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## Nonviolence by Tolstoy & Gandhi: Toward a Comparison through Criticism

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### 1. Nonviolence as Cultural Self-Criticism: Tolstoy and Gandhi

Both Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi had a great impact on the intellectual history of the twentieth century through their ideas of nonviolence. Though it seems that Tolstoy's impact has been rather moral or personal, while Gandhi's rather political or public, the meaning of their thoughts and deeds is still being re-estimated in the new context of globalism and the post-9.11 political situation.

In his foreword (1909) to Tolstoy's *A Letter to Hindu: The Subjection of India—Its Cause and Cure*, Gandhi calls Tolstoy “a great teacher whom I have long looked upon as one of my guides.” For Gandhi, “Tolstoy's life has been devoted to replacing the method of violence for removing tyranny or securing reform by the method of nonresistance to evil. He would meet hatred expressed in violence by love expressed in self-suffering. He admits of no exception to whittle down this great and divine law of love. He applies it to all the problems that trouble mankind.”<sup>1</sup> Written in 1909, at the age of forty, this sounds like an anticipated self-portrait of Gandhi himself. For both of them, the idea of nonviolence was closely related to the “truth,” which all mankind must follow in order to overcome the problems of modernity.

Both thinkers share the basic image of this “truth” so that the cores of their thoughts are quite similar. Their thoughts are equally based on a kind of anti-modernist or anti-modern-European sense of values, that is, they attach greater importance to spiritual, inner values than to material values, prefer a simple or ascetic life (sexual abstinence, vegetarianism, labor, diligence, and self-help) to an abundant or convenient urban life. They both regard any violence or power as absolute evil and reject fighting against evil using the same means as does evil.

Their aim is not victory over each separate evil phenomenon but an entire change of the rules of the game. So their nonresistance is by no means a passive or escapist measure to cope with evil, as some critics tend to regard, but is quite a positive or aggressive position, which aspires to a change of the total orientation of world development. Both of them were quite radical or even obstinate in their principal argument. They find sources of evil and violence in every sphere of human life, from the level of our own inner desires to the level of the ruling system of society (government, police, army, etc.), and tried to call for nonviolent resistance on various fronts: against capital punishment, military service, war, monopoly, partial taxation, discrimination by

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<sup>1</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *A Letter to Hindu: The Subjection of India—Its Cause and Cure* (with an introduction by M. K. Gandhi), [[http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bright/tolstoy/lettertohindu.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/tolstoy/lettertohindu.html)].

nationality and caste, etc.

Both Tolstoy and Gandhi were born, to borrow Martin Green's expression, citizens of great empires, which covered enormous land mass.<sup>2</sup> Tolstoy's Russia occupied a quarter of the land surface of the globe, had a population of 150 million in 1905, and was composed of many ethnic and confessional groups. Gandhi's India was, first of all, a Hindu empire, which was a part of the British Empire, which covered almost one third of the land surface of the globe, had a population of 372 million in 1897, and was also composed of numerous ethnic and confessional groups.

Tolstoy was born a gentleman with the title of count, was heir to an estate of four thousand acres with three hundred and fifty male serfs in central Russia. This means the middle level of the gentry class, which accounted for only 1 percent of the Russian population. This estate was once faced with a crisis due to the gambling of its young owner, but the mature Tolstoy quickly improved his economic state by authorship and bought another three thousand six hundred acres in Samara (beyond the Volga). In the 1890s, Tolstoy tried to renounce his possessions and abandon the copyright of his works, which caused a big conflict with his wife. So we can regard him as one of the most privileged inhabitants of the empire who felt a kind of moral obligation to the people around him and to society.

The Gandhis belonged to the third, Vaishya caste, mostly composed of merchants and farmers. But Gandhi's grandfather and father had been prime ministers of a small state on the Kathiawar Peninsula, western India, and enjoyed a well-to-do life. But what Gandhi inherited was not an estate but an education in England, earning his own living and acquiring a sense of responsibility to the Indian people.

As Martin Green puts it, both Tolstoy and Gandhi had had "imperial" experiences in their youth and manhood:<sup>3</sup> Tolstoy's experience as a soldier of the empire in the Caucasus and Crimea is reflected in *The Cossacks, Sevastopol, the Invaders and Other Stories*, his study of the history of the Napoleonic Wars, and his contacts with various ethnic and confessional groups in the empire (the Chechens, Tatars, Old believers, Dukhobors, and so on); Gandhi's imperial experience was of England, the center of the empire, his colonial emigration to South Africa, and so on. Both had some tint of an imperial mentality (Martin Green calls it enthusiasm for empire), such as for example interest in adventure like that of Robinson Crusoe, spirit of self-discipline like Benjamin Franklin, and an attitude of self-help like Samuel Smiles. Of course, they both became anti-imperialist in their mature age, but had learned something from the image of the diligent citizen of a modern empire.

Indeed, the personal experiences of Tolstoy and Gandhi were quite different. Russia was in itself the main body of the empire, which consisted of both a European (ruling) part and an Asian (ruled) part, while India was a colony of the British Empire, and contains within itself antagonism among confessional groups as well as the discriminative caste structure within the Hindu community. So Gandhi's game was much more complicated than Tolstoy's because he had to cope

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Green, *The Origins of Nonviolence: Tolstoy and Gandhi in Their Historical Settings* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Green, *The Origins of Nonviolence*, pp. 7-20.

with the task of the independence of India on the one hand and the liberation of India from various conventional prejudices and bondages on the other. His activities were closely related to the fate of India and he constantly talked on behalf of India, while Tolstoy could allow himself to speak on behalf of the whole of mankind. This might mean that Gandhi had a series of very concrete tasks to achieve before he could cope with the final aim (the realization of a world based on the “truth”), while there was nothing to prevent Tolstoy from aiming directly at the ideal, only showing on his way the idea of self-perfection through asceticism and nonviolence adapted to individual concrete issues. As Valentin Bulgakov wisely puts it, Gandhi’s nonviolence reminds us of a curious hybrid, that is, Tolstoy’s ethical idea of self-perfection mixed with Lenin’s design for social revolution.<sup>4</sup>

People’s perception of, and response to, their thoughts and activities were quite varied, so that each had abundant supporters, critics, and enemies.

