and deeds that will end our suffering. The forest monk, Achaan Chah, writes: "Only when our words and deeds come from kindness can we quiet the mind and open the heart" (1983: 50). Our work is not only to grow in wisdom and compassion but also to help others in their suffering. This takes place not necessarily in further theoretical work, but in moment-by-moment, day-by-day, step-by-step awareness of what actually is. We are on a wandering path to emptiness, to an awareness of the fullness and wholeness of all things.

That we criminologists are to be engaged in spiritual work in order to eliminate crime may require further reflection. To be fully human presup-

poses the development within oneself of a quality of being that transcends material existence. It is a quality that is not acquired automatically, but one that develops slowly and needs to be tended carefully. Through inner work, we forge a link between the profane and the sacred. Indeed, all of life becomes filled with the sacred. Such a quality within each of us assures a life of growing wisdom, compassion, and service.

Nothing any longer is profane, without the transcendent dimension. The simplest actions, from eating and walking to talking and working, have a sacramental character signifying something beyond themselves. Our lives are within a realm that demands a spiritual as well as material existence. This is why the great religious traditions continue to emphasize a constant discipline of recollection, meditation, study, prayer, contemplation, and at least some measure of solitude and retirement. The Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, thus writes: "If the salvation of society depends, in the long run, on the moral and spiritual health of individuals, the subject of contemplation becomes a vastly important one, since contemplation is one of the indications of spiritual maturity. It is closely allied to sanctity. You cannot save the world merely with a system. You cannot have peace without clarity" (1979: 8). Seeing the truth, in contemplation and meditation, sets us on a path that promotes a humane and peaceful existence. Such an existence is a reality which we can attain only in a life lived in the depth of the sacred. A life devoted to criminology cannot avoid the importance of this truth. Care has to be given to the inner life of each of us.

This life of giving attention to spiritual matters, of going beyond the self to all that is in the world, is a socially committed life. The contemplative life is not self-indulgent, for social issues cannot be faced appropriately without inner spiritual preparation (see Merton, 1962). Oppression in the world is caused by selves that are not spiritually aware, by those who live by greed, fear, egotism, and the craving for power over others. As Jacob Needleman (1980: 212-19) observes in *Lost Christianity*, the "outer" world is not out there, and the "inner" world is not solely one of personal emotions and thoughts. Both are of the same space, in interpenetration of everything. The objective is a compassionate living of each moment with all other beings—for the ending of suffering.

### Compassion and Service

We are all of us interrelated—and "not just people, but animals too, and stones, clouds, trees" (Allken, 1984: 10). Those who are enlightened in the service of others, the Bodhisattvas of the world, realize fully the reality of the interpenetration of all things. By experiencing the ephemeral and transparent nature of reality, by being aware of the oneness of all things, we can know the potential of peace and harmony.

Were there complete perfection and unity, there would be no suffering. Suffering has arisen out of disunity and separation from the embracing

totality, and it can be ended only with the return of all sentient beings to a condition of wholeness. We have fallen from the grace of wholeness into a separation from one another and from the ground of all being, a separation that is assured by craving and grasping selves, by selves that are really an illusion. If human beings were constantly and consciously in a proper relationship with the sacred and with the natural and social environment, there would be only as much suffering as creation makes inevitable (see Huxley, 1970: 233-34). But our own created reality is one of separation, and therefore one of suffering.

Thus the healing of separation is necessary if suffering is to be ended. To begin to end suffering, we must be aware of the causes of suffering within ourselves and search for the reasons that make us suffer. The Tibetan Buddhist master, Rinpoche Kalu, says that the suffering we experience in the world "is caused by the six afflictions—ignorance, desire, pride, anger, jealousy, and greed" (Kalu, 1987: 13). The most hopeful way to attain world peace, to end global suffering, he adds, is by developing within ourselves compassion and loving-kindness toward others.

In the practice of loving-kindness, what Buddhists call *metta*, there is developed the feeling of caring and connectedness. From within, thoughts of goodwill and benevolence are extended outward, embracing all others in an increasingly wider circle. In compassion, the suffering of others is recognized out of one's own suffering, and the suffering is shared. Jack Kornfield (1983: 63) writes: "Compassion is the tender readiness of the heart to respond to one's own or another's pain without grief or resentment or aversion. It is the wish to dissipate suffering. Compassion embraces those experiencing sorrow, and eliminates cruelty from the mind." Looking directly at suffering, both the suffering in the world and the suffering in one's own heart and mind, we love others (as ourselves) and act in compassion to end suffering—to heal separation.

We begin our practice, then, by being aware of the ways in which suffering is manifested in each of us. "The more conscious we are in dealing with our own suffering, the more sensitive we will be in treating the pain of others" (Dass and Gorman, 1983: 86). Our responsibility is to do what we can to alleviate the concrete conditions of human suffering. "We work to provide food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, health care for the sick and feeble, protection for the threatened and vulnerable, schooling for the uneducated, freedom for the oppressed" (Dass and Gorman, 1983: 87). When we acknowledge what is and act as witnesses in this shared reality, without attachment and judgment, we open ourselves to all suffering. Acting out of compassion, without thinking of ourselves as doers, we are witnesses to what must be done.

The path to the ending of suffering is through compassion rather than through the theories of science and the calculations of conditioned thought. Our sufferings are, in fact, exacerbated by science and thought. The discoveries necessary for dealing with suffering are within our being.

The truth that relieves suffering lies in the concrete moment of our awareness, an awareness that frees us from conditioned judgments, creates loving-kindness within us, and allows us to realize the absolute emptiness of all phenomena.

As long as there is suffering in this world, each of us suffers. We cannot end our suffering without ending the suffering of all others. In being witness to the concrete reality, and in attempting to heal the separation between ourselves and true being (the ground of all existence), we necessarily suffer with all others. But now we are fully aware of the suffering and realize how it can be eliminated. With awareness and compassion, we are ready to act.

### The Way of Peace and Social Justice

From the inner understanding of our own suffering, we are prepared to act in a way of peace. As in Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha*, truth force, social action comes out of the informed heart, out of the clear and enlightened mind. The source of social action is within the human heart that has come to understand fully its own suffering and therefore the suffering of others. If human actions are not rooted in compassion, these actions will not contribute to a peaceful and compassionate world. "If we cannot move beyond inner discord, how can we help find a way to social harmony? If we ourselves cannot know peace, by peaceful, how will our acts disarm hatred and violence?" (Dass and Gorman, 1983: 163). The means cannot be different from the ends; peace can come only out of peace. "There is no way to peace," said A. J. Muste. "Peace is the way."

In other words, without inner peace in each of us, without peace of mind and heart, there can be no social peace between people and no peace in societies, nations, and in the world. To be explicitly engaged in this process, of bringing about peace on all levels, of joining ends and means, is to be engaged in peacemaking (Muslo, 1986: 8-9). In peacemaking, we attend to the ultimate purpose of our existence—to heal the separation between all things and to live harmoniously in a state of unconditional love.

The radical nature of peacemaking is clear. No less is involved than the transformation of our human being. We will indeed be engaged in action, but action will come out of our transformed being. Rather than attempting to create a good society first, and then trying to make ourselves better human beings, we have to work on the two simultaneously. The inner and the outer are the same. The human transformation in relation to action is described by Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist peace activist, as a realization that begins in the human heart and mind:

To realize does not only mean to act. First of all, realization connotes transforming oneself. This transformation creates a harmony between oneself and nature, between one's own joy and the joy of others. Once a person gets in

touch with the source of understanding and compassion, this transformation is accomplished. When this transformation is present, all one's actions will carry the same nature and effect—protecting and building life with understanding and compassion. If one wishes to share joy and happiness with others, one should have joy and happiness within oneself. If one wishes to transmit serenely, first one should realize it oneself. Without a sane and peaceful mind, one's actions could only create more trouble and destruction in the world. (Hanh, 1983: 2; also see Hanh, 1987)

The transformation of ourselves and the world becomes our constant practice, here and now.

The practice is, in the true sense, spiritual and religious. In Buddhist terms, we become enlightened in the practice; and in Christianity, the transformation involves an inner conversion—a new age coming in both cases only when we have made ourselves ready. As a commentator (Muslo, 1986: 231) on the Catholic peace tradition writes, "Peace is not so much political revolution as personal conversion; it is not individual human ego and power at stake, but God's will to peace that only humans can accomplish on earth, as they are the recipients of God's gift and challenge to peace."

And there can be no peace without justice. This is the biblical command. A good social life—one based on equality, with the elimination of poverty, racism, sexism, and violence of all kinds—is a peaceful existence. The Old Testament Isaiah (32:17) states: "Justice will bring about peace, right will produce calm and security." Peace, the result of all the benefits of the covenant, is granted to those who fulfill the covenant by living in justice. "Peace and justice," Ronald Muslo (1986: 13) observes, "are thus inextricably bound: cause and effect, journey and goal." By living the covenant—by creating justice—there is peace. The peacemakers are truly "the children of God."

All of this is to say, to us as criminologists, that crime is suffering and that the ending of crime is possible only with the ending of suffering. And the ending both of suffering and of crime, which is the establishing of justice, can come only out of peace, out of a peace that is spiritually grounded in our very being. To eliminate crime—to end the construction and perpetuation of an existence that makes crime possible—requires a transformation of our human being. We as human beings must be peace if we are to live in a world free of crime, in a world of peace.

In recent years, we have seen several attempts at peacemaking in criminology. There have been writings and some programs employing conflict resolution, mediation, reconciliation, abolition, and humanistic action (see, for example, Abel, 1982; Currie, 1983; Pepinsky, 1988; Tift and Sullivan, 1980; Sullivan, 1980). They offer the concrete beginnings of a criminology of peacemaking, a criminology that seeks to end suffering and thereby eliminate crime. It is a criminology that is based necessarily on human transfor-

mation in the achievement of peace and justice. Human transformation takes place as we change our social, economic, and political structure. And the message is clear: Without peace within us and in our actions, there can be no peace in our results. Peace is the way.

We are fully aware by now that the criminal justice system in this country is founded on violence. It is a system that assumes that violence can be overcome by violence, evil by evil. Criminal justice at home and warfare abroad are of the same principle of violence. This principle sadly dominates much of our criminology. Fortunately, more and more criminologists are realizing that this principle is fundamentally incompatible with a faith that seeks to express itself in compassion, forgiveness, and love. When we recognize that the criminal justice system is the moral equivalent of the war machine, we realize that resistance to one goes hand-in-hand with resistance to the other.

The resistance must be in compassion and love, not in terms of the violence that is being resisted. A definition of "nonviolence" by a recent resister (Taylor, 1986: 1) is appropriate: "Nonviolence is a method of struggling for human liberation that resists and refuses to cooperate with evil or injustice, while trying to show goodwill to all opponents encountered in the struggle, and being willing to take suffering on oneself, rather than inflicting it on others." We are back again to the internal source of our actions: Action is the form the essence of our being takes. Thich Nhat Hanh, whose thoughts follow that same definition of nonviolence, writes:

The chain reaction of love is the essential nature of the struggle. The usual way to generate force is to create anger, desire, and fear in people. Hatred, desire, and fear are sources of energy. But a nonviolent struggle cannot use these dangerous sources of energy, for they destroy both the people taking part in the struggle and the aim of the struggle itself. Nonviolent struggle must be nurtured by love and compassion. (Quoted in Taylor, 1986: 2)

When our hearts are filled with love and our minds with willingness to serve, we will know what has to be done and how it is to be done. Such is the basis of a nonviolent criminology.

We begin, then, by attending to the direction of our innermost being, the being that is the whole of reality. Out of this source, all action follows. In the words of Lao-tzu, "No action is taken, and yet nothing is left undone" (1963: 184). Everything is done out of compassion to help lessen the suffering of others.

Living in harmony with the truth, we do everything as an act of service. Criminology can be no less than this, a part of the reality of all that is—a way of peace.

An earlier version of this essay appeared in the 1988 winter edition of *The Quest*, pages 66 to 75.

## REFERENCES

- Abel, Richard L. 1982. *The Politics of Infernal Justice*. Vol. 1. New York: Academic Press.
- Aiken, Robert. 1984. *The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*. San Francisco: North Point Press.
- The Bhagavad-Gita*. 1962. Tr. Juan Mascaro. New York: Penguin Books.
- Chah, Achaan. 1985. *A Still Forest Foot*. Ed. Jack Kornfield and Paul Breiter. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House.
- Curcio, Elliott. 1983. *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Dass, Ram, and Paul Gorman. 1985. *How Can I Help? Stories and Reflections on Service*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- The Dhammapadam*. 1936. Tr. Irving Babbitt. New York: New Directions.
- Goldstein, Joseph. 1983. *The Experience of Insight*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat. 1987. *Being Peace*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.
- . 1985. "Action and Compassion in the World." *Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter* 7 (3): 2.
- Huxley, Aldous. 1970 (1945). *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Kalu, H. B. Rinpoche. 1987. "The Value of Retreat." *Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter* 9 (Winter): 13.
- Kornfield, Jack. 1985. "The Buddhist Path and Social Responsibility." *ReVision* 8 (Summer-Fall): 63-67.
- Krishnamurti, J. 1975. *Freedom from the Known*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Lao-tzu. 1963. *The Way of Lao Tzu*. Tr. Wing-Tsit Chan. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Lavine, Stephen. 1979. *A Gradual Awakening*. Garden City: Anchor Books.
- Merton, Thomas. 1979. *The Alient to Truth*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- . 1967. *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New York: New Directions.
- Muto, Ronald G. 1986. *The Catholic Peace Tradition*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.
- Needleman, Jacob. 1980. *Lost Christianity: A Journey of Rediscovery*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Nishitani, Keiji. 1982. *Religion and Nothingness*. Tr. Jan Van Bragt. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pepinsky, Harold B. 1968. "Violence as Unresponsiveness." *Justice Quarterly* 3 (December): 539-63.
- Sayama, Mike. 1986. *Samadhi: Self Development in Zen, Swordsmanship and Psychotherapy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Shollmowski, Henry. 1986. "Life, Entropy and Education." *American Theosophist* 74: 305-10.
- Sullivan, Dennis. 1980. *The Mask of Love: Corrections in America, Toward a Mutual Aid Alternative*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press.
- Suzuki, Shunryu. 1970. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. New York: Weatherhill.
- Taylor, Richard. 1986. "What Are Nonviolent Tactics?" *Pledge of Resistance Newsletter* (Summer): 1-2, 8.
- Tift, Larry, and Dennis Sullivan. 1980. *The Struggle to Be Human: Crime, Criminology, and Anarchism*. Sanday, Orkney: Clonfuegos Press.
- The Upanishads*. 1965. Tr. Juan Mascaro. New York: Penguin Books.
- Walsh, Roger. 1984. *Slaying the Alien: The Psychology of Human Survival*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Watts, Alan W. 1957. *The Way of Zen*. New York: Pantheon Books.



and teachers than they do with their family members. Cooperative learning provides both a model and a source of experiences for students.

*Cooperative learning* is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Cooperative learning experiences are based on students' perceiving that they sink or swim together and that they must provide face-to-face help and support, do their fair share of the work, provide leadership and resolve conflicts constructively, and periodically process how to improve the effectiveness of the group. Not only will students achieve higher and learn more complex cognitive skills, working cooperatively will also increase their ability to work effectively with diverse and heterogeneous peers, their self-esteem and psychological health, their ability to act independently and exert their autonomy, their interpersonal and small-group skills, and their understanding of interdependence and cooperative efforts.

Of all the issues facing the world, the increasing interdependence among individuals, communities, and countries may be the most important. The future of the world and our species depends on how well we manage it. Today's children and adolescents of all ethnic groups and heritages, rich and poor alike, are the potential captains of that future. We owe them the best experiences in how to build, lead, and maintain cooperative efforts that we can give.

### References

- Johnson, D. W. 1990. *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-actualization*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Johnson, D. W. 1991. *Human Relations and Your Career*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Johnson, D. W., and Johnson, F. 1991. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Johnson, D. W., and Johnson, R. 1987. *Creative Conflict*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. 1989. *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R., & Holubec, E. 1990. *Circles of Learning*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

VI.1.2

## CHAPTER 19

### Business, the Relationship Age, and a New Kind of Nation

TERRY MOLLNER

Throughout the ages the truly sophisticated business person has known that the marketplace is fundamentally cooperative, not competitive. The free and orderly exchange of goods assumes the absence of a free-for-all. The conscious or unconscious agreement to not have a free-for-all is the cooperative context within which the free market exists. Unless you are at war with someone unto death, you are operating within some degree of restraints which are cooperative agreements. Free markets, therefore, necessitate a social contract which allows agreements to be made, products produced, distribution effected, etc. all on a continuous basis. Competition may be where the focus is, but it is cooperation which is fundamental in the marketplace.

It is also cooperation which determines success or failure when times are bad. If you go into business and fail, you fail. When Chrysler failed, it was saved. During the savings and loan crisis, when a small savings and loan bank failed, it failed. When a big bank failed, it was saved. In other words, the cooperative agreement is that big companies and banks will not be allowed to fail but little ones will be allowed to fail. Obviously, the people in the big organizations, including the government, are cooperating with one another at the expense of the people in the little organizations.

Thus, you will not witness a savvy business person making enemies. You will find him or her making friends everywhere he or she goes. That is because friends make cooperative agreements; enemies do so only reluctantly. After all, a "sale" is a cooperative agreement and friends, by definition, cooperate for their mutual benefit while enemies sabotage each other's self-interest. We also read of small banks or businesses which have friends in high places which are saved from failure. Obviously, friends in high places can be more valuable for this purpose than other friends.

In fact, as we will see below, competition is not even an alternative to cooperation. It is the lowest form of cooperation. There is no alternative to cooperation. It is fundamental.

The view of the universe as an immense number of separate parts which compete for the fulfillment of their self-interests is giving way to the view that it is one body with an immense number of connected parts which primarily cooperate in the self-interest of the one whole. The latter is no longer viewed by the new

science as an illusory ideal but as fact. Evolution, it turns out, is not fundamentally competitive. It is fundamentally cooperative.

As you have certainly realized by now, what is being presented here is a worldview which may not be familiar to you. However, it is this new worldview which will be defining our future. The global symbols of the Material Age—the Berlin Wall, the Iron Curtain, and the Super-power rivalry—are gone. They have been replaced by a peaceful united Germany, in a united Europe, in a rejuvenated United Nations committed to collective global security and free markets. These are the global symbols of the new Relationship Age. Earth has been in the Material Age since before human civilization. It is now entering the Relationship Age, the period when personal and planetary activities will be based on the assumption that *all is relationship, not matter*. The behaviors of the Relationship Age naturally begin to emerge from each of us when we embrace a new (at least to twentieth century science), more mature definition of who we are.

### THE RELATIONSHIP AGE

Under the Material Age worldview of both capitalist and socialist societies, I define my "self" as "my body." My body is "material—a part of the universe." Our new understanding of nature as a result of our study of sub-atomic particle physics, relativity theory, and quantum theory suggests a new definition of "self." According to this Relationship Age worldview, as I call it, my "self" is "all that is—the universe." The universe is no longer viewed as an immense number of separate parts competing for their own self-interest. Rather, it is an immense number of connected parts cooperating in the self-interest of the one, indivisible whole. All is relationship, not matter. (The smallest particle, it turns out, is not a particle at all. It is a pattern of organic energy.) Therefore, "I" am not only my body. "I" am the universe. So is everyone and everything else. There is only one thing, world, or being and we're it. Let me explain how this can be true.

### The New Science

In quantum mechanics scientists postulate that time and space do not have objective realities outside human perception. They are, in effect, mutually agreed upon illusions that we all accept and share. They are valuable illusions because they allow us to create language and be self-aware, but they are not real. Perception itself is an extension of and only possible because of this mutually agreed upon illusion. (Nothing we see is real; it only has the meaning we have given it.) Thus, the surface perceptions which first come to our minds as a result of the creation of language, that of separate and competing parts, is not accurate. It is a projection of the mutually agreed upon illusions which allow us to create language and be self-conscious. When we learn to suspend these illusions, we begin to see the universe not as a finite number of unrelated parts functioning independently but as an

infinite number of closely related parts functioning inter-dependently. Each connected and interdependent part primarily cooperates with all others for the common good, that is, for the self-interest of the one indivisible whole.

I find it of no small interest that the above assumption has also been the basis of spiritual and moral behavior throughout the ages. Now, in a reversal of previous positions taken by the scientific community of the Material Age, many scientists—but still a minority—are telling us that, based on the principle that there is only one whole, moral behavior is a natural phenomenon existing throughout the universe. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to assume that it needs to be imposed.

As we explore this further, it becomes apparent that a healthy whole is not possible without the health of all the parts. From biology we know that the impulse toward health and balance exists within each cell, within each organ, within each system, within the total organism itself, and finally is extended outward into the impulse to find harmony and balance with the external environment. If this observation of nature is an indicator, we can safely say that the interdependence of the parts with the whole is not a learned process but a relationship that exists throughout the universe.

Taking these theories as a model for human organization, we see that adjustment to the Relationship Age depends not on forcing ourselves to either learn new ways of being or unlearn old habits. Rather, when we switch from the Material Age self-definition to the Relationship Age self-definition we transcend the illusion of perception and reconnect with an existing and very fundamental and natural impulse. The result is, indeed, new ways of being but they are automatic, spontaneous, natural, and enjoyable. As we become aware of the patterns of behavior which emerge, our actions become more self-conscious and masterful at this new level of maturity. We find that we are on a course of learning which is thoroughly enjoyable and captivating. We remain focused on getting better and better at it without any feeling of effort or forcing ourselves. Its fun. Its life.

The existence of free will, which we too often associate with rugged individualism and the satisfaction of the body as our highest priority, should not be construed to mean that we are separate and independent. It is possible that there are more than five billion limbs of the one universal body each of which has the function of free will. Just as the impulse of each cell in our bodies to maintain its own optimal health ultimately benefits our whole body, so what we perceive as the drive of each of the more than five billion human beings on our planet to exercise their self-conscious ability called "free will" ultimately benefits the whole. It mainly does so by ultimately choosing the Relationship Age self-definition as the fundamental assumption upon which it builds relationships between and among human beings and the rest of nature.

### There Is Only One Natural Law

Under the Material Age worldview, operationally we have each discovered that there are two opposing natural laws. By nature all the parts of my body know

themselves as parts of one thing called "my body." Therefore, my hand always gives priority to the good of the whole body over its own self-interests. It never, except perhaps in times of serious illness, uses or abuses other parts of my body. However, according to this worldview, it is also natural for my body to always give priority to itself relative to all other things. Thus, among the parts of my body, nature's rule is cooperation. Between my body and the rest of nature, nature's rule is competition. In other words, operating on the Material Age worldview we have each discovered that reality is a contradiction.

According to the Relationship Age worldview, reality is no longer a contradiction. Cooperation, not competition, is the fundamental relationship among all the perceived parts of the universe. Competition is not even an alternative option. It is the lowest form of cooperation. The relationship of cooperation has no alternative. It is fundamental.

A farmer or anyone who has had two dogs or cats has probably witnessed the fundamental cooperativeness of nature. If you put down one bowl of food for two dogs, they will fight over it. This is the lowest level at which the parts of the universe cooperate for the good of the one whole, by the survival of the fittest through competition. However, if you consistently put down a bowl for each, they will cooperate by each eating out of their own bowl. Given the opportunity to cooperate at a higher level of maturity, direct cooperation with one another for the good of the one whole, they will naturally do so.

As we will see, once this oneness definition becomes a self-conscious choice as it can in human beings, the planet can evolve into having self-conscious cooperation rather than competition be the dominant form of fundamental cooperation. This would be a higher stage of evolution for the planet. Having this occur as an extension of individual free choice rather than allowing this natural instinct toward maturation on the basis of the assumption of oneness be manipulated by fascist has been the main theme in the story of human civilization since its emergence.

### **The Priorities in the Relationship Age Are the Opposite from Those in the Material Age**

Practically speaking, for individuals, couples, groups, corporations, and nations this means a reversal of the Material Age priorities. Instead of giving highest priority to the self-interests of ourselves, those who own the company, etc. the common good becomes the highest priority at all times. All relative good, i.e., the good of this part of the universe relative to another part, is always secondary and attended to only as an extension of the common good. These priorities are chosen either out of greater wisdom or out of the experience of discovering through the path of hard knocks that this is the only way to fully satisfy one's individual self-interests.

This is not done out of idealism. It is done because if it is true that the universe is one, indivisible whole, then this ranking of priorities is natural and, more importantly, we have been giving priority to the common good all along regardless of our efforts to do otherwise. We have just been doing it at a lower level of maturity than is

possible. Because of our adherence to the Material Age worldview, we have been freely choosing to do it at the level of maturity of minerals, vegetables, and animals rather than at the level of maturity which is possible for self-conscious beings, or a self-conscious universe.

Since it is obvious what the damage to all would be if we didn't, under the Material Age worldview it is usually agreed that we should give priority to the common good while at the same time it is agreed that it is not natural to do so. Thus, capitalism gives priority to the freedom of the individual to pursue his or her self-interests with only a minimum of restrictions while communism gives priority to the responsibility of the individual to the group and uses force to make sure it occurs. Neither assumes that it is natural for the individual to give priority at all times to the common good.

The essence of the emerging Relationship Age is that we will no longer rely on the common good being the result of force or the indirect result of competition to fulfill our independent self-interests. Rather we will each choose to give the common good highest priority at all times because we know that it is our true self-interest by nature. In fact, we can't stop doing it but only do it at higher or lower levels of maturity because the universe is, indeed, one indivisible whole and were it.

### **The Emotional Feeling of Full Rather than Partial Satisfaction Becomes Possible**

Also, doing it by choice is the only way to have the emotional feeling of full rather than partial satisfaction moment to moment as we move through life. This can occur because the tension from assuming reality to be a contradiction will no longer be present. Our choice of behaviors will be able to consistently be extensions of our one worldview without continually tacking between self-sacrifice and greed in search of the ephemeral mean. We will know what to do and choose it directly. This, as will be explained later, will allow for the feeling of full rather than partial satisfaction each moment regardless of how things happen in time and space. We will care what is happening in time and space, but it will not affect our fundamental feeling of peace which results from knowledgeably choosing the Relationship Age worldview and learning to live consistently inside it. The relative feelings which result from occurrences in time and space will be experienced as information, not something to be taken personally, which allows us to more artfully act for the common good. This, in turn, will result in cooperation for the common good being our self-conscious priority in the marketplace and competition being secondary—solely a means of establishing prices and stimulating creativity—and not something which threatens the health and survival of people.

### **The Full Metamorphoses into the Relationship Age Could Happen Rapidly**

If this is our new starting point, the business community in capitalist nations may soon undergo a change as radical as that which has occurred in recent years in

communist nations. Only rather than returning to democracy and free-market economies as the communist nations are doing, we will be moving forward to the next way, the Relationship Age. This radical change will be hastened by the fact that the rivalry with communism is no longer a distraction. This will focus a harsher light on capitalism with a demand that its shortcomings finally be eliminated. Since they will never be able to be eliminated while living within the Material Age, the Relationship Age will continue to emerge.

This metamorphoses into the Relationship Age could happen rapidly because just like the people under communism, people in capitalist nations are also overly ready for the next stage in the evolutionary journey.

#### THERE ARE ONLY TWO POSSIBLE FUNDAMENTAL SELF-DEFINITIONS

Before discussing the changes in the marketplace which are occurring, let's first give greater definition to the Material Age and Relationship Age self-definitions or worldviews.

It can be argued that there are only two possible fundamental worldviews. If we write the numbers from "0" on up on a line, each could represent a way the universe could be structured:

0 1/2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 etc.

"0" is the symbol for "does not exist—illusion." We are not interested in what is not. We are interested in what is. So we will cross out this option.

"1" stands for the assumption that the universe is one, indivisible whole. "2" stands for the assumption that the universe is two separate parts or forces where each acts in its own self-interest. "3" stands for the assumption that the universe is three separate parts or forces where each acts in its own self-interest, etc.

The one thing options "2," "3," "4," etc. all have in common is that they are not oneness. Also, competition rather than cooperation is fundamental. Thus, there are only two possible fundamental worldviews: oneness and two-or-moreness. All other worldviews, theories, philosophies, theologies, social theories, etc. must assume one of these two possible fundamental worldviews.

Each, using the terms Material Age Worldview and Relationship Age Worldview, would be defined as follows:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Material Age worldview:<br>(two-or-moreness) | the assumption that the universe is somewhere between two and an immense number of separate parts each of which competes for its own self-interest in relation to all other things. (Evolution is the result of the survival of the fittest through competition.)  |
| Relationship Age worldview:<br>(oneness)     | the assumption that the universe is an immense number of connected parts each of which cooperates with all other parts in the interest of the universe first and only secondary cooperates or competes in the interest of itself or any subgroup of parts. (Evolution is the result of the cooperation of all things for the maturation of the one whole.) |

Evolution assumes change which assumes time and space. Really, oneness, is changeless—there is no particular time or space to go from or toward where one is

not already. However, in the time and space world of self-conscious perception the self-interest of the one whole appears to be the maturation of the one whole. This is the projection of the assumption of time and space which allows for perception. The self-interest of the one whole is really the maturation of perception to an understanding of the changelessness of oneness while at the same time perceiving it as the maturation of the whole in the illusion of time and space. Thus the Big Bang Theory and all other theories of when time and space began are false. Time and space had no beginning. They are not real.

