

*In the early thirties, a young Indian writer, Mulkras Anand, inspired by conversations with his friends in the Bloomsbury group (including Virginia Woolf, EM Forster, John Maynard Keynes & other London intellectuals, who went on to deeply influence literature, aesthetics, criticism, and economics) had an occasion to talk to Mahatma Gandhi. He documented this dialogue in a Marg magazine issue on "The forgotten Arts of India", in 1969 -*

One of our first talks began when I asked the Mahatma whether he had read the books on art of John Ruskin, whose Unto this Last - he admired so much. He said 'No' - he had not been able to get hold of all of this philosopher's books. Anyhow, his own service of the people from day to day had prevented him from reading extensively about Art. But he said he had tried to grasp the essential points of Ruskin's attitude. And he found that in the matter of Art 'he was an advanced European and spoke for the middle classes'. Whereas in his social tracts such as - Unto, this Last - he had gone further and advocated equal value for work of a weaver, a lawyer, a barber, a manufacturer, a peasant, a skilled or an unskilled workman. Gandhi mentioned as an aside that though he had heard of Tolstoy's book - What is Art? - he had not read it. But, from hearsay, he preferred the views of Tolstoy, who had said that there can be no art today, unless it is an art produced by the peoples.

I said that, in the matter of creative art, I was on the side of Ruskin against Tolstoy, because the contribution of the middle classes to the making of symphonic music, modern city architecture, painting and sculpture was very considerable.

Gandhi said, with some feeling, that not many people could understand these intricate arts of the West of the machine civilisation. And he made a joke at my expense: "You still think as you thought in Bloomsbury. Remember, you are in Sabarmati Ashram".

I confessed that I liked to hear a Beethoven symphony even if I couldn't understand it completely. And that I like the paintings of Picasso. I added that quite a few painters and sculptors of Europe had taken their inspiration from the tribal arts of Africa.

"That is my point." Gandhi said. "Why do these painters return for inspiration to the tribal arts of Africa?"

"Not because it is people's art (because where the formula of people's art is applied, art becomes merely photography) but, because such images are simple and people immediately share them."

Gandhi insisted that I did not understand the issue clearly in spite of my sophistication. And he began to put forward his thesis :

"As you know, the middle classes of Europe destroyed the ancient village and crafts society and brought in the machine civilisation. The town took the place of the village. The bourgeois ended all human relations. They side-tracked religion. They destroyed the family and reduced the sentimental ties to money ties. They despised the folk arts and produced toys in factories. In fact, modern industry forced the middle classes to annex the whole world to their political Empires and to encourage little middle classes everywhere to do the same as in their own countries, as they had done at home. The cheap machine-made goods were easily saleable but created demands for new gadgets. Self-sufficient village society, based on the religion that everything has a soul, vanished. Thus the imperialists exploited the whole of mankind. And now there are revolutions going on, social unrest and increasing uncertainty. We ourselves are asking the British to go away."

"Then you prefer the old patriarchal village society which had become moribund. Do you conceive a return to the feudal states? How can you reject the machine altogether?"

Gandhi was patient in the face of my impetuous questions. After a pause he said: "**I am not against the use of the machine, but I prefer to rebuild our villages from below and absorb as many machines as may help human beings. I don't want people to become like nuts and bolts in a factory. I want the connection of the hand and the heart to remain in the making of things. I believe man remains more human if he works with his hands, knows how to grow food and can be more or less self-sufficient. In this way, we can avoid the sickness of the so-called civilised man in the West. He works long hours in the factory. He is isolated from his family. And he has recourse to bad sex books, films and theatres for his emotional gratification. He earns good money, but he spends the best part of it or more than he earns. And the advertisements in newspapers make him want more gadgets. The cycle never ends. He is a slave to the hire-purchase system. And there is no art in such a world except the art of the few. As far as I know, Ruskin praised the cathedrals of Europe more than modern art. And if Tolstoy's views have led to preference for photography on the one hand, they might also lead to faith in people's gift for creating fairy tales in cloth on the other.**"

I was not convinced about the prophecy and remained silent.

Gandhi said: " Our people have inherited great talents. Our way of life is imbued with the sense of beauty. Our women paint on the walls naturally. Our craftsmen know how to make houses. They make with their hands everything that we have in India. If we have faith in them, they can perform miracles."

