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# The New Menace of Gandhism

Wisdom has taught us to be calm and meek,  
To take one blow, and turn the other cheek;  
It is not written what a man shall do,  
If the rude caitiff smite the other too!

—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Somewhere in Ayn Rand's *Fountainhead* there is a striking passage where one of the Bad Guys (and Rand's Bad Guys are always unmistakably bad) abandons the Communist Party and rushes off to India to plunge into Hindu/guru mysticism. Rand caught one of the striking intellectual movements of our age. Time and time again, left-collectivists, after toiling many years in the Marxian vineyard, get disillusioned, give up, and join some Maharishi cult or other, babbling about the ineffable Wisdom of the East. On the New Left, Rennie Davis was a striking example; before that, veteran Communist fellow traveler Louis Fischer suddenly rushed down to India to do a biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

In my own experience, I knew a bright young Trotskyite who, during the New Left epoch, suddenly discovered LSD, and started distributing LSD tracts instead of Trotskyite ones. Pretty soon, one mind-destroying experience begat another, and he was putting up Krishna/Vishnu Indian mystical posters and babbling accordingly.

One of the most thoughtful analysts of this phenomenon has been Arthur Koestler; even the titles of some of his works portray his insights: the *Lotus and the Robot*, the *Yogi and the Commissar*. The point is that the Yogi is but the flip side of the Commissar. After years of trying to transform the world by forcing others to do his bidding, the Commissar abandons the world and strives to obliterate his ego in some mystical Great All-is-One Nirvana.

## I The Menace of Gandhism

It is said that history comes the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. In my more pessimistic moments, I sometimes believe that the libertarian movement is destined to repeat-as-farce many of the calamities that have befallen the Marxian and other ideological movements. And so there is now a spectre haunting the libertarian movement: the spectre of Gandhian non-violence, of the old Hindu baloney sliced once again.

Part of this new fad undoubtedly stems from seeing the movie *Gandhi*, which has inspired a lot of this nonsense, and so the fad might well be over when the movie fades at last from the theater screens. But the non-violence fad cuts deeper than that. For one thing, it has been picking off some of the best and most radical Libertarian Party activists, ones which the Party can ill afford to lose if it is to retain its thrust and its principles.

There has long been an anti-party tendency in the libertarian movement, headed by Sam Konkin, a tendency holding all voting and political action to be immoral for libertarians. But, in confronting the challenge of activism by we pro-Party types: What is *your* strategy for rolling back the State, Konkin could only fall back on forming a cheering section for black marketeers. But most libertarians find this an unsatisfactory outlet for activism, first, because black markets, while helpful, do not strike at the core of State power, and second, because black markets will be formed by adept entrepreneurs and need no cheering squads to urge them on. The other major anti-party leader, George H. Smith, confronting the same challenge, has come up with another strategy that has already drawn many radical activists out of the LP: Bringing down the State by massive non-violent resistance, or civil disobedience. This is the nub of Smith's recently formed Voluntaryist movement, and the current *Gandhi* film has lent effective focus to Voluntaryist efforts.

At the heart of the Voluntaryist strategy is an unquestionably correct syllogism: *If* the mass of the people were, at one blow, to withhold their obedience from the State, refuse to pay taxes, stop circulating the State's paper money, or refuse to obey unjust laws, *then* the State would be brought down. The major problem, of course, is the likelihood of the *If*.

There are many successful examples of violent revolution against the State in modern history; there are only two examples of successful non-violent revolution. (Professor

Gene Sharp, the current apostle of non-violence, mainly cites marginal examples which have a similar standing to Konkin's black markets: they ease some of the pain of oppression without doing much to end it. E.g., Danish slowdowns in obeying Nazi orders during the German occupation in World War II). These two examples are instructive, especially in light of the fact that violent revolutions are attacked from all sides as leading to new forms of State oppression. For they are Gandhi's India, which led to Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship and the horrifying experiment in compulsory sterilization; and the Khomeini revolution in Iran, which brought down the Shah's regime by a series of non-violent actions culminating in a universal general strike. The non-violent Khomeini revolution, of course, has brought forth the monstrous tyranny of Khomeini's Islamic fundamentalism.