In one's personal experience, the result of understanding this wisdom is the witnessing and participation in the maturation process of evolution within the context of a changeless peace and tranquility without any experience of contradiction. This is so because that which is real is being given priority and that which is illusion is secondary and viewed only as the language of self-conscious oneness.

How two people or nations relate, therefore, is a direct result of the level of maturity of their perceptions, not of events. This is why a wise person, such as Mohandas Gandhi, would fast and meditate before an important meeting in the process of the liberation of India from England. He wanted to be sure he came to the meeting with the correct perceptions. He knew that maturity, or love, is irresistible. If he could see the other person consistently as a part of himself regardless of the demands and seductions which may occur, the other person would eventually let go of them, look at Gandhi, and say, "What are we going to do with our problem?" From this perspective all things in time and space can be arranged to mutual satisfaction.

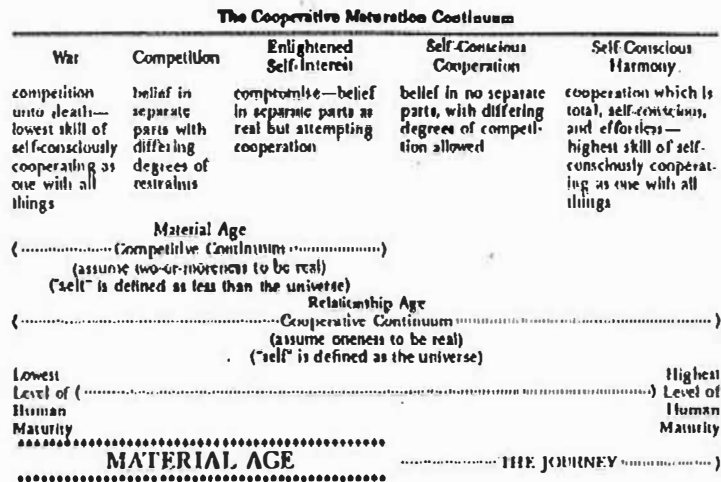
The Relationship Age worldview does not say that the Material Age definition of evolution is wrong. It simply says that there is a more fundamental definition within which the Material Age definition of evolution exists as a limited view. It is a view from half way up the mountain rather than from the top. The relationship between the two different self-definitions which result form these two possible fundamental worldviews is easily seen when we look at the Cooperative Maturation Continuum.

#### THE COOPERATIVE MATURATION CONTINUUM

The Cooperative Maturation Continuum represents the range of human behaviors in terms of these two possible fundamental self-definitions or worldviews. (*vide infra*)

First, before describing the above model, why are these theories important in the practical, everyday world? One way to answer this is by looking at a typical business.

If we look at it from the perspective of the Relationship Age, we see that a company is not merely the capital, buildings, products, machines, computers, fleets of trucks, etc., through which its activities are carried out. Those are merely tools used by the people within the company to carry out their various tasks. Beyond this, the company would be seen as the relationships between and among the people working in the organization. IBM, for example, is not its computers and buildings. Rather, it is the agreements, which are derived from perceptions, by which people are joined together—the contracts, written or implied, that define relationships, that constitute the heart and the life blood of the entity we call "IBM." The same can



be said for any group, large or small, from a married couple to a nation. And it is our self-definition of who we are which is always our starting point for creating these agreements.

If within an organization we define ourselves assuming a Material Age perspective, as being separate bodies, we will play by one set of rules: put somewhat simplistically, "me against the world." If we think of ourselves as more than our bodies, that is, as a member of a family, a community, a team, a religion, a corporation, etc., the basic rules don't really change much. The only difference is that our associations with others expand our resources, change our ability to compete, widen our influence in the world, etc. So, "me against the world," becomes "us against the world." Reality still has at least two parts.

When we step into Relationship Age thinking, however, we begin viewing ourselves as truly integral parts of one vast whole. We start thinking of our lives as joined, no longer separated from others. Our self-identities are now connected to and interdependent with everything in the universe. When a ship's captain makes an error and runs his vessel aground, spilling millions of gallons of crude oil along a pristine shoreline, we perceive and feel our relationship with that event. We suffer the horror of our ruined landscape and the dying wildlife. We recognize that as consumers we are part of that long continuum that invented the technology which depends so much on petroleum. We do have an intimate relationship to the whole event and that, perhaps, is what causes us to feel our outrage and grief so deeply. These feelings are especially strong when we learn of the atrocities in a war.

If the Relationship Age worldview is correct and all things are, indeed, parts of a whole, then war and competition are not alternatives to cooperation; rather, they

are the lower forms of cooperation. If the universe is one thing, it is not possible to escape the interrelatedness of nature with all its interdependent parts moving and relating as parts of the whole. The survival of the fittest through competition is simply the most cooperative relationship as parts of the one whole, possible for non-self-conscious parts.

Moving from left to right on the Cooperative Maturation Continuum is moving from less mature forms of cooperation to more mature forms, from war at one extreme to self-conscious harmony at the other extreme. By choosing the Material Age worldview, we have locked ourselves into the experiences at the lowest level of maturity. Compromise, where neither side in a relationship feels fully satisfied, is the most mature experience available to us. This is the behavior we would call "loving" whether at home, at work, or anywhere else.

However, once the Relationship Age worldview is chosen, the experiences on the second half of the continuum become viewed as possibilities rather than as naive fantasies. Our view of what is possible in an organization, partnership, friendship, or loving relationship changes and, of course, we now demand more than a willingness to compromise in our most intimate or important relationships. We now want the self-conscious feeling of togetherness as parts of one thing which has no opposite. This is the feeling of true love which we are forever seeking because we have had it for fleeting moments while operating on the Material Age self-definition—particularly in moments when one other human being where the feeling of oneness was present because our focus of attention was temporarily solely on that particular relationship. In part, this probably explains the large increase in divorce in our society and is additional evidence that we are moving into the Relationship Age. It also explains the demand for more mature relationships at work and the decline of the competitive ethic encouraged up till recently by management and unions. People have come to believe that it is possible to agree, disagree, sort things out, and make decisions as a secondary activity within a continuous loving context rather than at the expense of it.

Note that in the Material Age worldview each person has a different top priority from everyone else: the top priority of each person at all times is his or her own self-interest. Whereas with the Relationship Age worldview all people and things have the same top priority at all times—the good of the one whole. It is this which allows for continuous peace rather than conflict within relationships. And it is this which allows all to feel their self-interests are fully and continuously satisfied, rather than partially and periodically satisfied. And this is the one and only top priority which will allow an individual or group to have this experience.

However, the common good will only be our top priority at all times if we agree that the Relationship Age self-definition is the accurate one. Otherwise it would be something which we are forcing upon ourselves and not actually agree is true. That is why the fact that at least some sciences are now concluding that the Relationship Age self-definition is the correct choice is so important. This means that it is natural to have the common good as our top priority. It also means that it always is our top priority even when we have chosen the Material Age self-definition. We can't escape nature.

Therefore, it is important to see this continuum as a maturation continuum. We



must have the ability to choose an identity before we can choose to change that identity. We must learn language and become aware of our ability to choose before we can choose. This is why many cultures have had rites of passage into adulthood for young people usually between the ages of 7 and 14. Somewhere in here children become self-conscious of self-consciousness, cease simply adjusting and reacting, and begin defining themselves first and then choosing behaviors which are consistent with this self-definition.

After hearing people in one of my graduate school classes continually assume that one must get rid of one's ego, a street-wise community organizer from Poland finally shouted, "Get rid of ego? You need ego strength! You have to have a strong ego to survive in this world and get anything accomplished!" This is true. To change one's self-definition necessitates first having a self-definition which allows one to feel legitimate in choosing to freely and unilaterally change one's self-definition. This same pattern has been discovered in biology: Integration requires prior differentiation. Without the skill of language, being self-conscious of self-consciousness, and feeling free and able to choose to change one's self-definition, the maturation into the oneness worldview of the Relationship Age cannot occur.

So the behaviors exhibited by people operating on the Material Age self-definition are not "bad." They are the result of ignorance. They are the result of operating at a lower level of maturity, a level of maturity at which we all once operated. Our priority in relating with them should not be to judge and punish them but to assist them to mature. If we are at a higher level of maturity, we are elders and we have the joyful and fulfilling responsibility of elders. Elders do not lead by force but by example, by inviting others to participate, and by responding to requests for assistance.

It is necessary to know the difference between the two possible fundamental worldviews not only in thought but also in feelings, patterns of thinking, and in the experience of behaviors to be able to make a clear choice. This is why many who have chosen oneness ideologically are unable to exemplify it in action and are viewed as "airy" or "spacey." However, despite many suggestions to the contrary, it is not difficult for one who truly knows the oneness way of life to assist another to learn it.

Although Material Age thinking has been dominant on our planet since perhaps the beginning of human history, we are now at the beginning of our journey not only as individuals and organizations but also as a planet into the Relationship Age. In the Relationship Age, how we relate to each other becomes the primary focus of our attention. While the Material Age goals of focusing our attention on the distribution of goods and services will continue to be important it will not be accomplished at the expense of our relationships. This will be a major evolutionary shift on our planet, comparable to the invention of language or the discovery of fire.

As our world continues to shrink into a planetary village, it also becomes increasingly necessary to focus on our inter-dependence and to evolve into the future using the Relationship Age as our worldview. This is a natural part of the evolutionary process.

With the technologies of today we can know what is happening in any part of the globe within seconds. Almost at the exact instant that the Berlin Wall comes down, and the people standing near it cheer, the event is celebrated in homes all over the

U.S. A tremendous uplifting of the human spirit is felt not just in Berlin but virtually in every spot on the Earth. The sigh, the tears of joy, are experienced globally, and the experience reminds us of our oneness. Through television we are all increasingly experiencing the globe as our village.

However, this experience of the globe as our village has not only been in the realm of sharing common joys but also in the realm of sharing common fears. For example, with our development of nuclear weapons we have come to see that war is never waged against an anonymous enemy but is waged against the whole of which we are a part. With nuclear weapons and our capacity to wage a war from which there can emerge no winners we are at last beginning to see that our real enemy is not "the other guy"; it is our own inability to relate peacefully with our adversaries. The result has been a shedding of the super-power rivalry and a mutual embrace of collective security. In the future we hope to increasingly resolve conflicts through diplomacy and negotiations before a war rather than after it. This is the most obvious evidence of the ascendance of the Relationship Age on the global level. The increase in the concern for the environment is another obvious example of the beginnings of this journey at the global level. The solutions to these problems can only be the result of global agreements which give priority to the common good.

The new level of maturity we achieve with the Relationship Age is changing everything. In changing our definition of self we change the way we think and feel; we change our understanding of our relationship with God or the one, indivisible whole; we change our experience of romantic love, our social, political, and economic contracts, and even the corporate agreements necessary for remaining "competitive"—that is, "valued" or, dare we say, "loving and lovable"—in a free-market economy. (Isn't Tom Peters really screaming that we should be more "loving and lovable" in all his lectures and books?)

Since the beginning of human civilization, in every tribe, village, and nation the supporters of each of the two possible fundamental worldviews have each been seeking a consensus. Since they were opposites, it was obvious that one had to be a false worldview and the other true—the universe can't be one thing and two or more things at the same time. Equally obvious, the consensus would only be able to hold once the correct one was chosen. Finally, it could only be chosen once there was an explanation of its accuracy which made sense and was verifiable in experience, both in the laboratory and everyday life.

Our latest scientific discoveries have finally taken us to this point in the laboratory. The power of science as our new spokesperson for God is evident in the fact that the spiritual life has been taking people to this point in everyday life for thousands of years. Yet, until science discovered this truth in the laboratory, it insisted on looking the other way. This should not be scorned. This adds to its credibility as a discipline committed to the discovery of truth through direct experience and should finally firmly establish the oneness worldview and self-definition as the correct choice. Thus, now that science is also beginning—it is still not the majority view—to embrace the Relationship Age worldview, one can confidently conclude that the populations of the world will increasingly do so as well.

Of course, consensus on the oneness worldview has been reached by many tribes and nations in the past. However what makes this movement toward a consensus on

it unique is that this time it is being reached by the planetary village and with the approval of the current main planetary spokesperson for God—science. There is no unknown tribe which may be discovered on the other side of the mountain which is still following the Material Age worldview. This would encourage a return to fear and attack as a way of life, and a degeneration into an embrace of the Material Age worldview which inevitably accompanies such behavior. Assuming there are no human cultures on other planets, at least any with which we will have contact anytime soon, our only threat is from within our own planetary village. Therefore, we will have a memory of our discussions and conclusions.

Now that we have enough scientific knowledge to conclude that the Relationship Age worldview is the correct fundamental worldview, we will never be able to act as if we do not know that it is so. That is the wonderful thing about truth—once you know it you can never act as if you don't know it. And now it is becoming the choice of the one big village of which we are all members—Earth.

### RELATIONSHIP ECONOMICS

Within the Relationship Age self-definition, we can identify three possible relative power relationships and economies:

| The Three Possible Power Relationships and Economies |                    |                      |                  |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Fundamental Assumption                               | Power Relationship | Economic Agreement   | Economic Example |
| Material Age   | Power Hierarchy    | Command Economy      | Soviet Union     |
| Two-on-oneness                                       | Competition        | Market Economy       | United States    |
| Relationship Age or Oneness                          | One Partnership    | Relationship Economy | Mondragon        |

Under the assumptions of the Material Age there are only two possible power relationships: 1) either one person (or group) is in charge of others (power hierarchy) or, 2) there is no agreement about who is in charge, resulting in open-ended competition for power (competition).

Under the assumptions of the Relationship Age there is only one possible power relationship: "one partnership." This is when each person freely chooses, or finds himself or herself choosing, to heed and follow the natural impulse within to make the common good his or her primary concern at all times.

In the "relationship economy" of the Relationship Age, the individual is first and foremost a total team player—without an opposing team. One might compete with another person, another group, another company, but the primary goal would always be the good of all.

It is important to note that even in the relationship economics of the Relationship Age, people may organize according to a hierarchical system, becoming dutiful soldiers, giving and taking orders to accomplish a task. They might employ motivational techniques such as promising rewards if the task is accomplished in a certain

way, a technique also associated with the Material Age. All three fundamental power relationships—competition, power hierarchy, and one partnership—can be present in a relationship economy, as long as the priority at all times is the common good—one partnership. It is not the presence or absence of Material Age or Relationship Age relationships which is important. More often than not they are usually all present to some degree. It is how they are prioritized and the continuation of those priorities at all times and in all things which makes the difference.

An embrace of the Material Age worldview results in either a command economy or a market economy. Until recently, the Soviet Union was the most well known example of the command economy and the United States was one of the well known examples of the market economy. The best example I have found of the relationship economy is the Mondragon Cooperatives in the Basque region of northern Spain. A look at it may tell us something about the future which may be about to blossom in our market economies in the wake of communism's implosion and the embrace of the Relationship Age worldview by people in the business community.

### Mondragon

The inspiration behind Mondragon was a Catholic priest who in his own way understood the difference between the Material Age and Relationship Age worldviews. From the beginning he was about the business of creating a society based on the latter.

His first assignment upon leaving the seminary in 1941 was to be an assistant pastor at the Catholic church in the small town of Mondragon which is high in the Pyrenees Mountains of northern Spain. Mondragon is in the Basque region and Father Don Jose Maria Arizmendi Larrieta was Basque. This was just after the Spanish Civil War which General Francisco Franco and his fascist party had won.

He had had a difficult time defeating the Basques who had sided with the freely elected democratic socialist government against the fascists. If the democratic socialists won, the Basques had been promised an amicable separation from Spain so they could create their own nation. As a result, after the war Franco treated the Basques like an occupied nation. He even outlawed the Basque language. This forged a deep solidarity among the Basques. This was on top of the deep solidarity which already exists within Basque society.

The rain fall in the Pyrenees is such that there has never been a drought. Thus the Basques have never had to migrate. They have lived in those mountains for as long as there has been recorded history. Also, their farming and village life has been based on consensual democratic policies for as long as they can remember. At the same time, they have always been dominated by other people. These conditions, plus a unique language and common religion, have forged a deep solidarity among the Basque people.

So Father Arizmendi, not only a devout Catholic but also a devout Basque, set about building a Relationship Age society by extending into more sophisticated realms the Relationship Age values which were already present in Basque society. Since Mondragon was a small town very far off of the beaten path, the people in



Mondragon not only had the solidarity of history but also the immediate experience of being prisoners in a prison camp. In this setting, as is usually true of oppressed and imprisoned people, it was natural for Mondragonians to give priority to their identity as Basques—the common good of the group—over their self-interests. A very fertile soil within which to begin.

### The Philosophy of Father Arizmendi

To this mix Don Jose Maria added a pinch of wisdom. Mondragon is based on the non-material (call it "agreements" or "mind" or "spirit" or "relationship"). The common good is given priority over a particular good. Or, said another way, people (what is possible for self-conscious beings) come before things.

What is right relationship among people? We all know from our personal experience that the one word answer to this question is "love." But how does love play itself out in the structuring of a business enterprise?

From my research on philosopher Arizmendi, I have concluded that he observed that lovers behave differently around "things" than enemies do. If we are lovers and we have an apple which we both want, we probably will split the apple as evenly as possible and share it. If one of us has not eaten all day and the other just has had a full meal, the latter will take a little piece and give the rest to the former.

Lovers behave as if they have only one mind and one body. With little effort they share resources as easily together as they make decisions alone.

Enemies, on the other hand, behave in the opposite manner. If we are enemies and we have an apple, one of us might try to gobble it down while the other is not noticing. Or, if too smart for that, we might agree to share it by cutting it in half. Then we would both try to take the bigger piece even if one of us has had a full meal recently.

Enemies behave as if they have two different minds and bodies. This is because they think "things" are most important. There being only so many things around at any one time, they try to acquire as many of them as they can. Life for them is a process of competing and taking.

The difference between friends and enemies lies in the fact that the relationship among friends can be timeless and spaceless. For instance, if we make a mistake with a loved one, apologize and are forgiven, it can be as if it never happened. Yet materially it did happen. Relationship can be timeless and spaceless; matter is in time and space. If the relationship is truly loving, there can be no conflict around matter.

Arizmendi simply extended this relationship of oneness known by all in friendships and between lovers into the relationship with all things, even with those who see themselves as our enemies—like Franco and his Guardia Civil soldiers which were nearly always in view. Arizmendi pointed out that they were powerless to decide what people were thinking in their minds. Thus, rather than confront them, which would be acting as if they could, Arizmendi separated what people were doing from the language and belief system within which they were doing it. "Let's do what we want to do and then simply talk about it in their language and ideas," is

the kind of thing Don Jose Maria might have said. "Since in their worldview they do not think what we are doing is possible, they will think we are doing what they want us to be doing because we are talking their language. We will be left alone to do exactly what we want to do right under their noses. They will be happy and we will be happy without there being any need for confrontation. Soon they will discover that we are growing and they are not because they are stuck standing there watching us." Of course, they also wanted the occupation to end and they would work for that as well, but in the meantime they would be happy and prosperous and be building a society of their own. Thus, as you can see, Father Arizmendi's non-violent or loving methods of dealing with an oppressor in this setting did not even necessitate confrontation.

### The History of Mondragon

In 1943 Father Arizmendi assisted the students in his youth group to start a cooperative technical high school using funds donated by the community. There were parents, students, teachers, administrators, and community members on its Board of Trustees. He became head of the school. He taught his students and many in the community through his evening adult study group classes and conversations. In bars his Relationship Age philosophy as the way up and out of their predicament. He was not charismatic—people fell asleep during his sermons—but he was sure of his views, consistent, and persistent. The question for which he is most remembered is, "How can we do this in a way which works fully for those in the enterprise and those in the community rather than for one more than the other?" He never let them believe that it was necessary for someone to win and someone to lose. Giving priority to the common good always allowed all to win.

By 1954 five of his original eleven youth group boys who had gone to college had worked their way up to management levels at the large industrial company in town, the Union Carrejera. However, they became frustrated in their efforts to apply Father Arizmendi's ideas. So they left and formed a new company (Ulgor) where they could implement his teachings. They raised funds from local townspeople, just as they had when they had started the technical school. In 1956 they opened a small paraffin stove factory with 24 people. When butane gas arrived in Spain, they converted to butane stoves and caught the industrial wave entering Spain. Within one year, they had 117 owner-workers and had bought two nearby foundries.

Today, the "Mondragon Cooperatives" is an association of over 160 cooperative enterprises, more than 100 of which are owner-worker industrial cooperatives. (Of course, Relationship Age companies do not need to be democratically owned and controlled by the members; but as is the case with all relationships which allow for maturation, there is a tendency to eventually become democratic and then consensually democratic.) Beautiful, clean, and modern factories stretch out along the valley for several miles and are scattered throughout the Basque region of northern Spain. There are more than 22,000 members whose jobs are virtually guaranteed for life.

More than half of the Mondragon companies are focused on industry, producing

the full range of consumer and industrial goods, ranging from plastic rulers to bicycles and robots. Collectively, they are Spain's top producers of industrial machinery and major home appliances—refrigerators, stoves, washers and dryers, machine tools, etc. In addition, the Mondragon enterprises lead the way in heavy construction, furniture production, farming and high technology. Spain's only producer of computer chips is a Mondragon firm.

Coop members have a broad health insurance plan for their families, a private unemployment program which pays 80 percent of take-home pay if you are ever laid off, and a pension program, separate from their accumulation of profits, paying 60 percent of their salary on the last day of work until death. Upon retirement, most members are also offered a plot for a vegetable garden if they don't happen to have one where they live.

The 160 independent "relationship cooperatives," as I call them to distinguish them from Material Age cooperatives, are members of an association that owns and controls its own bank, the Caja Laboral Popular (The Bank of the People's Labor). As might be expected, all the businesses do their banking with their own bank.

### Relationship Entrepreneurship

I was amazed when I learned that the bank's Entrepreneurial Division, which provides venture capital for developing new relationship cooperatives, has close to a 100 percent success rate! In other words, nearly every relationship cooperative it has capitalized has succeeded. By contrast, venture capitalists in the United States consider a 20 percent success rate respectable, with 80 percent of all new businesses failing within the first five years.

The secret of Mondragon's success is that they have a unique approach to business development which virtually guarantees success every time. It not only assumes every new business will succeed, it makes a commitment to the business until it does and it backs this pledge with a highly-skilled staff at the Association's Entrepreneurial Division.

They only begin with a group of people who are already friends, never with one individual. They view these natural bonds of friendships as the bedrock upon which the new firm is built. Then the Bank and the founding group agree to stay together until the business is profitable. The members of the founder group put up twice the membership fee others will invest and the Bank loans the business the rest of the capital at approximately 13%. If the business has difficulty, the Bank loans any additional capital at 8%. If more trouble, 0%. If still more trouble, the Bank will donate capital to the business. In other words, the riskier the loan the lower the interest rate! Eventually, even if they have to switch managers or even their product line, the business becomes successful and is able to repay much of the loans, although the Bank often uses a portion of its profits to reduce the size of the loans of all of its relationship cooperative businesses.

You may think this is a very unusual relationship that has been created. However, it is not as foreign as you might think. The Bank is simply relating with these new businesses in the same way any large company relates with any new division it has

created to produce a new product. The only difference is that the Bank itself is a division of the one conglomerate called the Mondragon Cooperatives and this is its particular task. The circle defining our "we" has simply been extended by all beyond the corporation to include not only the Bank but the entire community.

Only unlike conventional businesses of the Material Age which rank their priorities capital-product-managers-workers, Mondragon ranks his priorities in exactly the opposite order: workers-managers-product-capital. People are given the highest priority and "things" the lowest.

Because capital is mainly stored labor and since the entire community is behind the creation of any business, nothing—not even capital—is ever abandoned. As long as the community is willing to put labor into the formation of a business, there will be capital available. This way the Bank never has defaulted loans, interest rates can be lower for riskier loans because the Bank will never abandon the business (so it's better to not overburden it), the owner-workers get guaranteed jobs for life, the community gets a stable commercial sector, and the consumers get high quality, inexpensive products. Everyone wins.

In Mondragon, the venture capital to finance new businesses comes from the savings accounts of bank depositors. This is virtually never done elsewhere. Does this scare depositors? Apparently not. The Caja Laboral Popular is one of the fastest growing and most successful banks in the world, with a branch in nearly every Basque neighborhood and more than 600,000 depositors. It has \$3 billion in total assets. To assure that the businesses remain strong, the seasoned business experts at the Entrepreneurial Division monitor the performance of every relationship cooperative on a monthly basis and are quick to recommend action if any difficulties emerge.

### Mondragon's Commercial and Community Businesses

The Mondragon association has not limited its activities to business and banking. Its total approach includes the needs of the members, their families and the surrounding community. They have participated in nearly every realm of community development. They have built over forty cooperative housing complexes, many incorporating grocery stores and other retail shops. They have created the equivalent of private day care, grade school, high school, and higher education facilities. The Mondragon educational system includes over forty schools and a college. In addition, there is a student relationship cooperative which allows working students to fully cover their tuition and living expenses for their private high school and college while offering the experience of running their own relationship cooperative. Looking at all these benefits, it is no wonder that people brought up in the system usually stay. To support this, children of members go to the head of the line of those seeking positions in the relationship economy.

The association of Mondragon Cooperatives includes a health maintenance organization, a health insurance company, their own social security system, and a chain of nearly 300 cooperative food stores—some of which include consumer retail complexes similar to K-Mart or Wal-Mart—with over \$400 million in annual sales.

The profitability of the Mondragon cooperatives is twice that of the average corporations in Spain. Of even greater significance, worker productivity in the cooperatives is higher than in any other organizations in Spain. While much of their success in this area is the result of Mondragon's innovative management approach, it can also be attributed to their aggressive use of high-technology production methods, such as robotics. And casting all conclusions about the management performance of Material Age cooperatives aside, in a study by the Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society, the management was found to be some of the most aggressive and innovative ever seen by the Foundation's staff. Also, the members were found to be highly motivated and personally fulfilled by their jobs.

The commercial enterprises of the Mondragon Cooperatives sold over \$1.6 billion worth of goods and services in 1987, 19 percent of this for export. And during the deep European business recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when 20 percent of the employees in the surrounding economy lost their jobs, the relationship cooperatives increased employment by 36 percent!

In light of the Mondragon Cooperatives' extraordinary success record it should come as no surprise that the Association became the Basque's model for the future. What is surprising is that the cooperatives were built in spite of suffering through over forty years of repression under General Francisco Franco—a testament to the wisdom of Father Arizmendi. The Spanish dictator died in 1975 but the Basques were not granted local autonomy until 1982. Then, in the 1989 meeting of the Basque National Congress, Mondragon's "third way" was adopted as the official economic policy of the new Basque nation. This may be the first nation in modern times to commit itself to the development of relationship economies.

### The Structure of a Mondragon Enterprise

Having articulated his philosophy, Father Arizmendi asked his young students and the men and women in the bars and drinking clubs "If these ideas are true, what kind of an organization does it suggest?"

First, they realized that if they wanted to have a loving organization, they could not define seemingly opposite roles, for example workers and owners, as the responsibility of different people, as if these roles could be separated in time and space. Are not we all both full co-owners and co-workers of the planet at all times before we are anything else?

To have easy and freely chosen one-mindedness, it is best if the owner and the worker in a business are the same person. If I am the person who decides what movie to go to and you are the person who goes to the movie, that will seem ludicrous to us. In this example, we easily can see that to separate the choosing and the doing from one another in time and space (into different bodies) brings fear into the relationship. We will each fear that the other will not be sensitive enough to our needs and wants. The potential for conflict is great.

If I am the chooser and the doer, however, I have no fear at all. I know I will be sensitive to my needs and wants so the relationship between the chooser and doer,

being both in me, is peaceful. This inner peace is the result of my freedom; the capitalist in me is happy.

If you and I are going to a movie together and we both are the chooser and the doer, then our relationship can be timeless and spaceless. If we are lovers and you want to go to movie A and I want to go to movie B, we will talk about it. If you want to go to movie A more than I want to go to movie B, we will decide to go to movie A. We will both be happy—yet in the material world I did not get anything I initially wanted while you got everything you first wanted. We are happy because we freely acted as if we had one mind. The limitations of the material world are fully accepted; we could only go to one movie together. There is peace in the relationship. This peace is the result of solidarity; the socialist in us is happy.