I realised that as a westernised Indian, I had not returned to the people. I was not sure whether Gandhi had considered the role of materials in the making of things in the modern world. But I was certain that he had sensed **the instinctive vitality of the hands and hearts of the people**. And that he wanted an integral art from below rather than an art imposed from the top by a few individualist artists cut off from the people. His views were simple and direct, and seemed to show a grasp of **the motivations behind human creativity**.

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## ANNEXURE B

### Gandhi on Cities & Villages

I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have no live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores (Tens of millions) of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth.

I hold that without truth and non-violence, there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realize truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the Charkha (hand spinning wheel) and all that the Charkha connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom.

The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control, he cannot save himself. After all, the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean.

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There are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village civilization and the city civilization are totally different things. One depended on machinery and industrialization, the other rested on handicraft. We have given preference to the latter.

After all, this industrialization and large-scale production was only of comparatively recent growth. We do not know how far it has contributed to our development and happiness, but we know this much that it has brought in its wake recent world wars. This second world war is not still over and even before it comes to an end we are hearing of a third world war. Our country was never so unhappy and miserable as it is at present. In the cities people may be getting big profits and good wages but all that has become possible by sucking the blood of the villages. It is the city man who is responsible for war all over the world, never the villager. (6-12-1944)

I regard the growth of cities as an evil thing, unfortunate for mankind and the world, unfortunate for England and certainly unfortunate for India. The British have exploited India through its cities. The latter have exploited the villages. The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the villages. (23-6-1946)

The half a dozen modern cities are an excrescence and serve at the present moment the evil purpose of draining the life-blood of the villages . . . The cities with their insolent torts are a constant menace to the life and liberty of the villagers. (17-3-1927)

We may not be deceived by the wealth to be seen in the cities of India. It comes from the blood of the poorest. (30-6-1934) You cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. Western nations are today groaning under the heel of the monster god of materialism. They measure their progress in £.s.d. American wealth has become the standard. She is the envy of the other nations. I have heard many of our country men say that we will gain American wealth. But avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure. We cannot be 'wise, temperate and furious' in a moment. (28-5-1946)

The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore, we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others."

A certain degree of a physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above a certain level, it becomes a hindrance instead of help. (29-8-1936)

Any country that exposes itself to unlimited foreign competition can be reduced to starvation and therefore, subjection if the

foreigners desire it.

This displacement of village labour is impoverishing the villagers and enriching the moneyed men. If the process continues sufficiently long, the villagers will be destroyed without any further effort. No Chengis Khan could devise a more ingenious or more profitable method of destroying these villages. (20-6-1936)

What India needs is not the concentration of capital in a few hands, but its distribution so as to be within easy reach of the 700000 of villages that make this continent 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad. (23-3-1921)

Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk to foreign invasion than urbanized India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces. (30-12-1939)

Under my scheme, nothing will be allowed to be produced by cities which can be equally well produced by the villages. The proper function of cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products. (28-1-1939)

As a matter of fact a villager could manufacture of himself sufficient cloth cheaper than mills if he did not count the value of his labour. (28-5-1925)

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. (28-7-1946)

Economic equality is the master key to non-violent independence.

A nonviolent system of government is clearly impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.  
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Everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. This ideal can be universally utilized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses.

Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but in other parts of the world too. (15-11-1928)

The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.

I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition, not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. (27-2-1937)

## **GANDHI on MASS- PRODUCTION**

Question : "Do you feel, Gandhiji, that mass production will raise the standard of living of the people?"

"I do not believe in it at all, there is a tremendous fallacy behind Mr. Ford's reasoning. Without simultaneous distribution on an equally mass scale, the production can result only in a great world tragedy."

"Mass production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer. If mass production were in itself a virtue, it should be capable of indefinite multiplication. But it can be definitely shown that mass production carries within it its own limitations. If all countries adopted the system of mass production, there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass production must then come to a stop."

"I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crises. If there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation."

"Because while it is true that you will be producing things in innumerable areas, the power will come from one selected centre. That, in the end, I think, would be found to be disastrous. It would place such a limitless power in one human agency that I dread to think of it. The consequence, for instance, of such a control of power would be that I would be dependent on that power for light, water, even air, and so on. That, I think, would be terrible."

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Question : Have you any idea as to what Europe and America should do to solve the problem presented by too much machinery?