As Tolstoy represented the mentality of the so-called repentant gentry, he found supporters among people of his own class (like Vladimir Chertkov and Pavel Biliukov), populist activists, socialists, Old believers, sectarians, and peasants. Some of such supporters gathered around him to join his activity, while others formed their own “Tolstoyan” communities, which once spread to several regions of Europe, Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Siberia, and then outside the Russian Empire. But most of the Tolstoyan communities were repressed by the 1930s under Stalin.

Tolstoy’s first and fiercest enemy was the Russian Orthodox Church. The Holy Synod headed by Konstantin Pobedonostsev together with the Imperial government was angered by Tolstoy’s “rationalistic” interpretation of the New Testament (his own version of the Gospels), his simplification of the Sermon on the Mount (as a message of nonviolence), and his criticism of the church ceremonies as falsification, and persecuted him with censorship and anti-Tolstoy propaganda. The Holy Synod finally excommunicated him in 1901, and this excommunication is still valid to this day. Among the other critics of Tolstoy’s nonviolence were liberalists, left populists (terrorists), socialists, communists, and religious philosophers, each of whom in his own way critically examined the feasibility of nonviolent methods of reforming Russian society.

Gandhi had fanatic followers from various spheres of Indian society and from abroad. He had also quite a few supporters of different profiles. As his activities directly concerned the real life and future orientation of the Indian people, nobody could be indifferent to his deeds. The English government was also among his watchers. But precisely because his idea was constantly tested by the unpredictable, real process of history, there is no telling who supported his tactics of nonviolence and who criticized them after all. In the book *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, editor Harold Coward lines up five individual critics of Gandhi (Neru, Ambedkar, Besant, Sri Aurobindo, and Tagore) and five groups that criticized him (the Hindu Mahasabha, Christian community, Sikhs, Indian Muslims, and the Urdu people), but most of these had once been his supporters or cooperators at the same time.

My main interest lies in a comparison of the experience of modernity by two Eurasian

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<sup>4</sup> В.Ф. Булгаков. Толстой, Ленин, Ганди. Прага, 1930 [[http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakow\\_w\\_f/text\\_0090.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakow_w_f/text_0090.shtml)].

countries (Russia and India) by comparing the ways in which the same kind of idea (nonviolence) was perceived and criticized in each society. This paper is mainly focused on the first half of the problem, that is, the critical perception of Tolstoy's thought in Russian society at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. This will eventually show how unique Gandhi's absolute devotion to Tolstoy's thoughts was and then how he skillfully adapted the idea of nonviolence to the political and moral agenda of the Indian society of his day. This aspect of the problem as well as the question of how Gandhi's thought was critically perceived in Indian society will be briefly touched upon in the last part of the paper.

## 2. Critical Perception of Tolstoy's Nonviolence in Russia

### 2.1 Critical dialogue with "sensible" citizens in Tolstoy's text

Before surveying contemporary criticism of Tolstoy, I would like to consider Tolstoy's own text on nonviolence, because it contains supposed responses of the contemporary people to his idea and serves as an imaginary dispute around this problem.

According to Tolstoy, the life of humanity changes and advances, like the life of the individual, by stages, and every stage has a theory of life appropriate to it. Now, humanity has outgrown its present social stage and has entered a new period. At such a time of transition, people ought to part with the old (pagan) concept of life and acquire a new (really Christian) one. By Christian doctrine, he means that of universal brotherhood, suppression of national distinctions, abolition of private property, and nonresistance to evil by force. But most people are not prepared to do so, and hence, there are various negative attitudes to Christ's message (*The Kingdom of God is Within You*,<sup>5</sup> ch. 5).

As he mentions, the idea of nonviolence has a range of predecessors in history.<sup>6</sup> But they have been neglected under the pressure of a tacit, but obstinate, conspiracy of silence around them. The significance of the Gospels is hidden from believers by the Church, and from unbelievers by Science (*The Kingdom of God*, ch. 3)

Tolstoy's version of the supposed pronouncements on nonresistance by believers and free thinkers is as follows.

#### Supposed criticism by Russian believers:

- 1) Violence does not run counter to Christ's teaching but is permitted and even enjoined on Christians.

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<sup>5</sup> Л.Н. Толстой. Царство Божие внутри вас. ПСС в 90-х томах. Т.28. For an English translation, I consulted the following versions: L. N. Tolstoy (translated by Aylmer Maude), *The Kingdom of God and Peace Essays* (London: Oxford UP, 1960); L. N. Tolstoy (translated by Constance Garnett), *The Kingdom of Heaven is Within You* (New York, 1894) [<http://www.kingdomnow.org/withinyou.html>].

<sup>6</sup> William Lloyd Garrison, "Declaration of Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention" (1838); Adin Ballou, "A Catechism of Non-Violence"; Chelicicky, *The Net of Faith* (fifteenth century); Dymond, "On War" (1824); Daniel Musser, *Non-resistance Asserted or The Kingdom of Christ and The Kingdom of this World Separated* (1864). He also mentions religious groups such as the Mennonites, Doukhobors, and Molokans (*The Kingdom of God*, ch. 1)

- 2) In spite of Christ's preaching to turn the other cheek, and give the shirt off one's back, too, there are wicked men in the world, and if these wicked men were not restrained by force, the whole world and all good men would come to ruin through them (St. John Chrysostom).
- 3) Though the command of nonresistance to evil by force is binding on the Christian when evil is directed against him personally, it ceases to be binding when the evil is directed against his neighbors, and the Christian is then not only not bound to fulfill the commandment, but is even bound to act in opposition to it in defense of his neighbors and to use force against their transgressors.
- 4) It is not proper to ascribe to the command of nonresistance to evil the special exclusive value attached to it by sectarians. This command has neither more nor less value than all the other commands, and the man who through weakness transgresses any command whatever, the command of nonresistance included, does not cease to be a Christian if he holds the true faith.
- 5) This question is one that has long ago been decided perfectly clearly and satisfactorily, and it is not worth discussing.

Supposed pronouncement of the conservatives:

This principle interferes with our activity in resisting the evil perpetrated by the revolutionaries.

Supposed pronouncement of the revolutionaries:

This principle interferes with our resistance to the evil perpetrated by the conservatives and with their overthrow.

Supposed criticism by foreign critics:

Such a doctrine is not strictly Christian but the Sermon on the Mount is only a series of very nice, unpractical reveries du charmant docteur, as Renan puts it, suitable for the naïve and semi-savage inhabitants of Galilee, but quite inapplicable to a high stage of European culture.