The comparative record of non-violent revolutions is, then, worse than that of violent ones, for the violence of the American Revolution after all brought forth a pretty good result, while non-violence has accomplished nothing fruitful at all.

Which leads to a fundamental libertarian point: What's so great about non-violence anyway? Libertarians, after all, are not opposed to violence *per se*; they are opposed only to violent *aggression*, to the initiation of violence against another's person or property. With the exception of the LeFevrian aberration, all libertarians, including Konkin and the Smithian Voluntarists, concede the right to use violence in defense against violent invasion of person and property. So what's so great about non-violence? Why wantonly abandon an important tool of self-defense?

The new craze of non-violence or Gandhism, is a menace to the libertarian movement for several crucial reasons. It is a dead-end for the libertarian movement. It serves the function of providing burnt-out LP activists with the illusion of an alternative form of productive libertarian activity. My observation is that many, if not most, Voluntarists or their fellow-travelers do not arrive at this strategy from a studied conviction that political action is immoral. (Even if it were, non-violent resistance would *still* be an illusory, dead-end strategy). Instead, they begin with various forms of disillusion or exhaustion with LP activities. At this perhaps temporary moment of weakness, they seize on Voluntarism for providing them with a cosmic rationale for dropping out of a commitment to the libertarian movement.

Why is non-violent resistance a dead end? First, because if we observe the two successful examples of mass resistance, they emerged from a monolithic religious tradition (Shi-ite Islam) or were steeped in the religious culture of the country (Yogi/guru India.) The United States has no monolithic religion or religious culture, and we have no real tradition of coordinated mass non-violence. If anything, Americans, more than most other Western countries, have often been ready to pick up the club or the gun at infractions on their liberty.

Secondly, since there is zero possibility of Smith and his confreres generating a mass movement for civil disobedience, this means that the Voluntarist movement is destined to take one of two roads, each disastrous in different ways. For when a dozen or so libertarians sit around for a year or two *talking about* bringing down the State by non-violent resistance, what is likely to happen? Either *nothing*, in which case everyone gets bored with meta-discussions of revolution, and the movement

falls apart and disappears. Or the couple of dozen revolutionaries decide to put their talk into practice by confronting the State apparatus with their bodies, by throwing themselves into stalling the machinery of the State. And what will happen then is inevitable: They will get smashed. The police hate pacifists and non-resisters even worse than Commies, and they will be the first to have their bodies dragged through the muck. Since these are some of the finest young men and women I have ever known, the personal tragedy, let alone tragedy to the movement, will be incalculable. If the movement needs martyrs, I have scads of suitable candidates for martyrdom before George Smith, Wendy McElroy, Carl Watner and the others get ground under the heel.

Note that the inner contradiction, the inner tension, in a handful of people talking continually about non-violent revolution is almost the same as in any similar group sitting around talking about *violent* revolution (e.g. the Weathermen, *et al*, in the New Left period.) For then the tendency, after a while, is either for the members to dismiss the whole thing as fruitless palaver and re-enter the mainstream of life, or else to start bombing. Either way, the movement is finished.

For those who believe that libertarian political action is immoral, there are other forms of activism that do not involve what is tantamount to self-destruction: education, lobbying, even Common Cause-type membership organizations. But of course I do not believe for a minute that political action is immoral for a libertarian or an anarchist (see the article by Scott Olmsted and myself on "Is Voting Unlibertarian?" in the next issue of *Libertarian Vanguard*.)

It is true, moreover, that Smith and McElroy are squarely in the Benjamin Tucker tradition. Tucker and *Liberty* counselled against political action and called for mass non-violent disobedience. Their call, of course, got exactly nowhere. The difference between Tucker and his followers, and Smith and his, is that Tucker shrewdly never tried to put his strategy into practice, only paid lip-service to civil disobedience, and remained content to forge a scintillating intellectual movement of individualist anarchism. Would that Smith and the Voluntarists did the same! Unfortunately, Smith seems to be taking the more reckless and futile course.