"You see," answered Gandhiji, "that these nations are able to exploit the so-called weaker or unorganized races of the world. Once those races gain this elementary knowledge and decide that they are no more going to be exploited, they will simply be satisfied with what they can provide themselves. Mass production, then, at least where the vital necessities are concerned, will disappear."

Question : "As a world organization?"

"Yes."

Question : "But even these races will require more and more goods as their needs multiply."

"They will then produce for themselves. And when that happens, mass production, in the technical sense in which it is understood in the West, ceases."

Question : "You mean to say it becomes local?"

"When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears."

Question : If distribution could be equalized, would not mass production be sterilized of its evils?

"No," The evil is inherent in the system. Distribution can be equalized when production is localized; in other words, when the distribution is simultaneous with production. Distribution will never be equal so long as you want to tap other markets of the world to dispose of your goods."

Question : Then, you do not envisage mass production as an ideal future of India ?

"Oh yes, mass production, certainly," "But not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning wheel is that. It is mass production, but mass production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale? But I quite understand that your 'mass production' is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions." Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms-hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?"

Concentration of production ad infinitum can only lead to unemployment.

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Mass production through power-driven machinery, even when State-owned, will be of no avail. (16-5-1936)

## **GANDHI on INDUSTRIALIZATION**

Industrialization is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors . . . India, when it begins to exploit other nations-as it must if it becomes industrialized-will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world.

The future of industrialism is dark.

In the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. (12-11-1931)

I do not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically, in the face of a world armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstance is a question open to the doubt of a septic. The answer is straight and simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making. (1-9-1946)

God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny

island kingdom (England) is to day keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts. (20-12-1928)

Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers. Therefore, we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others. (29-8-1936)

My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them. (29-9-1940)

I have the conviction within me that when all these achievements of the machine age will have disappeared, these our handicrafts will remain; when all exploitations will have ceased, service and honest labour will remain. It is because this faith sustains me that I am going on with my work. (30-11-1935)

What is industrialism but a control of the majority by a small minority? There is nothing attractive about it nor is there anything inevitable in it. (6-8-1825)

I claim that to industrialize India in the same sense as Europe is to attempt the impossible. India is one of the few nations of the earth which have witnessed the fall of many civilizations, herself remaining scatheless. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problem that faces her millions has never been so bright as it is today. (6-8-1925)

To make India like England and America is to find some other races and places of the earth for exploitation. So far it appears that the Western nations have divided all the known races outside Europe for exploitation and that there are no new worlds to discover. What can be the fate of India trying to ape the West? Indeed the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation. If they who are suffering from the disease are unable to find a remedy to correct evils, how shall we, mere novices, be able to avoid them? (7-10-1926)

I know that man cannot live without industry. Therefore, I cannot be opposed to industrialization. But I have a great concern about introducing machine industry. The machine produces much too fast, and brings with it a sort of economic system which I cannot grasp. I do not want to accept something when I see its evil effects which outweigh whatever good it brings with it.

We want industry, let us become industrious. Let us become more self-dependent, then we will not follow the other people's lead so much. We shall introduce machines if and when we need them. Once we shall have shaped our life on non-violence, we shall know how to control the machine.

## **GANDHI on MACHINERY**

Question : 'Are you against all machinery?'

My answer is emphatically, 'No'. But, I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottages, I should welcome. (17-6-1926)

What I object to, is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour', till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.

Question : 'Then you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today.'

I would unhesitatingly say 'yes'; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery, instead of becoming a hindrance, will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation.

Question : 'When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.'

It might have to go but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the Sewing Machine in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.

Question : 'But in that case there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.'

Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. This mad rush for wealth must cease. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian consideration, and not greed, the motive. Replace greed by love and everything, will come right. (13-11-1924)

Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type.

Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour.

I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand-labour by power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes. (5-11-1925)

Man is the most wonderful machine in creation. It can neither be duplicated nor copied. (25-08-1946)

I hold that the machinery method is harmful when the same thing can be done easily by millions of hands not otherwise occupied. It is any day better and safer for the millions, spread in the seven hundred thousand villages of India scattered over an area nineteen hundred miles long and fifteen hundred broad that they manufacture their clothing in their own villages even as they prepare their own food. These villages cannot retain the freedom they have enjoyed from time immemorial, if they do not control the production of prime necessities of life. Western observers hastily argue from Western conditions that what may be true of them must be true of India where conditions are different in so many material respects. Application of the laws of economics must vary with varying conditions.