Then Father Arizmendi rose above and beyond the Material Age of capitalism and socialism by identifying this as not only the loving relationship between the roles of owner and worker but also between the enterprise and everyone outside the enterprise. The individual freedom of others is honored and the good of all is given priority. Thus, this democratic enterprise is also unlike most other democratic workplaces which explains why it is so successful and most Material Age cooperatives have more often than not struggled or failed. In a "relationship cooperative" all share the same top priority—the common good. In a Material Age cooperative, each has a different highest priority—each individual's self-interest. Conflict, not cooperation, is still the basis of the philosophy. Thus, as at Mondragon, the Relationship Age worldview will eventually allow a plethora of democratic workplaces to emerge and flourish within a free market economy.

So, the first rule of a relationship cooperative is that the chooser and the doer, the owner and the worker—must be the same person. This merge of roles must go beyond titles and become the actual inner and outer (operational) experience of each member.

Each worker not only invests in the business by working all day but also, for the business to succeed, the worker must also become equally invested as an owner. Mondragon believes there is only one thing that will assure this investment as an owner and that is risking capital (stored labor). Everyone knows that ownership is. It is being at risk of something which is yours gets damaged or lost. People can be fully invested in something without being financially at risk. However, Mondragon wants everyone in the community to be equally invested to be members. So they need to make sure everyone becomes invested 100 percent as an owner. To ensure this, every member is required to loan the cooperative a substantial sum (without collateral) which is the equivalent of the lowest annual salary (about \$10,000 in U.S. dollars).

New members do not have to possess this capital on day one. They simply sign a note and it will be withheld from their salary over time with no interest attached. Membership, thereby, is open to all, regardless of financial circumstances. If the business goes bankrupt the next day, however, the owner-workers will still need to pay off the loan to the bankruptcy courts. In other words, even though the capital was not loaned on day one, the owner-worker is fully at risk and invested as an owner from the beginning.

The rest of the structure of a Mondragon cooperative is equally insightful into human nature. Only members of the cooperative can be on its Board of Trustees.

This assures adult-adult psychology patterns. Many owner-worker cooperatives in the past have invited non-members to be on their boards, resulting in parent-child (chooser-doer) psychological patterns.

Each board has two main committees: the Management Council and the Social Council. The manager is an owner-worker who is hired as manager for a four-year term. During that time the manager cannot be told what to do; he or she cannot be demoted. This unique aspect of the Mondragon design is based on the recognition that management is a specialty skill. So Mondragon hires skilled managers and then gets out of their way and lets them do their jobs. This has solved perhaps one of the greatest problems of all other owner-worker cooperative experiments.

In past efforts, managers were suspect because the workers had come from capitalist enterprises where the hierarchy was used as a power tool. As a result managers often did not have specialized training and, even if they did, the other owner-workers used their influence to demand changes in management's business plan without sensitivity to the sophistication of its design. Because of these tendencies toward ineffective management, it has been widely believed that democratic ownership could never compete in a capitalist society.

Mondragon has solved this problem by identifying the essence of hierarchy. They discovered that its essence is efficiency and not power. A hierarchical division of labor is the most efficient way for a group of people to do a complex task; and if the relationships among the people are of the timeless and spaceless variety described earlier, then hierarchy is only an efficiency system.

Thus, Article 4 of the Social Statutes of Ulgor (the first cooperative), as written by Father Arizmendi, reads: "Work is the means adopted for attaining a higher level of satisfaction for human aspirations and demonstrating collaboration with the other members of the community to promote the common good. To ensure that it is contributed freely, productively, and in a manner that makes everyone's collaboration viable, the members shall respect its discipline, namely a hierarchy . . ."

At the same time, the Social Council provides the equivalent of a union within the cooperative structure and also serves as a forum to provide members the opportunity for full participation in management.

Every division of 20 to 50 owner-workers in each business conducts at least a monthly work-group meeting to discuss any issues which have arisen. Each division has a representative who will meet with all the other representatives in the Social Council. The Board of Trustees delegate to the Social Council all the issues with which unions are normally concerned: job descriptions, salary scales, fringe benefits, safety, etc. The Social Council is also responsible for donating 10 percent of any annual company profits to charity. (This compares very favorably with the average American corporate contribution to charity of less than 2%.)

Management and the Social Council representative are part of the group, of course, but also a member of the group who has been elected to the Board of Trustees may participate. Through this system, every owner-worker can be involved in managing every aspect of the enterprise. During these meetings, the owner-workers can discuss anything they choose. Whether an owner-worker becomes enthusiastic about management issues or traditional union issues, his or her substantial capital investment keeps the commitment, both as an owner and a worker,

100 percent present in his or her mind. All owner-workers have one share of voting stock. This keeps them all equal in power. Thus, their relationship within themselves and among each other, as well as with the rest of society, is a one-minded cooperation for the common good.

The structure of the cooperative reflects this one-mindedness in time and space. The capitalist system's equivalent of management and union are each present in Mondragon and distinct; however, they both are inside the "us" of the cooperative, and are subservient to the Board which assures their total integration and coordination. If the Board ever fails in this task, the general assembly of all the owner-workers, which wields the ultimate power within the cooperative, can overrule the board.

Each cooperative elects representatives to the Association of Cooperatives. The Association in turn elects the Board of the secondary cooperatives, such as the bank, the research institute, the entrepreneurial division and the insurance and social security institutions. The main focus of the Association of the Cooperatives in Mondragon is the creation of owner-worker jobs to expand the opportunity for people to participate in the relationship economy. There probably is no better service to themselves. Job creation gives the current owner-workers greater job security and allows them to be enthusiastic about automation. They are very aggressive in robot development. They recognize that it both eliminates repetitive and dirty jobs and increases productivity, which is important in an international marketplace.

At the same time, they view owner-worker job creation as the best service to the community at large. Once a person has an owner-worker job in a Mondragon cooperative, best efforts are made to guarantee it for life. Thus the person's family will never be dependent upon public assistance but will continually contribute to the needs and development of society. Therefore, every act of each owner-worker every day is experienced as providing for one's self and serving society, both simultaneously and both 100 percent. The for-profit versus non-profit personality split with which we are so familiar in our society is absent in the attitude of the Mondragon member. And when you walk through a factory, you feel like you are visiting with someone in their kitchen or working at a church fund raising event and yet their productivity is the highest in Spain.

Finally, the uniqueness of Mondragon is demonstrated in the way profits are distributed by a cooperative. Fifty percent are distributed among the owner-workers based on salary scale and the number of years with the cooperative. However, these profits are not given out in cash. They are allocated to the owner-worker's internal capital account and regarded as a loan from the member to the company. Each year, just before Christmas, the member receives, in cash, the 6 percent interest paid annually on his or her internal account. Thus, the owner-worker's investment in the cooperative increases and the cooperative reinvests the worker's profit to create more relationship economy jobs. The business receives capital without collateral at a low interest rate, normally the most difficult and expensive capital to borrow.

As mentioned earlier, ten percent of the annual profits are donated to charity and the remaining 40 percent is retained in the collective internal account. If the

cooperative ever ceases to exist, this collective account will be donated to charity because it is regarded as the portion of profits which is collectively owned and managed for the common good. So, even the profits escape the time and space material axis by seeming to go in two directions at the same time. The owner-worker has the use of his or her portion of the 50 percent because it can be used as collateral at the bank for a loan which will be at an interest rate only a point or two over the 0 percent it is earning. Yet the cooperative has the use of the capital at the same time.

Don Jose Maria prepared the first by-laws and social statutes which extended the Relationship Age worldview into every aspect of the agreements upon which the business was based, making sure to leave no opening for an easy unraveling into a Material Age operation. This is evident in the five guiding principles upon which the company operated for more than a year before he could break it down into specifics in the by-laws and social statutes:

1. Solidarity
2. Individual economic contribution
3. Labor contribution by all members
4. Democratic government
5. Progressive expansion to incorporate other workers

"Solidarity" was their word for "the common good." It was given highest priority. The original by-laws and social statutes created by Don Jose Maria have been used by every subsequent cooperative.

All that is different is the way the founders looked at the situation in the first place. They started from a different place. Everything else was a result of that. The people at Mondragon believe they are all in business together—the owner-workers, consumers, bank depositors, and community. They arrange it so each owner-worker business is ultimately successful, the owner-workers will have jobs they can control for life, the businesses will avoid wasteful crisis management, the bank depositors will feel secure about their savings, and the community will not have to worry about disruptive plant closings or absentee owners. Finally, they have the joy of knowing that they all share the same top priority in all they do: the common good. This allows for the feeling of a safe, known, and loving context for the sorting out of all relative differences.

The main statement Mondragon has made is that businesses which operate on the Relationship Age worldview are not only viable in a free market economy but they are potentially more viable. And they certainly fulfill human beings financially, socially, and spiritually in ways which conventional Material Age enterprises are almost incapable of doing. This can only be positive for the success of the business. At a minimum, all other things being equal, this suggests that increasingly Relationship Age businesses will squeeze Material Age businesses out of the marketplace.

#### THE MARKETPLACE IS NOT FUNDAMENTALLY COMPETITIVE

There is one other key factor which will bring this about: the idea that the marketplace in a free-market economy is fundamentally competitive is a myth

which is no longer believed even by the man on the street. The marketplace, like everything else in nature, is fundamentally cooperative.

Our modern nation states are societies based on agreements, usually called "laws." All relationships occur within these agreements or one is not allowed to play by being put in jail. In fact, as mentioned earlier, capitalism is dependent upon a society of laws and relative social peace to accumulate capital, make investments, build and maintain facilities and distribution networks, and have agreements and contracts fulfilled day in and day out. The keeping of agreements is a cooperative act. In commerce, the primary agreement is that exchanges of goods and services will be determined by a free market.

The fundamental policy in any market sector is also cooperative. The airlines, for instance, give priority to working together first to maintain their market shares and only secondly to compete with one another to increase market share. This is evident from reading the front page of any financial newspaper. Often it is reported that, for instance, one airline was going to raise its fares but did not do so because it could not get the other major airlines to go along. Such action is illegal; yet the natural instinct to cooperate not only has a hard time but is virtually incapable of following rules which thwart cooperation. On another occasion, the airlines will all lower their fares on certain routes to force a new upstart airline out of business.

The argument will be made that companies are both cooperative and competitive. This is true. However, the important question is which is given priority. First, cooperation is fundamental in nature. Thus, it is not possible to not be fundamentally cooperating. Competition is simply the lowest form of cooperation, not an alternative to it. Secondly, when competition is the choice of relative relationship, cooperation is still given priority—cooperation with government, the bank, the community, the trade association, the members, the customers, etc.—to be able to compete. Finally, as mentioned above, there is cooperation with competitors, usually through indirect means rather than by direct contact, to maintain reasonable profits, keep others out of the market by not letting them in or buying them out, and taking more than reasonable profits whenever it can be safely arranged—especially when there are only a few major players and little possibility for new competition to enter the market quickly. Competing to increase market share is last on the list! It is done, and the focus of attention is usually on it; but it is the lowest priority in a mature market with established participants which is the case in the developed nations of the West and many others.

In these countries, it is only the people at the bottom, the individuals and small business people, who suffer the slings and arrows of the lowest forms of cooperation—outrageous competition. The higher up one moves the more one is insulated from such untidy activity. Chrysler was just one of many companies which was too big for the government to allow it to go bankrupt. The government loaned it money until it could get back on its legs. The government, as mentioned earlier, will save big banks from failure but not little banks because failure of the former would be catastrophic for the biggest company of which it is a division—the nation.

In other words, it is only the still naive who believe that the marketplace is primarily competitive. It is primarily cooperative. This myth that competition is fundamental is perpetuated by those who are cooperating as a means of controlling



those who are not powerful since, according to the Material Age worldview, only some people can be powerful. The sad reality is that the powerful believe the myth themselves even though they are quite aware that it is mainly through cooperation with certain others that they are able to maintain and improve their positions. The result is that sophistication is viewed as the ability to live comfortably with this dichotomy, with the assumption that reality is a contradiction. This is a most unpleasant way to go through life, but it is the most enjoyable way possible under the Material Age worldview.

### Companies Are Converting to Cooperative Thinking

As it has been becoming more and more self-evident that cooperation is what is fundamental, companies and organizations have been converting to cooperative thinking everywhere. It is the new way to get "a competitive edge" in the marketplace. (Until the switch to the Relationship Age worldview becomes fully self-conscious, we will continue to use Material Age language.) After all, if the Information Era is allowing everyone to rapidly have the same technological skills, other than creativity, it is the productivity of the employees that will make the difference in the marketplace. So the big question has become, "How do we increase the productivity of our people?"

Although unions are often a necessity for justice to the employees when the company is operating on the Material Age worldview, being constantly at odds in one's workplace is an ugly daily experience for both the employees and management. Thus, even the decline in union membership is an indicator that employees no longer want to work in such an atmosphere. The new focus of many unions on cooperative relationships with management is another indicator. Both employees and managers have turned toward the creation of companies which have a cooperative approach. This is evidenced by the large percentage of employees whose incomes are now tied to the performance of their companies. Corporate managers are also discovering that it is idiotic to ask their employees to be ruthless and deceitful in the marketplace and not that way with each other and management in the company. You have to go one way or the other in all directions at all times or you have unpredictability and chaos. And there is no in between. You either choose the fear and conflict approach or the peace and cooperation approach.

Since most managements are still operating on the Material Age self-definition, they discover that all their efforts to bring peace into the equation ultimately fail which brings them back to the policies of fear and individual self-interest. This will continue to be the case until they embrace the Relationship Age self-definition and learn to operate on it with sufficient skill to lead their people into it. We are getting very close to being able to do this as a result of abandoning the politics of conflict within companies. Plus our efforts to learn to act for the common good of all in the company has led us to see that this is inseparable from the common good of all. Slowly but surely we are creeping toward the Relationship Age in the marketplace. A watershed event which will make this switch a self-conscious choice may occur anytime now.

### Democracy is only One Possible Structure for a Relationship Corporation

The ultimate result is not necessarily ownership and control by the employees as occurred at Mondragon. One will always be able to start one's own business or even create a conventional multinational corporation on the Material Age worldview or on the Relationship Age worldview and remain the sole owner. The structural form is not primarily what determines a Relationship Age enterprise. It is the experience of the participants on a moment to moment basis. If participants accurately perceive that the organization is giving priority to the good of all, it is a Relationship Age company.

Working in a cooperative could be hell if people are not skilled at doing it. And working for a wise owner could be bliss. The difference is the wisdom of the leadership. In the second case it was wise and in the first it was not. Of course, it is much easier for one person to be more knowledgeable and everyone to benefit by following him or her. This pattern partially explains why we ended up with capitalist corporations before relationship corporations.

However, whereas form does not determine experience, experience does result in a change in the choice of forms. When the wise person who is currently leading the company dies, his or her replacement may not be as wise and the employees will have no say in who it will be. Thus, as has been the case in politics, experience will ultimately move employees toward democracy in the workplace because it is the only way to control their own destiny in the company. The increase in leveraged buyouts by groups of top management is but the beginning of this phenomenon. The percentage of employees who will become partners should continue to increase as we enter the Relationship Age.

At some point in the future, most entrepreneurs will be selling their businesses to their employees because that is where they will receive the best price because the employees will want to determine their own destiny. Since employee ownership will be commonplace, they will comfortably acquire the resources to buy the firm. Also, the community will consider the entrepreneur a hero for selling it to the employees. Everyone will consider themselves a winner. In other words, the maximization of self-interest, as always, ultimately leads us into the Relationship Age.

However, people are currently so focused on their own separate self-interest, and comfortable switching companies and locations to pursue it, that they do not easily think with such a long time horizon or at such a level of commitment in relationship to their workplaces. This is the case because employees know that since the company is relating with them within the Material Age worldview they easily conclude that it would be unwise to not do the same. Thus, the Material Age model re-enforces itself until the wisdom to go beyond it emerges. Also, the employees know that they do not have the power to change the company in fundamental ways. It is only the owners of the company who have the power to switch the context within which the company operates.

The obvious conclusion is that democratic Relationship Age companies will result from conversions of existing companies and the start-up of new companies. Also obvious, the quicker we learn how to artfully and successfully convert capitalist companies to relationship companies and then to democratic relationship com-

panies the quicker the transformation will occur because most people are already working in capitalist companies.

### The Early Stage of the Relationship Age

Many years before this becomes a widespread phenomenon, there will be a period during which companies will continue to be privately owned by a few, or controlled by a few as is usually the case with publicly held companies, but operate on the Relationship Age worldview. There will be an overt commitment to maintain the common good as the highest priority in all things and at all times for two reasons. First, there will be a growing consensus that the Relationship Age self-definition is the correct one which will place social pressure on companies to give priority to the common good and maintain a very clean record in this regard. And, secondly, the marketplace will demand it because it will result in better working conditions, greater employee loyalty, better relationships with the community and others outside the company, and greater productivity.

My judgment is that we are in the earliest part of the first phase of the Relationship Age. I believe this is so because a public discussion of the need to choose between the two possible fundamental self-definitions has not even become widespread. It is still only occurring in pockets here and there far from the public media. The Material Age worldview is still comfortably assumed by all discussants in the media in the USA. At some point, probably as a result of the oneness worldview being presented as part of a new scientific discovery, this discussion will become part of our public decision making process. A consensus on the Relationship Age self-definition and worldview will not take decades to coalesce once the discussion has begun. Rather quickly it will be seen as self-evident because once the question is clearly posed, it is self-evident.

There will be many indications of this change of thinking occurring in the marketplace. Employees will increasingly be seen as "citizens" by management rather than as employees. There will be an even greater sharing of the profits and losses with the employees. More importantly, as the commitment to the common good deepens, the ratio between the highest paid person and the lowest paid person will tend to shrink. This was the policy from the beginning at Mondragon. As an expression of solidarity with the other members inside the enterprise, managers and other highly paid personnel receive significantly less than their counterparts in capitalist organizations. And, to maintain solidarity with workers outside the relationship sector, pay rates for most members are kept close to those received by comparable workers in the non-relationship economy. However, even though it is loaned back to the company until retirement, all receive the added bonus of sharing in half of the profits.

There will be greater concern for the development of the career of the individual employee regardless of where it may lead as long as any transition out of the company is done with sensitivity to the company's needs. There will be greater education of the employees about the total operations of the company and an empowering of employees to assume greater responsibility, operate in teams, and

learn sophisticated consensual decision making skills to speed decision making and increase productivity. There will be greater involvement of private companies in meeting the needs of the communities in which they reside and of other communities in the USA and elsewhere as well.

These things will attract more and more people to prefer employment in relationship corporations. So the relationship economy will grow by success and attraction.

Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) are one of the popular ways corporations have increased the cooperative spirit within the company as well as the participation of employees in the increase and decrease in the value of the company. An ESOP is a US government program which uses tax incentives to encourage companies to give and sell stock to their employees. Basically, the government pays for stock the employees receive and profits the owners receive from the sale. When employees own stock in an ESOP, they usually do not have the right to vote the shares for a number of years. That right is placed in a trust which is controlled by management. In this way the company can move a substantial amount of stock into the hands of its employees without giving them any ultimate control over the company. Studies by both the University of Michigan and the Senate Finance Committee have proven that the greater the employee ownership of stock, the greater the productivity. The result has been a yearly increase in the number of ESOPs to where there were over 12,000 by the end of 1990.

There is a clearly discernible pattern toward increased self-conscious cooperation within companies and within the marketplace. As the Relationship Age self-definition becomes the self-conscious choice of more and more individuals as a result of its continued re-enforcement through scientific understanding, relationship corporations will become more numerous.

### DEMOCRATIC CORPORATIONS THROUGH ELDERING

Democratic corporations appear to be but a dream at this time. But like the destruction of the Berlin Wall, dreams become reality when the time is right for them to not be dreams any more. That time is probably not as far out in front of us as we now may think.

Perhaps the most significant barrier to this transition has been the absence of a worldview which made it meaningful and advantageous to convert to workplace democracy. As mentioned earlier, under the Material Age worldview, the top priority of each person is always his or her own self-interest. This results in competitive relationships, the conflict between unions and management being the one with which we are most familiar. Only the Relationship Age worldview allows all to have the same top priority. It also fully rather than partially satisfies the self-interests of the individuals because they define their self-interests differently.

However, there has also been a second barrier—the way we have been going about it. Lacking the Relationship Age worldview, there has been a tendency to view the legal ownership and control of the company by the employees as the highest priority. This has usually resulted in premature conversions, conversions before the genuine feelings of ownership and control were present and the democratic and



management skills necessary were adequately developed. And nearly always it was done before there was a full understanding and embrace of the Relationship Age worldview.

The support of the Relationship Age worldview by many in the science community is making it much easier to present it. This solves the worldview problem.

The second problem is being solved as a result of the realization that there must be a period of time—a transition period—during which both employees and management can learn the wisdom of embracing democratic ownership and control within the Relationship Age worldview rather than the Material Age worldview. Often in the past, democratic ownership and control was legally effected before the skills and abilities to successfully operate on such a system had been achieved. The result was often disastrous. At Trusteeship Institute, we now recommend the following procedure.

First, the owner or owners must embrace the Relationship Age worldview and decide that they would like to lead their employees into an understanding of it, first out of a genuine concern for the good of the employees and, secondly, to convert their company to be a democratically owned and controlled company based upon it. It is then presented to the employees as a management change, something they understand is within their area of responsibility. It is explained that management would be willing to sell the company to the employees should they decide they would like to buy it and management believes they are ready to successfully manage the company. However, although change in relationship management usually ultimately results in a desire by the employees to purchase the company, no pressure will be placed upon them to do so.

Next the employees elect an Employee Board of Trustees (EBT). The Corporate Board of Trustees (CBT) then delegates the responsibility for running the company to the EBT while maintaining the right to veto any of its decisions. It also emphasizes that it will try to never exercise its veto power. Instead it will meet with the EBT to reach a consensual decision. At least one or two people from the CBT sit as ex-official members on the EBT. The rest of the company is also restructured to operate as a Mondragon cooperative under the CBT, i.e., a Social Council, Management Committee, Accounts Committee, etc., are created. Bonuses and pay reductions based on performance are increased and profits are loaned back to the company at interest as are profit distributions at Mondragon, usually using an ESOP. (A portion of any losses are also deducted from these employee internal accounts as they are at Mondragon.)

Now the company is operating as a democratically controlled Relationship Age corporation beginning on the first day. The nature of this structure is to nurture democratic as well as Relationship Age values and processes. The CBT now has a new primary role: elder. It has assumed the responsibility for moving the company into the Relationship Age as a democratic company. It is free to expend the money on consultants and other services to provide the education and assistance as necessary. Often, under the old approach, this is one of the expenses first to be cut by companies once the employees assume ownership.

When, usually a few years later, the employees feel like they own the company as a result of operating it successfully without the need for intervention from the CBT,

the idea of purchasing the company will come from them. Then and only then should the possibility of selling the company to them be seriously explored because at that point the feelings of ownership and control within a Relationship Age context will be real and seasoned.

The CBT should not automatically sell the company to them. They have the responsibility of elders. Their highest priority must be the common good. Only when they believe the employees truly are ready to assume the responsibilities of ownership and control within Relationship Age wisdom should the sale be made. Many may see this as paternalistic, but that would be a projection of the Material Age worldview onto the situation. The fact is that the current CBT is representative of the owners of the company and under the current Material Age rules of our society they can do with it whatever they please. They are the parents. Therefore, this final decision is theirs and can't be taken away from them.

The new challenge facing them is the challenge of eldering, that is, leading the company to greener pastures in a way in which they both appreciate and actually gets them there. To sell the company too soon or too late would be to fail in the eldering responsibility with which society has entrusted them. As you can see, all have important new responsibilities in this process and everyone grows.

Of course, as the current owners grow older or have thoughts of selling the company for whatever reasons, the transfer of ownership issue may arise before the employees put it on the agenda. This often will speed up the process. However, a new owner would not lightly change this system of operation and would have to take it into full consideration before purchasing the company. Either way the probabilities are that the process will continue toward a day when the employees are the final purchasers of the company.

Using this eldering approach, a smooth transition not limited by time is possible. However, this will not be the main reason these conversions will begin to occur in greater numbers. The main reason, of course, will be an understanding of the Relationship Age worldview. The second reason will be that the Relationship Management System will substantially increase productivity, profitability, and peace in the workplace which will make these companies more successful eventually necessitating other companies to make this change to survive.

## THE RELATIONSHIP AGE NATION

One of the most remarkable developments at Mondragon is that the association has become what I call a "next nation," "Relationship Age Nation," or simply "Relationship Nation." It is a kind of nation fundamentally different from what we have become used to thinking of when we think of a nation. Unlike nations which define themselves by geography or nationality, this nation defines itself by its agreements.

It is like a corporation or conglomerate in the West in the sense that one could live and work within the structure of an association of relationship enterprises while residing in virtually any nation in the world. However, since the top priority is not private profit but the common good, there would be both for-profit and non-profit

corporations of every kind within the conglomerate, as at Mondragon, to meet nearly all the needs currently met within nations defined by geography. Also, unlike some capitalist conglomerates, a Relationship Age Nation would be viewed by the host nations as an unqualified asset to the local economy and its people. In fact, geographic nations would pass legislation to encourage their emergence. The ramifications of this have far-reaching, and very positive implications socially, economically and politically.

As corporations choose the Relationship Age worldview, it will be natural for them to associate together based on this choice. This association will not be like a trade association, a group which works for the collective self-interest of the members in relationship to other groups such as the government or other industry sectors. Rather, Relationship Age corporate associations will become much like the Mondragon Cooperative Association only in the early stages few of them will be cooperatives. Each company or non-profit organization will maintain its independence yet democratically associate with the others for the common good. The result will be that the association will operate more like a conglomerate with each group being a division of the one large company.

However, because its purpose is the common good, like Mondragon there will be everything from insurance companies, private social security and unemployment insurance programs, medical insurance and services, a bank and entrepreneurial companies, schools and colleges, retail stores, agricultural companies, social clubs, etc., and nearly everything else necessary for a healthy society. The most significant difference between this Relationship Age conglomerate and a nation state will be that the former is defined primarily by agreements rather than by geography. The result would be a new kind of corporate nation which would exist above and with the support of the geographic nations in the same way corporations currently do.

This new kind of nation will emerge because it must be freely chosen by each individual. It cannot be the result of majority or even 75% vote of those in a geographic nation. For each person to be free to join or leave it at anytime, it must be an option within a pluralistic society. Thus, a geographically defined nation cannot easily become a relationship nation. It can only encourage their development. This is why the agreement nation will emerge.

It will most probably be an association of for-profit and non-profit corporations within and transcending geographic nations. In cooperation with geographic nations it will attend to all the needs of its citizens—its members. Its highest operational priority will be the creation of additional jobs until all the people on the planet who choose to are voluntarily living and working in the relationship economic sector.

#### GOVERNANCE AT MONDRAGON

At Mondragon, a Congress, a Council of Groups, and a Permanent Commission were created as the formal governing structures for the association of enterprises.

The 350 members of the Congress are directly elected by the members of each cooperative, and each cooperative is represented in proportion to its number of

members. The Congress must meet at least once every two years. Since it is mainly a policy body, it is not assumed that it will need to meet very often or for many days when it does.

The purpose of the Congress is to define the philosophy, guidelines, and general criteria that will govern Mondragon. Its jurisdiction embraces practically all aspects of Mondragon's activities. For example, the Congress is responsible for any change in the relationship between capital and labor in the basic model documents, such as the Social Statutes, Internal Rules and Regulations, etc., used by the companies. It also determines the content of the agreements among cooperatives, promotes new cooperatives, provides for the members of social security, and establishes new organizations to solve problems or provide special services to the enterprises. The Congress establishes Mondragon's position on social issues and develops relationships with other social movements. It handles all relationships between the relationship cooperatives and international, national, and state governments.

In short, the association's governance system mirrors that of an individual cooperative with the Congress being the equivalent of the Board of Trustees. The Council of Groups is the equivalent of the manager, and the Permanent Commission is the equivalent of the Accounts Commission. The Accounts Commission is a three member group elected by the members each year which monitors all the activities and finances of the cooperative to be sure all transactions are honest and accurate and which also serves as the ombudsman ready to check out any concern brought to it openly or in private.

The decisions of the Cooperative Congress are not final. It merely makes recommendations to the members. The decisions of the Congress only become final when they are ratified by a majority vote of the membership. This is a significant innovation in political organization. It amounts to direct decision-making by the citizenry rather than by their elected representatives. Essentially, each piece of new legislation is subject to approval or veto, not by a President or some other elected official, but by the citizens themselves. This is a return to direct democracy. We have seen this occurring more and more in America as well, also through the use of referendums.