Smith, McElroy and the others deny vehemently either that they are mystics or that they are courting martyrdom. I remain unconvinced. In the same way that Smith is certain that there is an inner logic of libertarian political action that leads ineluctably to sellout, so I am convinced that the inner logic of the new Voluntarist fascination with Gandhite non-violent resistance will lead ineluctably either to disintegration or to what the Black Panthers used to call "Custeristic" confrontations with the State apparatus.

Indeed, one of the keenest analysts of the libertarian scene attended Smith's Voluntarist workshop at the recent February California LP convention, and reported that "George is psyching himself up for confrontation with the State." The "psyching up" is what Smith, Sharp and other preachers of non-violence refer to vaguely and disquietingly as "training." I personally find the very word "training" one of the most irritating in the English language, conjuring up as it does linked words such as "basic", "military", or EST. Top sergeants "train" the humanity out of their recruits, so as to form a disciplined team, ready to carry out instant orders

from above. Even apart from the military connotations, "training" implies distorting persons away from their natural inclinations and choices, and toward some form of imposed regimen. *Even if* the training is self-imposed, the word has the smell of suppression of the individual and his or her values and authentic personality.

In a session on non-violence held in New York recently, I challenged Professor Sharp in the Q. and A.: "You speak repeatedly of 'training.' What is this training? And more important, *who* is to train *whom*? Because I tell you one thing: I ain't going to be 'trained' by anybody." Sharp's answer was that I had obviously already "trained myself." Cute, but evasive.

## II The Mahatma Desanctified

The time has now come to rip off the veil of sanctity that has been carefully wrapped around Gandhi by his numerous disciples, that has been stirred anew by the hagiographical movie, and that has greatly inspired the new Voluntarist upsurge. In considering various aspects of his thought and life, we must realize that, for Gandhi at least, they all formed part of a seamless web, an integrated whole.

(Note: this section is based on the superb revisionist article on Gandhi by Arthur Koestler, "Mahatma Gandhi: A Revaluation," in *Bricks to Babel* [London: Hutchinson, 1980], pp. 595-619.)

### 1. Economics

Let us not mince words: Mahatma Gandhi was an economic crazy. For Gandhi, not only modern technology but almost any technology was sinful and evil. Railroads were evil, the industrial revolution was evil, cotton textiles were evil, modern medicine was evil, education was evil.

On railroads, Gandhi literally took the line that if God meant us to move around he would have provided us with personal locomotives. Note the following from Bapu ("father", a widely used term of affection for Gandhi in India) himself:

Man is so made by nature as to require him to restrict his movements as far as his hands and feet will take him. If we did not rush about from place to place by means of railways and other maddening conveniences, much of the confusion that arises would be obviated . . . God set a limit to a man's locomotive ambition in the construction of his body. Man immediately proceeded to discover means of overriding the limit . . . According to this reasoning, it must be apparent to you that railways are a most dangerous institution. Man has gone further away from his maker.

(Quoted in Sir C. Sankaran Nair, *Gandhi and Anarchy*, Madras, 1922, pp. 4-5.)

It is characteristic of Bapu that he nevertheless spent most of his life "rushing from place to place" in railway carriages in organizing his movement; it is also characteristic of his phony egalitarianism that he insisted on traveling third class—but with a special coach all to himself.

For Bapu, modern medicine and hospitals were pure evil: "Hospitals are institutions for propagating

sin . . . Hospitals are the instruments that the devil has been using for his own purpose, in order to keep his hold on his kingdom. They perpetuate vice, misery and degradation and real slavery." (Nair, pp. 6-7, 18). All his life, accordingly, the Mahatma experimented with nature-cures and remedies. And much of his life he was ill. But it was again typical of the quality of Gandhi's alleged devotion to the unity of theory and practice that each time he was seriously ill he began on nature cures, refusing Western medicine and surgery, but invariably ended submitting to drugs, injections, and Western-style surgical procedures.

