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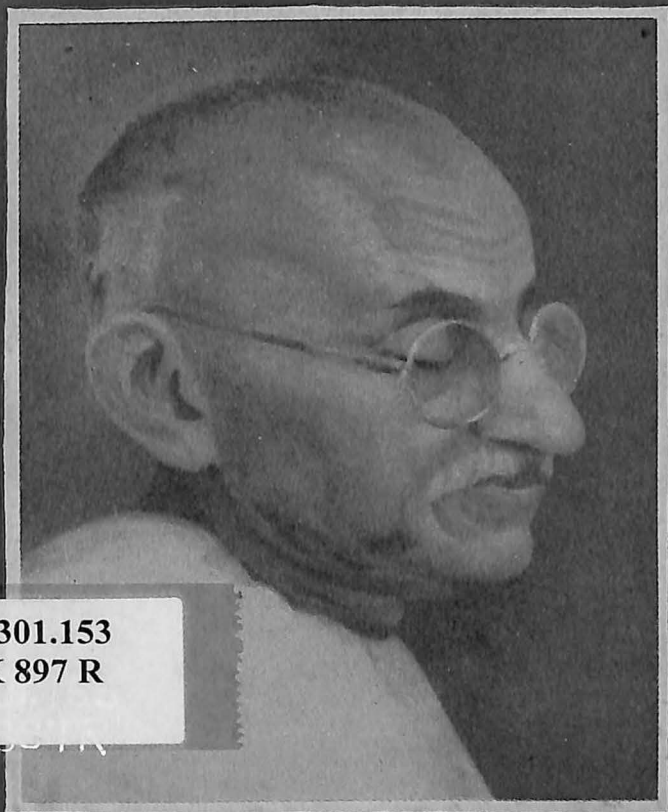


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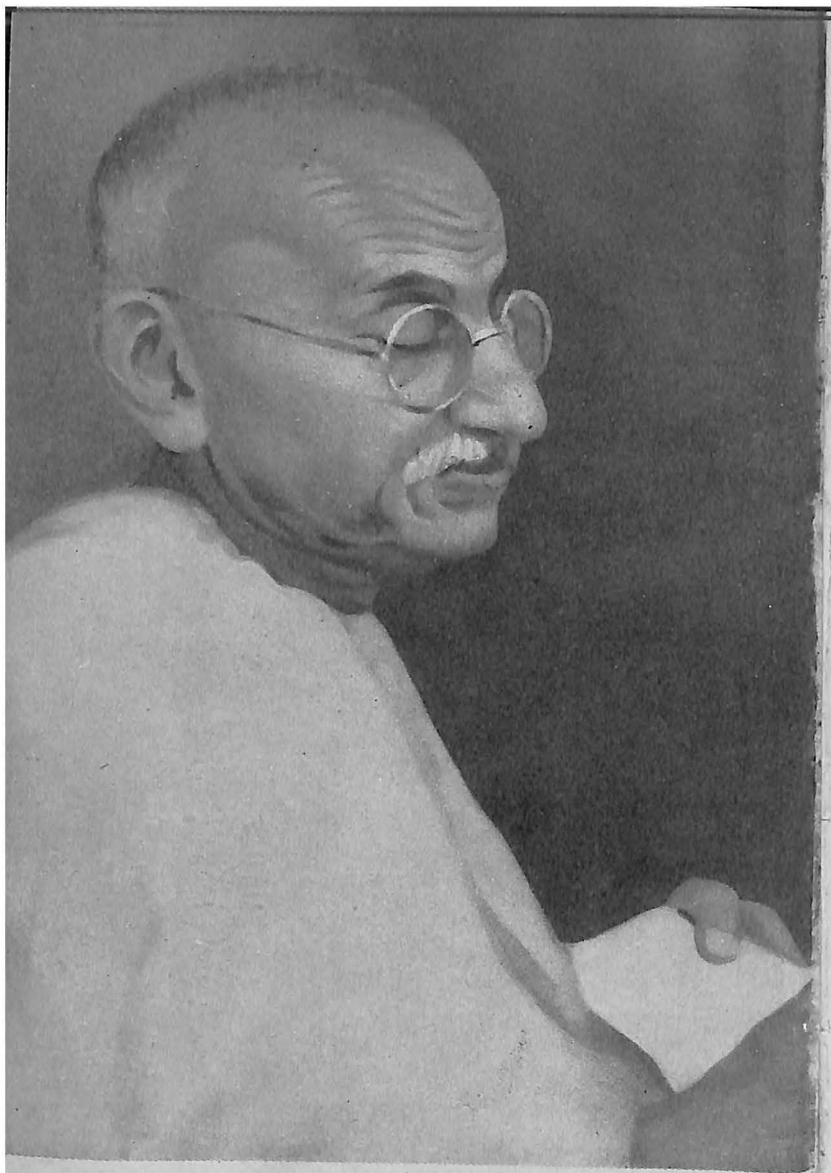
REFLECTIONS ON

