
UNIT 8 CIVIL SOCIETY, RESISTANCE AND PROTEST

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

If any one term of art can be said to encapsulate the convergence in intellectual interests among students of democracy since the fall of Communism, that term is ‘civil society’. The concept of “civil society” arose at the very dawn of the modern age, as a theory of political economy and market capitalism in the writings of Locke, Rousseau, Smith, and Hegel. After Marx subsumed it under his analysis of “bourgeois society,” a linguistically identical term in German, the concept remained bound to its evil twin from then until the 1980s. Scholars then revived and redefined it, drawing on Habermas’ account of the public sphere and Tocqueville’s analysis of the voluntary association. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and Foucault’s concept of discourse, both popular in the 1970s and 1980s, had pointed a way out of Marxism by drawing attention from economics to culture as the central locus of contestation and power in civil society. Meanwhile, the rise of gender studies—perhaps the most consequential site of scholarly innovation into the 1990s—offered a host of ways to embed civil society’s history in private life and public ideologies. Today, interest in civil society forms a cornerstone of the new inter-disciplinary arena, embracing historians, sociologists, and political scientists working on all regions of the modern world.

Traditionally, for Plato the civil society coordinates the activities of people with different skills and aptitudes. An understanding of the division of labour lies at the centre of his political and psychological theories and informs his epistemology as well.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to understand

- The concept of civil society in the pre and post-modern history
- The concepts of resistance and protest
- Some of the early and recent protest movements.

8.2 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The relation of law and “civil society” begs an important question: what is civil society? And what is its relationship with resistance and protest? There have emerged over the past three centuries a variety of responses. In recent years, Ford Foundation has pointed out at least three significant definitions that have taken a centre stage:

- Civil society as part of society – in the form of associations, groups of people operating within society at large;
- Civil society as a kind of society – value based creating ‘good’;
- Civil society as a public sphere – the arena for public debate and argument, a public space in which differences between community, cultural identity and public policy are debated.

As we look at it, ‘civil society’ describes that element of society outside of government and business sectors, both organised and essentially disorganised, that represents the workings of people among, and with one another to achieve their aspirations, meet their needs and live creative, active and healthy lives. To define the term much more precisely actually works to limit it, when in fact the essential character of “civil society” is its unlimited quality. As per the traditional definition of civil society, it is composed of the totality of civic and social organisations and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society, as distinct from the force-backed structures of a state.

From a historical perspective, the actual meaning of the concept of civil society has changed twice from its original, classical form. The first change occurred after the French Revolution and the second during the fall of Communism in Europe.

8.2.1 Pre-modern History

The concept of civil society in its pre-modern classical republican understanding is usually connected to the early-modern thought of Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. Generally, civil society has been referred to as a political association governing social conflict through the imposition of rules that restrain citizens from harming one another. In the classical period, the concept was used as a synonym for the good society, and seen as indistinguishable from the state. For instance, Socrates taught that conflicts within society should be resolved through public argument using dialectic, a form of rational dialogue to uncover truth. For Plato, the ideal state was a just society in which people dedicate themselves to the common good, practice civic virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation and justice.

The Middle Ages saw major changes in the topics discussed by political philosophers. Due to the unique political arrangements of feudalism, the concept of classical civil society practically disappeared from mainstream discussion. Instead, conversation was dominated

by problems of just war, a phenomenon that would last until the end of Renaissance. The Thirty Years' War and the subsequent Treaty of Westphalia heralded the birth of the sovereign state system.

Thomas Hobbes underlined the need of a powerful state to maintain civility in society. For Hobbes, human beings are motivated by self-interests. Moreover, these self-interests are often contradictory in nature. Therefore, in the state of nature, there was a condition of a war of all against all. In such a situation, life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. John Locke had a similar concept to Hobbes about the political conditions of England. It was the period of Glorious Revolution, marked by the struggle between the divine right of the Crown and the political rights of Parliament. In Locke's view, human beings led also an un-peaceful life in the state of nature. However, it could be maintained at the sub-optimal level in the absence of a sufficient system. From that major concern, people gathered together to sign a contract and constituted a common public authority.