Again and again, Gandhi, though himself highly educated, attacked education: not just public schools, or private schools, but education *per se*. A typical quote: "To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them." And: "A peasant earns his bread honestly. What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot?"

(Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, Ahmedabad, 1946, pp. 63-66.)

But Gandhi's nuttiest and most intensely held economic fallacy was his bitter attack on machine-made textiles and his holding up of homespun clothing as having virtually sacral value. It must be emphasized that Gandhi's lifelong war against manufactured textiles was not just a tactic to boycott English products in his struggle against British imperialism. For Gandhi, the home spinning wheel, which he had designed as the centerpiece of the Indian flag, was a holy symbol of a hoped-for return by the Indian masses to the Simple Life, and of absolute rejection of the impious Industrial Revolution.

Thus: "The call of the spinning-wheel, Gandhi wrote in *Young India*, is the noblest of all. Because it is the call of love . . . The spinning-wheel is the reviving draught for the millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen . . ." (In *The Gandhi Reader*, London, 1958, pp. 229-230.) The cult of the spinning-wheel spread through the Gandhi movement, and Gandhi's Congress Party resolved that all of its members should take up home spinning and pay their membership dues in self-spun yarn; Congress officeholders had to pay to the Congress 2000 yards of yarn per month. In its meetings, the top politicians of the Congress Party participated in the debates while operating their portable spinning-wheels. The plain white cap and white cloth became the uniform of the Congress movement, and Gandhi's hand-picked successor, Pandit Nehru, called this uniform "the livery of freedom". Gandhi, meanwhile, called the homespun cap and cloth "the sacrament of millions" and "a gateway to my spiritual salvation."

Gandhi led large-scale public bonfires of foreign (manufactured) cloth. His burning of English cloth might be considered a tactic in the revolution against Britain, but why then burn *all* foreign cloth, British or no? In a reply to his lifelong admirer, the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who had accused him of employing a "magical formula" in burning all foreign cloth, Gandhi essentially confirmed the charge: "I do indeed ask the poet to spin the wheel as a sacrament . . . It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth . . . On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and

thus purify myself, and thenceforth rest content with the rough *khadi* made by my neighbors." (*The Gandhi Reader*, pp. 228-231).

The homespun *khadi* may have made a deep imprint on the Congress Party and other Gandhi cultists, but ironically it never did so for the mass of Indian peasantry and villagers for whom the *khadi* campaign was intended. The peasants after all, were not loonies, and it took them little time to realize that there were better things to do, and that foreign manufactured textiles were not only better in quality than homespun, but also that homespun cost fully three times as much! As Koestler sardonically writes: "The spinning-wheel found its place on the national flag, but not in the peasants' cottages."

Arthur Koestler begins his excellent article with a quote from a long-time friend of Gandhi's: "It takes a great deal of money to keep Babu living in poverty." Mrs. Naidu, who made that statement, was more perceptive than she knew, for the "great deal of money" applies not only to fund-raising campaigns for *khadi*, but also to the Indian masses who had to suffer from demented attempts at economic self-sufficiency and reversing the Industrial Revolution.

## 2. Sex

From his late thirties, Mahatma Gandhi engaged in a lifelong crusade for chastity and against sex. For Gandhi, devotion to *brahmacharya* (sexual abstinence) was heavily influenced by the mystical Indian yogi tradition which can best be likened to the views of the nutty general in *Dr. Strangelove* (played by Sterling Hayden), who was chiefly concerned with "preserving his vital bodily fluids (*bindu*)." Whether married or not, people were supposed to engage in *brahmacharya* as "the conduct that leads to God", as the "*sine qua non* for those who aspire to a spiritual or higher life." From the age of 37, when he began the practice of abstinence, Gandhi repeatedly "tested" his devotion to *brahmacharya* by sleeping with a succession of women, beginning with his own wife and ending with the young granddaughter of a cousin.