THE GANDHIAN REVOLUTION



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Y. G. Krishnamurti



MAHATMA GANDHI

From the painting by
Miss Angela Trindade

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THE GANDHIAN
REVOLUTION

By
Y. G. KRISHNAMURTI



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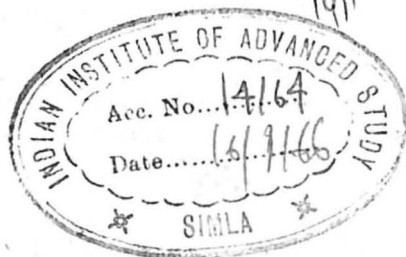


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“ When the question is heard whether liberty will enjoy what is known as the future, the answer must be that it has something better still ; it has eternity. And today too, notwithstanding the coldness and the contempt and the scorn that liberty meets, it is in so many of our institutions and customs and our spiritual attitudes, and operates beneficently within them.”

Croce.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This brochure is no grammar of obedience. Nor is it a summons to a heroic death. I have tried to lay down principles that would avert the fatal crisis that faces our civilized living. It is a search for fundamentals.

The critics might say that this is a pretentious work, a parrot-noise. I pray the reader should try to understand before he labels or libels me. I am discussing here whether our nation, my critics and I with them, should realise our better creative nature or prepare the way for national suicide.

My best thanks are due to Professor S. Srikantha Sastri for his unhesitating and helpful criticism. I owe the stimulus to this re-thinking to my valued friends Mr. Gulam Hussein Sonavala, Mr. C. L. Randery and Mr. B. J. Mody. Mrs. Mani Sahukar has always urged me to write in a non-technical language. I hope my bad logic and good feeling will appeal to many intelligent women.

My most cordial thanks are due to Miss Angela Trindade for giving me permission to reproduce her admirable portrait of the Mahatma.

I am indebted to Mr. M. K. Vora, who has enabled me to offer this brochure to the great debate.

Y. G.

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PREFACE

Servitude is created. Freedom is eternal. Long years of slavery destroy the will to good. But it is a part of God's design that man should cross thresholds from serfdom to freedom.

This transition is determined by the thoughts and feelings which move the mass. New societies are made by men who remake themselves. When man is in the grip of a new emotion he is fixed in a shape of mind which sees the truth and certainty of freedom. This is the great hour, the hour of liberation.

The ideals of a slave are mutilated. But his truths remain firm in his soul. They last the lifetime of the earth and pass into the eternity. They create the cast of mind which dissents. Men of kindred mind are the abettors of revivals and revolutions. This active minority has the truth of dissent. The history of a revolution is the story of a minority's dissent.

Men who lack this spirit of dissent are neither complete nor alive. Their activities are something else besides creative. This dissent exalts man's soul, flushes his face and gives him power to answer a

challenge in dream. During seasons of trial, this spirit rises to transcendent efforts.

The sway of the leader will be potent on such a mind. Social barriers afflict him like wounds. Conversion is his social weapon. His response is not rehearsed but spontaneous. He seeks peace with passion, freedom with honour and truth with steadfastness. To him revolution is illumination. The true Gandhian is such a type.

The Gandhian Revolution is an optimistic and ethical current which sweeps away the ideologies and instruments which range society against man, tyranny against freedom and repressions against life. Its wish to make spiritual values and not the exploiting tendencies the master has driven the children of Hindustan to seek freedom in passion, in love and in agony. They renew their pledge in blood.