Supposed comments of foreign free thinkers:

The conviction that mankind can be guided by such a naïve doctrine as that of the Sermon on the Mount proceeds from two causes: that such a conviction is partly due to the person's want of knowledge, ignorance of history, and ignorance of all the vain attempts to apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount to life, which have been made in history and have led to nothing; and it is partly due to the person's failing to appreciate the full value of the lofty civilization that mankind has attained up to now, with its Krupp cannons, smokeless powder, colonization of Africa, the Irish Coercion Bill, parliamentary government, journalism, strikes, and the Eiffel Tower (*The Kingdom of God*, ch. 2)

In a later part, he adds another argument by the conservatives:

*“To get rid of governmental violence in a society in which all are not true Christians will only result in the wicked dominating the good and oppressing them with impunity,” say the champions of the existing order of things. “State violence can only cease when there are no more wicked men in society” (The Kingdom of God, ch. 10).*

In this way, Tolstoy presupposes possible versions of the religious and secular argument against nonviolence and tries to refute them as evidence of weak consciousness of the Christian Truth in each individual. Practically, his imaginary dispute covers most (if not all) of the logics of the counterargument by contemporary intellectuals.

Now, we are going to survey the real arguments by Russian critics about his idea of nonviolence. Everywhere will be found similar logics and nuances as presupposed by Tolstoy, only with different accents and orientations.

## **2.2 Tolstoy’s nonviolence theory in the context of Russian history**

Starting our survey of the critical comments of Tolstoy’s thoughts in Russia, I would like to propose a certain classification of them by the historical moment to which each utterance belongs. Of course, historical time does not necessarily play a decisive role in discussing this kind of “eternal” issue. But it does play a certain important role especially in the transitional period with many catastrophes, which will cause a rapid change of social mood or psychology. The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia were precisely such a period. So our observation will be separated into the following three periods from the 1880s through the 1920s.

### **2.2.1 Critical reviews of Tolstoyism in fin-de-siècle Russia (1880s-90s)**

In the 1880s and ’90s, under the reactionary policy of the autocratic government after *The People’s Will’s* assassination of Alexander II, Russian intellectuals experienced an inflow of new European ideas: Marxism (the foundation of the Emancipation of Labor Group by G. Plekhanov in Geneva in 1883), the new philosophy of F. Nietzsche, neo-Kantian philosophy, spiritualism, decadence, symbolism, and so on.

Tolstoy himself was in a state of transition from a popular novelist to a thinker-admonitor, and started to spread his warning messages to Russian society. He wrote a letter to the new tsar to persuade him to reduce the death sentence meted to terrorists (1881), issued his own translation of the Gospels (1881), wrote *A Confession* (1882), started to preach sexual abstinence, signed V. Soloviev’s “Protest against the anti-Semitic movement in the press” (1890), was committed to the relief activity for the victims of famine (1892), and led the exodus of the Russian Dukhobors to Canada (1899).

He gradually attracted disciples and sympathizers from among people of his own class, populist activists, socialists, Old Believers, sectarians, peasants, and ethnic minorities, and hence

became the object of curse, persecution, and caricature by the conservatives and extreme right-wingers. For some people, Tolstoy's idea of a nonviolent, religious community, part of which was also expressed in the style of folk tales, was no more than a fable, while for others, it would be one of the alternative designs for the future Russia.

The most noteworthy critical comments on Tolstoy's thought in this period are as follows.

A) Irresponsible logic of Tolstoy's "left hand": N. K. Mikhailovsky (1842-1904), "Again on Tolstoy" (1886)<sup>7</sup>

Nikolai Mikhailovsky is a critic with a populist background. He is famous for his essay "Lev Tolstoy's Right Hand and Left Hand" (1878), where he develops his impression as a once-ardent reader of the writer that Tolstoy's world is a result of a curious cooperation of his right hand, which symbolizes commitment to social affairs, and his left hand, which symbolizes detachment or concentration on inner, personal affairs. In his later essays, he starts to deplore the fact that Tolstoy is gradually losing the function of his right hand and becoming a left-handed writer. For the critic, Tolstoy's theory of nonviolence only represents the negative virtue of non-commitment: "By resisting evil, you will only increase evil itself."

In his essay, "Again on Tolstoy" (1886), Mikhailovsky comments on the tale "Ivan the Fool" as a literary illustration of Tolstoy's theory of nonviolence. According to the critic, invasion of other tribes would cause much greater disaster (insult, injury, murder, rape, and blasphemy) than the disasters expressed in Tolstoy's tale. In theoretical discussion, one can hide all such details, and the defects of the theory may not be noticed. But one cannot do the same thing in artistic expression. The reader will immediately notice that Tolstoy's picture of foreign invasion is far from the real affair and will guess the reason. In Tolstoy's tale, such "lies" are compensated by expression of the sorrows of the villagers. Illustrating his theory by a tale, Tolstoy must have realized the conflict between theory and life, and could not but reveal the defects of his own theory by his artistic tact. After all, Tolstoy the artist could not help admitting that there are such kinds of violence to which we cannot ourselves relate with the aphorism, "Submit to evil, and evil will submit to you."

Mikhailovsky also criticizes Tolstoy's logic that "peace is good just because it is peace, while war is bad just because it is war," saying that moral judgment concerning war and peace should depend upon "what the war is for or what the peaceful relations are based on." This sort of argument was to be repeated by later critics, including Mr. Z from V. Soloviev's "Three Conversations" (1899): War is not an absolute evil, peace is not an absolute good; there are good wars and bad peace; and there are cases of the inevitable use of violence in order to cope with evil.<sup>8</sup>

Mikhailovsky and Soloviev also share a humanist concern about the fate of innocent victims

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<sup>7</sup> Н.К. Михайловский. Опять о Толстом // С.П. Бычков (ред). Л.Н. Толстой в русской критике. Москва, 1952. С. 320-327.

<sup>8</sup> К.Г. Исаупов (Сост.) Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. СПб.: РХГИ, 2000. С. 170.

who are to be saved from violence (a point presupposed by Tolstoy).