The Enlightenment thinkers argued that human beings are rational and can shape their destiny. Hence, no need of an absolute authority to control them. Both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant argued that people are peace lovers and that wars are the creation of absolute regimes. As far as Kant was concerned, this system was effective to guard against the domination of a single interest and check the tyranny of the majority.

8.2.2 Modern History

G W F Hegel completely changed the meaning of civil society, giving rise to a modern liberal understanding of it as a form of market society as opposed to institutions of modern nation state. For Marx, civil society was the base where productive forces as social relations were taking place, whereas political society was the superstructure. Agreeing with the link between capitalism and civil society, Marx held that the latter represents the interests of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the state as superstructure also represents the interests of the dominant class; under capitalism, it maintains the domination of the bourgeoisie.

This negative view about civil society was rectified by Antonio Gramsci. Departing from Marx, Gramsci located civil society as co-terminus with the socio-economic base of the state. Rather, Gramsci located civil society in the political superstructure. He underlined the crucial role of the civil society as the contributor of the cultural and ideological capital required for the survival of the hegemony of capitalism. Rather than positing it as a problem, as in earlier Marxist conceptions, Gramsci viewed civil society as the site for problem-solving. Agreeing with Gramsci, the New Left assigned civil society a key role in defending people against the state and the market and in asserting the democratic will to influence the state.

8.2.3 Post-modern History

The post-modern way of understanding civil society was first developed by political opposition in the former Soviet bloc East European countries in the 1980s. However, in the 1990s with the emergence of the non-governmental organisations and the New Social Movements on a global scale, civil society as a third sector became a key terrain of strategic action to construct an alternative social and world order.

By the end of the 1990s, civil society was seen less as a panacea amid the growth of the anti-globalisation movement and the transition of many countries to democracy; instead, civil society was increasingly called on to justify its legitimacy and democratic

credentials. Post-modern civil society theory has not largely returned to a more neutral stance, but with marked differences between the study of the phenomenon in richer societies and writing on civil society in developing states.

8.3 RESISTANCE AND PROTEST

Resistance

When Mohandas K Gandhi was born in 1869, India was a colony of the British Empire. The Gandhi family lived in a region of India that had not been greatly influenced by Western Culture. People of that region followed the same customs and traditions as their ancestors had for generations. The life of young Mohandas centred on his mother, who taught him about the Hindu doctrine of *ahisma*, the refusal to do harm and the duty to do good. This belief was foundation for the bold and courageous acts that led to Gandhi's fame as a proponent of non-violent resistance.

Gandhi called the non-violent resistance the *satyagraha*, which means the "force contained in truth and love," or "nonviolent resistance." The philosophy of *satyagraha* required that a person who decided to break a law considered unjust must accept the consequences of that decision.

Resistance functions to restructure the society in that new leadership emerges, traditional authority patterns are challenged and anti-colonialism provides for integration and cohesion among diverse ethnic and religious groupings. The Bissau (West Africa) dock-workers' strike in 1958, for example, illustrated urban economic resistance which had widespread influence and ultimately led to the mobilisation of the rural peasantry into a nationalist movement which struggled for the independence of Guinea. Thus resistance within the indigenous populations of our areas of concern can be viewed as an embryonic stage of nationalism.

Protest

Non-violent protest and persuasion is a class, which includes a large number of methods, which are mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion, extending beyond verbal expressions but stopping short of non-cooperation or non-violent intervention. Among these methods are parades, vigils, picketing, posters, teach-ins, mourning and protest meetings.