Just on the verge of a crowning victory this human uprush seems losing its directing ideal. Instead of aiming at a progressive solidarity its chosen leader is clutching at a readymade formula based on stale scraps of fossilised ideas.

The voice of reason is drowned by the bawling of the Red Flag, the yell of the stunt press and the organised prohibitions of the partymen. This issue cannot be shouted down. It has caused in

many little opaque heads insomnia. Thank Heaven ! our minds are not yet clenched.

Sham leaft-wing phrases are bandied. Gags like ' self-determination is not vivisection ' are followed. One ventriloquist says that once the Muslims join the struggle, the discords will be sand-papered and Pakistan will only become bickering in the working team.

The communal formula is either excessively original or excessively eccentric. It is original as pseudo-political baby talk. It is eccentric as it is a temptation to self-deception. Instead of trying to broaden and purify the national sentiment it makes selfishness a virtue. The individual is asked to lose an old certainty to gain a new conviction. It reflects the confusion of the time, its moral weariness and its cynical indifference. Its image is one of disintegration and futility. In the prophetic lines of Yeats :

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Those who plead for the acceptance of the communal formula cannot understand their own

misfortunes. Its sponsor, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is strictly honest. But honesty without a secure basis of coherence is not enough. He is trying to scramble together all the scattered confusions, myths and defeatism. He is an expert in the new and rising technique of doing one's best to postpone action. Behind his thick black glasses lurks a threat of interrogation.

The difficulty of recalcitrant minorities is the difficulty of other nations also. My objection to the communal formula is not that it is too clever but that it is not clever enough. The unifying intelligence is safe. While the disruptive intelligence is next door to the charlatan.

Here is a sinister influence, a pacifist make-believe which smashes the ideology of the revolution. The wheels of history roll on and we trifle with our destiny. We are deliberately ignoring the historical truth that a healthy community is animated by a synthetic vision.

Any deflection of the collective energy of the nation in favour of a wilfully blind unit carries within it the germ of death. In the tree of life the energies are integrated at higher levels. Therefore atomism is the back wash, the ebbing out a wave of life.

The charriot of freedom has no reverse

gear. Some grinding of the springs is to be faced at the turn of the way.

In this bitter hour it is imperative for India's millions to summon their hearts to proclaim faith in the eternal and indivisible India. They should cherish more strongly that loyalty to positive Gandhism which Gandhi himself has abjured. Fragmentation is the death sentence on our collective life.

The author of the open rebellion has an open mind. I hope he will assert himself in some equally dramatic way against this Ulster business, bluff and wooden guns.

CHAPTER ONE

OUR HERITAGE OF LIBERTY

The day sets tonight and it breaks tomorrow. This is a sober certainty. The ending of tyranny lies at the root of victorious life. This is history as action.

In the past illusions were dear to us. For a time we preferred to be rocked in stagnant waters. Now we are navigating in tempests.

Of all energies the energy of morality is emphatic, a thing arresting in itself. And so is our non-violent revolution. It is coexistent with the moral energy. It has made goodness great and truth passionate.

With the rage of the oppressor truth cannot hold a plea. Hence our pain is self-chosen pain. The rocks are not so stout as our hearts. Our bodies decay and never our ideals.

Heroism, faith and love are liberty's roots, and ever green. We feed on prayers. Our heart is unspotted. Our resolve is beautifully firm. We neither yield to base flatteries nor fear the frown of the despot. There is no armour against non-violence.

Ours is no readjustment but a revolution. As well as human frailty would allow we have responded to the bugleman of the renaissance.

Our destiny is cut out for us. In its common pursuit our labours have become unselfish and our prejudices are disciplined. The enemies of freedom have exaggerated our trifling oddities. Their spleen is often thinly disguised. They talk as if our patriotism is vague and their yearnings are precise. The truth is our patriotism has meaning because it is grounded on spiritual values. Their patriotism is muddled because the "Rule Britannia" stuff is not a substitute for right fellowship.