It must be understood that, for Gandhi, sexual abstinence and non-violence (*satyagraha*) were mutually intertwined and interdependent. It was in 1906 that Gandhi embarked on his vow of chastity, and when he also launched his first campaign of non-violent resistance. *Brahmacharya* put Gandhi "in touch with the infinite," with the soul-force which also powered *satyagraha*. For Gandhi, furthermore, sex is violence, and so abstention from the two evils become closely linked.

One of the worst aspects of Gandhi's anti-sex crusade was the way he treated his own sons, conceived, of course, in his pre-chastity days of "sin" and lubricity. He apparently hated his sons for being the living embodiment of his own sin, and he tried his best to keep them from falling into the same sinful trap. He disowned his eldest son, Harilal, for daring to marry and thereby disobey his father's injunctions to chastity, and when his second son, Manilal, committed the mortal sin of losing his virginity to a woman, the Mahatma went on a public penitential fast. Gandhi decreed that Manilal might never marry, and managed to persuade the guilty female to shave her hair in penitence.

Scorning all education, Gandhi kept his sons from school,

intending to teach them himself. An admirable goal—except that, in his pursuit of the higher truth, he somehow never found the time.

Gandhi's lifelong struggle to "purify" his diet was linked with his campaign against sex. When taking the vow of chastity, he wrote: "Control of the palate is the first essential in the observance of the vow . . . The *brahmacharya's* food should be limited, simple, spiceless and if possible uncooked . . . Six years of experiment have shown me that the *brahmacharya's* ideal food is fresh fruit and nuts." (Gandhi, "How to Serve the Cow", Ahmedabad).

## 3. The Scam of Non-Violence

It should be clear that the life of Mahatma Gandhi was essentially a scam, from start to finish. Making a big show of his allegedly deeply-held principles, claiming to make his life and thought a seamless web, he always ended up betraying those principles. He rode on railways, he fell back repeatedly on Western medicine and surgery, and he continued to "test" his chastity with various females until the end of his life. The same is even true for his allegedly great contribution, the theory and practice of non-violence. Let us then examine two aspects of Gandhi and non-violence: first, how successful was Gandhi's campaign, and second, how consistently did he adhere to the principle?

### a. The Effectiveness of Gandhi's Non-Violence

Mahatma Gandhi launched his first nationwide civil disobedience campaign in 1919. But the campaign was an abject failure, for the non-violent action quickly degenerated into violent rioting all over India. Gandhi suspended the action, confessed to having made a "Himalayan blunder", and, characteristically, went on a penitential fast. He attributed the failure to launching the campaign before the Indian masses had been sufficiently "trained" in the philosophy and techniques of *satyagraha*.

A year later, apparently believing that sufficient training had now taken place, Gandhi launched another nationwide campaign of non-violent resistance. But it too led to widespread violent riots, culminating in the massacre of Chauri Chaura; Gandhi again suspended the action and went on a penitential fast.

Gandhi's most successful campaign of civil disobedience occurred in 1930-31, in his "march to the sea" against the salt laws. But even here, there was widespread rioting by the Indian masses. His later *satyagraha* campaigns—1932-34, 1940-41, and 1942-43—were highly publicized, but inconclusive. In general, we can say that Gandhi's non-violence did not "liberate India"; on the contrary, the British decision to pull out of India was triggered far more by their general withdrawal from Empire after World War II, attendant up on British economic exhaustion, than it was by Gandhi's campaigns of non-violent resistance. Indeed, many historians have pointed out that India would have won independence earlier without Gandhi's existence. (See, for example, John Grigg, "A Quest for Gandhi," London *Sunday Times*, Sept. 28, 1969).