Most of Mondragon's relationship corporations are associated into conglomerates based on product areas or geography. The Council of Groups is composed of the managers of the 12 conglomerates; the managers of the chain of retail cooperatives, the bank, the entrepreneurial division, the social security system, and the long range research institute; and the President of the Congress. Except for the managers of the bank and entrepreneurial division and the President of the Congress, each group's manager participates voluntarily. Each Council representative has a number of votes equal to the number of members he or she represents; and in order to make a decision, representatives from at least three conglomerates or other groupings must be present. The Council must meet at least once every three months.

The Council of Groups, like an individual company's management, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the agreements adopted by the Congress and ratified by the members. It is responsible for coordinating discussion and activities at the executive level of Mondragon. It focuses particularly on maintaining a unified industrial policy for all the companies which includes coordinated ap-

proaches to finance, promotion, investment, research and development. The Council will seek to harmonize the interest of Mondragon's various social, human, physical, technical, and financial infrastructures in search of high quality community development. Finally, it solves differences which may arise between the companies and conglomerates. To fulfill all these executive functions, it counts on the collaboration of the Entrepreneurial Division. To prevent the development of a managerial class, the continued existence of the Council of Groups, just like management in an individual company, is dependent upon the Congress which can dissolve it at any time.

While the Council of Groups is responsible for the execution of policies on a day-to-day basis, the Permanent Commission is responsible for representing the interests and policies of the Council on a day-to-day basis to be sure the spirit as well as the letter of the agreements are being kept. The Permanent Commission is composed of the president, vice-president, and secretary of the Congress, and one representative of each of the conglomerates.

There surely are differences and debates within all of these bodies. However, the equivalent of political parties have not emerged nor are they expected to emerge. That is the conflict approach to solving problems, not the consensual approach. Representatives are elected not because they support a particular position but because the groups believe they best represent the entire continuum of positions within the groups fairly. They are elected because it is believed that they are committed to and skillful at searching for the truth. Finally, they are elected because it is believed that they are talented at constructing a consensus which moves the group forward based on its values. The basis for political action is cooperation and consensus because that is seen as the natural process and easily done when assuming the Relationship Age self-definition. Competition and compromise are viewed as immature behaviors, not feared but not chosen either.

Note that "citizenship" in this nation by agreement is reserved for those who have invested their own capital and are continually at greater risk as a result of the reinvestment of their distribution of profits. They are not citizens as a result of where they live but as a result of accepting a portion of the responsibility for the success of this new nation. Rather than being subjects who are taxed, they are voluntary investors who can withdraw their participation and investment at any time. The result is the feeling of being part of a responsible and caring family, a very different feeling from the way most people feel in relationship to their geographic nation, and the reason people are naturally attracted to these new nations.

#### THE GEOGRAPHIC NATION CAN ONLY ACHIEVE ITS GOALS BY ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGREEMENT NATIONS

It is not the fault of the geographic nation that people do not feel part of a responsible and caring family. What we need to understand is that the nature of the geographic nation all but precludes this possibility.

People do not feel part of a family as a result of living in the same geographic area. They feel part of a family by freely making commitments to relationships with

others and accepting collective responsibility for them. This means an investment of time and money. It means the acceptance of responsibility to work, to perform, and to provide not only for one's self but for others. And it means freely choosing to make these decisions.

What the Relationship Age self-definition adds to this is that one is only truly wise when the listing of "the others" does not stop with his or her mate, family, and friends, or even town, state, or nation, but only when we are all included and the person accepts responsibility for his or her relationship with those in all the concentric circles of relationships which extend out from him or her at all times. The agreement nation is the vehicle which allows people who share this view to join together on the basis of it. And it is only they who would be attracted to doing so because those who place their financial self-interest first will quickly realize that a commitment to the Relationship Age self-definition will put them in a different game which would qualify their potential success in their workplace. They would still be able to invest, however; and, as the socially responsible investment community has demonstrated, it is possible to earn market returns on investments while giving priority to the common good.

What we need to do is to encourage the development of Relationship Nations within our geographic nations as the way to achieve the feelings of being part of a family within geographic nations. They will eventually emerge anyway, but wise public policy would be to encourage their development. ESOP legislation is an example of legislative steps in this direction.

The first fear which usually emerges when the idea of many relationship nations sprouting up in communities is discussed is that it will put an end to the melting pot aspect of American culture, particularly if each relationship nation builds its own private schools and the public school system begins to shrink. People will fantasize the emergence of separate Catholic, Jewish, Islam, Black, Hispanic, Christian Fundamentalist, Polish, etc., relationship nations.

First, the very nature of relationship nations is to give priority to the common good by building relationships of friendship with others. These communities exist today. The only difference will be that they will be assuming the Relationship Age self-definition which, in turn, will result in greater and more mature cooperation within the community as well as with those outside it. Secondly, it is probably more likely that people will join in agreement nations based on the Relationship Age worldview and friendship rather than race, nationality, religion, etc. An aspect of embracing the Relationship Age worldview is viewing all these differences as languages of the universe rather than as distinctions which are significant in themselves. Finally, television and the ease with which we are able to move about via automobile and public transportation have turned Earth into one large melting pot.

As long as one is in the Material Age, one will need to create an enemy if there isn't one to be found. Life would not make sense otherwise. For evolution to be the result of the survival of the fittest there must be someone with whom I am supposed to be struggling to survive. When one graduates to the Relationship Age, one finds only friends, some of whom think they are our enemy because they are still operating on the Material Age self-definition. However, those operating on the

Relationship Age self-definition know better. They continue to behave as a friend in relationship to those still in the Material Age, often in the language of competition since that is the language with which people in the Material Age are most comfortable. In other words, the fundamental distinction to one in the Relationship Age is not any differences in time or space (languages, forms, traditions, even beliefs) but in the levels of maturity solely for the purpose of cooperating successfully with the other.

Finally, people will generally continue to buy the best product at the best price regardless of which relationship nation has produced it, theirs or another. The purchase of the best products produced by a relationship nation will be seen as giving priority to the Relationship Age over the Material Age. This will be more important than the success of our relationship nation in relationship to another. However, although this will generally be the case, there will certainly be a greater loyalty to one's own relationship nation if all other things are equal and in the start-up and recovery from a downturn phase of a business.

Of course, there will be lapses back into Material Age patterns at times. That is part of the natural spiral of maturation. Mondragon has not been without its problems nor will it be without them in the future. However, ultimately the positive direction of the Relationship Age will always prevail as it always has. After all, all wars begin and end in peace just as all illusions begin and end in reality. The Relationship Age can be summarized as the process of learning to skip illusions and war.

## CONCLUSION

If, indeed, the universe is one, indivisible whole and we are all parts of one body, even those of us who have the ability we call "free choice," then evolution is fundamentally cooperative, not competitive. As this new understanding of nature seeps into everyone's patterns of thought, everything in our world will change because feelings and ways of relating which we previously thought to be fanciful will become real possibilities. We will discover that there is a different starting point than we had thought as a result of discovering that our self-definition is different than we had thought.

In the world of matter, there are always trade-offs. We cannot, with our minds, make two apples where there is one. However, one can choose either to make the apple or the relationship more important. If the apple is given top priority, competition will prevail. If the relationship is emphasized, cooperation can develop. The Relationship Age is leading us beyond both capitalism and socialism because both of the latter gave priority to the apple—either through competition for the biggest piece of it or through a paternalistic decision on how it will be distributed.

Mondragon has demonstrated that loving relationships can be given priority and institutionalized into a social order that can not only out-perform both capitalism and socialism on their own terms, but bring greater inner and social peace at the same time. Individual freedom is not compromised and each person freely takes responsibility for their interdependence with everyone else through a social system which maintains everyone in a position of equal power and familial solidarity.

We need to remember that Karl Marx died before the father of psychology,

Sigmund Freud, became well known. Marx's strength was not psychology. He made the fatal error of thinking that the end could be different from the process, that class struggle would bring a classless society.

It wasn't until Mohandas Gandhi that we heard a prominent person argue that capitalism and socialism were both lacking because they placed things before people and goals and process before self-definition. Gandhi's economic theory of "trusteeship" defined the relationship among the participants as more important than anything else, in much the same way as Father Arizmendi did. Father Jose Maria Arizmendi, going one step further, has clearly demonstrated how to institutionalize Gandhi's theories as a socioeconomic order. It appears it is the fulfillment of Gandhi's dream.

It may also be the realization of the hopes of our American founding mothers and fathers and every wave of immigrants to the present day who came to America searching for a better way. In the 18th and 19th centuries, they described their dream as a "cooperative commonwealth." In 1800, less than 2 percent of free Americans worked for someone else. To do so was viewed as one tiny step above slavery. Today, 95 percent of Americans work for someone else. The story of the U.S. during the 1800s is one of failed efforts by Americans to prevent the erosion of the "cooperative commonwealth" they knew in their rural townships. Neither capitalism nor socialism was their choice. Mondragon and the Relationship Age worldview may be what we have needed to guide us to the next stage in our evolutionary development as well as to the fulfillment of the original American, and human, dream.

The truth, we now know, is that cooperation is primary but nearly all still believe that competition is primary. What has been missing has been the understanding that competition is the lowest form of cooperation rather than an alternative to it and that cooperation cannot be escaped. As this awareness becomes pervasive, the building of Relationship Age societies will become a self-conscious agenda. Once that occurs there is nothing stopping it from emerging rapidly.

## References

- Campbell, A. 1980. *Mondragon 1980: Industrial Common Ownership Movement*. London.
- Campbell, A., Keen, C., Norman, G., and Oakeshott, R. 1977. *Worker-Owners: The Mondragon Achievement*. Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society, London.
- Curt, J. 1980. *History of Work Cooperation in America: Cooperative Movements, Collectively and Communally from Early America to the Present*. Berkeley, CA: Homeward Press.
- de Calleja Hasterrechea, A. P. 1976. *The Group of Cooperatives at Mondragon in the Spanish Basque Country*. Caja Laboral Popular, Mondragon.
- Johnson, A. G. "The Development of Industrial Democracy in Mondragon" (unpublished paper).
- Mollner, T. 1982. *Mondragon Cooperatives and Trusteeship*. Trusteeship Institute, Shutesbury, MA.
- Oakeshott, R. 1978. *The Case for Workers' Coops*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Thomas, H., and Logan, G. 1982. *Mondragon: An Economic Analysis*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Ulgor S. Coop. 1956. "Social Statutes" (internal document). Mondragon.
- Whyte, W. F., and Whyte, K. K. 1988. *Making Mondragon: The Growth and Dynamics of the Worker Cooperative Complex*. Ilexica, NY: ILR Press.

VI.1.6

in swami's name  
with deep respects  
Romesh

# ESSAYS IN GANDHIAN ECONOMICS

*Editors*

Romesh Diwan  
Mark Lutz

INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
OF NORTH AMERICA

NEW YORK

294

323

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## Gandhi and Marx: An Outline of Two Paradigms\*

Madan Handa

### INTRODUCTION

THIS paper is an attempt at developing a Gandhian paradigm to analyze the contemporary world order. It suggests that the Gandhian paradigm helps one understand the existing world order—which may be described as the highest stage of violent social system—better than the two other dominant paradigms of social science, namely the Neo-Classical or Liberal and the Marxian. In the West, the Neo-Classical or Liberal paradigm is quite well understood being as it is the basis of current literature, politics, policies, and our institutions. Basically, it rationalizes the concentration of all sorts of power through arguments such as survival of the fittest. The paper does not seek to elaborate this paradigm.<sup>1</sup> Even though the Marxian paradigm is also well-known, the paper does formulate it for comparative purposes.

The order of the paper is as follows. In the next section a short description of the nature of the existing world order is given. In order to understand world order, the method of formulating a paradigm is used. The second section then provides a formulation of the Marxian paradigm. In the third section the common features between the Marxian and Liberal or Neo-Classical paradigms are pointed out. It is suggested that these paradigms may be called the "paradigms of violence". Section four introduces the Gandhian

\*This paper was originally presented at an Association of Indian Studies session on Gandhian Economics at the Allied Social Science Association Meetings held in Atlanta, Georgia, December 28–31, 1979. It was subsequently published under the title of "The Existing World Order: A Gandhian Interpretation" in *Gandhi Marg*, November 1980.

perspectives. The structure of the Gandhian paradigm is formulated in section five. The Gandhian paradigm may be called the "paradigm of nonviolence". The paper ends with the conclusion that the Gandhian paradigm catches the essential features of the existing world order.

### *The Nature of the Existing World Order*

The present-day world reality is the result of a historical process of complexity at the global scale. Two paths have led to the emergence of what the world order is today. One of them is the path of development which evolved in the Western capitalist countries. It involved an extension of the colonization of the peoples in borders far beyond the frontiers of these nations and a similar colonization at home. The origins of the second path are found in the challenge and critique of this capitalist path. It started with a promise of a socialist alternative, avoiding the ills of this path. The colonized Third World has followed these two paths in its liberation.

The two paths of social organization share the common factor of modern scientific and technological knowledge. Both the paths have resulted in producing a highly managed and centralized violent world order of antagonistic nation-states.

The present world order may be defined in terms of the following characteristics:<sup>2</sup>

- (a) We are living on a globe today which is highly centralized and managed—in the sense that a few people make decisions and millions are left out from the decision-making processes.
- (b) These few people have at their disposal a massive apparatus of force in the form of the State.
- (c) This centralization of political authority and control is a universal phenomenon. It exists in all kinds of Western democracies, socialistic states and third-world nations.
- (d) Even in the countries with political democracy, there is a severe inequality in the distribution of wealth. There are such extremes as 4 or 5 per cent of the people controlling 15 to 20 per cent of the national wealth, while the bottom 15 or 20 per cent are left with less than 10 per cent of the national wealth.
- (e) This uneven distribution of wealth is also global. For instance, North America with less than 7 per cent of the population consumes 40 per cent of the world energy.



- (f) The effect is that the world is divided between rich and poor, manager and managed, ruler and ruled.
- (g) The above characteristics imply that both individual societies and global order are violent.
- (h) The social order is violent in three respects:
  - (i) The political state is violent, both nationally and internationally.
  - (ii) The economic system is violent, because (a) it is locked in the production of armament and application of science to the production of means of violence and destruction; and (b) it is violent to the individual in the sense that it divests labour of dignity. Technology and management of work conditions are not intended to develop human life but, instead, to extract from the individual the maximum amount of output.
  - (iii) The social system is violent educationally. It teaches and breeds violence and discrimination. Education is not contributive to the development of human personality in an integral sense but is geared to teach skills and attitudes which prepare the individual to adjust and contribute to the continuation of a violent social order. There is also the violence in the consciousness-moulding industry, like television, films, books, etc.

#### *The Marxian Paradigm<sup>3</sup>*

A paradigm is a mental set, a way of looking at reality, and a means by which reality is mentally constructed and interpreted. In so interpreting and constructing reality, we also influence the existing reality and can change it through actions. Paradigms are not only products of circumstances but also their architects. The existing two social science paradigms, viz. the Liberal and the Marxist, focus on the social forces—the origin, development and rationalization of these forces—in such a way that violent social orders come out as inevitable and natural.

- (i) The Marxist paradigm claims to be scientific/dialectic materialist. Being scientific, it distinguishes itself from the "utopian" which Marx-Engels considered as a "romantic" view of the past and future, as against the "revolutionary" (scientific) view. Being "materialistic", it distinguishes itself from the "idealist" view which traces the locus of change to "ideas" or

- "mind against matter" in dialectical motion. In Marxian perspective, there are two dichotomies: "Romantic versus Revolution" and "Idealist versus Materialist". Superimposed on this is the notion that the Romantic and the Idealist view is reactionary in its social philosophy and practices. The scientific and materialist view is revolutionary. The Marxian paradigm focuses on a rational analysis of the social forces, particularly the social relations of production.
- (ii) All social systems experience tension. This tension is due to contradictions of the system. In the Marxian paradigm, the primary contradiction of all societies is attributed to the class character of societies.
- (iii) Class societies are violent social orders. Capitalism is the highest state of class societies and of commodity production. It is also the highest stage of violent social order. Imperialism is the highest state of capitalism. It is also the most violent phase of history. Like violence, alienation also heightens as commodification advances.
- (iv) State is the organized instrument of violence; both to keep the local labour force under control and the third world proletariat in subjugation.
- (v) In addition to force, the state uses ideological means (education, church, media, etc.) to "falsify consciousness".
- (vi) The exploited and oppressed classes—the victims of the objective conditions of the social order—grow into revolutionary awareness as the objective conditions of exploitation, oppression, and alienation develop.
- (vii) Thus starts a revolutionary "epoch" as class awareness of the working classes grows and these classes organize themselves.
- (viii) Revolution led by the oppressed classes—in Marx's original conception the urban-industrial proletariat and in the Maoist conception the rural peasantry—will abolish the propertied class and bourgeois state apparatus.
- (ix) A transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat will be necessary for some time to create a classless society.
- (x) Classless society alone will bring about a nonviolent social order.
- (xi) The last stage of this revolutionary reconstruction of a new society will be: (a) withering away of the state; and (b) an international socialist order.



From the Gandhian perspective, the central weakness of this paradigm is its inadequacy to grapple with the following issues.

- (a) The socialist state is highly centralized.
- (b) The oppression and alienation in the proletarian state continues, in spite of abolition of classes. The socialist state has become a managed society by a centralist system.
- (c) The socialist states are more violent and armed than ever before.
- (d) The socialist states are as much in conflict with each other as the capitalist states.
- (e) The linear progressivist vision has led to ecological imbalance in the socialist world (at least in USSR) as much as in the capitalist world. It has also led to global resource crisis.

The Marxian paradigm cannot help to explain the present-day world reality because it ignores centralism in power and economy and the interaction of the two.

#### *Paradigm of Violence*

Both the Marxian and Liberal or Neo-Classical paradigms have a large number of common features. In view of their commonality, these paradigms may be called the "paradigms of violence".<sup>4</sup>

- (i) Both paradigms share the common legacy of a linear progressivist material view of life and society. Gandhian focus is on the "simplicity" of life founded on basic human needs and a progressivist view of moral and ethico-spiritual fulfilment of life.
- (ii) Both share a common view of Man versus Nature in which the former is the conqueror and the latter the vanquished or to be controlled. The Gandhian view is one of Man-in-Nature. This leads to a sensitivity to an ecological balance and man's place in it.
- (iii) Both these paradigms lead to a centralist and bureaucratic view of society's problems. The political parties, for instance, under both conceptions are bureaucratically organized—the communist and so-called democratic parties. The conception of State and economy, too, is centralist.
- (iv) One reason for this commonality of these two paradigms—apart from the fact that these are cultural products of Europe which gives them Euro-centric and Ethno-centric character—is that they essentially deal with national transformation, the

emergence of national economy, nation-state, etc. These paradigms are sectarian, or racist, or communal in outlook.

- (v) The Gandhian focus is on "Truth" in its scientific and moral aspects rather than on any "falsification" or "rationalization" for sectarian-class interests on which the other two paradigms lay emphasis.

#### *Gandhian Perspectives*

The Gandhian concept of man is one of an integral man and the Gandhian concept of society is that of an integral society. The Gandhian concept is one of an integral transformation of man and society.<sup>5</sup> In the Gandhian conception, the processes of individual (spiritual) transformation and political transformation are inevitably interconnected. The Gandhian concept basically pursues the unity of the individual and the social order. Gandhi stresses the unity of the private and public life. It is the Gandhian view that private life must be transparent and in that transparency, we can see the public life too. In the Gandhian thought, the stress is on the unity of the individual and social praxis. The Gandhian conception may be termed as the "Unity of Existence". This corresponds to the emphasis in the Western social theory on the unity of scientific method. The notion of the unity of scientific method stresses that the method or conception of social sciences must be the same as in physical sciences. The tradition, which expresses itself in the form of "Positivist Model of Sciences", is common to natural and social sciences. Gandhi was not within the tradition of social theory and he did not ask questions of analysis. He emphasized the unity between man and nature, or the "connection" of what one may call man and nature. Man, in the Gandhian conception, is nature at a certain stage of development. Man is not out of nature. It is nature itself which expresses itself as man, as we know it at a certain stage of its own evolution. The laws of nature's evolution, therefore, cannot be set aside because they are still in man. It is a wrong conception to see man as having only laws of his own, as if having cut the umbilical cord with nature and being able to live independently of nature's laws of evolution. Even if man is conscious, that consciousness is the consciousness of nature as well. It is this connection between man and nature which is fundamental to the understanding of Gandhian thought in all its dimensions. It is the dimen-

sion of individual spiritual transformation in which society becomes a necessary "field" to work out and develop individual, as well as collective, spirituality. This conception of the purpose of life lies behind Gandhi's position on every question in social theory.

*The Structure of the Gandhian Paradigm:  
or the "Paradigm of Nonviolence"*

We should make a distinction between the Gandhian world outlook and the method, the former being the philosophical perspective and the latter as tools of analysis. Marxists have dichotomized the world outlooks into "idealist" and "materialist". Each outlook has its own characteristics. Simply speaking, the idealist outlook assumes the ideas and mind as the primary cause of the universe and of history. The dialectical materialist outlook considers the matter, being in dialectical motion, as the primary cause of the universe and mind as a property of the matter. In social analysis this becomes the method of dialectical-historical materialism which places the material forces—defined as the mode of production—at the centre of social dynamics.

What is the Gandhian outlook in terms of the above dichotomy? From the Gandhian view, this dichotomy is not exhaustive, and is questionable. Therefore, there is a Gandhian critique of this dichotomy. Gandhian outlook rejects the above dichotomy as too limiting. The Gandhian perspective itself may be described as Dialectical Human Realism or simply Human Realism.

Below I state some propositions which in my view contain elements of a Gandhian paradigm—a set of relations that help conceptualize reality. These propositions are deliberately written in the language of social science.<sup>6</sup>

- (i) All social systems experience tension and this tension is due to the contradictions of the system.
- (ii) The cause of all contradictions is centralism. It may be described as a situation in which a few control the means and the power to make decisions which affect many who are left out. By this criterion, for instance, an elective representative system of the present type is centralist. So are, of course, the communist (so-called people's democratic) conceptions and practices.
- (iii) Centralism, as the source of social contradiction, has two

major loci: (a) the sphere of production (Economy); and (b) Power (State).

- (iv) Centralism in production and centralism in power are correlated.
- (v) Centralism in production leads to exploitation. Centralism in power leads to oppression. The two centralisms reinforce each other.
- (vi) The reinforcement between centralism in production and in power is achieved through two mediation mechanisms: (a) Falsification of consciousness (the "non-truth"); and (b) Violence.
- (vii) The State has organized the means of violence under its control. Therefore, the State is potentially—and in actuality—the source of most forms of violence. Also the statecraft is a craft of "non-truth"—that is, of falsification.
- (viii) Politics of the State (called *rajniti*) is based on violence and falsification as against the politics of the people (*lokniiti*) which has a chance of being based on nonviolence and truth.
- (ix) Violence is possible not only because of the objective conditions of violence, i.e., the existence of organized means of violence, but also due to the subjective conditions of violence, i.e., ideology of violence. The State not only possesses the means of violent destruction and is the biggest practitioner of violence, but also creates the subjective conditions of violence—rationalization of wars, oppression, tortures, prison system, etc.
- (x) There is a relationship between the objective conditions of violence and the subjective conditions of violence at all levels of society, although it is most manifest at the level of the State.
- (xi) Objective conditions of violence depend on the development of the objective conditions of exploitation and oppression, i.e., development of centralism in production and centralism in power.
- (xii) The subjective conditions of violence depend on consciousness-making mechanisms such as education, and in modern times on radio, television, the printed word, etc.
- (xiii) The process of change in society can begin either in weakening the centralism of power or in centralism of production or in the objective and subjective conditions of violence.

- (xiv) No meaningful process of change can be generated by those who are in the "centralist" structure, either of production or of power—because these are structures of privilege. It is only the victims of centralism, that is, those who are exploited and oppressed, who alone will initiate change.
- (xv) The process of change started by the victim of the "structure of privilege" will only reproduce the system if it copies the centralist system itself, even if only in a new form. That is, the victims of change in their process to change society should not have centralism of production or power. This means that for the praxis of change, the following conditions should be fulfilled:
  - (a) The praxis must be broadly based, that is, it should be a mass movement.
  - (b) The mass movement be not characterized by centralism in its ideology or in its organization.
  - (c) If the movement becomes centralist in its organization, then it will acquire the property of the State (such as the Bolshevik Parties are).
  - (d) The movement should be free of violence. In its objective conditions it should not arm itself. In its subjective conditions it should be firmly rooted in the ideology of nonviolence. It is these two characteristics of the movement to expose exploitation and oppression that gives it the moral force of "truth" against "non-truth". The movement must not engage itself in falsifications like the State. Otherwise this moral force will be weakened and the goal of real and lasting change will be defeated.
  - (e) Individuals have a central role in this praxis. It is by incarnating the values of trust and nonviolence, and by the magnificence of their example that individuals express moral force.
- (xvi) All history is a history of mass movements. Mass struggles have so far failed to bring about a basic nonviolent revolution either because these struggles failed or because when they succeeded, they were cast in the mould of the State itself. Armed and violent movements reproduced violent State and social structures when these succeeded. History of mankind so far is its pre-history, because it has been a violent history, violence reproducing violence.

- (xvii) The last revolution will be a nonviolent revolution. The mass movement which will bring this about will be free of centralism, and also free of the properties of the State itself which it wants to abolish. A Human State will be a decentralized society of equal partners.

### Conclusion

From the Gandhian standpoint, these contradictions and violent conditions can be traced to centralism of which private property and its concentration is one aspect.

From the Gandhian perspective, the present-day world is a system of nation-states with violent social orders which has reached its highest state. These social orders are in the West and in the East. The history of capitalist societies is visibly violent. Even when private property is abolished and socialized, there is no abolition of violence and oppression. Both types of states are piling up organized means of violence and destruction and are engaged in the armaments process. The Third-World countries are growing as the mirror image of one or the other system.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Liberal or Neo-Classical system, particularly in reference to development, has been explained at length by Romesh Diwan and Dennis Livingston [1979]. This book contains an exhaustive bibliography on this subject.

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed description of the existing international order, see Romesh K. Diwan and Dennis Livingston [1979], Chapter I.

<sup>3</sup>For an understanding of the Marxist paradigm, see Karl Marx [1918]. Also, see Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy [1973].

<sup>4</sup>Both these schools of thought concentrate on materialism and technology to develop such materialism. It is interesting to note that the nature of technology in both these systems is identical and ecologically undesirable. For an excellent analysis of technology and ecology, see Barry Commoner [1971].

<sup>5</sup>Gandhi is not known for the consistency of his writings. It is possible to interpret him differently. However, there is a general agreement among scholars about his concept of integral transformation. A large part of Gandhian writings is available in the following two titles: M.K. Gandhi, *Economic and Industrial Life and Relations* [1957]; and *Political and National Life and Affairs* [1967].

<sup>6</sup>Other attempts at interpreting Gandhi in the modern idiom of social science are being made. The more interesting ones are: Romesh K. Diwan and Sushila Gidwani [1979], and J.D. Sethi [1978].

## CHAPTER THREE

# Elements in Gandhian Economics\*

Romesh Diwan  
Sushila Gidwani

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing skepticism about the benefits of growth and development and about the continued emphasis on material consumption, particularly in the developed countries of the West. The "bads" and "externalities" produced by the industrial system, such as pollution, ecological imbalance, and harmful impacts of chemical additives on health have become increasingly important, persistent, and visible. Love Canal is the most recent example. There is now a growing recognition that the resources of the earth are limited.<sup>1</sup> There is, thus, a serious doubt if these problems can be solved by more technology or "technological firms",<sup>2</sup> particularly if these problems are the result of the "successes" of the hard technology in the first place.<sup>3</sup> Also, increased amounts of material consumption have not led to social harmony or happiness.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, this has perhaps heightened a feeling of emptiness of materialism. The developing and poor countries that have attempted to copy the industrialization development strategy of the Western countries find that even after thirty years of such policies, a meaningful development is still far away.<sup>5</sup> The per capita income has not grown, while unemployment, poverty, and income-inequality have grown tremendously.<sup>6</sup> There is thus a questioning about the very concept of development, growth, and related issues.

\*This paper was originally presented at the 1978 Annual Meetings of the American Economics Association at a session organized by the Association of Indian Economic Studies, Chicago, and subsequently published in *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 1, No. 5, August 1979.

The ideas about development force questioning of the very basis of economics. The thought and practice of Mahatma Gandhi provides a fruitful area for research and fresh thinking. We believe that Gandhian Ideas present a complete, even if not fully articulated, basis of an entire economic system. This paper is a modest attempt to outline some of the elements in such an economic system. A meaningful essay will involve defining concepts and stating and formulating propositions for logical consistency. This is, no doubt, a stupendous task. To reduce the possibilities of confusion and questions of relevance, we would outline below various propositions and place them against the neo-classical economic framework.