- B) Forgetting man's animal nature: N. Ya. Grot (1852-1899), "Moral Ideals of Our Day: Friedrich Nietzsche and Leo Tolstoy" (1893)<sup>9</sup>

Psychologist Nikolai Grot's comparison of Nietzsche and Tolstoy well betrays the interest of the time. This critic-psychologist found the following parallels between the two thinkers:

- 1) Radical criticism of the ethical standard of the contemporary world
- 2) Anti-church, anti-state tendency
- 3) Idea of a new man and new society liberated from historical prejudice
- 4) Tendency to individualism

Grot then counts the following aspects as indicators of their differences:

Nietzsche: Preference for an ancient, pagan worldview on Christian morality; aesthetic rationalism; the ideal of "superman" on the basis of exploitation of the masses; anarchism; tendency to see the elements of the beast, evil, crime, and egoism in human nature

Tolstoy: Belief in the Christian morals of the Gospels; rational moralism; impartial evaluation of each person on the basis of freedom and nonviolence; anti-anarchism; tendency to regard meekness, endurance, self-renunciation, and love as the most essential human nature

What Grot regards as a defect of Tolstoyism lies not in the moral sphere because he thinks Tolstoy ideally understood the moral teachings of Christ. Tolstoy's mistake lies in his excessive idealism and spiritualism (anti-materialism), which neglects the duality of human nature, the basis of the Christian metaphysics of the Fall and Redemption. Emphasizing man's rationality and spirituality, Tolstoy so easily forgot about the other, animal or material, aspect of our existence that he too naïvely believes in the perfect quality of human nature and the possibility of a man acquiring self-sufficient virtue, irrespective of any external norms of activity.

This "existentialist" comment on Tolstoy was also to be repeated by various critics.

- C) Oversimplification of the Gospels' message: V. V. Rozanov (1856-1906), "Again on Count L. N. Tolstoy and His Teaching of Nonresistance to Evil" (1896)<sup>10</sup>

Vasily Rozanov, a unique synthesizer of Christian philosophy with the worship of sex and the body, tried to examine Tolstoy's moral idea in the light of the Gospels' message. He found the following defects of Tolstoy's argument.

- 1) Tolstoy is no more than a novelist and is not endowed with the power of a prophet. His verbosity prevents his message from reaching the human mind.
- 2) His idea of "Do not resist evil by any means" is a misinterpretation of Christ's message.

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<sup>9</sup> Н.Я. Грот. Нравственные идеалы нашего времени (Фридрих Ницше и Лев Толстой) // Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. С. 196-215.

<sup>10</sup> В.В. Розанов. Еще о гр. Толстом и его учении о непротавлении злу // Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. С. 264-273.



It is not true in the literary sense and it is not the most important message of the Gospels.

- 3) In the Gospels, there is a series of important messages, which should be fulfilled one after another: To love God; to love your neighbor like yourself; to rid God's temple of unsuitable institutions; and not to resist evil.
- 4) Tolstoy negates the idea of active love in the Gospels. As it is impossible to persuade a burglar by words, nonresistance practically means to close your eyes to evil deeds.
- 5) Resistance to evil by force is not only permitted but is also required in the Gospels.
- 6) A man struggles against, first of all, his own evil, and then the evil within other people. Throughout life, and all through history, man fights against demonic powers with the help of the divine power within himself. The Church and the Court are the keystones in this fight.
- 7) Tolstoy seems to be extinguishing the spark of fire that the Savior lighted within us.

Here, Rozanov apparently takes Tolstoy's message not as nonresistance to evil by evil (violence) but as nonresistance to evil at all. This is also the case with other critics of nonviolence.

D) Toward a positive definition of "good": N. F. Fyodorov (1829-1903) "What is Good?" (1933)<sup>11</sup>

Among the voices critical of Tolstoy in the 1990s, Nikolai Fyodorov's sounds the most radical because it finds moral value not in the negative prohibition of violence but in the active deed of resurrection.

In Fyodorov's opinion, Tolstoy knows only the negative side of good (what good is *not*), but does not know its positive side (what good *is*). Tolstoy finds the aim of art not in the realization of what the son of mankind bears in himself, but in unification of mankind in one emotion, whose content he does not know. When he names this emotion "brotherhood," he forgets that people can be brothers only thanks to their fathers and ancestors. If people forget their fathers, they will become aliens. Hence, what Tolstoy calls brotherhood is not brotherhood at all.

"Good" is life itself. Not to annihilate life ("Do not kill") is only a negative definition of good. Its positive definition is to keep life and recover lost life. Good consists in the promise of eternal life to those who are alive and the resurrection of those who are dead. This logic is directly related to this philosopher's cosmic project of total resurrection of our Fathers.

### **2.2.2 Anti-nonviolence in a declining Russia (first decade of twentieth century)**

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Russia's crisis became evident. Russia lost the Russo-Japanese War, experienced general strikes, the first revolution, foundation of the first Duma (Congress), the bloody reforms under Stolypin, and the assassination of this prime minister. Tolstoy, who was excommunicated from the Orthodox Church in 1901, gradually faded away from

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<sup>11</sup> Н.Ф. Федоров. Что такое добро? // Н.Ф. Федоров. Сочинения. Москва, 1982. С. 607-610.

the platform of Russia's public opinion, partly owing to the prohibition of publication of his writings, and partly owing to the seemingly impracticable fundamentalism of his ideas. But his influence spread to the outer world by a series of critical appeals concerning political issues: anti-war propaganda ("Bethink Yourselves," 1904), the anti-revolution message (1905), and the anti-capital punishment appeal ("I Cannot Be Silent," 1908). He also developed contact with Asian people, who were oppressed by European imperialism (*A Letter to a Chinese*, 1906; *A Letter to a Hindu*, 1908). At the end of this decade, Tolstoy once again attracted the attention of society by his sudden running away from home and his scandalous death at a local station. This offered society an opportunity to discuss the total meaning of Tolstoyism once again.

The most noteworthy reviews of Tolstoy's thought in this period are as follows.

- E) Marxist view of nonviolence: V. I. Lenin (1870-1924), "*Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution*" (1908)<sup>12</sup>; G. V. Plekhanov (1856-1918), "Karl Marx and Lev Tolstoy" (1911)<sup>13</sup>

Vladimir Lenin's characterization of Tolstoyism was simple enough to be the official standard of Soviet criticism. In his opinion, Tolstoy's idea was the expression of the contradictions in Russian social life of the last third of the nineteenth century and represents the protest of the patriarchal Russian peasants against poverty and the loss of land in the age of capitalism. In short, both the merits and demerits of Tolstoyism reflect the specificity of Russia's peasant-bourgeois revolution.

Georgy Plekhanov develops the same kind of view through a comparison of Marx and Tolstoy. Unlike Marx, a dialectist and materialist, Tolstoy was an idealist and metaphysician. This is why he categorizes relative concepts, such as "evil" or "good," as absolute ones, while in the real world, all depends upon the situation and social condition. The moral sanction of war is also relative, depending upon what war it is (which traces Mikhailovsky's point).