What Gandhi *did* manage to achieve, in contrast, was (a) to make himself into a living and eternal legend, misleading

countless Western seekers after truth; (b) poisoning the wells of Indian culture by perpetuating its most misguided, foolish, and genuinely reactionary economic and social views; (c) seeing to it that the reins of the new independent India were seized by his own statist and dictatorial—and scarcely non-violent—Congress Party; and (d) achieving an independence that led to the decidedly non-nonviolent slaughter of literally millions of Hindus and Muslims.

#### b. How Consistent was Gandhi?

In some ways, Gandhi was horrifyingly consistent on non-violence, especially if the non-violence was supposed to be practiced by *other* people in other countries. Thus, after the first nationwide pogrom against the Jews in Germany, in December 1938, Gandhi counselled the Jews to react in a non-violent manner: "if the Jews can summon to their aid soul-power that comes only from non-violence, Herr Hitler will bow before the courage which he will own is infinitely superior to that shown by his best stormtroopers." And after the news of the Holocaust became known, Gandhi, in 1946, counselled retroactively.

The Jews should have offered themselves to the butcher's knife. They should have thrown themselves into the sea from cliffs . . . It would have roused the world and the people of Germany. (Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi: A Study in Revolution*, London, 1968, p. 341.)

Perhaps what the Jews lacked was little Bapu to give them their "training."

After the fall of France, the Mahatma praised Petain for his courage to surrender, and on July 6, 1940, Bapu published an "Appeal to Every Briton" to follow Petain's lead:

I want you to fight Nazism without arms or with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have . . . You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman, and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

(T. A. Raman, *What Does Gandhi Want?* Oxford, 1943, p. 24.)

George, Wendy, Carl: In the grand old Randian phrase, check your premises! Is *this* really the credo that you would like Americans to adopt? I personally find it odious, repellent, and extraordinarily creepy, and I venture to predict that there are damned few libertarians, let alone the mass of Americans, who will go along with it. Arthur Koestler's reaction to this paragraph was scintillating: "It would have taken a great deal of corpses to keep Bapu in non-violence."

Perhaps the height of Gandhian idiocy on non-violence came in his reaction, on the last day of his life, before he was assassinated, when a *Life* magazine reporter asked him: "How would you meet the atom bomb . . . with nonviolence?" Here's Bapu's answer to what is certainly a crucial question in our modern world:

I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of ill-will against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But the longing

in our hearts—that he will not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened.

(*The Essential Gandhi*, London, 1963, p.334.)

I suppose that we should be thankful that we cannot now hear Bapu opine on how the longing in our hearts will reach out to button-pushers of missiles many thousands of miles away.

If the Mahatma was fiercely consistent on non-violence for other people, how was he on his own home ground? First, in 1918, he served as a recruiting sergeant for the British Army, stating that to achieve home rule India "should have the ability to defend ourselves, that is, the ability to bear arms and to use them", and therefore "it is our duty to enlist in the army." Three years later, Gandhi stated that "Under Independence I too would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country."

(*The Essential Gandhi*, p. 125; and Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, London, 1951, p. 371.)

Gandhi later excused these positions as early lapses: "I had not yet found my feet . . . I was not sufficiently sure of my ground." (*The Essential Gandhi*, p. 125.) Okay, fair enough. At 52, Gandhi was not exactly a spring chicken, but nobody expects a man to arrive in the world a full-blown theoretician. Chalk that one up to a learning experience. But we surely cannot use such an alibi for the last years of Gandhi's life, when he had long since found his ground. In late 1947, after the partition of the newly independent states of India and Pakistan, the two new states went to war over largely Muslim Kashmir (a province which India unfortunately was able to conquer and keep.) Where did Bapu stand on the India-Pakistan war? The true Bapu now took his stand. He had been, he said in an important speech.

an opponent of all warfare. But if there was no other way of securing justice from Pakistan, if Pakistan persistently refused to see its proved error and continued to minimize it, the Indian Union would have to go to war against it. War was no joke. No one wanted war. That way lay destruction. But he could never advise anyone to put up with injustice.

(Nirmal Kumar Bose, *My Days with Gandhi*, Calcutta, 1953, p.251.)