### GOALS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

A distinction has to be made among three different states. One is the desired or the ideal state. This state is as yet unachieved. Critics doubt if it is ever achievable. Gandhian thought persists in the possibility of achieving this state,<sup>7</sup> otherwise striving towards it is meaningless. For the individual, the ideal state is the achievement of *moksha*. For the society, it is *swaraj* for everyone. This is a state in which everyone is ruled by one's ownself and by no one else. It involves absolute freedom of all kinds. The ruling principle in this society is *satya*—the Truth.<sup>8</sup> The second state is the transition to the ideal state. Gandhi is very clear about the transition path.<sup>9</sup> Conditions laid for this path are rather stringent. That is why his emphasis on the purity of means becomes persistent. The ruling principles of the transition are *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. The third is the state of the present order. This determines what is possible and what is not possible. This is what provides historicity to the Gandhian method.

### SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

The Gandhian system has never been fully articulated. Most of the ideas presented to us by Gandhi were practised by himself. In practice, these ideas appeared fully immersed in the situation of the time. Those ideas, thus, need to be separated from the historical context in which they were developed. Since this has not been done, any formulation of his ideas and propositions needs to be subjected to a serious debate. Such a debate will analyze, refine, and

hopefully also develop a consensus. In this section we propose a few concepts relevant to the economic system. These are our interpretations and we offer these basically as an agenda for discussion and debate.

In our view, there are six basic concepts<sup>10</sup> that are essential in Gandhian economics. These are all related to each other. There is no hierarchy among them. In other words, these all have equal importance. The order in which these are presented is irrelevant. We feel that these six concepts come in pairs of two. They are: (i) *swadeshi*, (ii) bread labour, (iii) *aparigraha* or non-possession, (iv) trusteeship, (v) non-exploitation, and (vi) equality.

*Swadeshi* may be translated as self-reliance. It follows from the concept of *swaraj*. There are various interpretations of *swadeshi*. Some interpret it narrowly as "autarky" or self-sufficiency.<sup>11</sup> The question is: how does one apply the concept of *swadeshi* to a nation? The problems and misunderstandings arise from this question itself. A more meaningful question is: how would *swaraj* look like with or without *swadeshi*? If *swadeshi* is essential to *swaraj*, then how does one go about introducing it in the transitional state? The interpretation of *swadeshi* as "self-reliance" provides a clue to this question.

Bread labour provides the ethical dimension to *swadeshi* at the level of personal action. One cannot be self-reliant if one cannot produce the necessities of living by one's own labour. It is possible that one can obtain one's necessities from other persons. However, this is possible only under two different conditions: (a) one can become dependent upon others; or (b) one can exploit others. Both are unacceptable since they involve violence, alienation, and dehumanization. Hence the importance of bread labour. The question is: what is bread labour? Is it the time spent by one person in obtaining goods that can be later exchanged for the desired necessities themselves? The earlier concept of *swadeshi* would favour the second interpretation.

Non-possession follows from truth and nonviolence. It involves that a person should not possess *anything* that one does not need. The Gandhian concept of theft is based on *aparigraha*. Accordingly, anyone who possesses things and objects not needed by oneself but needed by others is a thief. This is an essential concept in *swaraj*, because it brings to it the most coveted state: "to each according to one's need". This also implies institutional forms. The whole con-

cept of private ownership of property—where property is distinguished from tools—comes under sharp questioning.<sup>12</sup> We feel that non-possession is not compatible with capitalism.

Trusteeship follows from and is built on the concept of non-possession. Non-possession may also be considered as a form of nonviolence, if possession involves violence. By trusteeship is meant that all those people who possess things as well as "capabilities, abilities, or other natural gifts" must hold these possessions as trustees for all others. In other words, they should not derive the benefits from these possessions for themselves. On the contrary, the possession brings immediately an obligation. Possession is a burden.<sup>13</sup>

Non-exploitation follows straightforwardly from the concept and principle of nonviolence. One cannot exploit without doing violence. It is both a simple and a complex concept. The complexity arises particularly from the nature of the society all the world over today. Some people maintain that both Marxist and Capitalistic societies, as constituted today, have institutionalized exploitation, particularly in the production of goods and services. In view of the inequalities and the prevalence of alienation, the very concept of market may be exploitative.

Equality follows from and ensures non-exploitation. Exploitation among equals is not possible. Questions have been raised: What is equality? Is it equality of opportunity only? Looking at the other concepts, we feel that equality in the Gandhian system involves "all possible achievable quality". It is something more than equality of opportunity. It does accept differences in natural gifts. But this is a part of diversity and not a question of equality.

On the basis of these concepts and various principles, we would outline below, in a preliminary attempt, some propositions implied in the Gandhian system of economics. These propositions are for debate and discussion. To facilitate debate and discussion we have placed these propositions in the context of neo-classical economics and in a comparative fashion.

### CONSUMPTION AND UTILITY

In neo-classical and neo-Marxian economics, consumption is a source of utility. Commodities possess utilities and the function of consumption is the transference of these utilities to the consumer.

Classical economists recognized that all commodities do not possess utilities. They distinguished between "basic" and "non-basic" goods. According to Adam Smith, this distinction followed from the distinction between "productive" and "non-productive" labour. In Marx it is derived from the distinction between "values-in-use" and "values-in-exchange". The neo-classical and neo-Marxian economists have obliterated these distinctions so that they no more have to think of the distinction between "basic" and "non-basic" goods.

In Gandhian economics, this distinction between "basic" and "non-basic" goods is fundamental. Gandhian economics will accept the hierarchy of "needs" defined by Maslow. In these hierarchies, there is necessary consumption that satisfies physiological and security needs on the one hand and "self-actualization" on the other. The former group of needs is socially determined, while the latter group is necessary for the creative needs of an individual. Along with material goods to satisfy these needs must come the possibility to satisfy love, respect, and a sense of belonging. The consumption of material goods only marginally satisfies these needs and beyond a certain level may actually be inimical to the satisfaction of these needs.

We can, then, define "basic" goods as all those goods that satisfy the needs listed above, that is, basic needs, self-actualization needs, love, respect, and a sense of belonging. All other goods are "non-basic." The consumption of "basic" goods provides utility in the sense of the "uplift" and "creativity" of the society and the individual. However, the relationship between consumption and utility is not monotonic. Instead, it is non-linear for the simple reason that these needs have saturation limits. Beyond a certain level, consumption of these "basic" goods becomes a nuisance.

It is not clear what is the role of non-basic goods. By and large, the relationship between utility and consumption of non-basic goods is not well-defined. A part of the consumption of such goods is positively harmful. Another part is at best neutral, neither being useful nor harmful. Some part is, perhaps, beneficial. In the industrialized societies, there is a preponderance of such consumption.

It is because of a lack of consumption of non-basic goods and their preponderance in industrialized societies that the conclusion is drawn that the consumption in Gandhian society is limited. The

fact that consumption is limited does not imply the conclusion that the utilities are also limited. On the contrary, even though the level of consumption is low, the acquisition of utilities may actually be far larger. This follows from the fact that in neo-classical economics, consumption is the only source of utility. In Gandhian economics, there are two other sources.

Work in Gandhian society is, by and large, a source of utility. In neo-classical economics, it is full of disutility. This difference arises from the nature of work.<sup>14</sup> Work in Gandhian economics is "self-defined" work, while in industrialized societies it is "stranger-defined" work.

Secondly, the quantity and quality of leisure in Gandhian economics is also far higher. In neo-classical economics, leisure is treated as a source of utilities via consumption of non-basic goods. As Lindler has argued, the leisure in the American society is so little that it has led to the dissipation of the culture and the "very pleasure of life". In Gandhian economics, not only is there more leisure, but the leisure is also not wasted in the process of consumption and its maintenance. Instead, this leisure is available for genuine satisfaction. The basic differences between the neo-classical and the Gandhian system with respect to consumption can be enumerated as follows:

| CONSUMPTION  |   |
|--|---|
| Neo-Classical  | Gandhian  |
| BASIC PROPOSITIONS:  |   |
| (1) Resources are limited and wants are insatiable             | Resources are abundant enough to satisfy needs of all in a comfortable way                                  |
| (2) Consumer's goal is to maximize utility                     | Consumer's goal is to satisfy needs   |
| (3) Consumption is budget-determined                           | Consumption is need-determined  |
| (4) More is better and desirable for its own sake              | More is desirable and better only to a point of freedom from drudgery, discomfort, and arduous labour       |
| (5) Multiplicity of material wants becomes the aim of life     | Restraint on material wants is the aim of life  |
| (6) Utility function of multiple wants has no upper bound      | Utility function of multiple wants has an upper bound defined by "necessary comforts" exclusive of luxuries |
| (7) Individual utility functions are independent of each other | Individual utility functions are inter-dependent  |



- (8) Societal utility function is maximized through maximization of individual utility functions
- (9) Want-oriented society creates waste of economic resource, preoccupation with earning for consumption deters the growth of an average individual in other aspects of life

Societal utility function is maximized through maximization of the number of economically satisfied individuals

Need satisfying society requires only bread labour. Relatively independent and self-sufficient economy allows an average individual enough time for self-fulfilment

### PRODUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY

In the capitalistic industrialized societies, there is a production of both "basic" goods and "non-basic" goods. In the total output, however, the "non-basic" goods form a larger part. This is so because the income elasticity of "non-basic" goods is far greater than that of "basic" goods. Since production is defined by profit or growth motives, it is more profitable to produce "non-basic" goods.

In the neo-Marxist East European countries also, there is an emphasis on the production of "non-basic" goods. The reasons for this emphasis lies both in the tendency to consider "non-basic" goods as incentive goods, and the idea that the production of "non-basic" goods is an index of improvement in the standard of living as well as of "coming of age".

In Gandhian societies—parts of China, perhaps, are the only example—, the emphasis is on the production of "basic" goods. Some non-basic goods are produced. However, a very large percentage of total production is made up of "basic goods". The motivation for this emphasis comes both from sheer need as well as from moral and ethical considerations about love, humanism, and respect. The motivation of the production of "non-basic" goods is basically creativity, self-expression, and societal preservation.

The cost of production of non-basic goods in the capitalistic and Marxist societies are comparatively lower because these costs are highly subsidized by the State in the form of infrastructure, tax shelters, and other fiscal measures. Costs of these goods in the Gandhian system are comparatively far higher because the production unit has to bear total costs which are not subsidized.

The basic source of cost subsidization in capitalistic and neo-

Marxist societies lies in the prevalence and encouragement of an exploitative production and technological structure. In the United States, slave labour was used for a long time. Even now some of the exploitative characteristics remain. In the Soviet Union, the use of political prisoners performed the same function as of a slave system. Recently the exploitative system has been institutionalized in the form of technology. The technology in both these systems encourages and imposes production modes which require specialization and large-scale organizations. An extreme degree of specialization makes work alienating and creates opportunities for exploiting the labour.

In the Gandhian system the production modes cannot be exploitative by their very nature. The technological change must satisfy the following three major conditions:

1. Technology must increase the productivity of the worker.
2. Technology must not replace the worker.
3. The worker must have complete control of the technology.

These are stringent conditions and much of the Research and Development programme has not provided innovations in this direction. The current Appropriate Technology movements all over the world, however, are attempts in this direction.

It has been argued that production in the Gandhian system is less varied. This is a mistaken argument. It is true that the number of commodities in the Gandhian system is far less. However, there are far more varieties of every commodity produced. The diversity of production in the Gandhian system, thus, is much larger than in a capitalistic system. The following details would make this point clearer.

### PRODUCTION

|                                | Neo-Classical   | Gandhian   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Goal of the economic activity: | Multiplicity and quantity of the production of material goods | To provide work for body and to satisfy economic needs of the society so that its members can fulfil themselves within a harmonious society. In other words, the goal is the moral progress. The progress of the permanent element in us. The material progress is contained in the moral progress but the reverse is not true |



|                      |  |   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Measure of success:  | GNP and ever-rising standards of living  | Absence of starvation among masses  |
| Incentives:          | Production for the sake of profits   | Produce just enough to satisfy one's needs in order to keep one's mind trained and educated for a harmonious growth   |
| What to produce?     | Products which would fetch the highest rate of return. Utility is directly related to the price                            | Goods which would satisfy the basic needs. Since consumption and production are localized, the value of the products is determined by the labour value rather than exchange value; the profits are absent   |
| How to produce?      | Least-cost combination   | Full employment of the voluntary bread labour   |
| For whom to produce? | Those who can pay  | For self  |
| How much to produce? | Restricted only by the production capacity   | Constrained by the individual's needs and a socially desirable level which would not hinder individual's total growth   |
| Industrialization:   | A boon   | A curse   |
| Capital:             | Essential  | Only if it aids human beings  |
| Technology:          | Essential  | Only if it is simple and usable by the masses   |
| Labour:              | A commodity of production to be exploited  | A source of human power which must be utilized for the benefit of its owner. It is the fundamental law of our being, viz. that we must work for our bread, that we eat our bread by the sweat of our brow; it is voluntary, not exploitable   |
| Labour value:        | All labour has exchange value which is derived from the interplay of the laws of supply and demand in the resource markets | Only bread labour has value which is derived from the individual's need to maintain healthy body, mind, and soul. The intellectual labour is self-satisfying, hence it has no exchange value. Since individual's satisfaction is incomplete without its social utility, it should be rendered freely to the society |
| Employment?          | MRC = MRP  | Full employment regardless of cost. Since most of the labour is self-employed, the question of labour cost largely becomes irrelevant   |

|  |                 |  |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Occupations requiring productive labour: | All occupations | Only those requiring bread labour, agriculture, printing, carpentry, shoe-making, gardening, house-making, handicrafts, weaving, spinning. The manufacture of everything needed to satisfy essential human wants and labour in all essential occupations count as bread labour. Also pursuit of education and training related to any occupation requiring bread labour is productive and intelligent labour |
| Intellectual labour:                     | No such concept | The occupations which are essential in service to the society, such as law, medicine, social work, teaching, religious service, etc.   |

## DISTRIBUTION THEORY

| <i>Neo-classical</i>   | <i>Gandhian</i>  |
|--|--|
| 1. There is a market for factors of production   | There is no market for factors of production   |
| 2. Entrepreneur corporation brings the factors together for production by buying   | Trustees bring together agents and factors of production by example and cooperation  |
| 3. The relationship is of employer-employee  | The relationship is one of trustees and cooperative workers  |
| 4. Workers are paid a wage   | There is no wage labour  |
| 5. Wages are paid on the basis of marginal productivity  | There are no wages. Everyone shares in the total output equally  |
| 6. There is income from the employment of capital. This is appropriated by the capital-owners  | There are no incomes accruing to capital. Capital, once installed, is maintained without generating incomes  |
| 7. Capital is owned by the capitalists   | Capital is owned by the community  |
| 8. Capitalists substitute capital for labour in order to maximize profits to the capitalist. In the ideal situation capital-labour substitution is infinite or its elasticity is one | There is no substitution between capital and worker as long as it leads to displacement of workers. The function of capital is to enhance productivity without replacing worker and diminishing the humaneness of the work. The capital-labour substitution, thus, is zero |
| 9. Risks of production are taken by the capitalists  | Risks are taken by the community as a whole  |

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>10. Investments are made by the capitalists out of income from capital and for future profits</p> <p>11. Investments from profits are residuals after other costs are paid</p> <p>12. There are various prices: short-runs, long-runs, etc. These differ from each other</p> <p>13. Short-term prices are determined by demand</p> <p>14. Long-term prices are determined by average costs where costs are defined by the capitalists</p> <p>15. Distribution is unequal</p> <p>16. Production and distribution are channelled by economic incentives</p> | <p>Investment is made by the community as a joint decision to improve the quality of life in the community</p> <p>Investment decisions are made from total output and the remunerations to workers and trustees are from the residuals</p> <p>There is only one price implicit in the long-run</p> <p>Short-term allocations are determined by need and equality</p> <p>Long-term prices are determined by average costs. The costs, however, are defined by the community</p> <p>Distribution is the essence of the system</p> <p>Economic incentives are opposed diametrically by trusteeship</p> |
|--|---|

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Meadows, *et al.* [1972].

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of technological fixes see Amory B. Lovins [1977].

<sup>3</sup>Harry Commoner [1971] develops and provides ample evidence of this thesis.

<sup>4</sup>This line of thought is developed by Robert L. Heilbroner [1976].

<sup>5</sup>There is now ample evidence on the failures of conventional development strategy in spite of and particularly because of its success in the limited areas. See Romesh K. Diwan [1977a].

<sup>6</sup>See ILO [1977].

<sup>7</sup>Part of the reason Gandhi has been called an idealist, a saint, and a utopian—and hence irrelevant—follows from his message about the existence of this state.

<sup>8</sup>In Gandhi, Truth is God, God is Truth.

<sup>9</sup>The distinction between "transitional" and "ideal" state has been confused in Marxism. That is why it is now felt that the Soviet experience has gone sour because what seemed a transition to communism has turned out to be a roundabout to capitalism. Recently Charles Bettelheim in his "Great Leap Backward" has persuasively argued that the party line after Mao is non-revolutionary and positively bourgeois. He points out the mistake the Marxists have been making by not distinguishing between "socialism" and "transition to socialism".

<sup>10</sup>Sethi [1978] also suggests six concepts; namely truth, satyagraha, nonviolence, equality, swadeshi, and bread labour. Our concepts are different in so far as we interpret truth to be the overriding principle. Satyagraha follows from truth, since it is one of the methods to fight for and establish truth during the transitional stage. We interpret nonviolence also as a guiding principle and have derived from it the concept of non-exploitation. Nonviolence is a much larger concept. We feel the economic content is contained in non-exploitation. The remaining three are the same as in our scheme. However, we have added two additional concepts—non-possession and trusteeship—since these define, in an essential way, the principle on which economic institutions are to be developed.

<sup>11</sup>Sethi [1978] makes persuasive argument that Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* needs to be reinterpreted and its literal meanings are inconsistent with Gandhian thought and practice.

<sup>12</sup>Gandhi has been misunderstood or misinterpreted by Marxists as a defender of private property and as being soft on capitalism. Clearly the concept of *aparigraha* is the strongest denunciation of capitalist forms.

<sup>13</sup>One of the authors has attempted to define it as a negative relationship between privilege and the decision-making power.

<sup>14</sup>Romesh K. Diwan distinguishes between "stranger-defined" and "self-defined" work. Production and employment in the national income accounts follow from "stranger-defined" work. The relevant concept in Gandhian economics is "self-defined". See Romesh K. Diwan [1977b].

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Poverty, Alienation,  
and the Gandhian Way Out\*

J. D. Sethi

A MAJOR argument of this paper is that the Gandhian way has to be blazoned by a self-conscious elite dedicated to Gandhian values. As one of the latest recruits to the Indian elite, my message is that we should consider seriously whether we should join the exploitative and parasitical elite that already exists and is a part of our problem or whether we should become a member of the new Gandhian elite dedicated to the task of changing society on the lines indicated by him.

Secondly, the vastness of the theme I have chosen daunts me somewhat. Its exposition, difficult at all times, is almost impossible for anyone. All the same, I shall attempt to state briefly, and perhaps tersely, the problems facing the world and India today and what I consider to be the Gandhian solutions for them.

Let me at the outset summarize my argument. All the ills that afflict the world today can be summed up in two words: poverty and alienation. Though the former is the most visible problem of the developing countries and the latter of the developed countries, both capitalist and communist, poverty breeds its own alienation and alienation leads to the impoverishment of the spirit.

I shall examine the various manners of these predicaments in their historical as well as contemporary perspectives. It shall be my endeavour to persuade the reader that Gandhi proposed the best situations for escaping from these predicaments into a more just, better adjusted society in which human beings can realize their intellectual and moral potentialities to the fullest extent possible. In particular, I shall argue that for India this is the only way out.

\*This paper was originally published in *Gandhi Marg*, July 1979.

Let me now elaborate this theme a little. Of all the suggested typologies into which the world is divided in current debates such as North-South, Capitalist-Communist, Super Powers-Small Nations, etc., it seems to me that the most important one is that which divides it into one dominated by alienation and the other stricken by poverty.

Karl Marx was the first major thinker who developed a theory which linked poverty to alienation, and regarded both of them as inevitable adjuncts or products of capitalism. However, in developing his theory over several decades, he went on narrowing his definition of alienation, with the result that it ultimately became only a one-dimensional phenomenon, namely the alienation of the worker from his products. Some Marxists have now discovered that the younger Marx in his early works had defined alienation in a much broader sociological context when he stated that alienation resulted from the contradictions between man's conditions of existence and his human essence, which under capitalism was degraded by his potential powers being thwarted and his essential needs being denied. In his own words in the early writings, particularly in the Paris Manuscripts and Holy Family, Marx described alienation as "an all-pervasive phenomenon of capitalism", but added that "the possessing class and proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation". Marx did not or could not foresee that the alienation of the individual in the communist societies of today would correspond to his terse statement of his younger days. One has only to substitute "State and party bureaucracy" for the term "possessing class".

That is probably why many Marxists of the New Left have gone to the other extent of flatly refusing to call the Soviet Union even a socialist society. Maoists call it a capitalist society of social imperialism; other Marxists have vigorously called it a "system of general State slavery based on industry" (Wittfogel), or a "degenerate workers' State" (Trotsky), or "State Monopoly Capitalism" (Bordiga), or even a "feudal society" (Rizzi). Some of these statements are obvious exaggerations and misrepresentations. The Soviet society has made most remarkable achievements in the last half century. But practically all the New Left Marxists are agreed on one fact, namely that the Soviet society is the most alienated. Ironically, the Chinese who severely criticized the Soviet path are themselves now well set to travel on the same road. The campaign

for Demasisation is on and no one knows where it will end. Despite all this, Mao's struggle against alienation remains a classical development in Marxist history.

Both poverty and alienation are spiritually bankrupting, but poverty also leads to physical decay. It is hypocritical to suggest a flight from poverty to spiritualism. If one looks at the health statistics of India, particularly the statistics of malnutrition and of communicable diseases and of blindness or any other major disease, one cannot escape the startling conclusion that this nation is going through a biological decay which does not get reflected at all in the statistics about people below the poverty line. There are 50 to 60 million children suffering from malnutrition in this country. What they and their children would be in two generations if the general level of nutrition does not improve is frightening to imagine.

WESTERN civilization has been able to solve by and large the problem of poverty in stark contrast to our failure to do so. This should generate sufficient humility in us to desist from facile superciliousness about Western materialism. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the West is suffering acutely from alienation which, in fact, has become a social and economic imperative arising from its production structure and its need for manipulating projects for endless consumerism. Just as for the poor of the world, there is no flight possible from poverty to spiritualism, there can be no flight from alienation to human fulfilment for the Western man so long as he is caught in the rat race of consumerism that provides the dynamics of the society he lives in. Whereas the poorer nations are producing generations with defective brains and bodies, developed societies are increasingly facing problems of disorders of consciousness.

However, it would be a half-truth to suggest that poverty is our problem, while alienation is of the developed countries, both capitalist and communist. Marx's definition has been widened by the New Left to include five kinds of alienation. These are: (a) alienation of man from his work; (b) alienation of man from the commodities he produces; (c) alienation of consumption from production; (d) alienation of man from social organisms; and (e) alienation of men from one another. If to this list we add alienation of man from nature and alienation of man from his inner self, we would have a nearly complete Gandhian definition of alienation. If it pleases anyone, he can call it a truly Marxian definition. The point

is that by this definition all existing social systems would be found alienated, wholly or partially. And we must confess to our shame that the Indian society is far more alienated than any other because of the crippling poverty of its people on the one hand and, on the other, because of the serious inroads that values of the alienated West have made into our society by creating an irresponsible power elite with split personality. This combination has led to our society being an alienated one in respect of each one of the counts listed above.

The problem of the developed world is that in it man has developed a pseudo-self. Material progress beyond his needs and comforts is causing deterioration in his inner self. Young rebels in the West are revolting because they see their society falling apart or because it is ceasing to be a society at all; it is becoming an economic machine which cannot draw a distinction between false and true needs. The false needs are superimposed on the individuals by social interests of capitalists, the State power and the dominant elite, sometimes called the military-industrial-intellectual complex. This system has grown into a mass society which is a conglomeration of unrelated individuals, having lost the power to influence or criticize decisions. David Riesman called such a society the Lonely Crowd and Herbert Marcuse described it as a society of One-Dimensional Man. There are certain other catchy descriptions of it also.

The transformation of the Western society from work-orientation to consumption-orientation has brought about the loss of the autonomy of the individual, so much so that it often degenerates into psychopathic delinquency, or disorientation or psychosis bordering on paranoia. Even the New Left, which has exposed the ugly face of this society, has found no solution for such a society. Though philosophically wedded to humanism and egalitarianism, the New Left in practice often falls prey to skepticism, empiricism, and nihilism. Some of those subscribing to the ideology of the New Left propose spontaneous action as was done in the 1968 revolt. But the movement, after registering protest, degenerated into violence and then petered out, leaving behind a trail of disenchantment. The failure of that movement has generated a new wave of terrorism all over Europe and the Americas which, incidentally, is a counterpart of the nuclear terrorism of the nuclear powers. There is that most dangerous alliance between trade unions and the criminal elements, called the Mafia.

One can go on listing their problems but there is no need to go further. However, I must mention one more point, namely that technological advancement of the West has created a worldwide problem of a rapid depletion of natural and non-renewable resources, waste of scarce energy resources, pollution, ecological imbalance, etc. In the United States alone, 10 billion dollars are invested annually in technologies intended to reverse these effects of technology itself. It is remarkable that Gandhi had warned the West nearly seventy years ago against this dangerous possibility.

The Marxian theory of alienation does not lead up to a lasting solution because it rests only on economic factors, the most important of which precedes even the class analysis. It is largely based on the division of labour and technological factors. Elimination of capitalism and multipurpose training were the instruments suggested by Marx for partial repair of the damage done by alienation. Nothing more. The experience of the communist countries has belied even these hopes of Marx.

Gandhi's approach to both the problems of poverty and alienation rested in his philosophy. This philosophy, though largely drawn from the mainstream of the Indian philosophic tradition, was also significantly influenced by other religious philosophies, particularly Christianity and Islam. It is not possible to go into all the details of Gandhi's philosophy in this short paper. But suffice it to say that Gandhi's philosophy centered around six major concepts and any particular approach or action had to be tested by these concepts. These were: Truth, Nonviolence, Bread Labour, Swadeshi, Aparigraha, and Satyagraha. Gandhi made it very clear that none of these concepts was absolute, though man through his unceasing struggle continued to reach what he called a series of Euclidean points each corresponding to these concepts. Therefore, one may sum up that Euclidean points, Material Indeterminism, and Moral Relativism in Progression, constituted the main tenets of Gandhi's philosophy. One must remember these components of his philosophy as being the final reference points for any theory or practice of social transformation, including the removal of poverty and alienation.

TAKING these concepts one by one I can show their relationship with both poverty and alienation, but such an exercise will require a lot more space and will take us far away from the practical side of the

main theme of this paper. However, I will take one of the concepts, namely Truth, as a matter of illustration. "Truth" is the central theme of the Gandhian conceptual system. Gandhi used the word "Truth" in a variety of ways into which I cannot go here. However, one crucial aspect of it is extremely relevant in the present context. In contrast to the Hindu concept of "Maya", the Gandhian concept of "Truth" is both its opposite and the means of comprehending reality. The word "Maya", as interpreted by the orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, has done considerable harm to India in determining our relations with the external world because the external world itself was equated with "Maya". Of course, there were several philosophers such as Patanjali who used, instead of "Maya", the word "Avidya" or "Illusion" at the level of consciousness. In Gandhian phraseology it would be called untruth. Marx used the phrase "false consciousness" which implied a mistaken thinking about some aspects of reality. However, no matter what definition one uses, the basic idea is that an alienated man as a social or a self-creative being rests on illusion and false consciousness.

Gandhi's insistence on the practice of truth was to remove this illusion, whereas to Marx the way to knowledge was through illusion as well as the overcoming of it. That is why he described ideology also as false consciousness. In other words, alienation to Marx was both a condition and a compensation under capitalism. Gandhi could not accept this interpretation as it would amount to putting truth and untruth on the same level. Similarly, Marx regarded religion also as an expression of false consciousness. Gandhi had a different view. Religion could be both false consciousness as well as true consciousness and the man who followed the path of truth could not but take from religion only true consciousness. That is why Gandhi believed that an alienated man cannot even ask a right question. But, paradoxically, Marx also made the same statement.

The essence of the Gandhian approach was the centrality of man, both as an individual and as a social being. In his system man was not alienated because of the variety of approaches that emerged from his conceptual system. I shall briefly mention some of them. First, Gandhi was against all deterministic philosophies, particularly the Marxist philosophy of historical materialism. In fact, he opposed all those interpretations, even of the *Gita*, which opted for a deterministic philosophy. No one seriously challenged him on that. In his own words: "I appreciate that freedom as I have im-

bibed it through the central teaching of the *Gita* that man is the maker of his own destiny, in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom."