Protest may be manifested as a complaint, objection, disapproval or display of unwillingness to an idea, course of action, or social condition. Protest, it may be argued, stems from an active desire for change, while the process of developmental change frequently originates from the impact of protest. Protest may be the outcome of exposure to the materialistic and other benefits that an anticipated "better" life can produce. Protest activity may also be the direct result of institutional failure to accommodate immediate and local demands, as in the situation described in India's freedom struggle particularly non-violent protests. When rising expectations are not satisfied or demands for change are not met by suppression, rejection, and non-integration, protest is likely to follow the path of increasingly unstable and irrational means to accomplish goals.

Protest and Resistance

Protest and resistance may lead to crisis, an unstable state of affairs in which a decisive change may be impending. Crisis relates to physical and human problems. In one country,

for instance, crisis may be the result of droughts or floods. It may also be caused by structural changes in the regional economy or by the successes and failures of attempts to find solutions to problems through welfare policies, the migration of people from area to area, and so forth. Crisis might also be result of a class conflict and differences between oligarchic rulers and the mass of followers in a particular society. Crisis may well be related to the tensions and alienation of people who see themselves as nonparticipants in the decisions that shape a community.

The concepts protest and resistance relate also to opposition and conflict. Opposition is a manifestation of protest or resistance against the control and use of power in society and occurs when those subject to it experience shared feelings of exploitation and oppression. Exploitation is dependent on social expectations, those of the group or groups subject to the power, which determines how they react to given demands for obedience, and those of the group in power, which determine the extent of their demands for submission. Conflict may be the result of such expectations. Conflict basically means the incidence of disagreement over fundamental values in society. Such conflict may relate to major cleavages that have historically affected society, among which might be identified cleavages emanating from differences in social and economic class, religious sects, ethnic groups, ideological divisions, and geographical regions. From this we might generalise that the more issues defined in cleavage terms the greater the likelihood of political conflict. Also the larger the number of cleavage-related issues that might be resolved simultaneously, for example, the unstable the political system.

8.4 NON-VIOLENCE: AN ATTRIBUTE OF PROTEST AND RESISTANCE

Non-violence means abstaining from the use of physical force to achieve an aim. As an ethical philosophy, it upholds the view that moral behaviour excludes the use of violence; as a political philosophy it maintains that violence is self-perpetuating and can never provide a means to a securely peaceful end. As a principle, it supports the pacifist position that war and killings are never justifiable. As a practice it has been used by pacifists and non-pacifists alike to achieve social change and express resistance to oppression. For pacifists, of course, all demonstrations of their view and protests against violence may by definition be non-violent.

Historically, non-violent practices have included civil disobedience, non-cooperation, passive resistance or non-resistance and non-violent direct action in the form of protests. The first American Quakers, whose religion was pacifist, practiced civil disobedience when they refused to pay taxes supporting the British war effort during the American War of Independence. During the Second World War, Danish shipbuilders practiced non-cooperation when they feigned misunderstanding and worked so poorly that their ship could not be used in war. Passive resistance, “turning the other cheek” and refusing to hit back, has been practiced and promoted by followers of both Jesus and Buddha. Tolstoy preached non-resistance in its pacifist sense, meaning that one should rather die than kill. Non-violent direct action has recently become a high profile manifestation of non-violent principles, as when protesters damage public property to make them heard.

Mahatma Gandhi used non-violence to successfully free India from the British rule. He called his ideas Satyagraha, meaning intensely active yet non-violent resistance. He believed that non-violent resistance focused on the power of the spirit, while violent

resistance focused on the power of the sword. From this belief and the belief that the spirit is stronger than the sword, Gandhi came to a conclusion: “I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment.”

Martin Luther King, Jr, used non-violent resistance to reconcile his religious belief with his passion for social justice, and this enabled him to make great advances within the United States towards racial equality. Over his lifetime, he had read books written by Marx, Temple, Nietzsche and others. None could completely explain how King’s religious and civic duties should coincide until he discovered the works of Gandhi. Years later, he wrote:

“The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social contracts theory of Hobbes, the “back to nature” optimism of Rousseau, and the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi”.