In terms of class consciousness, Tolstoy tends to think from the viewpoint of the gentry class, that is, from the side of the oppressor, the exploiting class, and discusses the moral harm of oppression for the oppressors (not the harm for or agony of the oppressed). Besides, Tolstoy was a subjectivist and had no access to solidarity with the revolutionary masses.

As a result, he could stand on neither side of Russia's liberation movement, that is, he was neither revolutionary nor reactionary, but just remained an onlooker. This is why his ideas worked just as general, abstract aphorisms. His only achievement is a literary depiction of the exploitation of the people by the upper classes.

- F) How to conquer moral dogmatism: S. L. Frank (1877-1950), "Moral Doctrine of L. N. Tolstoy (to commemorate the eighty-year anniversary of the birth of Tolstoy)" (1908)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> В.И. Ленин. Лев Толстой как зеркало русской революции // Л.Н. Толстой в русской критике. С. 57-62.

<sup>13</sup> Г.В. Плеханов. Карл Маркс и Лев Толстой. // Л.Н. Толстой в русской критике. С. 405-427.

<sup>14</sup> С.Л. Франк. Нравственное учение Л.Н. Толстого // Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. С. 299-308.

Semen Frank, a religious philosopher and psychologist, positively accepted the core idea of nonviolence. In his opinion, Tolstoy is the strongest spokesman of the Christian idea of conquering evil by goodness, hatred by love, and anger by meekness in the contemporary world and in this sense, is the direct antipode of the Marxists.

Although Frank finds a problem with Tolstoy in his moral dogmatism, and in this point, his criticism sounds like those by Mikhailovsky and the Marxists, he argues that Tolstoyism is one-sided idea only with great logical power. The difficulty of disproving it lies in the fact that his idea is the fearless and logically irreproachable result of dominant premises (not resisting evil by violence, for example). By simple logic, Tolstoy shows the contradictions and inconsistency in the dominant moral consciousness in relation to the original premises.

His weakness lies in that he regards the premises themselves as perfectly inviolable, so that he neglects the necessity of examining his starting point itself. In fact, the starting point of his moral decision lacks axiomatic authenticity. One should not see evil in certain external deeds, in violence, lying, drinking wine, eating meat, and so on. Similar acts can be good in one case, but bad in another. It depends upon their motivation, internal meaning, and aim pursued. The criterion of good versus evil can be applied in an absolute sense only to our state of mind, to our internal order of personality. One who attaches to them absolute, fixed criteria will fall into dogmatism.

Tolstoy's case is characteristic Russian dogmatism like that of the Old Believers. To conquer Tolstoy's moral dogmatism is itself to conquer the moral mentality of political radicalism.

In Frank's opinion, evaluation of Tolstoy's moral individualism (Mikhailovsky's "left hand") differs according to the times: At the moment of cruel reaction and intensive request for political reform, Tolstoy's call for self-perfection and non-commitment was answered by protest. But now, after the first revolution, when we look back with hindsight, we cannot but recognize that Tolstoy was correct, because, after all, social reform depends upon the moral reform of each citizen.

G) Missing the total image of Christ: E. N. Trubetskoi (1863-1920), "Dispute between Tolstoy and Soloviev about the State" (1910)<sup>15</sup>

Evgeny Trubetskoi, a jurist, attributes what Frank calls moral dogmatism to the misperception of Christ's image in the Gospels. His argument consists of the following points:

- 1) Tolstoy approves the commandment of nonresistance to evil as an absolute moral discipline, which expresses the essence and meaning of the Christian doctrine concerning the Divine Kingdom. On the other hand, in the genuine Christian understanding of life, this discipline is endowed with just a subordinate and limited meaning. It is not the aim itself but just the medium of establishing the mystical principle of all-oneness in human relations. The sword, war, and defensive measures of the state are not evil in themselves but are a means to cope with evil.

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<sup>15</sup> Е.Н. Трубецкой. Спор Толстого и Соловьева о государстве // О религии Льва Толстого. Москва: Путь, 1912. С. 59-76.

- 2) Tolstoy bases his argument on separate texts from the Gospels, taken out of their total context, and leaves aside the highest principle for Christians—the total image of Christ.
- 3) The Gospels contain the concept of tolerance toward states and military service. Hence, Tolstoy unconsciously accuses Christ's way of thinking.

### **2.2.3 Critical reviews of Tolstoyism under World War I, the Russian Revolution, through the early Soviet period**

In the following two decades, Russia experienced drastic change: World War I, the February and October Revolutions, civil war, large-scale emigration and exiles, construction of a socialist country, collectivization of agriculture, and so on. Tolstoy's ideas lost actual meaning except for some Tolstoyans. Yet toward the end of this period, certain thinkers, especially those who had emigrated to the West, attempted a total examination of his idea of nonviolence in the light of their own experiences of world war and revolution. The serious investigation of his idea by I. Ilyin and the thoughtful comparison of Tolstoy, Lenin, and Gandhi by V. Bulgakov were both written in the 1920s.

H) The difficulty of moral subjectivism: P. I. Novgorodtsev (1866-1924), "On the Social Ideal" (1917)<sup>16</sup>

In the year of the Russian Revolution, Pavel Novgorodtsev, a philosopher, sociologist, and jurist, published a symbolic essay on social ideals, which contains an interesting trial of mediation between individualism and collectivism.

He calls Tolstoy's position moral subjectivism, which locates itself between absolute individualism and absolute collectivism. Tolstoy's basic concepts, as classified by Novgorodtsev, are as follows:

- 1) The world is based on absolute reason.
- 2) The meaning of life lies in building the Kingdom of God on the earth that is, changing a violent, obligatory, cruel, and hateful society into a loving, brotherly society.
- 3) The only means of our moral development is self-perfection of our own personality and hence of our society.

Tolstoy is against social movements because genuine social reform will be possible only by religious and ethical perfection of each personality, whereas on the way to perfection, one is not alone but God is always with one.

According to Novgorodtsev, Tolstoy was not free from the following problems:

- 1) He had a tendency to moral absolutism of the "all or nothing" type.
- 2) Moral subjectivism can be used as a cover to hide one's indifference to social well-being or one's powerlessness to improve the situation.

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<sup>16</sup> П. И. Новгородцев. Об общественном идеале // Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. С. 309-330.