We have become conscious of the importance of freedom. Hitherto we confused the vital and the unessential. Our attitude towards the past was sentimental in the extreme. We disliked to live anew. This does not mean we should put our tradition to the axe. It means that tradition without intelligence suffocates life.

The concept of freedom was agreeable to the ear of our ancients. They knew that freedom constituted the essence of man. They beheaded or exiled a tyrant. If we were truly traditional then we would not have tolerated even for a split-second our loss of freedom. We are neither

aware of the pastness of the past nor fully conscious of the dynamism of the present.

The flaring up of discords in our national life is an irrelevant accident. The thought behind an Indian is of men of genius, of spiritual beauty. Emotionally we are just as strong as other nationals. Groups of western writers have labelled us "politically amateurish". The seasoned reader will not be taken in by these shams. If the moralising critics look more deeply into the foundations of our polity then they will know that our grandparents political institutions enshrined better ideals than their own diseased frame-works.

Such hostile critics cannot peer into the depth of feeling of the Vedic poets. They cannot comprehend the Dialogues of Buddha, their emotional range and power. Does not the unity of action and speculation in Asoka's life show emotional maturity? If the contemporary west had an Akbar it would not have shrank to its present dwarfish fate.

To call an Indian amateurish illustrates the crankiness which frequently affects writers of the Anglo-Saxony and its tradition. Confusion of emotion seems to be eminently their virtue.

As a nation we have a fully formed personality and a well-nourished tradition. Gandhi and Nehru

have annexed new power to this tradition. Gandhi has offered the stricken world a new political emotion. He is an integral part of history. To live in the country and epoch of Gandhi is to be able to see beauty and excellence; compassion and refinement.

Nehru, by what he has done and what he has failed to do, represents the strength and limitations of our tradition. He is the most instinctive rebel against tyranny. In him our tradition has come alive. Strong passion and moral resistance, joy of faith and readiness to sacrifice, craving for God and loyalty for truth make the Indian unique. The whole personality of the Indian is involved in the present struggle.

Our generation is making the efforts and sacrifices of scores of generations. No pain can impair its sensibility and strength. The Anglo-Saxon mind is not likely to grasp the true significance of our struggle. One feature which can hardly be overpraised is that there is no discrepancy between its means and end. It has created an instrument of liberation for other nations held in bondage. From its fundamental truths it has not deviated.

The Indian is a realist and his politics is reality transfigured. Back through the ages the

idea of freedom beat in the minds of his ancestors. To regain our freedom is to recapture their achievement.

A free life is a life purified of insignificance and cowardice. In the struggle for its realisation we perfect our own beings and behold higher truths with clarity. It is not a fugitive disturbance upon the surface of our national life. The fact that it is the supreme vindication of our tradition that makes the non-violent revolution the wonder it is. We see in freedom the one sure escape from decay into the hope of abiding beauty.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GANDHIAN EXPERIMENT

Love, conversion, truth-force and world-view are but one aspect of the same struggle ; a struggle for a true meaning of life. Without inner coherence man cannot postulate these enduring values. Inner coherence demands spiritual daring.

Gandhism aspires to express these superior ideas in terms of a programme. It is a call to religion and seeks to unite truth and love ; vitality and beauty on the moral plane. Being essentially a moral current it helps the individual to recreate himself.

The essence of this philosophy is not gloom but joy ; not the denial of life but its highest intensification. It courageously rejects the contemporary background. The modern cannot distinguish between knowledge and feeling ; transient beauties and soul-reality. He desires to reconstruct in himself the mentality of the caveman. Gandhism has within it a reaction to this nihilistic humankind. It holds that precise mutation is possible in the ethical direction.

Gandhism has put the comfort of illusions away. We recognise in it the assumption that in the contemplation of action the soul becomes self-supporting. Self-reliant acceptance of suffering makes man notably more himself.

Gandhism wants a qualitative change. This can be forced by reconditioning the individual's life in its intimate aspects. Further it aims at the integrated and not the regimented man. The notion that the human society is an organism to be united from within is acceptable to it.

Is Gandhism an opiate which gives visions? In truth, it obstinately refuses to lull but awakens. Gandhi supposes his vision to symbolise thought. This is an illicit step in his dialectic. We can trust our intuition but we cannot always believe it.