In modern times, non-violence has become a powerful tool for social protest. There are several examples of its use in non-violent resistance and non-violent revolution, including Gandhi leading a decade long non-violent struggle against British rule in India, Martin Luther King’s adoption of Gandhi’s non-violent methods in the struggle to win civil rights for African Americans and Cesar Chavez’s campaigns of non-violence in the 1960s to protest the treatment of farm workers in California. The 1989 Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia that saw the overthrow of the Communist government is considered as one of the most important non-violent revolutions of 1989. Most recently, the non-violent campaigns of LeymahGbowee and the women of Liberia were able to achieve peace after 14-year civil war.

8.5 NON-VIOLENT ACTION

Non-violent action generally comprises three categories: Acts of Protest and Persuasion; Non-cooperation; and Non-violent Intervention.

8.5.1 Acts of Protest and Persuasion

Non-violent acts of protest and persuasion are symbolic actions performed by a group of people to show their support or disapproval of something. The goal of this kind of action is to bring public awareness to an issue, persuade or influence a particular group of people, or to facilitate future non-violent action. The methods of protest and persuasion include speeches, public communications, petitions, symbolic acts, processions and assemblies.

8.5.2 Non-cooperation

Non-cooperation involves the purposeful withholding of cooperation or the unwillingness to initiate in cooperation with an opponent. The goal of noncooperation is to halt or hinder an industry, political system, or economic process. Methods of non-cooperation include labour strikes, economic boycotts, civil disobedience, and general disobedience.

8.5.3 Non-violent Intervention

Non-violent intervention, compared to protest and non-cooperation, is a more direct method of non-violent action. Non-violent intervention can be used defensively – for example, to maintain an institution or independent initiative – or offensively – for example,

to drastically forward a non-violent struggle into the opponent's territory. Intervention is more often more immediate and effective than the other two methods, but is also harder to maintain and more taxing to the participants involved. Methods of intervention include occupations (sit-ins), blockades, fasting (hunger strikes), and dual sovereignty/parallel government.

8.5.4 Non-violent resistance

Non-violent Resistance (or non-violent action) is the practice of achieving socio-political goals through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic or political noncooperation, and other methods, without using violence. It is largely synonymous with both non-cooperation and non-violent intervention and blends the better of the two.

8.6 SOME RECENT PROTEST MOVEMENTS

8.6.1 Egypt

Protest in Egypt has consisted mainly of strikes and labour sit-ins not sanctioned by the official, government-controlled labour unions and professional associations or syndicates. Egypt experienced more than 1,000 episodes from 1998 to 2004, with more than 250 social protests in 2004 up from 200 in 2003.

After the 2005 elections, protest activities continued to gain momentum in number and scope. Egypt's daily newspaper *al-Masry al-Youm* reported 222 strikes, labour sit-ins, and demonstrations in 2006 and 580 in 2007.

In 2007, strikes even extended to public sector employees, with 55,000 real estate tax collectors striking for weeks in Cairo to demand wage parity with other collectors. At the same time, episodes of socioeconomic protest increased. 2008 witnessed over 400 instances of workers' collective action involving an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 workers.

The most important event was a massive general strike led by young activists and workers' groups that took place on 6th April 2008. In the face of continuing socioeconomic protest, the government gradually shifted from repression to a policy of making targeted concessions to the protesting groups. Wages and salaries of state workers and employees were raised several times, while prices of basic foods were strictly controlled.

The most recent episode of protest against the ruling government has brought the curtains down on President Hosni Mubarak's decades long regime in Egypt.