Secondly, man would be non-alienated when engaged in the dialectical process of truth realization. We have the experience that most ideologies ultimately become dogmatic religions with the result that their followers turn out to be the most alienated men. That is why Gandhi had to equate God with Truth because the purely theistic argument eroded the philosophic thrust of his or indeed Indian dialectics. That is also why Gandhi used the word "truth" on the one hand and "experiments with truth" or "truth-realization" on the other.

Thirdly, an unalienated man is one who by his actions and beliefs "changes one's very nature" by attaching himself indissolubly to truth, i.e., his own true self. A man easily gets alienated when he becomes a slave of his habits or of his nature.

Fourthly, an unalienated man is one who can listen to his own inner voice. It is the tragedy of man today that he is so lonely in a crowd that no one listens to him and he listens to no one. It may be mentioned here that Gandhi put forward the idea of an inner voice against the distortion and corruption of the practice of finding a guru for charting one's course of life.

Fifthly, an unalienated man is one who respects and does not show hatred towards those against whom he struggles, particularly the exploiters. The Marxists talk of expropriating the expropriators but they do not add that a new set of expropriators continue the process. And expropriators by definition are alienated jointly with the exploited. Whether this exploitation is based on property relations or State power or the power of the party bureaucracy, Gandhi insisted again and again that no one can be truly non-alienated unless he gives up hatred and practises loving persuasion towards his opponent. Once he follows this precept, he is not alienated either from himself or from his friends and foes.

Starting with the simple imperative that Economics must remain inseparable from Ethics, he concentrated on man as an uncompartimentalized and integral whole. One may even say that like Marx, Gandhi believed in the total man, though Marx did not pursue his idea to its logical end. Gandhi's solutions were the following:

First, Gandhi sharply differed from all economists, Marxian or non-Marxian, in respect of the theory of labour. To him, labour



was not a disutility as economists define it. Labour had four components: (a) bread labour which is a kind of minimum physical labour which must be performed by everybody from the philosopher to the ordinary labourers; (b) earning labour for living as is normally understood in economics; (c) as an instrument for self-actualization; and (d) as a method of service to others. Once this fourfold view of labour is accepted, no degree of division of labour can really dehumanize man totally.

Secondly, Gandhi's views on the scale factor are the most misunderstood or misinterpreted. "Small is Beautiful" is a phrase coined by Westerners in the name of Gandhi. There is no such absolute hypothesis in Gandhi. Nevertheless, though the scale factor itself cannot be evaluated, other things being given, small is better than large. But other things do not remain the same. One cannot produce a railway engine in a cowshed. Absolute concepts have no choice. But when choice exists, other considerations have to be given full weight. Gandhi was the most scientific modern mind and he could not vote for a reversal of technical progress that may push us into barbarism. As a searcher and experimenter with truth, he rejected technologies and even scientific research which was repugnant to real human needs just as he rejected those human wants which were repugnant to human consciousness. What he insisted was that technological and scale choices must not be solely determined by economic considerations. A full spectrum of technologies would be acceptable to him if it was found to be consistent with his sixfold conceptual system mentioned earlier and it can be shown that in a given situation some technologies will satisfy this creation, whereas others would not, irrespective of the differences in their productivity components.

Ideas travel fast and wrong ideas travel even faster because they require no commitment. Some people in India have already started talking against industrialization just when we have taken only a few major strides. In this falsification of problems, Gandhi's name is often evoked. This is a gross distortion, because Gandhi was not against industrialization as such. He was against the spirit of Western industrialization which induced a dangerous acquisitive lust and also became an instrument of imperialism. What he warned us against was taking to a path that was bound to take us finally to a fetishism of industrialism and consumerism. The quality of life of which Gandhi often spoke was nothing but an alternative to con-

sumerism as a basis of industrialization from the demand side. Today when we talk of appropriate technology and call it a Gandhian query, what do we mean by it? Appropriate technology in Gandhian terms is nothing but appropriate industrialization. This definition may appear to be a tautology and to avoid that impression, I must state Gandhi's position in this respect more precisely. Gandhi would agree to technical, scientific, and industrial conditions for human emancipation. Beyond that, avoidance of alienation will determine choices in the production field.

Thirdly, Gandhi refused to accept any of the prevailing economic systems, which may be summarized as Capitalist, Communist, and Mixed Economy, since all of them produced alienation of one kind or another. He suggested in turn what he called the system of Trusteeship. Curiously, Gandhi claimed that Trusteeship was likely to be his most lasting contribution, whereas the votaries of all the existing systems seem to reject it. Partly it is due to the fact that Gandhi did not elaborate it sufficiently, and partly because we ourselves have also not paid adequate attention to it. Trusteeship has two aspects: its basic principles and structure; and, secondly, the method to achieve a society based upon the principle of trusteeship. It is the second aspect which has created doubts because Gandhi expected capitalists to relinquish voluntarily their property and act as trustees of the society. But more than once Gandhi made it clear that he was offering a solution or a way out for the capitalists in place of a bloody revolution which they must face if they remain tied down to their wealth and profits. He was also quite emphatic in stating that if the capitalists did not voluntarily surrender, the State is within its right to nationalize their assets. But nationalization to him was only a necessary evil, an intermediate state, which must ultimately be transformed into trusteeship. This is one of the vital differences between Gandhi and Marx.

Gandhi did not leave behind a model of trusteeship; he only stated the basic principles of its organization. These principles were: (a) no one has any right over property which is a social phenomenon; (b) State ownership of property leads to concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a small bureaucracy which has the monopoly of violence and hence is an antithesis of trusteeship; (c) trusteeship is by definition a communitarian system, a kind of general cooperation of efforts and resources; (d) trusteeship is a system of social self-management and a kind of socialist

democracy from below; and (c) trusteeship is based on the Gandhian theory of labour as enunciated above.

SOME people have suggested that partial trusteeship is being introduced in many developed countries. Workers' control of and share in management are now accepted by some even in capitalist countries. This acceptance is partly in answer to the rising militancy of the working class and partly a reflection of its increased dissatisfaction with dull, stultifying jobs. The capitalist class is experimenting with attempts to "humanize" the workplace but within the overall property relations of capitalism. The result of this effort has been a tremendous improvement in efficiency of production as well as the provision of a slightly less alienating workplace. But the degree of participation is kept limited because otherwise it would generate demand for a share in the financial gains of the company and the stiff opposition from the managerial class which feels threatened in the exercise of its power and leverage with the proprietors. On the other hand, we have a much more genuine experience of socialist self-management in Yugoslavia where decisions both in a macro and a micro sense are being decentralized and with good results. But being a one-party State like other Communist countries, Yugoslavia faces the problem of political alienation. How can one remove one level of alienation while intensifying another?

Some of us have become increasingly convinced of Gandhi's theory of Trusteeship in view of the fact that Marxists have either not addressed themselves to the question of what happens after means of production are put in the hands of the State or have not found an answer to this question. This has raised doubts about their prescription, although except for the Soviets, probably all other Marxists have come round to the view that nationalization is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for having a humanist and non-alienated society. But they do not know where to go from there. Their arguments have stopped at a rather critical point because in the absence of a right answer, they usually slip back into equating sufficient conditions with the necessary conditions.

This brings us to the second indictment by Gandhi that modern civilization was the alienation of the individual from political power and from those who exercise it. In democratic countries, this aspect of alienation seems to be less emphasized because of the dominance of the electoral processes in which people do participate

in a limited way. But, in fact, there is a large gap between the political power elite and the ordinary voter.

Gandhi was against all totalitarian systems. What divided Gandhi from Marx and his followers was that no Marxist society or Marxist thinker has been able to produce a theory of the distribution of political power. Communist countries can claim to have achieved a high rate of economic growth, a good system of economic distribution, and a certain degree of discipline. But all this has been done under the fear of the coercive power of the State. They have not been able to devise a theory or system of distribution of political power corresponding to these non-political functions. Gandhi and the Marxists would have a lot in common if the latter could produce a theory of the distribution of political power.

Gandhi openly rejected the view that politics or power is inherently either sinful or amoral. What he decried was the soullessness of the present-day politics. In a materialistic society with the State presiding over it, institutions are bound to become centres of amoral power and power was bound to corrupt. Gandhi himself was a politician *par excellence* and one of the most power-conscious men. He totally disagreed with those who thought that society could be fundamentally changed without the instrument of politics. In fact, he himself declared that it was his search for truth that had drawn him into politics. He denied that power politics is ultimately detachable from the rest of politics. For him, those who were concerned with social emancipation but felt repugnant to politics were as much alienated people as those who were seeking power for the sake of power. The only way to avoid this double alienation was to combine politics with moral principles and a programme of necessary social reforms.

If one of the significant factors contributing to alienation is the all-pervasive power of the State, which Gandhi described as a soulless machine with concentration of coercive power by which it can limit the freedom of the individual, was he a philosophical anarchist as some people have tried to project him? The answer is "no". In the final analysis, he would have agreed with the Marxian concept of a Stateless society. Indeed both Gandhi and Marx describe the State as an alienated social entity. But this is not relevant at present and one does not know when such a society will come about. Gandhi was indeed a defender of parliamentary democratic institutions, though he quite clearly admitted the insufficiency of such systems

because in a parliamentary system the State machine and its power can be very effectively used against an individual. Of course, Gandhi was not prepared to consider the validity of any totalitarian system and he would use all the power at his command to fight such a State.

But one may ask what was Gandhi's answer to the general problem of political alienation when the State power is accumulating in the hands of the State, no matter what the system is. Behind every political power lies an economic system. We have already suggested above that he would have changed the present economic base of both corporate culture and State bureaucracy into Trusteeship. If the Trusteeship system succeeds, one of the most important economic bases of the coercive and alienated State power will have been eliminated. But Gandhi would not, however, have been satisfied with that. Political alienation could exist even in such a society, unless there were political institutions permitting direct participation through what we call institutions of participatory democracy. Along with institutions of the parliamentary system Gandhi advocated a system of parallel polity. This polity would consist of a wide network of institutions which permitted direct participation of the people. He had often used the word "Panchayats" as a reference point. One may even describe his concept as the Leninist concept of the "Soviets". But he would not allow Parliament to be removed by the "Soviets" as was done in the Soviet Union.

Gandhi defined a polity as some kind of a system of oceanic, concentric circles rather than as a pyramidal system as all modern political systems are. In his view, the larger circle has to get its support from the smaller circle so that no matter how small a circle may be, one can play one's role there as well as be linked to the largest circle. In other words, an individual's political activity could at once be both narrow and large. This is not an easy concept to follow. But as more and more people, dissatisfied with the limitations of the modern parliamentary system, are seeking correctives in the form of institutions of participatory democracy to avoid alienation, Gandhi's approach requires serious study.

Finally, next to Trusteeship, Gandhi made the highest claim for his educational system as an alternative to the monster that has emerged from the British system of education that we have opted. It is on the lips of almost everyone that our educational system

serves only the interests of a small minority, is unrelated to our environment, poorly serves the objective of development, generates superficial elitism and, above all, is the most concentrated form of alienation. Looking back over the experience of the last thirty years, one finds that our system, instead of creating a really educated man, has only created a class of parasites. The nation is paying a heavy price for having allowed this terrible distortion.

The educational system of the modern developed societies responded to the compulsions of those societies. The educational elite succeeded in changing the consciousness of the people by bringing about changes in the educational system. In the late 1960s it appeared that the European educated youth were rising in revolt against the authorities in those societies which were considered most stable. But that revolt turned out to be a mere aberration. On the contrary, in our case, neither our educational system nor our youth seems to respond to the compulsions of our society. They seem to be in continuous revolt, but this revolt appears to be mindless and rudderless. Fewer and fewer protests are made on the basis of educational values, class, and ideological or political affiliations. Student revolt seems for the most part to be spontaneous rioting without leading to the spontaneous emergence of a new force. Clearly, this is a case of alienation rather than of revolutionary action.

I have discussed so far the pathology of the Indian and global disease of poverty and alienation and have dilated upon some aspects of Gandhian diagnostics and prescriptions for them. But the most difficult issue is by whom and by what means are these sick societies to be cured. There have been many philosophers in the world who have done diagnostic exercises. But only a few have had the perception and the moral authority to suggest the means of changing the society. I shall confine myself only to two aspects of this problem as suggested by Gandhi. First, like Lenin, Gandhi insisted on and hoped for the emergence of a small revolutionary elite who would be the instrument of change. Second, the method of change would be Satyagraha.

In every society there are always people who are more concerned than others about its survival and its value system. Gandhi addressed himself to that part of the Indian society that had such a concern but he laid very stringent conditions for their conduct. Anyone who believed in the sixfold Gandhian concept mentioned earlier

and followed in practise the compulsions of those concepts alone could be a member of that revolutionary elite minority. These concepts in action were indeed nothing more than that which was described in the Indian philosophy of *Karmayoga*. The members of this elite had to give up all property. They had to live as ordinary men do. They had to practise the principles of bread labour and so long as there was suffering in the humanity, they had to partake of it in a way so as to eliminate it. And, above all, this revolutionary elite had to pursue the nonviolent path of conquering hate by love and untruth by truth, through the continued process of struggle called Satyagraha. In the final analysis, Gandhi was fully convinced that if one accepts congruity between firm and pure intentions and the capacity for effective choices on the basis of what is held to be necessary, there would be no alienation of the elite. The alienation in the rest of the society will depend upon how much the revolutionary elite is itself alienated from the society. That is why Gandhi made it very clear that without eliminating the component of alienation from politics, there could be no elimination of alienation from elsewhere. In other words, politics for him was inseparable from other social and economic activities. The revolutionary minority had to be highly politically conscious, morally exemplary and sensitive, and fully capable of understanding and undertaking the practice of Satyagraha.

GANDHI did not consider any socio-economic system as legitimate unless it carried with it the right method of struggle to avoid stagnation and degeneration of its proclaimed values. Marx evolved the method of class struggle and Gandhi the method of Satyagraha. Both methods have their own dialectics, except that the communist countries have been hard put to apply convincingly the Marxian dialectics to the type of classless society they claim to have realized. Partly this difficulty arose from the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism of which the class struggle was the precocious child. No satisfactory answer has been offered by them to the question as to what would happen after the class struggle. For, within the framework of Western philosophy, which has only two streams, namely Science and Linguistics, there is no scope for perpetual dialectics. Sometimes the Marxists talk of non-antagonistic contradictions, but these are of a temporary character. Mao was the only major Marxist who believed in dialectics as a

perpetual process that was to go on for hundreds of years. But Mao remains an exception rather than the rule. On the other hand, in the Gandhian philosophy there are two perpetual streams, man's relations with his external world as well as his relations with his inner self, both positing an unending dialectic unless man reached final salvation, that is, *Moksha*.

If Gandhi would not accept a system which did not have built into its processes a method of struggle, he was obliged to suggest a method of rightful struggle for his own system. He suggested Satyagraha which was essentially a man's struggle for the vindication of his freedom and truth without which there could be no escape from alienation. Satyagraha, in its manifold forms, was not merely man's legitimate struggle against tyranny and injustice but also simultaneously an instrument for testing the validity and morality of the purposes and methods of struggle. That is why Gandhi always insisted on the adoption of right means because Satyagraha was also an instrument of self-purification as well as moral self-advancement, and it was a powerful instrument both for a struggle for human rights against their suppression by the State and for creating a cohesive society of non-alienated individuals. Gandhi openly proclaimed that people submitted to oppression because they did not know or practise the technique of Satyagraha. The more oppressive is the State, the greater would be the intensity of a Satyagraha movement it called for. Disobedience and even sedition is not ruled out if the Satyagrahi who opts for it willingly accepts the onus of responsibility and the consequences of changing the law.

Although Gandhi regarded Satyagraha as a practice that could be pursued by anyone and everyone and called it "a doctrine of universal application", he addressed himself essentially to a small revolutionary minority which alone could imbibe its very stringent conditions that he laid down. Although he said that "it is as difficult or as easy to practise any other virtue", he knew the limitations of ordinary men and the limits of their sufferings and, therefore, in political practice prescribed it for an elite minority. A Satyagrahi was a revolutionary who aimed at making far-reaching changes in society and who had the vision of change and was prepared to challenge the entire system. But he was also disciplined and self-sacrificing and a practitioner of truth and nonviolence. This was probably the only distinction which Gandhi drew between the elite and the masses.

Naturally, he addressed himself to those who were educated, had a highly developed social consciousness, could exercise discretion, and also discriminate between the various stages of Satyagraha as a movement. Although what he called the law of Satyagraha was applicable to individual action as well as to a mass movement, he was very conscious of the possibility of the latter generating into violence, anarchy, and irresponsible disobedience, and thus destroying even the normal law-abiding habits and therewith undermining a democratic society.

Indian politics during the last thirty years has clearly demonstrated the vacuity and the futility of all the revolutionary methods we borrowed from abroad. Our society is more aimlessly convulsed today than it was at any time before. There is a class conflict, though not a real one, but through which cut the caste conflicts. We have linguistic and regional conflicts; we have communal conflicts; we have also widespread disturbances and clashes in educational institutions; public property is burnt or damaged on the least provocation; and new facets of police regression are appearing on the surface. No genuine analyst can ignore what lies behind these convulsions and confrontations. But one also cannot ignore the fact that methods used in these conflicts are not only eroding the democratic institutional structure but also destroying our moral value system. In one sense or the other, all these conflicts are the by-products of poverty, or alienation, or both.

After India became independent, it became a habit with old leaders who assumed the reins of power to denounce Satyagraha as unnecessary and illegitimate in a democratic society. But, for Gandhi, Satyagraha was relevant at all times and in all contexts. According to him, there has to be Satyagraha even in Satyug, not to speak of our age of Kaliyug. Struggle is a part of life and in a society in which both poverty and alienation dominate, it must be given proper shape and direction so that it does not degenerate into massive violence, entrenchment of divisive forces, pervasive hatred, corruption, and the lies of politics. All this is happening everyday right in front of our eyes. Gandhi had made it very clear as early as 1930: "My nonviolence would not prevent me from fighting my countrymen on the many questions which must arise when India has become free." A truly Gandhian Satyagraha could well be a relevant instrument today.

But before anyone thinks of launching any struggle, he has to ask

himself whether he has left any scope for understanding the viewpoint of the other side. He should also ask himself if he is being merely self-righteous or so full of hatred against his opponents that he leaves no scope for a peaceful resolution of conflict. Gandhi had once said that a born democrat is a born disciplinarian. For him, educational institutions should be such as to produce a good army of potential Satyagrahis. He left even scope for students walking out of institutions but he left no scope for any selfish individual gain for anybody.

I, therefore, would like to make a strong plea for a return to the pursuit of Gandhian methods of Satyagraha both as a way of fighting one's own alienation as well as putting an end to social alienation. The educated youth is the most alienated element of our society because it is very conscious of its alienation and is also facing the bleak prospect of lack of job opportunities. It is doubtful if the present system, including the educational system, can either remove poverty or eliminate alienation. For us it is going to be a very long-drawn struggle and each one of us has to ask himself on which side of this struggle he is going to be. One may join the power elite which rules this system. One may join the forces of violence which destroy everyone but create nothing. One may go for causes in the name of easy-going slogans of this or that "ism" or one may decide to stand up as an individual and as a member of society to change the whole system.

But it would be necessary to understand the preconditions Gandhi laid down as absolutely necessary for the practice of Satyagraha. First, there can be no Satyagraha for an unjust cause. Otherwise the principle of truth will be flouted. Secondly, Satyagraha excludes the use of violence in any shape or form, in thought or action. Thirdly, Satyagraha presupposes a clear distinction between a willing obedience to the laws which are good and opposition to those which are immoral. In the final analysis, the superiority of the law of conscience has to assert itself over other laws for a Satyagrahi. Fourthly, Satyagraha is an instrument available only to those who have no hatred towards their opponents. Fifthly, a Satyagrahi must have the capacity and willingness to suffer. That is why Gandhi insisted more on a small revolutionary minority rather than a whole people undertaking it. Sixthly, Satyagraha means, among other things, constant engagement in constructive social work so that Satyagraha as a struggle does not become negative.

Seventhly, Satyagraha calls for total humility on the part of those who practise it. Last but not least, Satyagraha is the expression of discipline and sincerity. As Gandhi said, it challenges our honesty and our capacity for national work and our willingness to submit to discipline.

I began by focussing on the problems of poverty and alienation, both Indian and global; and I would like to end by stressing that unless a revolutionary minority takes up the task of total transformation to mobilise masses, we would remain locked in barren intellectual exercises. In view of growing violence, parasitism, and multiplicity of social conflicts, no method other than Satyagraha is going to serve us.



## The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge

Vandana Shiva

"It wasn't progress to make agriculture chemical-based and based on heavy energy subsidies. It was crude science. It was crude technology. We have paid a heavy price for it, and we should stop being foolish trying to perpetuate those models of sophistication."

*In February 1996, on the occasion of her appearance at the International Forum on Globalization in Berkeley, California, I had an opportunity to meet with Vandana Shiva, one of the world's most challenging thinkers on the environment, women's rights and international economics. Ms. Shiva is from India, and is a physicist, ecologist and activist. A recipient, in 1993, of the Right Livelihood Award, known as the alternative Nobel Peace Prize, she directs the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy, and is Associate Editor of The Ecologist. Ms. Shiva has written several books, including the recent Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge.*

*As I read your book, Vandana, I was struck by the chapter title "Piracy Through Patents: The Second Coming of Columbus," and I thought of all the discussion in the United States and other countries about the protection of something now known as intellectual property. Kind of ironic, isn't it, that concern for intellectual property has so far outrun our concern for human well-being?*

The very notion of intellectual property, Jerry, is not that old. Patents are old. But to define a group of ideas and knowledge as a new form of

VANDANA SHIVA

property, and then to extend that form to cover animals and cows and sheep and seeds and medicinal plants, as if they were products of the human mind, this is an absolutely new human condition.

Not enough is heard about the arrogance of these American corporations, who worry about piracy of Michael Jackson music by Chinese record companies while claiming patents on forms of life. One U.S. corporation, for example, has taken patents on neem, a tree which produces pesticides that my mother has used, my grandmother has used, everyone in Indian society has used. Entire medicinal plants, even our soils are being claimed, and the people who protest most about piracy of intellectual property are the ones most engaged in the piracy of the biological diversity of the Third World and the indigenous knowledge of societies like India. Most of this indigenous knowledge has been generated, maintained, reproduced and continued over millennia in the hands of women as the caretakers of knowledge. So it's piracy from Third World women by the largest corporate powers in the world.

*When was this term "intellectual property" first used?*

It has only come up in the 1980s. Before that the concern was "industrial property" because it was recognized that you can have invention and innovation around industrial artifacts, around machines, around tape recorders, around radios. This shift from "industrial property" to "intellectual property" has taken place just over the last decade, and it has happened so quickly and powerfully that it was central to the property rights discussions within the World Trade Organization and the Uruguay round of GATT.

GATT has a whole chapter called "Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights," through which now the whole world must follow a very perverse system that is promoting of monopolies. It has absolutely no ethical limits and ethical boundaries and has no social obligations of any kind. Extremely responsible regimes and laws around patents, around copyrights, around trademarks are being dismantled, under

threats from the United States, under a special clause in the trade act, and under new laws.

For example, there was a law passed in the U.S. last year, the Economic Espionage Act of 1996, by which any transfer of knowledge regarded as economic espionage will be treated as a threat to national security, requiring mobilization of federal investigation agencies. So we have reached a very, very crazy situation in which sharing what has been shared most in society—knowledge, seeds, genetic resources, biodiversity—has been turned into a crime. This sharing has always been the basis of human well-being and human prosperity.

*Is this the concept of commodification that Karl Marx wrote about?*

It's way beyond the commodification that Marx would have imagined. When Marx talked of commodification, the reality of the industrial revolution was that the capacity of capital and those who controlled capital was merely to extract the surplus labor of people acting in the now, in the present. So, I can exploit you if I have capital and you have labor, and take away your surplus labor and leave you just enough to survive so that you can keep working for me. Through intellectual property, on the other hand, particularly in living things, capital now has the ability to appropriate surplus from the future, surplus from the future of nature.

By making a claim on future evolution in nature—through reproduction of animals, and plants and seeds, as if this were happening because someone invented a cow, or a seed—capital has now gained the ability to collect rents, and incomes, and royalties on the basis of that. So that the farmer who has labored on the land, instead of being able to save and plant his or her seed every year, must pay rents and royalties to a handful of seed companies. To me, that is way beyond the appropriation of labor surplus in the present. It is the appropriation of surplus of nature and labor into the future, thus denying both humanity and nature their best potential.

*Is there any nation that opposes this?*

India did oppose the drafting of intellectual property rights into the World Trade Organization and into the GATT. As a result, it took four years for the United States to get this agenda on there, but I can tell you the Indian people are definitely not accepting it.

I've just come straight out of a very remote village in Kerala, which has been very much in the public eye because of this best-selling book, *The God of Small Things*, which takes place there. The villagers invited me to into their community because for over two years they have been documenting its biodiversity. They had a ceremony they wanted me to attend, in which they declared that their biodiversity is both their collective trust and covered by their collective right. They will never allow any of its products to be patented, and any characteristic shared by that collective heritage is not up for appropriation.

Of course, one village can't stop this process. But there is a growing movement in India, where people are saying exactly what Gandhi said when the British put a tax on salt that the people collected from the sea in order to pay for their colonial armies. Gandhi went to the beach and picked up the salt and said, "This has been given by nature for free. It is necessary for us, for our survival. You can not tax it. Such a law is unjust and deserves to be broken."

In the very same way, we have a very wide and vibrant seed *satyagraha* going in our country. *Satyagraha* is Gandhi's word for non-cooperation with unjust laws. Intellectual property rights proposals, ranging from patents on life forms to monopoly rights on seeds, have been brought again and again to the Indian Parliament through the pressure of the United States and the World Trade Organization, and again and again they have had to be withdrawn. Interestingly, the United States Agriculture Secretary came to India and threatened us last year and said you had better revise your laws to protect our corporations. Of course, the Indian people instantly mobilized and said, "No. India's laws are meant to protect Indian people, India's environment, India's legacy and

India's heritage, not just to protect the profits of a handful of corporations."

*And yet, there's a certain amount of progress being made. Is there not, in defending the intellectual property of developing countries against corporate appropriation?*

It depends on what you call progress. The progress we really need is protection of the collected legacies of indigenous societies that have found that certain medicinal plants have certain healing properties. Indigenous societies have evolved seeds that can tolerate saline water, they have evolved seeds that can survive in drought. These are the legacies that need protection.

In my valley, for example, we have the best rice, and another valley near by has the best basmati—basmati, the word itself means the rice with an aroma, the rice with a perfume. The other day someone brought me basmati seeds to save because I run a program in India that conserves native seeds and seeds that have been evolved by farmers through very dynamic and innovative processes. What we are basically saying is, the farmers have innovated; they should have rights. Innovation doesn't begin when the agricultural corporations enter the scene of breeding. Innovation is there all the time, as long as human beings are interacting with the wealth that has been given to them by nature. Seeds don't just come to us from the land. They come through a core of evolution.

*I can't say I'm very familiar with seeds or hybrid seeds and the growing corporate control of that part of life. Can you just sketch out what is the state of the case? How much food derives from seeds that are handed down by farmers, and how much is in the control of seed corporations?*

In India, eighty percent of the seeds are farmer's seeds. They are seeds that have been evolved by farmers, saved by farmers, exchanged be-

tween farmers. Of the rest, fifteen percent comes from the public sector, which means universities, agriculture laboratories, the publicly-sponsored seed enterprise. The remaining five percent comes from the private seed industry. Most of this has traditionally been in vegetables and floriculture, but since the arrival of new economic policies of globalization and liberalization, the seed sector has been greatly opened up for foreign corporations.

Cargill, which is the biggest private corporation in the world, has a big control over agriculture, not only in the United States, but also over the rest of the world. Cargill came into India in 1988, and in 1992 tried to introduce hybrid sunflower seeds. The seeds failed. The farmers literally tore down the Cargill offices and the Cargill seed plant, first because they had been misled, and then because of Cargill's refusal to accept liability—to take responsibility for the failed crops and the failed seed.

Companies like Monsanto are also trying to enter India in a very big way. They, of course, look at India as a market. We're told that without these corporations we're going to have famine, but this is not at all true. Most of the research that these corporations are doing is focused on selling their seeds more effectively, and selling their chemicals more effectively. Herbicide resistant seeds will enable Monsanto to sell their Round-Up herbicide better. It will not produce more food for the hungry.

It is very interesting that even though in India we have tremendous resistance to the new monopolies, and farmers have said they will not allow them to take root and take crown, Round-Up resistant soy, a genetically-engineered soy bean, was planted with an agreement that I would call high-tech slavery. Monsanto says the farmers can't save seeds for three years after planting; seeds must be purchased each year. Monsanto has the right to investigate the farmer, to make sure they have not saved seeds. The farmer cannot use chemicals other than Monsanto's, and if the farmer is caught using other companies' chemicals, he will be dismissed from the program. Even the farmer's heirs are

liable in this agreement, but Monsanto is totally free and we know that the cotton crop failed last year and Monsanto had no liability, no responsibility.