If the craze for the machinery method continues, it is highly likely that a time will come when we shall be so incapacitated and weak but we shall begin to curse ourselves for having forgotten the use of the living machines given to us by God. Millions cannot keep fit by games and athletics. And why should they exchange the useful, productive and expensive games and exercises?

When Indian becomes self-supporting, self-reliant and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any power in the West or the East, and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armament. Her internal economy will be India's strongest bulwark against aggression. (2-7-1931)

The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths. (14-9-1935)

I am not fighting machinery as such, but the madness of thinking that machinery saves labour. Men 'save' labour until thousands of them are without work and die of hunger on the streets. I want to secure employment and livelihood not only to part of the human race, but for all. I will not have the enrichment of a few at the expense of the community. At present, the machine is helping a small minority to live on the exploitation of the masses. The motive force of this minority is not humanity and love of their kind, but greed and avarice. This state of things I am attacking with all my might. What is the cause of the present chaos? It is exploitation. I will not say, of the weaker nations by the stronger, but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others. In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know. (22-10-1931)

Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery, there are large cities; and where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways; and there only does one see electric light. Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. I remember that when in a European town there was scarcity of money, the receipts of the tramway company, of the lawyers and of the doctors went down, and the people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery. (1908)

Do I want to put back the hand of the clock of progress? Do I want to replace the mills by hand-spinning and hand-weaving? Do I want to replace the railway by the country cart? Do I want to destroy machinery altogether? These questions have been asked by some journalists and public men. My answer is: I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. But I have no design upon machinery as such. (19-1-1921)

If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures.

I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphyxiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people. I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many. (22-6-1935)

I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration. (17-12-1925)

Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India. . . .

Question : "You are opposed to machinery in general. That is not true, I believe."

"That is quite wrong," answered Gandhiji. "The spinning wheel is also machinery. It is a beautiful work of art. It typifies the use of machinery on a universal scale. It is machinery reduced to the terms of the masses."

Question : "So you are opposed to machinery, only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands

of the few."

"You are right. I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me. That is all." (2-11-1934)

If the machinery craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land. (1908)

## **GANDHI on WESTERN CIVILIZATION**

I wholeheartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites, and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic. (17-3-1927)

A time is coming when those, who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants, vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say: 'What have we done?' Civilizations have come and gone, and in spite of all our vaunted progress I am tempted to ask again and again 'To what purpose?' Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin, has said the same thing. Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries, he has said, had not added one inch to the moral height of mankind. So said a dreamer and visionary if you will - Tolstoy. So said Jesus, and Buddha, and Muhammad, whose religion is being denied and falsified in my own country today. (8-12-1927)

The fact is that this industrial civilization is a disease because it is all evil. Let us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships or telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. We must not suffer exploitation for the sake of steamships and telegraphs. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. . . . India has withstood the onslaughts of other civilizations because she has stood firm on her own ground. Not that she has not made changes. But the changes she has made have promoted her growth. To change to industrialism is to court disaster. . . . Our concern is, therefore, to destroy industrialism at any cost. The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. . . . (7-10-1926)

India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which she shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not therefore lazily and helplessly say, 'I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world. (7-10-1926)

European civilization is no doubt suited for the Europeans, but it will mean ruin for India, if we endeavour to copy it. This is not to say that we may not adopt and assimilate whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us, as it does not also mean that even the Europeans will not have to part with whatever evil might have crept into it. The incessant search for material comforts and their multiplication is such an evil; and I make bold to say that the Europeans themselves will have to remodel their outlook, if they are not to perish under the weight of the comforts to which they are becoming slaves. It may be that my reading is wrong, but I know that for India to run after the Golden Fleece is to court certain death. Let us engrave on our hearts the motto of a Western philosopher, 'Plain living and high thinking'. (30-4-1931)

Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for services. (1935)

Democracy of the West is, in my opinion, only so-called. It has germs in it, certainly, of the true type. But it can only come when all violence is eschewed and malpractices disappear. The two go hand in hand. Indeed, malpractice is a species of violence. If India is to evolve the true type, there should be no compromise with violence or untruth. (3-9-1938)

There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications. Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practiced by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals. (12-11-1938)

I feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government. . . .

Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India. The same remedy is, therefore, likely to be applicable. Shorn of all camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe is sustained by violence.