8.6.2 Jordan

The country experienced successive waves of protest for over twenty years, some sparked by economic conditions, others by political events. In general, however, political and economic protests are much more closely intertwined in Jordan than in Egypt. There was widespread protest in 1989 following the introduction of economic measures, including privatisation policies that affected the employees of the state sector. The Jordanian government understood that the discontent was not purely caused by economic hardship but also by political grievances, and responded by easing restrictions on political activism and allowing the opposition to participate in parliamentary elections. This resulted in an increase in the number of seats held by the Islamic Action Front. When protest started again in January 2011, in part a response to the uprising in Tunisia, however, the

government responded not by relaxing political controls, as it had done in the 1990s, but by pledging U.S. \$283 million to reduce taxes on fuel and food products like rice and sugar.

8.6.3 Morocco

Morocco also experienced successive waves of protest, particularly in the last decade. Noticeable in some incidents was the presence of labour unions, which at times even included government-aligned ones. The high point of protest in Morocco was in 2007, when 945 protest episodes took place between January and October as labour unions, professional associations, and young activists took to the streets to voice frustration at unemployment, high prices, and poor labour standards. Protest, however, subsided in the subsequent years.

8.6.4 Gulf Countries

Citizens' protests have been a rarity in Gulf countries. The only two countries to have experienced numerous episodes are Kuwait and Bahrain and in both the motives and demands were political. In Kuwait, episodes of protest centred on political and civil rights and were driven by middle and upper class professionals rather than by workers. In 2006, more than 4,000 young protesters loosely organised in what came to be known as the Orange Movement, succeeded in forcing the government to cut the number of electoral districts in the country from 25 to 5.

The reduction in the number of voting districts was considered by many in Kuwait as essential for curbing vote buying and the influence of tribal loyalties in the elections in order to get elected in large districts, the argument went, candidates would have to appeal to a broad cross section of voters and would find it difficult to buy enough votes to determine the outcome. Although the desired electoral legislation was passed and new parliamentary elections were held, however, vote buying and tribal loyalties continue to play a major role.

8.7 ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTEST MOVEMENTS

After the U.S. government's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, recognition of the dangers that nuclear war posed to human survival sparked the development of an anti-nuclear movement in the United States and abroad. The Manhattan Project scientists—some of whom had opposed the use of nuclear weapons during World War II - organised the Federation of Atomic Scientists (which later became the Federation of American Scientists) and the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists, with Albert Einstein, Leo Szilard, and Eugene Rabinowitch playing leading roles in a crusade for nuclear disarmament. A burgeoning world government movement also warned of the menace of nuclear war, as did pacifist groups like the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters League, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. A communist led antinuclear campaign, focused on the Stockholm peace petition, surfaced as well. With the deepening of the Cold War, however, American attitudes grew more hawkish and the protest movement dwindled.

In 1954, though, another wave of protest began, stimulated by the terrible destructiveness of the newly developed hydrogen bomb and by the atmospheric testing of this weapon, which showered the planet with radioactive fallout. Joining with British philosopher Bertrand Russell, Einstein issued a dramatic appeal to world leaders to halt the nuclear

arms race. Subsequently, meeting in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, scientists launched the periodic Pugwash conferences of scientists from East and West to discuss nuclear issues, while chemist Linus Pauling began a scientists' petition calling for an end to nuclear testing. In 1957, Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, and other nuclear critics organised the National Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE), a group that placed antinuclear ads in newspapers, held public meetings and demonstrations, initiated petition drives, and soon had 25,000 members. Established in 1959, the Student Peace Union mobilised college students against the nuclear menace and introduced Britain's nuclear disarmament symbol in America. Two years later, Women Strike for Peace, founded by Dagmar Wilson and other concerned mothers, brought thousands of women into the streets, demonstrating for an end to nuclear testing and the nuclear arms race. These dramatic protests played an important role in convincing previously reluctant governments to negotiate the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), banning atmospheric tests. Reassured, many concerned citizens turned to other issues.