In the crunch, then, when his theories came home to roost, the Mahatma caved in and sold out. Traveling through massacre-torn East Bengal, Gandhi admitted to his intimates that "for the time being!" he had "given up searching for a non-violent remedy applicable to the masses." And a few days later: "Violence is horrible and retarding, but may be used in self-defense." To Nirmal Bose, in commenting on Indian Deputy Premier Patel's decision to send troops into Kashmir, the Mahatma confessed that

he could no longer successfully apply the method of nonviolence which he used to wield with signal success. I have made the discovery that what I and the people with me termed non-violence was not the genuine article, but a weak copy known as passive resistance.

And to Professor Stuart Nelson, Gandhi admitted that "what he had mistaken for *satyagraha* was not more than passive resistance, which was a weapon of the weak . . . Gandhiji proceeded to say that it was indeed true that he had all along laboured under an illusion. But he was never sorry for it."

(Bose, *My Days*, pp. 104, 107, 251, 270-71, 4n.)



I suppose that being a successful ideologue means never having to say I'm sorry, even if millions of followers had been tragically misled. Gandhi never lived long enough to adumbrate any new doctrines of "genuine" civil disobedience, but I suppose that we are just as well off.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thumb through your library and you will find a raft of hagiographical works on Gandhi, many sporting such titles as "The Mahatma: Seer and Prophet". Louis Fischer, in his biography, called Gandhi "a unique person, a great person, perhaps the greatest figure of the last nineteen hundred years." A more accurate assessment is that of Arthur Koestler:

He had been lavish with his advice to Britons,

Frenchmen, Czechs, Poles, Jews to lay down their arms and surrender to injustices infinitely more terrible than those committed by Pakistan. As on earlier critical occasions, when the lofty ideal clashed with hard reality, realism carried the day and the Yogi succumbed to the Commissar. He had believed in and practiced nature medicine, but when critically ill had always called in the practitioners of Western science which he held in such contempt. Nonviolence had worked like magic on the British, but did not work on Moslems.

(Koestler, p. 615).

Enough! I had not thought that the libertarian movement, steeped as it is in the rationalist heritage of Rand and Mises, would ever fall prey to the wiles of this little Hindu charlatan. But once again, I seem to have underestimated the folly of which the libertarian movement is capable. ‡

## The Burns Campaign

The Gene Burns Presidential campaign is rolling along splendidly. He has already proved to be a super candidate. He is highly intelligent, articulate, and learns very rapidly, seeing quickly how issues fit into libertarian principles. Burns is a rousing speaker, getting standing ovations wherever he goes. As a media talk show and newsman for two decades, he is superb in Q. and A., and in media interviews.

Burns took the highly important California LP state convention by storm in Oakland on the weekend of February 18-21. He was on numerous interview shows, and spoke twice at the convention. He has also impressed libertarians in other states wherever he goes, and he intends to go to as many states as will have him before the convention.

Burns came to the Oakland convention with an impressive and savvy staff of five people. They were extremely well-organized, and highly knowledgeable about the Libertarian Party, its personnel and its particular concerns.

Gene Burns wowed the California convention in his speeches, interviews, and Q. and A. Not only is he hard core and principled on all issues, but unlike some LP candidates who deaden issues in their replies, he uses every answer to widen the consciousness of his audience and expand their knowledge of libertarian principles. And he does so without ands, ifs, or buts.

Examples from the Q. and A.:

*Item:* Q. Where do you stand on the legalization of heroin?

A. I don't like the word "legalize" because it implies that the State should have something to do with drugs. It should have *nothing* whatsoever to do with drugs.

*Item:* On immigration restrictions, on which we have had candidate trouble in the past, Burns gave a rousing and clear-cut answer: In this land of the Statue of Liberty, there must be no restrictions whatever on immigration to our land.

*Item:* On a topic dear to all of our hearts, taxation, he was asked what he would do as President about income taxes? This to me was one of the great moments of the convention.