The Euclidean intellect may not sanction some of his tenets. But his spiritual honesty accepts them. He fights his own crucible of doubts. Sometimes he makes us feel that either his faith is insufficient or we are out of tune. The failure, he tirelessly argues, is not in the technique but in ourselves.

The essential difference between Gandhism and other recent mass philosophies is that the former is a protection against moral chaos. It can

rescue us from frustration and give life to us. What threatens it is our own lack of integrity.

It is mindful not only of immortality but of salt-tax. It seeks to remove the ever-present irritations in individual life and the irrational forces in the social framework.

Why does Gandhi crave about non-violence ? Because non-violence is a sacred thing and insincerity about it is a bad form of hypocrisy.

Gandhi's inner balance has withstood many spiritual blasts. He uses in his grave political letters words cheerful and fair. The total effect is that of great charm, great depth of feeling. His simplicity is born of precise thought. His restraint is compelling.

Gandhi lives in an age which has bludgeoned truth and reduced love into moody silence. In this world of heartbreak he has taught us to love every leaf and every ray of God's light. He is the Mahatma because he has seen deeper into life and has enabled us to see it with his own vision.

The Gandhian way is the way of discipline. Discipline of emotion involves mortification. It should be noted that if a chasm separates behaviour and belief then it imposes a great strain on the individual. Therefore there should be no wide gap between what is easy and what is Gandhian.

We love Gandhi and love him for ever. The uniqueness of the Mahatma is one with the uniqueness of the stars and he remains unique for ever and ever.

Anyone who points out a flaw in the Omniscience of the Mahatma is branded an enemy of the cause. Those who have treated the party pledge as a worn-out bus ticket are the first to swear their confidence in Gandhi. Gandhi believes in a world federation and also accepts the trend towards atomism. He believes in the self-determination of the units and also that they ought to be pollarded. He has faith in social justice and also in the innate goodness of the capitalists. Such contradictions weaken rather than strengthen the Gandhian faith.

I accuse the Mahatma of Platonic affection for two more anarchs in the anarchy of nation-states. I accuse him of evasion of responsibility. I accuse him of eating out of the liberal hand. I accuse him of shifting thought, refusing to nail himself down to one definite meaning. I accuse him of yielding to a working compromise urged by the pipe-smoking grand make-shifts. I accuse him of cautious nature which bears no malice for hard knocks.

I have brought these accusations against him because he has still winning cards in his hands and

please God the Gandhian Revolution is not going to be beaten.

I candidly admit Gandhi has studied moderation, tactful geniality and power of conciliation. These may be a proof of deep political wisdom. But they are a deadly peril to the mood of revolution.

Gandhi has a clear vision and the power of recovery. He can visualise the goal of a vast Supra-national Indian Union in which cultural nationalisms flourish and economic instruments are owned by the state. The ideal of all-inclusiveness, at-onement is worth every danger of the way. The light of freedom is playing on our eyelids. It is our historic mission to make the world safe for freedom. If we cease to believe in our own mission then it is the beginning of our decay. Let us go forward with bright hope.

CHAPTER THREE

EVERYONE A GANDHIAN

Our environment is revolutionised. A parallel change has taken place in us. The mood of the nation resents any settlement without victory. Gandhi has forged the tremendous weapon of non-violent resistance. This calm, just man is now ready to throw down his non-violent arms. Without a twinge of conscience he is prepared to barter away human souls.

Gandhi does not abandon his principle but his subtle mind stretches it to an endless elasticity of interpretation. He calls the communal formula an accommodating document. With the neatness of a wasp he paralyses all criticism. Pakistan is a bitter pill. The Mahatma tries to sweeten it with so expensive a condiment as self-determination.

Stated in cold blood, Gandhi has not only relaxed the tension of the struggle but is destroying the means of renewing it. By sheer native intuition he was providing a brilliant response to the challenge of the historical moment. His leap from impression to action was unpredictable but deadly.

His first impulse after his release has been to be generous and not just.