- 3) Tolstoy's thought was too one-sided and irreconcilable, so that it could hardly become a discipline of social movement.

In fact, Tolstoy was not alien to more concrete ways of social reform: emancipation of the serfs, denial of private possession, introduction of a single taxation system, and so on. But he was so inculcated with the idea of self-perfection that he came to eliminate any relative or limited way of social reform after all.

Though personality is an absolute unit, it is not self-sufficient. Society consists of people, who are bound by a single moral ideal. Even if a person's spiritual life is wider and deeper than politics and society, it does not mean that politics loses its meaning in its limited but inevitable sphere. Such was Novgorodtsev's argument.

- I) Retrospective utopia: A. V. Lunacharsky (1875-1933), *Tolstoy and Marx* (1924)<sup>17</sup>

Anatoly Lunacharsky, commissar of the enlightenment in the first Soviet government and Lenin's ideological rival as a follower of empirio-criticist philosophy, curiously admits in the first decade of the Soviet era the potential importance of Tolstoy's idea for Russian society, saying that Marxism and Tolstoyism are two of the essential ideologies that divide people in Russia or indeed all human beings. Of course, as a Marxist, he did not forget to mention the historical background to the ideology. According to him, Tolstoyism was the product of the historical period, when a new social formation (concentration of capital and development of commerce and industry) calls forth prophets who will speak out about the idea of turning back the wheels of history, which is itself the ideology of the petit bourgeoisie. Tolstoyism is similar to Rousseauism in that it idealizes the uncivilized, natural state of life.

Lunacharsky also claims that Gandhi is a genuine Indian Tolstoy.

- J) Call for a common front against evil: I. A. Ilyin (1883-1954), *On Resistance to Evil by Power* (1925)<sup>18</sup>

Ivan Ilyin, a religious and political philosopher, white émigré publicist and ideologue of the Russian All-Military Union, published in 1925 a comprehensive criticism of Tolstoy's thoughts. The specificity of his criticism is, I believe, that it is based on the feelings of a person who experienced World War I and the Russian Revolution as a really serious ordeal that all human beings as well as all human thoughts have undergone. The following sums up his initial standpoint: Our generation has experienced evil of unprecedented power. The naïvety of all-equalizing, abstract morals has long been exposed in the field of philosophy. It is nonsense to require that "all always" or "none ever" should resist evil with power.

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<sup>17</sup> А.В. Луначарский. Толстой и Маркс. Ленинград: Academia, 1924.

<sup>18</sup> И.А. Ильин. О сопротивлении злу силою. Берлин, 1925.

Then, Ilyin enumerates the basic premises of Tolstoyism, which may well seem too naïve in the light of the above-mentioned experiences.

- 1) There is no awful evil, but just harmless delusions and errors, weaknesses, passions, sins, and degradation.
- 2) If evil appears in others, we should turn away and ignore it without judging people for it.
- 3) The problem of judging people for their evil does not occur to the loving man. To love others is to feel pity for them and let them also love, without causing any distress to them, so that love excludes any possibility of physical resistance to evil.
- 4) The problem of resistance to evil is in itself vain, because the moral person cares only about his own self-perfection and gives others the freedom of self-control, leaving everything to the mercy of God's will.
- 5) Even if we fight against outer evil, there are always better and more expedient ways and methods to do so than by violence.

Ilyin's criticism of Tolstoy's nonviolence roughly consists of the following arguments:

Personal and social aspects of evil: Man is a social animal and all people are inevitably connected with each other in moral affairs. We are always confronted by the power of evil from outside as well as from within ourselves. Neither good nor evil has a purely "personal" or "private" nature in human life, so the idea of self-perfection separated from the problem of social evil cannot be justified.

- 1) Common front against evil: Our community should form a common front against evil, where nonresistance to the enemy (evil) will mean accepting it and betraying the common front.
- 2) What evil is and what the fight against evil is: Evil is an insurmountable power, endowed with four basic aspects: commonality, aggression, cunning, and diversity. Overcoming evil is a long process of fighting against evil emotions, evil intentions, and evil deeds, and we must distinguish the concept of violence from the concept of compulsion or correction in this process.
- 3) What to love and what to fight against: Christ's message to love your enemy means to love your own enemy, but not the enemy of God. There must be no reconciliation on our side with evil against God, and one must fight against it. The purpose of the fight should be not personal revenge but a compulsion or a correction of evil. To love all without any distinction between good and evil is no more than sentimental philanthropy. One must follow a selective love.
- 4) Nonviolence is not a means but an end: It takes thousands of years to restrain and re-educate human-faced animals into a social and disciplined existence. So nonviolence is no more than the result of such improvement in future, not the condition or means of the fight against evil.
- 5) Defects of Tolstoyism: Tolstoy tries to compensate for lack of religious experience with moral experience. He analyzes religious dogmas with simple common reason. His is a

religious nihilism, a moral utilitarianism, an esthetical nihilism, a legal, state, and patriotic nihilism, and an anti-spiritual hedonism. Tolstoy's position is no more than that of the sentimental, self-oriented, egocentric, subjectivist, and rational moralist, which has no power to overcome the catastrophes of the modern world.

K) What Gandhi added to Tolstoyism: V. F. Bulgakov (1886-1966), *Tolstoy, Lenin, Gandhi* (1930)<sup>19</sup>

Valentin Bulgakov was Tolstoy's last secretary; he wrote an autobiography, led anti-war activities in exile, and finally returned to the Soviet Union and became the head of the Tolstoy Museum in Yasnaya Polyana. In 1930, he published in Prague a quite curious essay, in which he attempts a comparative study of Tolstoy, Lenin, and Gandhi. These three are, in his opinion, the most important and impressive advisors of mankind, who will show us where and how to go after the cataclysm of World War I. The most interesting point for us is that Bulgakov treats Gandhi as heir to and completer of Tolstoy's idea of nonviolence.

As he counts the merits and demerits of the three leading figures of the twentieth century, let us summarize his argument.