Instead of talking about a 30 per cent cut, and all the rest of the hokum, Burns said:

"First, I would call for repeal of the 16th amendment, and abolition of the income tax."

And second, until that occurred, Burns took up a pet scheme of my own which I had pressed, with no success, on the previous presidential campaign:

"As President, I would announce an automatic pardon for all past and future victimless Federal crimes. And among such victimless crimes, I would include income tax evasion."

And so Burns has said it, he has committed himself that, in the one-in-a million chance he would get to be President, he would immediately make federal income taxation voluntary, since he would announce an automatic use of the unappealable power of the Chief Executive to pardon "criminals."

Not only is this immediate grasp by Burns of the principled, hard-core position personally gratifying, it shows that he is gutsy and hard-core, and does not begin every reply with worrying about the most "respectable", most Tweedeldum position he might possibly take.

*Item:* Burns was asked if he would give the public and the media the sort of answers he was giving the LP at its convention. He immediately answered: "I've just spent several hours telling the media the exact same things." Which he had.

*Item:* Most LP members are gun-shy about deficit spending during campaigns. They are properly so, because of the years of experience we have had with Crane Machine-run campaigns that spend money like water and then induce the LP to pick up the tab. Gene Burns' reply to a question on campaign deficits was clear-cut and unmistakable: an absolute pledge to incur no deficits in his campaign. Period. There was thunderous applause on that one.

The other side of the coin to zero deficits is Burns' already evident ability to raise money. In the two weeks that he had been in the race, he had already raised close to \$20,000 for his

campaign, clearly from new sources of funding. His fund-raising ability is not the least of Burns' attractions as a Presidential candidate. Burns also pledged that he will run a balanced campaign, that is, he will concentrate on grass-roots party building fully as much as on media spots for his own race. Again, a most refreshing change from the past.

*Item:* Q. Do you have any intention to run for other offices in the future?

In reply, Burns made clear that he is totally committed to running for President, and that, if nominated, he will devote *full time* to the Presidential campaign from January 1, 1984

until Election Day. But, after that, since he does not intend to make a career in politics, he will remain active in the LP, but will not run for any political office ever again. His presidential race, he feels, will be his contribution to the spread of libertarian ideas and the buildup of the Party.

Gene Burns is a godsend to the Libertarian Party. He will make a superb Presidential candidate. All libertarians are hereby urged to join the Libertarian Party, and either become a delegate to the national convention in New York, or else elect delegates who will vote for Gene Burns for President.

Gene Burns, the *libertarian* candidate. ‡

## An Open Letter to the English Movement

To both factions in the English movement, and to those in between: *Please* guys, de-escalate.

The inter-necine warfare within the English movement has only been under way since last September, and yet already it has escalated to a horrifying extent, making the famous struggle over the Crane Machine in the U.S. seem like a game of pattycake. So far, the charges of one side against the other, or allegations of such charges, include:

blackmail, threats of libel suits, calling in the police, rifling through each other's papers, racism, fascism, anti-Semitism, Nazism, being in bed with British intelligence, being agents of the KGB, being in bed with international Trotskyism, threats of turning people in to

the income tax authorities, threats of turning people in to the immigration authorities, threats of assault, actual physical assault, and threats of murder.

In the immortal words of Monty Woolley in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, "Are we to be spared nothing?" It seems that the only thing left is a general shootout in the streets of Covent Garden.

*Basta!* Enough! In the name of liberty and reason, please cool it! To each side I say, paraphrasing the immortal words of Cromwell in his letter to the Church of Scotland: I beseech you, in the bowels of Nock, think it possible you may be mistaken. ‡

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AN INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW

Murray N. Rothbard, Editor

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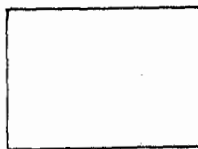
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(Both papers originally presented at the CLS/Liberty Fund sponsored conference on "Herbert Spencer: His Ideas and Influence," August 1980.)

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