Communal settlement and not winning freedom has become his reigning obsession. The wizard who conjured up victory is now conjuring up petty advantages. He has done an injustice to the splendid and heroic devotion of the leaders who are in chains. The problem is not how much to screw from Britain. But in a fit of absent-mindedness she should part with the keys of power.

The ruling class has never slackened its vendetta against the Congress. It is matchless as a puller of wires. The Mahatma's forlorn hope is to create a sort of a National Government out of his own following of Congressmen and true blue plutocrats in combination with the sorely tried Quaid-e-Azam. After letting off some rhetorical steam some Congressmen outside the prison have shown no desire to Jockey the chief.

Gandhi is a dynamic force. We begged this wizard to win our freedom. We trusted his arts. We believed that his spell would make the nation walk in a trance to its dream-goal. For close upon twenty-five years, he has shown a shallow misunderstanding of the practice of imperialism. It is a chilling reflection that the destinies of our society now depend upon the upshot of the conflict of Gandhi with Gandhism. It is essential to our

freedom that the present negative Gandhism should transform itself into positive Gandhism.

Our progressive ambition should fall within the framework of a unified and humanised India. To this end the Mahatma should have set our faces and directed our lives. The phase of inflamed nation-states and the bluster of sovereignties should be superseded. By integrating the existing institutions and forces at a higher level he could have achieved the unity which makes possible liberation of thought and creative effort. To sacrifice collective interest to the exigencies of conflict is to pave the way for one of the new tyrannies.

Pakistan is a black-out of our culture. It is there, partially blessed by the Mahatma, dominating the whole situation. We must scotch the idea, here and now, and prevent it from being bolstered up in our time, or that of our children's time.

Pakistan may be defined as the striving of a racial minority for a national personality. It aims not at social nationality but legal nationality. Its claim for a specific territory is founded on religion.

Historical rights, civilization, religion and language are the objective criteria. They are also

put forward to justify annexations. The plebiscite is often declared the surest test of ascertaining the subjective fact of the will of the people. But plebiscite is a rough-and-ready political instrument. The political propagandist uses force, threat and repression. By arousing the religious emotion reason can be uprooted and slavish conformity produced. The ballot-box cannot reflect the will of the mass. Wild promises the realisation of which are lost in the mists of the future will be effective. The propagandist can gauge correctly the pulse-rate of the people. Appeals to human judgment can be swept aside by violent emotion. Therefore the popular will expressed by the majority is an out-worn Liberal idea.

In international law the right of self-determination is recognised only in the case of nations and denied to its minorities. External demarcation and international status are the essential symbols of nationhood. National consciousness is a complex structure and it is hard to determine it.

The most fundamental characteristic of a nation is the community of history, tradition and culture. A solidarity founded on memories of sufferings and victories is enduring. But a community without a territory is not a nation. A nation is a community of fates. It is a spirit which makes people feel, act and think as one.

The tradition, ideals and interests centre round the idea of national territory. The national character is formed by this framework. The sectional interests are fused in the national ideology. While giving significance to the sectional facts it spreads the cult of national pride.

The national aspirations are composed of the striving for unity, freedom, distinctiveness and prestige. Therefore a nation may be defined as a community of fates, endowed with a personality and above the will of the individual. It has a national personality, oneness in manyness. To stir up warmer emotion the national personality is expressed as a symbolic figure. Indians possess a developed national consciousness. We are a community created not by the votes of electoral districts but by the genius of our people.

A nation is a spiritual organism. It is a soul. Montesquieu, Burke, Hegel, de Maistre, Royce-Collard, Ernest Renan, Michelet, Green, Bradley, Bosanquet and a host of other thinkers defend this view.

There is an opposition between our national ideology and particularism. It has given a unique capacity for suffering. Our heart rebels against the vast imbecillity of dissolving our heritage. An ideology robbed of its ultimate meaning loses its evocative power.

Our love of the historical tradition should expand itself into the worship of the idea of unity. This patriotism might become strident but it would be no ignoble product of our spirit. It will lead our pilgrims souls to freedom alone.

The image of a free and unfragmented India should blossom itself as a rose in the deeps of our heart. Otherwise life will become unbearable. As passion mounts and awareness deepens a new power and intensity will be added to this exquisite image. Solidarity increases in struggle, for love replaces egotism. Only in a struggle the emotional impulse which is iron-cold can become a living flame.