8.8 SOME EARLY RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS AND CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE

8.8.1 Albania

Faced with an illiterate, agrarian and mostly Muslim society monitored by King Zog's security police, Albania's Communist movement attracted few adherents in the interwar period. In fact, the country had no fully-fledged Communist Party before World War II. After Fan Noli fled in 1924 to Italy and later the United States, several of his leftist protégés migrated to Moscow, where they affiliated themselves with the Balkan Confederation of Communist Parties and through it the Communist International (Comintern), the Soviet-sponsored association of international communist parties. In 1930, the Comintern dispatched Ali Kelmendi to Albania to organise communist cells. But Albania had no working class for the communists to base their ideas on, and Marxism appealed to only a minute number of quarrelsome, Western-educated, mostly Tosk, intellectuals and to landless peasants, miners, and other persons discontented with Albania's obsolete social and economic structures. Paris became the Albanian communists' hub until Nazi deportations depleted their ranks after the fall of France in 1940.

8.8.2 Denmark

During the World War II, Denmark was invaded in 1940 and the Danes saw that military confrontation would change nothing except the number of Danes left to be occupied. The Danish government therefore, adopted a policy of official cooperation they called "negotiation under protest." On the industrial front, Danish workers subtly slowed all production that would feed the German war machine. On the cultural front, Danes engaged in the symbolic defiance of organising mass celebrations of their history and traditions.

On the legislative front, the Danish government insisted that since they were officially cooperating with Germany, they had an ally's right to negotiate with Germany, and then proceeded to create bureaucratic quagmires which stalled or blocked German orders without having to refuse them outright. Denmark also proved to be conveniently inept at controlling the underground Danish resistance press, which at one point reached numbers equivalent to the entire adult population. The Danish government also gave room to underground groups involved in sabotage of machines and railway lines needed to extract Danish resources. Even when their government was dissolved entirely, the Danes managed

to block German goals without resorting to bloodshed. Underground groups smuggled over 7,000 of Denmark's 8,000 Jews temporarily into Sweden at great personal risk. Workers went on mass strikes, refusing to work for an occupier's benefit on an occupier's terms. After an initial response of greatly increased repression, the war-distracted Germans abandoned strike-breaking efforts in exasperation. The Danish resistance against the Nazis proved highly effective.

8.8.3 France

In 1971, the French government announced their intention to extend the military camp on the Larzac plateau, an arid area in southern France where they claimed that "almost nobody lived". Local farmers strongly disagreed with this assessment and, inspired by the example of Lanza del Vasto (a philosopher and follower of Mahatma Gandhi who had gone on hunger strike for two weeks in their support), they embarked on a campaign of non-violent resistance.

In 1972, the farmers' struggle attracted worldwide media coverage when they brought their sheep to graze on the lawn under the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The issue became a famous cause among many groups, from ecologists to conscientious objectors, and in 1973, 100,000 people attended a demonstration in Paris in support of the farmers of Larzac. The fight lasted until 1981, when the new socialist government decided to abandon the project.

8.8.4 Palestine

Despite the common mischaracterisation of Palestinian resistance as a wholly violent or radical, there is a long and rich history of non-violent actions and campaigns, as well as a large number of contemporary ones. For instance:

1. In 1902, the inhabitants of three Palestinian villages – al-Shajara, Misha and Melhamiyya – held a collective peaceful protest against the takeover of 70,000 hectares of agricultural land by the first European Zionist settlers.
2. In 1936, Palestinians held a six-month-non-violent industrial strike against the British Mandate's refusal to grant self-determination to Palestine. The ultimate aim of the strike was to make Palestine ungovernable by anyone but the Palestinians themselves.
3. Fifty years later, in 1986, Hannah Siniora, the then editor of the Jerusalem Arabic Daily, called for Palestinian civil disobedience by boycotting Israel-made cigarettes. This led to a full-scale Palestinian boycott of Israeli soap, food, water, clothes, and other consumer durables.
4. The 1987-1993, First Intifada was largely conducted non-violently. Palestinians held mass public demonstrations, refused to pay taxes, and sought out local alternatives to Israeli facilities. Community leader Mubarak Awad initiated olive tree planting on Palestinian land about to be confiscated by Israeli settlers. The Israeli law prohibited any construction on land dedicated to growing fruit. Awad used non-violent resistance, and Israel's own laws, to challenge the encroaching settlements. Currently, and especially, since construction of the separation Wall began on 16th June 2002, Palestinian villages across the West Bank have cooperated in non-violent resistance. The communities of Jayyous, Budrus, Bil'in, Nil'in and Umm Salamonah have all non-violently resisted the Wall being built around them. Weekly non-violent demonstrations against the Wall were held in cities of Bil'in and Nil'in, which brought together Palestinians and Israelis.