I see this as a new system of absolute rights with absolute irresponsibility that leaves no space for democracy and accountability. And given that this is all happening around food, the most vital need that human beings have, I think it is time for people who love freedom, people who love democracy, people who love justice, to turn to agriculture, to food and to intellectual property rights to see exactly how totalitarian regimes are being created in the name of progress.

*In the U.S. would it be the reverse? Would ninety percent of the seeds come from corporations?*

I think one hundred percent of the seeds. There are a few smaller sources—there's Seeds of Change, there's Heirloom Seeds. But they're not in industrial food crops. They're in vegetables and they protect garden varieties. They're not in agricultural crops that account for major production. They're really for home gardening and small scale cultivation for self-use.

*So would you say that U.S. farmers are totally dependent on those corporations?*

I would say the U.S. farmer is a slave to American agribusiness. Production has increased. Many more bushels are produced per acre because of the pesticides and hybrid varieties that the big seed companies make available. That's the short-term "benefit" of the process that you're describing. But the entire equation of agricultural production has been so artificially engineered that it's very difficult to figure out when more is really more, and when it is less.

Take for example the fact that the biggest producer of rice in the world is increasingly becoming the California desert, where there is no

water. Rice is a crop that has evolved in high rain zones where there is plenty of water, and societies like India, Thailand, Japan, where rice has evolved accordingly to the ecological advantages of the land, are now being rendered non-competitive because of a strange combination of subsidies.

I was just studying figures—the rice cultivation in California has a water subsidy in the amount of something like \$980 per ton. Now if that cost were internalized into the cost of rice, this would not be an efficiently producing system. But you can't object to that under the rules of the World Trade Organization. The World Trade Organization does not have a system of taking into account such environmental subsidies. It's only direct financial subsidies that are taken into the audit of the World Trade Organization. In fact, if you were to ask me what drives free trade, I would say it is running on massive hidden subsidies that make non-competitive, unproductive enterprise look like competitive enterprise.

I'll give you another very simple example. Tomatoes to be grown for Pepsico were introduced into Punjab because the Green Revolution—which was this miracle revolution that was supposed to have done all kinds of good things for India—had collapsed. In fact, the violence and terrorism in Punjab was linked to the collapse of the Green Revolution and the declining economic situation of farmers; the younger farmers took up arms in an effort to form a separate state. Well, the tomatoes were being sold by the farmers to Pepsico for one rupee fifty, which is next to nothing. One can't even translate it into a fraction of a dollar. Pepsico, meantime, was getting seven rupees fifty for transporting those tomatoes. Now quite clearly with that kind of subsidy on transporting, a subsidy made by buying cheap from farmers, it's wonderfully efficient for Pepsico to grow tomatoes in Punjab. But if you were to build in all the real costs, all the environmental costs, all the social costs, this system would not be the miracle it has been made to look like.

*Vandana, could you talk a little more about this Green Revolution?*

Everything I am saying is related to this issue of the Green Revolution. The Green Revolution was projected as a miracle savior of India from the famines that had afflicted the nation from the early 1900s up to the middle of the century. But it's very important to recognize why these famines took place. Famine in India occurred during British rule because food became a tradable commodity, not a basic item of meeting a human need under the control of the peasants and the farmers who were the producers. They had no control of what they grew because two-thirds of what they grew was just taken over as taxes by the British rulers. In 1942, for example, while two million Indians were dying, India exported more rice than ever before, because the British were at war and needed more and more deployment of food to sell all over the world on international markets and they did not care if Indians died.

There was no famine after 1942 in India. In 1965 there was a drought and a small scarcity. India had to import wheat that year. But the United States put a condition on these imports and said, "You have to change your agriculture system, then we'll send you the shipments." The condition was to introduce a "Green Revolution," chemical agriculture with new plant varieties called dwarf varieties, sometimes called miracle varieties. These crops were engineered to be shorter, not higher yielding. The native varieties were not low yielding—that's a myth that has been propagated and it is a total lie. We conserved the old varieties, and some of them out-performed the Green Revolution varieties even in terms of yield. And in terms of nutrition, of course, they are much better.

The Green Revolution was really designed to sell more chemicals. The dwarf varieties were necessary because local varieties are tall and slender and fall down when they have too much uptake of instantaneous chemicals rather than the slow absorption of nutrients from organic manure. That problem was solved by shortening the varieties, turning them into dwarfs so that they could take up more chemicals. That was the real issue. The Green Revolution was made to look like it was about hunger, but it was about selling chemicals. The new biotechnologies are being promoted in a similar way, as if they were about hunger, but

they too are about selling chemicals and gaining more control and dependence of the farmers. Farmers are compelled to buy inputs from companies, and then sell back their production to the the same companies, leading to really a very, very sophisticated and complex form of slavery, but slavery all the same.

*Lester Brown from the World Watch Institute has put together figures showing that the rate of increase in the world-wide production of wheat and rice is falling. He suggests that we are looking at serious food shortages, particularly as China switches to a more industrial base, upscales from a more vegetarian diet to meat, puts more cars on the road, and paves over their agricultural land. Do you have any thoughts on that?*

I definitely think there are going to be food shortages, but not because we are unable to grow food in adequate quantities. We're going to have food shortages because we are putting trade higher than need. India has had food abundance, food security, without any problem at all. But last year India opened up its food markets under pressure from the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, and we're already having food scarcity. We increased our exports of food on the grounds that we had enough, and now our imports have doubled. By importing twice as much, we are spending scarce foreign exchange, and before we know it, our international debt is going to deepen and an economic crisis will continue to grow.

We must recognize, first of all, that rice and wheat are not the only foods that people eat and live on. Most people of the Third World, in fact, live on crops other than rice and wheat—crops such as millet, sorghum, pearl millet—some of which have been forgotten because of what I call racism in food. White crops, you know—rice that is white, flour that is white—have been made to look superior. Crops that are more nutritious but darker have been pushed out as primitive crops, as backward crops, as marginal crops, even though, if you were to look at nutrition per acre, they give us far more. I think we need a whole rethink-

ing around that. These crops are also prudent in resources, using one one-hundredth of the water that irrigated rice uses. They could produce so much more in terms of the nutrition human beings need.

The second problem with the tapering off of productivity gains made during the Green Revolution, even in the false way in which they were measured, is related to the fact that chemical inputs are totally non-sustainable. You can't keep pumping fertilizers into soil because fertilizers don't improve soil fertility. You can't keep spraying crops with pesticides because pesticides increase pests rather than control them. These are non-sustainable options of growing food. Sooner or later this thing has to run out.

Rather than looking for a deepening and acceleration of this direction of technological change in agriculture—more chemical dependence, more monocultures, more uniformity and more centralized control—what we should be looking for to increase productivity is what I call biodiversity intensification. Which would mean that we should intensify our natural biological production. We should intensify our use of organic manures, intensify pest control through biological means on the farm, intensify the diversity of what we grow on the farm.

All of that will start taking care of both the environmental problems and the uprooting of the small farmer from the land. It will create decentralized food production, more healthy food production and will therefore undo the kind of monopolistic concentration we see now, in which five companies control the world's trade in food. Five or six companies control all the patents and seeds. That kind of concentration is the biggest threat to food security, and is the biggest reason we are going to see food scarcities in the future.

To get to more local food sufficiency and more biological diversity, it strikes me that two things are going to occur. Number one, you're going to require more human labor in the production of food; and number two, you're going to have to reduce these massive food exports from the United States. Is that true?

Right now India is not importing much from the United States at all. In fact, for thirty years prior to last year, we had absolutely no food imports. But the World Trade Organization rules, which have been created by United States agribusiness, would like to see even more food imported. I don't think the world would be harmed if the United States stopped growing rice in California. I don't think the California desert was ever meant to be the bread basket of the world. It has better land uses and that's how it should be. It is not a loss to the world if the world is not dependent on United States companies for food production and food supply.

The most important issue, of course, is, yes, we will need more people in agriculture. But the measurement of productivity in agriculture as labor per unit was never more than a mechanism to get rid of labor in agriculture, to uproot the farmers, to leave less than one percent of the people on the land. We're reaching a stage globally where people being made dispensable, in my view, is the biggest social and economic crisis of our times—both because it's creating economic insecurity, but even more importantly, because it's creating people who don't have a dream of the future. They're not able to look hopefully into the future. I believe that biologically-diverse, intensive agriculture that makes room for people again is the biggest peace movement for society, creating societies that are at peace with themselves.

*Last night I walked to the Oakland produce market, which is a few blocks from where I live. They start opening at about ten o'clock at night and these trucks pulling in are gigantic, vastly larger than they were thirty years ago. I saw one truck being unloaded and I looked at some tomatoes that came in from Sinaloa, Mexico. There was a whole bunch of produce stacked along the sidewalk there and I asked the driver, "Where did you come in from." He said, "I came in from Nogales." That's a long way from here.*

*I just have to think that such a huge truck—the driver said it cost about \$150,000—certainly burned up a lot of oil, not to mention the tire dust being thrown out and we know that tire dust kills thousands each year in*



*the United States. That supply line, it strikes me, can't be a sustainable system.*

It's definitely not sustainable. India has just had a nine-day truckers' strike because of new taxes introduced on the trucking system. All the trucks went off the road. Nine days. If we had been living in a food system like the United States we would have had famine. We would have had riots. The reason nine days didn't hurt us is because in most places, people eat what is growing very close to their homes and therefore it doesn't matter if trucks aren't running.

A Danish Agricultural Minister gave me an interesting statistic. He said one kilogram of food shipped north, south, either way, either direction, contributes to ten kilograms of carbon dioxide. It reminds me of a wonderful statement by Gandhi. When someone said, "Don't you want India to be civilized and industrialized like the western world?" he answered, "One tiny island nation needed to enslave the entire planet to be able to run its industrial machine. Can you imagine how many planets an India imitating the British Isles would need?" And I think that is what we need to recognize—that the World Trade Organization is globalizing American agriculture. American agriculture is non-sustainable even for the United States. On a global level, it will just destroy societies. It will destroy the ecosystems and the biodiversity we have inherited.

*Let me take up an issue that has to be at the center of this whole discussion. Many powerful people would treat this conversation as nonsense, and I believe the argument would go, "Well this sounds so primitive. This is another version of Rousseau and the noble savage." Gandhi himself didn't like railroads. Early in his career he rejected industrial textiles and mastered the spinning wheel. But I don't think we're going backwards to the way it was when there were a billion people on the planet, a hundred years ago, a hundred and fifty years ago. So where do we have progress, scientific utilization of knowledge, that is positive? In terms of survivability, in*

*terms of elegance and power, where do science and technology fit in?*

I was just reading *Time* magazine while coming over here, and it has this interesting two-page story about how everything that science taught about babies—putting them in a separate room and letting them cry to sleep, and so forth—all that is now being recognized as nonsense. Now, I never really believed it. I brought up my child exactly as my society has, with my baby sleeping next to me, feeding when he gets up in the night and everything worked fine. I think there are many similar areas where science and statistics are produced to prove things that, over time and with experience, are not true at all. It wasn't progress to shift from breast feeding to using baby food substitutes. It wasn't progress to bring up children the way we were told. It wasn't progress to make agriculture chemical-based and based on heavy energy subsidies. It was crude science. It was crude technology. We have paid a heavy price for it, and we should stop being foolish trying to perpetuate those models of sophistication. The power of your instruments is not the sophistication of your science. Sophistication of your science is how well you understand relationships within an ecosystem.

To me, the real progress in science, in food production, for instance, would be to understand fully the ecosystems in which you produce food, using their potential to the best while doing the least damage and, through that, maximizing output without wasting a lot of the resources.

I would use two yardsticks for general progress for human beings. The first is that people should be ecologically-oriented, enlightened in an ecological way, not reductionist, not fragmented, not blind to the relationships on which everything depends. And second, they should exercise democratic control. Technologies that are not under democratic control are made to look like improvements, but they are not so for people. Turning entire societies into automobile-dependent societies, for example, means that for the smallest need you have to get into a car and travel many miles, which means that society is, in fact, totally crippled. It's not a free society. It's a chained society.

In the same way, if people don't have flexibility in the way they grow food, and everything is controlled and timed in terms of where they will get chemical inputs and how they will use them, they can't use their freedom, they can't use their judgement. I basically see that as destructive. Democracy in the use of science and technology is a precondition to ensure that scientific changes actually protect nature and the interests of people.

*Here in Washington, both the Republicans and Democrats are constantly singing the praises of NAFTA and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. As for trade here in Oakland, we have a port with trains coming and going throughout day—130 cars at a time picking up containers that come off dozens of Chinese ships filled by people making thirty, maybe forty dollars a month. And this is this thing they call a global village with all these rules managing the flow of traffic. Now judging from everything we've been talking about, it sounds like your prescription is blow it all up! Get out of GATT! Let's get more local, reduce world trade, be more self-reliant.*

I believe that the system will blow itself up. I don't think it can last. In fact you can see it blew up in Mexico with the collapse of the peso. It has blown up in place after place. 'The truckers' strike I was mentioning in India is a result of new international rules on the servicesector that have crippled trade totally. And it's constantly feeding back negatively on itself. You get unstable governments. Right now I don't even know who is ruling India because the United Front Coalition has issued a withdrawal of confidence to the Congress Party. The global economic system creates unstable governments, it creates violence, and it also fosters fundamentalism. The rise of religious fundamentalism is intimately linked to the globalization of trade; as more and more people are dependent on fewer and fewer options, more and more people are made redundant. Redundant people, insecure people, turn to each other.

*I'm thinking again of the truck driver I talked to at the produce market last night. He told me he was from Texas, and I said to him, "You know, very soon these trucks are going to be driven by cheaper workers from south of the border and you're going to be out of a job."*

*He understood that he was going to be hurt, eventually, by NAFTA. It hasn't happened yet, but it's pretty hard to stop the logic of that, isn't it? Why should a transport company pay somebody twelve or thirteen dollars an hour, when, by just going below the border a few miles, the business can save an enormous amount of money?*

The world into which globalization was introduced was not a very equal world. We had tremendous north-south divisions. The divisions weren't always that deep, but over time affluence has grown in the northern countries, and poverty—which is closely linked to this growth of affluence—has increased in the countries of the Third World. Now instead of creating an adjustment so that the income gap is reduced, what globalization has done is maintain those inequalities and use them to the advantage of more affluent nations. This is a totally undemocratic way to deal with economic inequalities, between north and south, and between men and women.

More and more men in Third World countries are now being put out of work because women can be hired at half the rate. More and more children are being drawn into the workforce for exactly the same reason. It takes twice the wage to hire the parents, so children are given the job. In India people are saying no to all of this in increasing numbers. The myth is that we're moving toward a free market system; the state wasn't efficient, so let's allow the market to work more efficiently. But it doesn't work! Not the free market is using the state—using it to deliver economic subsidies.

Intellectual property rights are one major subsidy, created by allowing corporations to make money out of what was free for people and came from the people in the first place. Another major subsidy in India that is being resisted and fought—and this movement is going to

grow in the coming years—is that the state is asked by foreign companies to acquire land with state authority and force people off of it. The land is then handed over to these companies to build huge power plants and steel plants in the name of jobs, and growth and the free market. People are increasingly saying, “We will not move. We will not leave our homes. Why should we subsidize your profits with our product? Why should we be dispossessed?” People are saying that this is not freedom. Market freedom is not people’s freedom. Our freedom is our ability to live where we belong; our ability to be engaged in fruitful ways and meaningful ways; to belong to cohesive and peaceful societies; to be able to look into the future and be linked to our past. And this movement of the people saying “No!” to globalization is, in fact, the face of India fifty years after gaining independence.

*What is the role of the philosophy of Gandhi in this movement?*

It is the most important philosophy in our times. Gandhi was not appreciated enough even in his own time except by the people who rose with him and were able to mobilize their energies to confront the armies of the British. But in my view there is no other philosophy that can get people out of our current crisis.

First of all, there is no other philosophy that empowers you and makes you fearless. And you need to be fearless in the face of authoritarianism. There is no other philosophy that enables people to carve out democratic spaces for action at a time when governments have been hijacked by lobbies of the corporate world; when governments no longer listen to people, but only listen to those who gave them kick-backs, to those to whom they owe a favor. And that is common to both the White House and in Delhi. There is no difference.

There is no other philosophy that makes us construct a good, satisfying, meaningful life with limited use of resources, without predatory behavior toward the environment and other people. In his writings Gandhi uses the word “enoughness.” He says it very clearly. He says the

world has enough for everyone’s need, but not enough for even a few people’s greed. I think Gandhi got it right. You need just one greedy person on this planet, just one. Just one corporation with a limitless appetite could tear this planet down.

*A central element of Gandhi’s philosophy is resistance and non-violent refusal to collaborate with unjust powers. Do you see direct action as part of the agenda for fundamental change?*

Very, very much. I think there are three concepts in Gandhi’s philosophy that are relevant, not just to India, but to every community that wants to reclaim democracy, wants to reclaim meaningful life. The first is self-rule; we should be governed by our own rules in our communities, then in our cities, then in our states, then federally, and then as a global village. You can’t be a member of a global village if you have been denied membership in your own village. The second is a concept Gandhi popularized called *swadeshi*, to make the things you use and wear with your own skills, knowledge and local resources, and thus to minimize waste and increase the meaning and relevance of each person, so that each person has a place in society. The third was *satyagraha*, direct action in the form of non-violent resistance. In the struggles over intellectual property rights and patents on life, I believe not cooperating with this is the highest human duty of our time.

*So you think people should disregard intellectual property restrictions, that the Chinese people should continue to make their Michael Jackson records, and not worry about it?*

I am not worried about what happens to Michael Jackson’s records. I wouldn’t even make a commitment either way. I’m not committed to the right of the Chinese to copy, and I’m not committed to the right of the American company to prevent the Chinese from doing so. I am worried about what happens to biodiversity, to plants, to indigenous

knowledge. I find it outrageous that human umbilical cord blood cells should have been patented, that cell lines of Panama and Papua New Guinea natives should have been patented, that neem should have been patented. These are not reflections of an evolved civilized society.

*How about genetically-engineered tomatoes that are less subject to rot, and other genetic manipulations of food that we tend to associate with progress?*

I believe that genetically-engineered food is totally unnecessary, both from a production standpoint and a consumption standpoint. First of all, the Monsanto tomatoes that were engineered to resist rot turned out to be a failure. And as far as the genetically-engineered soy bean that Monsanto is forcing upon Europe just now, I've been invited to many countries to help the fight against its proliferation—to Austria where there was a referendum against it earlier this month, to Sweden, to Finland, to Denmark. People do not want this food!

People do not treat the imposing of genetically-engineered food as an act of democracy. They believe they have a right to choose their own system of food production. Monsanto thinks it has a right to force genetic engineering upon unwilling consumers and to prevent people from knowing, through labeling, what they are eating. But the only way genetic engineering can be established as a dominant mode of food production is by ending democracy. The choice is really between genetic engineering and democracy. And I think people should decide. We must find avenues and ways to ensure that our choice is exercised in the means of food production.

# Saving Our Cultural Environment

Putting the "vision" back into television

## A conversation with George Gerbner

by Michael Toms

**F**or millennia, human beings have learned about life and the world through the telling of stories. For young children, nothing can be more compelling and influential than listening to their parents read a story to them. However, with the onset of modern communications technology, storytelling has become the purview of multinational megacorporations, which deliver a particular brand of storytelling through television, designed to lull us into a narrow view of the world around us. We hear much about the environmental crises in the natural world. Just as dangerous is the invisible crisis we face with the new corporate media environment.

George Gerbner is Bell Atlantic professor of telecommunications at Temple University. He is dean emeritus of the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, and the editor of *Invisible Crises: What Conglomerate Media Control Means for America and the World, and Triumph of the Image: The Media's Way in the Persian Gulf—A Global Perspective.* —MT



George Gerbner

**M**ichael Toms: George, we're all familiar with television. Most of us see it everyday; it's in our lives. How has television changed in the last fifty years?

George Gerbner: It hasn't changed very much in the last fifty years in terms of the

basic building blocks of telling stories. Prime-time network television is still what most people watch most of the time.

Prime-time television presents a world in which men outnumber women three to one; young people under eighteen are about one-third of their true proportion in the population; older people sixty-five and above, about one-fifth. It is a world driven by marketing, which prefers the best consumers and ignores those who are not the best consumers. The lower one-third of our population in terms of income and education are represented by 13 percent of the characters in prime-time. They are practically invisible. They are the ones who are ignored, and consequently it's their fate.

The urban crisis is never presented to us on television except as a situation of menace and fear, to be addressed by building more jails, giving longer and harsher sentences, and supporting the medieval barbarism called executions—the U.S. being the only civilized country that even has such a thing. So much of that is driven by the marketing imperative and by that feature of the marketing imperative that is most profitable,

which is violence. Exposure to violence tends to cultivate that kind of insecurity and the approval of so-called strong measures, even repression.

*When you use the term "marketing imperative," probably many of our listeners think of commercials. But it's more than just commercials, it's programming.*

Commercials are the least of it. In fact, commercials actually present a more diversified cast than the programs, because they're trying to sell to a large number of people, depending on the product and the sponsor. No, the marketing imperative shapes the world that is presented on television, and that shaping begins with infancy. A child today, for the first time in human history, is born into a home in which, as you mentioned earlier, it is no longer the parent who tells the stories, or the school, or the church, or the community. And in many cases around the world, it's not even programming from the native country, but essentially a handful of global conglomerates that basically have nothing to tell, but a great deal to sell. That is the great human transformation of the past hundred years.

*It's pretty well been proven, although we don't read about this much in the newspapers, that violence on television really has an impact, particularly on children. It also has an impact on our society, doesn't it?*

It has a tremendous impact on our society, where violence is seen five times per hour in prime time, and between twenty and twenty-five times per hour in the cartoons. Violence is always an expression and demonstration of power. The real question about violence is not "How frequent?" but "Who is doing what to whom?" That is the way we set up a power structure. For every ten violent characters on prime time, there are about ten or eleven victims. For every ten women who are written into scripts to exert that kind of power that basically white males in the so-called prime of life get away with, with relative impunity, there are nineteen females who become victimized. For every ten women of color who are written into scripts to show that kind of

power, there are twenty-two women of color who become victimized.

As we grow up in this culture, unconsciously and unwittingly, we develop a calculus of risk that defines our sense of power, our sense of security. If you have a higher calculus of risk, you feel more vulnerable. You will be trained to be a minority. Minorities are not born, they are trained. They are culturally trained to be more submissive, more insecure, more demanding and dependent on protection. This is a cultural process, and violence is the prime instrument—its demonstration of power, and its enormous frequency. Ironically, sex, which is potentially a life-giving activity, is subject to much more censorship in many countries than violence, which is a life-threatening activity.

Contrary to usual popular conception, an inordinate amount of exposure to violent representations does not make people more violent, it makes people more insecure, more fearful.

In fact, it's a great pacification and passivity training. I wish people were a little more aggressive. I wish people would stand up for their rights, and be more aggressive in that way. No, violence teaches them to be insecure, more dependent, more afraid. Even though I don't see the violence in my own home or neighborhood that I see on the screen, I still think that's the way the world is—mean, dangerous, and not to be trusted. Strangers are to be feared.

Now, that is the crumbling of the veneer of civilization. I define civilization as a society in which kindness to strangers is one of the key words. We are afraid of strangers; we don't talk to strangers; we avert our eyes. Our children are taught, "Don't talk to strangers." A handful of dramatic and tragic incidents have been so amplified and made to reverberate in every home that we have become afraid of strangers. We have become brutalized, and in many ways have lost what I consider to

be the hallmark of a civilized life.

A common misconception is that violence is what people want. But in our culture it is the supply that determines the demand. What our public wants is what it has seen from infancy. An infant is not born with certain tastes and desires and expectations. In the first six years of life, our children are taught what to want, what is exciting, what is spectacular. Unlike any other marketed product, which appeals to tastes developed before you encounter the product, with television it's the other way around, because television integrates you into its world from infancy on.

In the average home, the television is on seven hours and forty-one minutes a day. The child is born into a television home. By the time the child has an opportunity to

**"Our media environment is so homogenized, presenting so little diversity of approaches or perspectives that we are not even aware that there are other ways of looking at life and the world." —George Gerbner**

encounter education and create a variety of information and impressions, it's too late. By that time a child has been integrated into an essentially highly homogenized, monopolized, violence-saturated cultural environment, which is why we call our movement the Cultural Environment Movement. It's not the media that the movement is interested in challenging, it's the total environment into which a child is born, the mainstream of which is television.

We're not aware of our media environment for the same reason that the fish in the ocean is not aware that it's swimming in saltwater. Basically it has known nothing else, because our media environment is so homogenized, presenting so little diversity of approaches or perspectives that we are not even aware that there are other ways of looking at life and the world.

Increasingly, in the last five or ten years we have witnessed a monopolization of our

(continued, page 27)



|                                 |                 |           |                                  |                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Maynard L. Cressman             | Kutztown        | PA        | Mary Nelson                      | Sunnyvale       | CA          |
| Joe McGinity                    | Yardley         | PA        | Victoria S. Davis                | Sutter Creek    | CA          |
| Barbara C. Reynolds             | Cookeville      | TN        | Sergio Lub                       | Walnut Creek    | CA          |
| Bill L. Stone                   | Jonesboro       | TN        | John & Pam Schofield             | Kidway          | CO          |
| Peggy Vester                    | Memphis         | TN        | John Paul Jones                  | St. Petersburg  | FL          |
| Elaine Stratton                 | Sevierville     | TN        | Anne Wister                      | Atlanta         | GA          |
| Eleanor Jordan                  | Austin          | TX        | Wendie Elstrand                  | Monrovia        | PA          |
| Patricia Rosenblad              | Austin          | TX        | Glen Jans                        | Sun Valley      | ID          |
| Cora Stephens                   | Austin          | TX        | Dr. Edda Hadd                    | Chicago         | IL          |
| Nancy Walker                    | Austin          | TX        | Valerie Kovitz                   | Evansville      | IN          |
| Mary Beth Wilbanks              | Austin          | TX        | Ruth Gott Brooker                | Indianapolis    | IN          |
| Autumn Scudamore                | Dallas          | TX        | Evelyn Chervell                  | Lowell          | IN          |
| Gloria Ashberger                | Denton          | TX        | Betsy Janzen                     | Merriam         | KS          |
| Lee Andrews                     | El Paso         | TX        | Debra Spencer                    | Lexington       | MA          |
| William & Nancy Marsh           | El Paso         | TX        | Peter Kent                       | Silver Springs  | MD          |
| Dr. Keith Root                  | San Antonio     | TX        | Bennett J. Sims                  | Hendersonville  | NC          |
| Grace Watt                      | Bridgeport      | VA        | Daniel Kordian                   | Beverly         | NY          |
| Anita Harrell                   | Charles City    | VA        | Peggy & Ed Witz                  | Cincinnati      | OH          |
| Barbara Olin                    | Charlottesville | VA        | Harvey & Trivette Bradley        | Blodgett        | OR          |
| Dan Bond                        | Hopewell        | VA        | Mary Alice Lausell               | San Juan        | PR          |
| Robert K. Purcell               | Lynchburg       | VA        | Linda Rankin                     | Knoxville       | TN          |
| Reinhold Bauer-Tajovsky         | Newport News    | VA        | Charlene Strawn                  | College Station | TX          |
| Kathryn A. McArthur             | Norfolk         | VA        | Aaron F. Malachuk, MD            | San Antonio     | TX          |
| Cathie Stivers                  | Powhatan        | VA        | Elizabeth Cist                   | Great Falls     | VA          |
| Linda Thornburg                 | Woodbridge      | VA        | W. Duke Grikovic                 | Richmond        | VA          |
| Evangelyn D. Johnson            | Bristol         | VA        | Ralph Arthur Klein               | Janesville      | WI          |
| Hannah Johnson                  | Burien          | WA        | Doris & Barbara Murtry           | Sausalito       | WI          |
| Robert Slay                     | Cummins Island  | WA        | Wills D. Sas                     | Ilwaco          | WA          |
| Catherine Strauss               | Deer Harbor     | WA        | Piero Antognetti                 | Unterseen       | Switzerland |
| Donald J. Erskine               | Seattle         | WA        | <b>Radio Underwriter Members</b> |                 |             |
| Donna Reisinger                 | Seattle         | WA        | (250+)                           |                 |             |
| Michelle A. Bryant              | Sequim          | WA        | Pat McGovern                     | Phoenix         | AZ          |
| Elis May Minnessan              | Shoreline       | WA        | Jane Peery                       | Lafayette       | CA          |
| Isabel Buette                   | Madison         | WI        | James A. Aubry                   | Des Moines      | IA          |
| Sheila Farrell                  | Madison         | WI        | Judy Butz                        | Indianapolis    | IN          |
| Raymond Sajdak                  | Milwaukee       | WI        | Rich Ahrens                      | Eugene          | OR          |
| Marcia Craighead                | Jackson         | WY        | Kevin Lister                     | Portland        | OR          |
| Inger Peschke-Koedt             | Moore           | WY        | Audrey Hirt                      | Erie            | PA          |
| Cheryl & John Dodds             | Chiswick        | Australia | Judith Moore                     | Summerville     | SC          |
| Bill Christian                  | Livingston      | Australia | <b>Satellite Sponsors</b>        |                 |             |
| Dr. F.J. Kynner, Medical Center | New South Wales | Australia | (3500+)                          |                 |             |
| John E. Morrissey               | NSW             | Australia | Mary Reimer                      | Oakland         | CA          |
| David Oldfield                  | Queensland      | Australia | Ronald G. Thomas                 | Eugene          | OR          |
| Joan Grey                       | Tasmania        | Australia | <b>Benefactor Members</b>        |                 |             |
| Doreen Chevroux                 | London, ON      | Canada    | (51000+)                         |                 |             |
| Susan Gibson                    | Owen Sound, ON  | Canada    | David Schoenmann                 | Mill Valley     | CA          |
| <b>Sustaining Members</b>       |                 |           | Richard & Ariel Moss             | Oakhurst        | CA          |
| (\$100+)                        |                 |           | Lawrence S. Rockefeller          | New York        | NY          |
| Nat Shapiro                     | Orade           | AZ        | John McCain                      | Cincinnati      | OH          |
| Olan Kagei                      | Atascadero      | CA        | Lakha Hoffman                    | Adland          | OR          |
| Jean McDaniel                   | Harbor City     | CA        |                                  |                 |             |
| Cheri Quincy                    | Santa Rosa      | CA        |                                  |                 |             |

## Network Update, from page 12

KPBS-FM, 89.5, in San Diego. Write to Gary May, KPBS-FM, 5200 Campanile Drive, SDSU, San Diego, CA 92182-5400.