The Gandhian Revolution is a master reality of our time. This sacred flame will reduce total evil into charred stumps. The collective suffering it has occasioned has created the most enduring of human monument. It has made the nation not only alive but unique beyond all previous imagining.

This Revolution derives its force from truth. Its strategy is open but sinewy. Its votaries live within and not for themselves alone. It has dragged secret methods into the clear nakedness of light. It is an experiment in spirit.

The urge to justify our existence in terms of world-view is implied in this Revolution. It is

the bearer of the seed of love which bricks up peace.

Progress through violent conflict will soon come to a dead end. Whereupon life chooses another path. Here success goes not to the biggest bully but to the humblest seeker. Gandhism possesses this future because it is a movement in self-transcendence.

Gandhism is soaring humanism, cosmic emotion. It is a search for significant beauty. It would rather see India perish than be false to the truth in it. The world will be eventually captured by this spirit. The healing leaves of its doctrinal tree will give life to civilization and meaning to our existence.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MAKING OF TOMORROW

A conscious revolutionary purpose which transcends sectional interests can transform the structure of our life. But what we need to understand is that the Congress symbolises the conscious will to political and social revolution.

Instead of educating the nation in the understanding of this self-transcendence its political chief is busy about some melodramatic division of spoils in a hypothetical future. Thus he is abandoning the historical tradition of the Congress. The failure of the Mahatma to understand and declare that the Congress seeks an aim that is federal and pluralistic; classless and collectivist has prepared the way for moral paralysis. If a situation of dangerous stagnation has developed it is due to his unconscious self-contradiction.

Congress is a community and not a class. By virtue of this homogeneous quality it is dynamically a revolutionary force. By changing from disinterestedness to interestedness in group-interest this movement is passing from reality to illusion.

Let us do the right even if there is no free life. The argument that a bargain with the League must be a bargain at Tory Britain is muddled. It ignores the distinction between the right and the expedient; the seeker and the Neo-Machiavellian. The sense of dedication to human values has invested the Revolution with a lovely passion from the start. It is in the mood of dedication, of heroism, of humility, of prayer that the Revolution should be won. It is this, too, that has made us awake to the forces which make the tomorrow.

Therefore to deny the urge to completeness is to misconceive the nature of human responsibility. It means we will not make ourselves free but ordain our fall. To encourage separatist tendencies is to destroy the deepest convictions on which our life is built.

The moral ideals alone inform us. Our moral aspirations will be fulfilled when we know the outcome of the change we initiate. Patanjali utters a sentence of hopeful import "the misery that is not yet come is to be avoided." Its message to the loftiest visionaries should be sufficiently clear.

Today many pens and heads are sitting by their studious lamps rethinking the old problems. There is a 'mental warfare', a revolution in thought. It will change the political and social climate of the world.

The problem of individual and social adjustment is not difficult if the individual recasts his ideas and attitudes. During a revolutionary period the tempo of this change is fast. Basic adjustments are thrust upon man and society.

On the world stage we see the authority of reason abdicating itself in favour of cruder powers. In the shade of vested interests men have ceased to be men. The winds of doctrines are sweeping over continents. The civilised values are dead and the western man is standing by its coffin.

Deaths and births of epochs are necessary to history. I do not believe that the world can find a truer healer than Gandhi and a greater symbol than love. A socialism that includes Gandhism will bring about a major historical change—a change toward a world that will be more socialised, more planned and more humane.

In this new world order Fascism and Imperialism will go down swirling into the cosmic drain. Therefore the single end of our Revolution should be an endeavour to achieve freedom and to subordinate our freedom to a world purpose. The Gandhian Revolution is destined to be the vehicle of a more free and more abundant life.

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By Acharya Kripalani

(General Secretary, Indian National Congress)

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"The very scientific manner in which Acharya Kripalani approaches the subject and the very lucid way in which he thinks out and writes down his thoughts make this book (now in its Second edition) a remarkable contribution to Gandhian literature..... There are also a few good photographs of Gandhiji.

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