Contextual Relevance

Gandhi had coined the term Satyagraha that is defined as the force of truth and love. This was a term that he used in preference to “passive resistance”. Martin Luther King Jr, understood this distinction when, following Gandhi, he rejected “passive resistance” as a misnomer. Satyagraha, King wrote, “avoids not only external physical violence but also violence of spirit. The non-violent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him....In the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns....Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can be done by projecting the ethic of love to the centre of our lives.”

Gandhi’s political theory, at its most original, contributes two ideas that are quintessentially his own: the first, for which he is renowned, his conception of the power of non-violent or Satyagraha; the second, integrally related, is his theory of freedom or swaraj. It was for civil disobedience Gandhi spent three months in a Pretoria prison.

The power of Gandhi’s new style of leadership was restorative, therapeutically designed to recover India’s spirit and identity. The twenty-eight year national movement that followed the Amritsar massacre mobilised the country in three successive civil-disobedience campaigns. These occurred then years apart: the first non-violent non-cooperation campaign (1919-22); the mass civil disobedience movement of the “salt satyagraha” (1930-31); and the wartime resistance or “Quit India” movement against the government (1942-44). Each of these targeted specific issues, such as the salt tax in 1930, but all had the general aim of attaining swaraj.

Gandhi’s originality as a thinker and political leader appears most dramatically in his theory and practice of non-violence. No one before in history had conceived of non-violence and applied it to politics like him. Although Gandhi was inspired by the Hindu concept of ahimsa (literally, non-injury), as well as by Christianity and the writings of Tolstoy and Thoreau, none of these influences provided a blueprint for him to follow when he developed his conception of satyagraha. Conceptual connections between non-violence and truth, swaraj and satyagraha, as well as defence of non-violent resistance as a courageous method capable of succeeding where violence must fail, appeared first in Hind Swaraj. Here they were sharpened as they were applied to the freedom struggle in India. The ancient idea of ahimsa assumed unprecedented forms.

8.9 SUMMARY

As Albert Einstein wrote, “In our age of moral decay, Gandhi was the only statesman who represented that higher conception of human relations in the political sphere to which we must aspire with our all powers. (Einstein on Peace, edited by Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden, Avenel Books, New York, 1981). Martin Luther King words, “I could never reach the standard of morality, simplicity and love for the poor set by the Mahatma...Gandhi was a human without weaknesses,” still resonate (New York Times, 30th January, 1995). Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her non-violent resistance to government tyranny in Myanmar, “acquired her lasting admiration for the principles of non-violence embodied in the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.” (SuuKyi, Freedom From Fear, Penguin, New York, 1991). His Holiness, the Dalai Lama

of Tibet, relates the inspiration of Gandhi: “I had and still have unshaken faith in the doctrine of non-violence which he preached and practiced. Now I made up my mind more firmly to follow his lead whatever difficulties might confront me. I determined more strongly than ever that I could never associate myself with acts of violence” (*My Land and My People*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1962). Gandhi thus lent much credence to the methods and techniques of non-violent protest in the history of mankind.

8.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. How did the concept of civil society evolve during the pre, modern and post-modern historical context?
2. Analyse atlength the methods of resistance and protest. Give few examples supporting your analysis.
3. Examine some of the early and the recent non-violent protest movements.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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