WTUL-FM, 91.5, New Orleans. Write to the Public Affairs Director, WTUL-FM, Tulane University Center, New Orleans, LA 70118.

### Where to contact me

Write with your queries, or for a free copy of the *New Dimensions Network Guide*, a leaflet offering guidelines on how to help bring "New Dimensions" to a station near you.

You can pass on my name and number to stations if they would like a demo tape and some background information on our regular weekly program and our other series, such as "Deep Ecology for the 21st Century."

Send to: Jacqui Dunne, Director of Affiliate Services, New Dimensions Broadcast Network, 475 Gate Five Road, Suite #206, Sausalito, CA 94965. Telephone: (415) 332-0854.

cultural environment that was inconceivable ten or fifteen years ago. Then the Supreme Court ordered the divorce of the program producers from program distributors. Now, the three or four major conglomerates—Disney, Time-Warner, Rupert Murdoch, Capital Cities, ABC—are telling all the stories. The greatest and the most troubling part of this is that if all the stories are told—and stories include news as well as dramatic stories, news is basically oral stories—are told from one perspective, how can we have a democratic country? How can we have a democratic political choice? Most people are not aware how unique, how unusual, how basically undemocratic that kind of a system is. In France or Italy or England or Japan, they cannot imagine that we accept and call "free and democratic" a system in which there's a monopoly of perspectives.

You cannot have a political choice until and unless there are different perspectives that are given licenses, resources and subsidies to program their perspective. In the United States we still call ourselves democratic but have only the trappings of democracy—if you don't have a socialist party, a communist party, a fascist party, a religious party, and regional parties, you have no political diversity. In fact, you have no choice. The only choice we have is between the ins and the outs. And when we vote the outs to be in, they behave and legislate pretty much like those who were in before, so it's more a question of revolving chairs with the same people and the same groups. There is no political differentiation.

The reason why there is no significant political, ideological differentiation in our country is that different ideologies and perspectives are not being cultivated. This is ironic because the framers of the First Amendment to the American Constitution said, "Government shall not abridge freedom of press," in order to retain or cultivate a reasonable diversity of perspectives. That shield of the First Amendment is now claimed by a handful of monopolists who claim the freedom to communicate, which also means the freedom to suppress everything else.

Politicians and people in Congress are so beholden to the media, so dependent on media for re-election, that they are unable and unwilling to lay down any of the laws and rules that put any limit on media monopoly. We have been brainwashed into the notion of a free market that is an unregulated market. But an unregulated market is not a free market, an unregulated market is where the loudest voices can scream loud enough to push everybody else off. It's like a town meeting without a moderator. An unregulated marketplace leads to commercial monopoly and political dictatorship.

And now comes the so-called digital system. The digital system is a very flexible new system of communication of all kinds, from broadcasting to our computers. In another ten years, most of our computers will be obsolete. We'll all go to the digital system. This is already set in motion, and the FCC has given away the existing licenses for the digital system—which is potentially much more diverse and can accommodate many more diverse

(continued, page 28)

## George Gerbner, continued from page 27

voices—without any public discussion, without any special hearings on the issue, it has given away the licenses to the existing conglomerates, which will then go on digital.

*In this country we have the ironic situation that the govern ment can't be involved in media. We don't want to spend tax dollars to create public programming. Yet, in point of fact, our government has created the media with the way that they pass laws.*

Exactly. The media are created. The Federal Communications Commission operates on a set of laws which have been passed by Congress. So the idea that government should not regulate is ridiculous, because it is regulating. But it is regulating the wrong way. It's regulating it by prohibiting and permitting monopoly instead of providing an even playing field for a diversity of perspectives. This is a pervasiveness of the First Amendment, which was designed to protect freedom of speech and to create diversity. But now the First Amendment is used as a shield by monopoly interests to suppress diversity.

You can go to any other democratic country, and in one week, even in one day, you can see and hear many different perspectives in broadcasting, in movies, in newspapers. In some countries this is so important that, for example, in Scandinavian countries the government subsidizes opposition newspapers because they believe that you have to have a dialogue of opposition in order to give people a choice, in order to examine every issue from a variety of points of view. We have squeezed out independent voices instead of subsidizing them.

In Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan and many other countries, the total viewing time is divided about half-and-half between public television and commercial television. Public television in the United States has never been conceived as a true choice. Legislation has attempted that it exists on a very low budget, recently there was even talk about zoning it out, in that wild and really undemocratic discussion in Congress

In every other democratic country, public television is fully financed; it's fully subsidized, not in a hidden text like advertising, but subsidized directly by the government. In the United States, we're brainwashed to think that government control is somehow impoverishing. In fact, if you have any semblance of a democratic country, it's government control and government financing that guarantee diversity. The ironic backlash of the First Amendment is that we cannot have a media law. Any other democratic country has a media law, a law that allocates public airways to different parties, different religious and social groups, and says, "You're going to have such-and-such a frequency, or such-and-such amount of time that you can broadcast, as you see fit." We can never do that.

*What suggestions do you have as to what people might do to change the situation?*

Many people are frustrated and unhappy because they see the trends that we're talking about. And when we talk to them about the Cultural Environment Movement, an organization that provides an outlet for some action, they say, "Well, I've been concerned about these things, but what can I do?" It's a difficult question: What do you do when you're in the river with a strong tide going in one direction, and you are trying to swim against the tide, or at least trying to avoid being swept downstream like everyone else? If's hard, it requires resistance, action and organization, and that is what the Cultural Environment Movement is trying to do—first of all, to become conscious of this great river in which we all swim.

If we don't see the shores, and everybody is drifting or swimming with us, we don't see that we're going in any direction. We have to say, "Yes, we're going in a certain direction," and to say, "This river is not an act of nature, it's all artifact. It consists of streams." These are the streams that we create, that we tell, that we buy, that we sell. And they exist in public space. Yes, there are things that we can do about it, and

our responsibility as parents, as children, as citizens, is to become more active—not just to analyze but to organize, to try to take the public always back into public control. We in the Cultural Environment Movement are organizing a conference, in about a year from now, to try to call attention to this giveaway of our most precious public resource, the airways.

*I'd like you to describe what the Cultural Environment Movement is.*

The Cultural Environment Movement is a coalition of about 150 organizations in some fifty-two countries that is working for greater equity and greater diversity in media ownership, employment and representation. We think that it's a simple democratic idea, but it's very difficult to implement because it runs against the current trend toward monopolization. Essentially we are campaigning in the good old anti-trust tradition of the American public which, again, has been forgotten. What happened to the anti-trust department of the Department of Justice? It doesn't seem to be working; it doesn't seem to be calling any attention, let alone putting on any brakes, to the inconvertible monopolization of cultural life and of industrial life as well.

*And you are having a conference in 1999.*

Yes, it will be at Ohio University, and I invite listeners who are interested. Your readers may write or email us, so we can keep them informed, and extend invitations for this international conference. ☺

*This excerpt is taken from New Dimensions Tape #2703, "The Mythology of the Media with George Gerbner" (see the full description on page 11). You may write to George Gerbner at P.O. Box 61847, Philadelphia, PA 19104 / email: [gerbner@university.temple.edu](mailto:gerbner@university.temple.edu)*

**CHRISTMAS ORDERS**  
for timely delivery,  
order by  
December 11.



## Activist Note

THE OTHER AMERICA: THE FORGIVERS AND  
THE PEACEMAKERS

by Elise Boulding

For Panel on "Is America a Forgiving Place?" at Inaugural Conference, Toward a Deeper Understanding of Forgiveness, Center for Religion, Ethics, and Culture, College of the Holy Cross, September 15, 2001. The history of the traditions of nonviolence in America beginning with William Penn's Holy Experiment is discussed briefly and is related to the United Nations' declaration of a Decade of Education for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence. Current movements including the restorative justice movement and community-based mediation; dialogue; and nonviolence training and peace action, as well as the growing field of peace research and peace studies, are reviewed in light of their potential for further development of peace culture in the United States.

In spite of all the public rhetoric about the United States being the world's policeman, a corollary of the Manifest Destiny doctrine, in spite of the new drive to achieve mastery in space through an anti-ballistic missile defense system, and in spite of our commitment to keep order in our own society by being tougher on crime, there is another America with a long history of nonviolence and peacemaking, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This history goes back to William Penn's Holy Experiment in the colony of Pennsylvania in the last decades of the 1600s, which involved both Quaker settlers and Native Americans. This experiment has left traces in some of the wording of the United States Constitution. It might be said that from the beginning, the two traditions of the gentle Quakers and the judgmental Puritans were present but that the Puritan tradition has remained more visible. Although the willingness to use violence to right wrongs has been the more celebrated image, traditions of nonviolent problem solving and peaceful change strategies played a significant role in the American Revolution itself and have been alive and present in a continuing series of movements

PEACE & CHANGE, Vol. 28, No. 3, July 2003  
© 2003 Peace History Society and  
Peace and Justice Studies Association

over the past three centuries. These movements actively have resisted injustices and have created new ways of accomplishing social goals without harming persons, as Staughton Lynd painstakingly has documented in *Nonviolence in America* and Michael True has recorded vividly in *An Energy Field More Intense than War*.<sup>1</sup> Nonviolence was very visible in the abolitionist movement and in the long struggle against slavery and the racism that grew out of it. It was strong in draft resistance during the Civil War, strong in the history of the labor movement, and continues to be strong to this day in the civil rights movement and in the current struggle against the rule of global corporations.

How does nonviolence relate to forgiveness? Nonviolent direct action is reaching out in love to a perpetrator of injustice through an act of physical presence that affirms the possibility of relationship. This reaching out in love is a process of active forgiving that continues even if the perpetrator responds with physical force. Gandhi called it soul force, or *satyagraha*. It comes from deep within the human spirit as a result of intensive inner work on the part of the *satyagrahi*. Reading the account of the 2,500 Gandhi followers marching to the Dharasana salt deposits in India in protest against being refused access to their means of livelihood and falling by the hundreds as they were ruthlessly beaten by the police, with undeterred marchers stepping over bruised and bleeding bodies as they continued to their destination, one gets a glimpse of the intensity of the mental and spiritual discipline that makes this kind of witness possible. No one struck back at the police. And in the end, a new India was born.

Martin Luther King taught this same kind of powerful nonviolent protest, emphasizing over and over again that it was a reaching out to the aggressor with love. The ultimate goal of the freedom rides, of the protests against segregated facilities, and the variety of nonviolent direct-action strategies used in the movement was, said King, the creation of the beloved community. The beloved community could come about only by breaking the cycle of violent response to violence.

King's vision of the beloved community is part of a long and inspiring tradition in American history, a tradition almost invisible in standard histories. It begins in the lifeways of the original occupants of the continent, the Native Americans, and continues with the Quaker holy experiment and the Shaker followers of Mother Ann Lee who created their own holy experiment in the New World. These soon were followed by numerous intentional experimental living communities devoted to peace, loving kindness, equality, and a careful tending of the earth,

combined with spiritual attunement to the evolving human condition. From the late 1700s right up to the present, these intentional communities, founded by the hundreds in any given era, have been a significant part of the moral backbone of American society. Fortunately, we have Charles Nordhoff's study of over 70 successful communes founded in the first half of the 1800s, some of which are alive and well in the 21st century.<sup>2</sup> Another 50 or so socialist experiments started in the same period did not survive. But failures they were not because they, in fact, generated the industrial villages in the early stages of the industrial revolution that set standards for a sharing and caring village life, such as developed in Hopedale, Massachusetts.

These early intentional communities have contributed to the best in 20th-century American civic life. The 1995 *Communities Directory* documents communities formed in the depression years of the 1930s, World War II-era intentional communities formed by conscientious objectors and their families, the new age communities of the 1960s and 1970s, and the ecologically oriented communities of the 1980s. Many of these communities are alive and well today, and new ones are forming all the time (131 formed between 1990 and 1995).<sup>3</sup> These communities can be thought of as a key repository of problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills and practices of mutual aid, forgiveness, and reconciliation that contribute to the quality of American community life. They also help breed the activists who keep nonviolent social movements going.

There is another tradition of community building that resonates with Americans through the 200-year history of westward migration, as settler families had to help each other plow new soils and build new homes. It resonates in the stories of the boomtowns of the Rocky Mountain region, where I studied firsthand how the coal boom brought miners and their families to settle in what was for them the middle of nowhere. I saw how families banded together to build local schools, churches, and libraries; helped each other find food; and managed to provide for each other the woefully lacking human services they had been used to where they came from. The coal companies took no responsibility for any of this, and nonviolent protests came over time—but first came the caring community.

There is a deep longing for the recreation of community as we begin the new millennium and a greatly heightened sense of the diversity of lifeways and cultures of the 10,000 ethnies spread across the 189 states of the United Nations (UN), whose boundaries have been drawn largely by the West. In the United States, every city is a community

of migrant communities, diasporas whose homelands are far away, a microcosm of the world's diversity. Fortress America sees these communities as a source of crime and violence, but the reconciling America seeks mutually enriching relationships.

A resource the reconciling Americans only are beginning to discover lies right in our midst, in the programs being developed by the UN that we house so cavalierly and indifferently in the city of New York. The UN has many institutions and programs dealing with different world needs, but one category of program is designed by the UN General Assembly precisely to enable the peoples of each member country to come to understand and to cooperate with peoples of the other 188 countries. I refer to the UN General Assembly's practice of designating special years and decades to focus on particular problems arising from our diversity as a world family and to create opportunities for developing understanding, trust, and new relationships within that family. Here are some of the opportunities that beckon us in the new century: This is the UN Decade of Education for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2000–2010); we are also still in the UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The year 2001 was the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, the UN Year of Mobilization against Racism, and the UN Year of Volunteers. If you did not know about all these special decades and years, it is because fortress America ignores them and because reconciling America is not well informed about them yet. A new movement to support the UN is growing, however, and opportunities to open doors into each other's stocks of wisdom about how to live on the planet still exist. Each people needs both to forgive and be forgiven, and the UN can provide space where groups can gather in forgiveness dialogues.

One of our country's major tasks is seeking forgiveness. Since America has no Truth Commission to deal with wrongs committed in the past (as 16 or more other countries now have), we depend on the small, courageous groups that work for reparations for slavery, for land taken from the Native Americans, for the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and for participating more recently in the bombing in Iraq and Kosovo.

That seeking of forgiveness prepares the way for a new role for the United States in the family of nations, one foreshadowed by our first president, George Washington, when he spoke of the need to establish a National Peace Academy to train citizens in the skills of resolving conflicts with other states without going to war. That new role for the



United States also is being prepared by groups such as the Institute of Multitrack Diplomacy and in seminars at the United States Institute of Peace in preventive diplomacy. The Institute of Peace, established by Congress in 1981 to further the development and use of peace-related knowledge and skills at all levels of society, is an important public expression of the possibilities of role change for the United States in international affairs. Current efforts in Congress to pass legislation creating a United States Department of Peace and a Secretary of Peace are other such expressions.

Movements to strengthen the traditions of nonviolence, peacemaking, and reconciliation in the United States are legion. The restorative justice movement—to replace judgmental retributive penal systems with healing circles that meet the needs of victim, victimizer, and community and involve restitution and reconciliation—is based on healing circle traditions among indigenous peoples around the world. Currently it is having positive effects in many communities in the United States.

Realjustice is a program within the movement that uses a healing circle approach called “conferencing” in every sector of local communities from schools to workplaces—wherever there is conflict and violence. Nonviolence training for police departments is a rapidly growing development, as it is realized that police need special training for the great variety of potentially violent situations they confront in their daily work.

A related community mediation movement now has a national organization composed of local mediation associations from 1,000 towns and cities across the United States. School programs in peer mediation and nonviolent peacemaking training and school-neighborhood conferencing, along with nonviolence training for teachers, now can be found in many states. Hope in the Cities is a program of reconciliation and relationship building in urban areas of violence that has roots in a remarkable forgiveness and reconciliation movement, begun by the American Frank Buchman in the 1940s and known as Moral Rearmament. It maintains a center for reconciliation of enemies in Caux, Switzerland.

As cities become more violent, faith communities become key actors in bringing together warring gangs and other groups that are prone to inflict violence on one another. They have been critical especially in communities torn apart by church burnings in the North and South. Partnering programs create fellowship among churches with very different social class and ethnic backgrounds, and interfaith programs help Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish congregations understand one another across sometimes very wide chasms between belief systems. While

teachings of forgiveness and reconciliation exist in every faith, this is not recognized widely. Those shared teachings become a very important resource in dealing with community violence, and especially with the ugly face of racism.

A significant way to create space for reconciliation is the new movement to hold “public conversations”—what Harold Saunders calls “a public peace process”—a sustained and much-needed dialogue to transform conflicts in the absence of the traditional old-style town meetings. A number of foundations now support public dialogue programs, enabling participants to gain new understandings of the complexities of the communities in which they live by listening to views they have not heard before. Another special communication space is created by street newspapers that have sprung up in many American cities in recent decades, giving voice to the homeless, the abused, the unemployed, and the mentally ill of all ages and stages of life. Their surprisingly wide readership makes new relationships among haves and have-nots possible.

An unusual way to create community space for reconciliation in America comes out of the peace team movement, originating in Gandhi's *shanti sena*, or nonviolent peace armies. The movement trains cadres of young and not-so-young people who can enter communities where communal violence is going on in order to create safe spaces for those in danger of attack and at best to create conditions for mutual listening among opposing groups. Peace teams, sometimes called peace brigades, create zones of peace. A zone of peace is an area in which parties to conflict mutually agree that no weapons will be allowed and that no violence will take place. It becomes the space where peacemaking can go forward. International peace teams go where they are needed around the world.

Another related approach is found in the Alternatives to Violence (AVP) organization, which gives training in nonviolence and community building to thousands of participants in prisons, communities, and schools in the United States and around the world. Its work of social transformation in settings of violence has been sufficiently visible and powerful to make AVP one of the most rapidly growing programs in the peace movement.

Other clusters of groups that foster nonviolence, dialogue, and peacemaking include the peace research/peace studies movement and the peace action movement. Peace researchers study the dynamics of how conflicts are handled, and especially the structures and dynamics of peaceful conflict resolution and problem solving processes, using the

tool of the social sciences. Peace studies programs pass on this knowledge to the student generation. Professional peace practitioners foster dialogue and problem solving among actual groups in conflict. American researchers and practitioners are part of an active international network of colleagues. Practitioners generally operate by finding and supporting local peacemakers who know local ways and by empowering them with their professional skills. There are many peace and justice action organizations in the United States—some more than a century old, such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and new ones forming all the time. Peace activists are found in a great variety of organizations working on the many problems of social, economic, and racial injustice in American society and for environmental protection. There are now hundreds of websites linking individuals and groups, and the internet plays a special role in creating a cyberspace where experiences can be shared and translated into new forms of local action. They can assist, but not replace, face-to-face work of reconstruction and reconciliation. New children's organizations, formed and led by teenagers, are developing in many different settings from street gangs to schools and churches. Those best known in the peace community range from Kidspace, an all-American group, to international networks of young people such as Peace Child, the Voice of Children, and the Taizé Youth Assembly.

Women's peace and nonviolence movements, such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Women's Action for New Directions and the Women Strike for Peace group most active in the 1960s and 1970s have been a very important part of American peace culture. Although the high rate of violence against women continues to be a major problem on every continent, including North America and especially the United States, women's listening and mediation skills have become increasingly evident both to researchers and policymakers as women's groups currently are playing leading roles in local conflict areas around the world. The nongovernmental organization (NGO) International Alert has presented documentation of this largely hidden reality, conducted by an international network of women's groups, to the UN Security Council. This has resulted in the Security Council's recent mandate that women henceforth must be key participants in all UN peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. This opens the way for long-term changes in the use of force in conflict situations.

The role of the men's movement in American peace culture, a movement that seeks a gentler and more relationship-oriented model for masculinity, becomes an important complement to the women's movement.

NOMAS, the National Organization for Men against Sexism, and MENS'UFF, a national resource center for men, are the most visible of a number of new men's groups, national and local.

Another dimension of peace work in American society lies in the arts. Poets, musicians, artists, and dramatists have sung, danced, painted, sculpted, and otherwise created images and sounds of a world at peace. Their work in community centers where violence rages in the streets is testimony to the capacity of the arts to reach into the heart of violence and to find love and forgiveness.

The different movements and types of activities I have been describing are some of the elements of what could be called the American culture of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In many ways it is distinctively American, but it is also interconnected closely with peace cultures in the global civil society. How shall we define peace culture? I will define it as a culture that promotes peaceable diversity; that gives space both for social bonding and individual autonomy and uniqueness; that includes patterns of belief, values, and behavior that promote mutual caring and sharing among humans and nature.

Among futurists like myself there is a sense that there may be positive developments ahead. While technologically oriented futurists imagine a future where humans are served and are protected by robots and missile shields, humanistic futurists are imagining more fully developed, more sensitive and creative human beings living in a more peaceful, earth-friendly world. A recent book describes the phenomenon of "cultural creatives," spiritually centered activists committed to non-violence and seeking a less materialistic way of life.<sup>4</sup> They are said to be present now among us in significant numbers.

In a sense, all the groups I have been describing are cultural creatives, making space in a relatively violent world for new lifeways and new relationships. Because so much harm has been done, there is need for so much forgiveness, but forgiveness needs space. Much violence stems from social and physical crowding—the crowding of colonialism, the crowding of slavery, the crowding of armies and of global corporations. But social space can be created wherever there is crowding, by spiritually centered persons with the skills of relationship building. That space makes it possible to see the "other" as a fellow human being, and to begin to feel the stirrings of the basic human urge to bond with others, which is so essential to our survival as a species. The stirrings of the bonding urge make possible a slow, difficult process of moving to mutual forgiveness. As has certainly been said, we cannot forgive others



without first forgiving ourselves, a process that requires inner space in each of us. But forgiveness not only needs but also creates space—space for each of us to become what is uniquely in us to become.

Because cultures of war and violence are so visible to us in our history books and in our media, it is easy to forget that the longing for peaceable lifeways and the social movements to create those lifeways are as old as human history. Every people, every society, has its own traditions of peacemaking that need to be made visible. There is a new effort in this country to make the American tradition of nonviolence and peacemaking publicly visible, as the publications I have referred to testify. The various groups I have described are all part of that new effort. I would like to close by quoting a favorite saying of Kenneth Boulding: "What exists is possible." All the creation of social space for forgiveness and reconciliation that is going on today in this country, and the new social bonding that arises from it, tells us that peaceableness exists in the United States, and therefore, a peaceful, nonviolent, forgiving American society is possible.

#### NOTES

1. Staughton Lynd, *Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); Michael True, *An Energy Field More Intense than War: The Nonviolent Tradition and American Literature* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995).
2. Charles Nordhoff, *The Communitist Societies of the U.S.* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966, 1875).
3. Fellowship for International Community, *Communities Directory: A Guide to Cooperative Living* (Langley, WA, 1995).
4. Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, *The Cultural Creatives* (New York: Random House, 2000).

#### Book Reviews

Jay E. Austin and Carl E. Bruch, eds. *The Environmental Consequences of War: Legal, Economic, and Scientific Perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

This book boldly forces the pace of development of a field of environmental studies that hitherto has existed only in fragments and largely by implication. It is expansive as well as bold: Running to nearly 700 pages, *The Environmental Consequences of War* includes no fewer than 25 separate contributions. These are the proceedings of the First International Conference on Addressing Environmental Consequences of War held at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., in June 1998.

The subject of the book is so arresting because it is an apparent oxymoron: How can one account for environmental care, or expect this of the protagonists, in the extreme condition of war? This collection has a seeming "credibility problem." Yet in practice many people already take the environmental consequences of warfare very seriously, their consciousness raised by the Vietnam War and the Gulf War. Some institutions have acted already. The American armed forces, to take one case, already have codes of environmental behavior in place (this is analyzed in one of the essays). States are making legal claims, such as the government of Yugoslavia taking out a lawsuit over the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing of the Pancevo oil refinery during the Kosovo campaign. One may question the seriousness of any of these actions, but when the environmental consequences of warfare already have entered into the discourse of all sides in some conflicts, the challenge is to systematize this behavior. The "rules of war" allegedly are guided by humanitarianism, but can this be superseded by environmentalism?

Conceptually, the study must start almost from a standing stop. The 1998 conference was not quite the first on the theme as, during the late 1980s, Arthur Westing, one of the contributors here, hosted a conference on "Cultural Norms, War, and the Environment." Nevertheless, particularly in the legal section of the book, the tentative state of the field is clear. There is a very meager existing body of law that even is

A quote from Marija Gimbutas in  
M. Nagler, America Without Violence  
(Island, 1902).

Finally, there are a sizable number of technologically primitive communities that represent, as nearly as we can tell, life as it was lived by groups of *Homo sapiens* before the development of settled agriculture.

Recent archeological discoveries have shown that this way of life, too, was often far more peaceful than our own. At an important site called Koster in the lower Illinois valley, the early Indians apparently "came and went . . . over a span of more than nine thousand years without any sign of cataclysm or replacement of local inhabitants through annihilation." This first site on the American continent where a record of such continuous habitation could be found bears witness to a simple gathering-and-hunting existence unmarred by violent calamity for 500 generations.

Even the new economy of settled agriculture, which is often cited as a precursor of war, did not always lead to war. For literally thousands of years, physically modern peoples inhabited the steppes of Europe and western Asia in stable and (by later standards) small agricultural communities. These "Old European" peoples were matrilineal, it seems, and lived in egalitarian communities without furnishing elaborate burials for a royal or military elite: In fact, their houses and lands have not yielded one artifact that has to be classified as a weapon, though there are examples of hauntingly beautiful pottery and other manufactures. We find no sign of a defensive wall around the settlements. It was not until the fifth millennium B.C. that these peoples began to be gradually overrun by successive waves of Kurgan (barrow) peoples who had domesticated the horse and were pushing westward in search of pastures and living space for their growing populations. It is thought that these newcomers were our cultural ancestors, the Indo-Europeans:

The Old European and Kurgan cultures were the antithesis of one another. One economy based on farming, the other on stock breeding and grazing, produced two contrasting ideologies. The Old European belief system focused on the agricultural cycle of birth, death, and regeneration, embodied in the feminine principle, a Mother Creatrix. The Kurgan Ideology . . . exalted virile, heroic warrior gods of the shining and thunderous sky. Weapons are nonexistent in Old European imagery; whereas the dagger and battle-axe are dominant symbols of the Kurgans, who like all historically known Indo-Europeans, glorified the lethal power of the sharp blade.

In the course of 3,000 to 4,000 years the new arrivals relentlessly imposed their "virile" ideology throughout this vast territory by conquest or cultural assimilation—even as they were to do millennia later in North America. Yet in other parts of the world, a number of peaceable communities have survived to modern times, enabling us to form a better impression of their earlier life than we could from the archeological record alone.