- 1) Tolstoy's merit: Tolstoy is right in that the human soul is, after all, in any condition, the center, around which all rotates in the world. The happiness of the world depends upon how individual people are. Self-perfection, the basic commandment of Tolstoy's catechism, cannot but remain an inevitable base of man's reasonable life.
- 2) Tolstoy's demerit: Tolstoy is a religious subjectivist and is not interested in the physical conditions of our life. According to Tolstoy's dogma, our personal non-commitment to war and revolution is enough to have a clear conscience and to be free from responsibility for the fact that such tragedies are happening and will happen. He has no practical picture of a better, future life, and hence no concrete, active tactics for organizing social power and realizing a fair social system.
- 3) Lenin's merit: Lenin has the power of sympathy with the repressed and the theory and tactics for freeing the working classes.
- 4) Lenin's demerit: Lenin does not understand the value of a man as such, and is not interested in the individual person, hence the cruel violence of his politics.
- 5) Gandhi's merit: Gandhi's scheme is a kind of synthesis of Tolstoy's idea of self-perfection and Lenin's tactics for organizing the people's power and realizing a good society.
- 6) Gandhi's method of peaceful resistance, noncooperation, and nonviolence is useful only when the people committed are prepared for the idea and understand its essence. He is also so concerned with the liberation of the Indian nation that he is sometimes under the influence of Indian nationalists.

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<sup>19</sup> В. Ф. Булгаков. Толстой, Ленин, Ганди. Прага, 1930.

### 3. From Tolstoy to Gandhi: Toward a Comparative Study

Russian intellectuals in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth century criticized Tolstoy from various viewpoints: the unreality of his utopian, idealist, or metaphysical understanding of evil; dogmatism in moral judgment; self-righteousness, which is blind to the agony of the innocent victims of violence; ignorance of the duality of the human mind; oversimplification of the Gospels' messages or lack of Christ's image; absence of a positive aim; limitation by historical or class background; moral individualism or subjectivism; mistaking of means for ends; religious nihilism and moral utilitarianism; lack of a practical approach to real life; and so on.

As is mentioned above, most of the arguments trace the counter logic that Tolstoy presupposed against his theory.

What is the most interesting for us is that Gandhi's idea of nonviolence has also gone through a similar kind of criticism by representatives of various ideological or political groups, a comprehensive picture of which we can see in Harold Coward's splendid collection of articles *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, especially in its conclusion by Julius Lipner.<sup>20</sup>

For example, Bhim Rao Ambedkar, leader of the movement against caste discrimination, who cooperated with Gandhi in refraining from physical violence, did not hesitate to recommend another form of violence, that is, destruction of the Hindu scriptures that seem to support caste discrimination. He could not share Gandhi's moderate idea of reinterpreting the scriptures in a more democratic way.

Muslims were also reluctant to accept nonviolence as an absolute moral imperative, though they were prepared to use it as a limited strategy or policy. Muslim religious scholar Abul Kalam Azad was prepared to support the British war effort during World War II if the British had promised freedom for India in return. This position was shared by Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, and others. For those people, like for the many Russians cited above, nonviolence could be a good means but not the end itself.

By some people, Gandhi's ideology of nonviolence was perceived as just immoral. Sri Aurobindo, Indian nationalist leader, issued his "Doctrine of Passive Resistance," where he justifies violence on the basis of the *Bhagavad Gita*. According to his religion of Integral Yoga, both violence and nonviolence have necessary parts to play in the process of evolutionary transformation of the self and the universe. According to V. D. Savarkar, author of *Hindutva* and president of Hindu Mahasabha (1937-42), violence (both physical and military) is necessary in human affairs not only as an occasional strategic ploy, but because it is a law of human nature, at least in its present condition, when the law of the jungle prevails. For him, nations, which are superior in military strength, are bound to survive and dominate, while those that are militarily weak shall be politically subjected or cease to exist at all. From the viewpoint of these theories,

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<sup>20</sup> Julius Lipner "Conclusion: A Debate for Our Times" in Harold Coward (ed.), *Indian Critiques of Gandhi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).



Gandhi's concept that "nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute" seems an anti-human prejudice or monomaniacal senselessness. This reminds us of the Russian criticisms of Tolstoy's "dogmatism" in moral judgment, "self-righteousness," which is blind to the anguish of the blameless victims of aggression, "ignorance" of the duality of the human mind, religious "nihilism," moral "utilitarianism," lack of a practical approach to real life, and so on.

People who cared for a more moderate way toward the liberation of Indian society were cautious about certain practical aspects of Gandhi's nonviolence movement. Annie Besant from the Theosophical Society, Charles Andrews from the Indian Christian community, and the poet Rabindranath Tagore each in his/her own way regarded Gandhi's tactics of noncooperation, civil disobedience, and fasting as abuse of satyagraha and ahimsa, which will intensify social antagonism in vain. Gandhi's endorsement of the burning of foreign cloth was the most ambivalent or doubtful step for these people. Andrews and Tagore were also cautious about Gandhi's self-righteousness in campaigns of nonviolent resistance. People were also perplexed by Gandhi's apparent arbitrariness, his abrupt changes of policy without prior notice, and his intransigent attention to the inner voice. This also somewhat reminds us of critical comments on Tolstoy's "dangerous extremity," "abruptness," and "craziness."

In short, Gandhi's nonviolence theory, which was in fact a quite complicated mixture of ideology, strategy, and creed, or an integration of religion, social concerns, and politics, was by no means understood or shared by most of the people around him. Neither was his "inclusivist" way of thought, where Hindus, Buddhist, Jains, and Sikhs all flow into the vast ocean of Hinduism.

But realizing the difficulties and criticism Gandhi's idea had to go through in Indian society, we are all the more curious to know why and how nonviolence could work as a binding idea for Indian society on her way to independence. Why was Gandhi able to "synthesize Tolstoy's idea of self-perfection and Lenin's tactics for organizing the people's power and realizing a good society," as Valentin Bulgakov puts it? Was it due to the unique synthetic personality of Gandhi himself, to the background to the religious or philosophical culture of Indian society, to the historical experience of the Indian people that is filled with glories and hardships, or to the existence of appropriate social institutions for negotiation among various groups, such as the Indian National Congress or All-India Home Rule League, which had no counterpart in Tolstoy's Russia?

Though I have to stop my essay here halfway, I believe it will be worth our while to seek answers to such questions in the framework of our cooperative research project, that is, the comparative study of the cultures of Eurasian countries.

**Nonviolence by Tolstoy and Gandhi: Timeline**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Social Affairs</i>	<i>Tolstoy's &amp; Gandhi's Lives</i>	<i>Major Publications</i>
1828		T is born in Tula.	
1845		T enters Kazan University.	
1847		T inherits 4,000 acres at Yasnaya Polyana.	
1848	February Revolution, Communist Manifesto		
1849	Petrashkevsky Affair		
1851	SPb.-Moscow Railway	T travels to the Caucasus and joins the army.	
1852			T: "Childhood"
1853	Crimean War (-1855)		T: "The Raid"
1854		T fights along the Danube and then in Crimea.	
1855	Fall of Sevastopol		T: "Sevastopol Sketches"
1857		T is shocked by a Guillotine execution in Paris.	
1859	<i>On the Origin of Species</i>	T opens a school on the estate.	
1861	Emancipation of the serfs	T is nominated a member of an agro-mediation committee.	
1862	T's house was searched by the police.	T's Marriage	T issues journal <i>Yasnaya Polyana</i> .
1863	Polish Rebellion		T: <i>The Cossacks</i>
1866		T. defends a soldier in a court martial trial.	
1869		G is born in Gujarat.	T: <i>War and Peace</i> completed
1871		T buys 6700 acres in Samara	
1872			T: Textbook <i>Azbuka</i>
1873	Populist movement (-1875)	T's relief activity for the famine in Samara	
1876	Queen Victoria becomes empress of India.		
1877	Russo-Turkish War		
1878	Terrorism prevails in Russia.	T's depression and suicidal feelings	T: <i>Anna Karenina</i> completed
1881	Assassination of Alexander II	T's letter to the new tsar to persuade him to reduce the death sentence handed to terrorists	T: <i>The Gospels</i> (translation) T moves to Moscow.
1882	Census of Moscow First Theosophical Society in India	Tolstoyism movement prevails.	T: <i>A Confession</i>
1885	Indian National Congress convention		

Nonviolence by Tolstoy & Gandhi: Toward a Comparison through Criticism

<b>1886</b>	George Kennan visits T and talks about Siberian exile and nonviolence.		T: <i>The Death of Ivan Ilich</i> ; "What Then Should We Do?"
<b>1888</b>		T preaches sexual abstinence. G leaves for England to study law.	T: "On Life"
<b>1889</b>			T: <i>The Kreutzer Sonata</i>
<b>1891</b>	Famine in Russia (-1893)	T renounces his possessions.	
<b>1892</b>	Lotus and Dagger society in London	T's relief activity for the famine (91-93)	
<b>1893</b>	Government discredits T as a revolutionary.	G goes to South Africa as a lawyer.	T: <i>The Kingdom of God is Within You</i> G reads it in SA.
<b>1894</b>	Dreyfus Affair	G founds the Natal Indian Congress in SA.	T: <i>Christianity and Patriotism</i>
<b>1895</b>		T drafts a will to abandon all copyright at his death.	T: "Be Ashamed"
<b>1896</b>	Famine in India		T: <i>Patriotism or Peace</i>
<b>1897</b>	Zionist movement	Persecution of Tolstoyans	
<b>1898</b>	Famine in India (-1900)		
<b>1899</b>	Boer War in SA (-1902) V. D. Savarkar's revolutionary organization Mitra Mela	Exodus of the Russian Dukhobors to Canada G organizes an ambulance corps for the British.	T: <i>Resurrection</i>
<b>1901</b>		T is excommunicated from the Orthodox Church. G returns home and attends the INC.	
<b>1902</b>		T's appeal to Tsar Nicolas for the freedom of the nation	
<b>1904</b>	Russo-Japanese War (-1905)	T's anti-war propoganda	T: <i>Bethink Yourselves</i>
<b>1905</b>	First Russian Revolution	T's anti-revolution message	
<b>1906</b>	First Russian Duma (parliament)	G takes a vow of sexual abstinence.	
<b>1907</b>		G organizes Satyagraha (soul-force) against compulsory registration of Asians.	
<b>1908</b>		G is attacked and wounded by an Indian extremist. G is arrested and sentenced to two months in prison.	T: <i>A Letter to a Hindu</i> T: "I Cannot Be Silent" V. I. Lenin: <i>Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution</i>
<b>1909</b>	Assassination of Sir William Curzon by a follower of Savarkar	Correspondence between G and T	T's "The Subjection of India" with an introduction by G: "Hind Swaraj"
<b>1910</b>	Assassination of Russian prime minister Stolypin	T leaves home and dies in Astapovo local station. G establishes Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg.	T: "Superstition of the Nation"

1913	Tagore wins the Nobel prize for literature. The Muslim League calls for Muslim self-government.	G helps campaign against nullification of non-Christian marriages. G: Third Satyagraha campaign as a “great march” of 2000 miners, and G was arrested three times.	
1914	World War I (-18)	Satyagraha campaign is suspended.	
1915		G returns to India. G establishes the Satyagraha Ashram near Ahmedabad.	
1917	February Revolution October Revolution	Satyagraha campaign for rights of peasants on indigo plantations	
1918		Satyagraha campaign for peasants in the Kheda Viceroy's War Conference at Delhi agreed that Indians should be recruited for World War I.	
1919	Rowlatt Bills passed.	Nationwide hartal — suspension of activity for a day — against the Rowlatt Bills G suspended the Satyagraha campaign in penitence for violence.	G becomes editor of the English weekly <i>Young India</i> and the Gujarati weekly <i>Navajivan</i>
1920		G becomes president of the All-India Home Rule League.	
1921		G presides over a bonfire of foreign cloth in Bombay.	G: <i>The Story of My Experience with Truth</i> Tagore and Andrews criticize G's non-cooperation movement.
1922	Establishment of the Soviet Union	G suspends mass disobedience because of violence at Chauri Chaura. G is sentenced to six-year imprisonment in Yeravda Jail (-1924).	
1923			G writes <i>Satyagraha in South Africa</i> and part of his autobiography.
1924		21-day "great fast" as penance for communal rioting (between Hindus and Muslims)	
1925		G announces one-year political silence and immobility.	Tagore criticizes G's home spinning of cotton movement.
1928			G's speech at T's birth centenary
1929	The first five-year plan and collective agriculture in USSR	Congress declares complete independence and a boycott of the legislature, and fixes January 26 as National Independence Day. The third all-Indian Satyagraha campaign starts.	
1930		200-mile salt march from Sabamarti with 79 volunteers to the sea at Dandi	G: <i>Varnadharma and Duty of Labour</i>

1931		Gandhi-Irwin (Viceroy) Pact, ending civil disobedience	
1932		Two-year anti-untouchability campaign	Andrews criticizes G's fast-unto-death.
1933		Self-purification fast of 21 days against untouchability	
1934	Three separate attempts on G's life	All-India Village Industries Association	
1935			Ambedkar: <i>The Annihilation of Caste</i>
1939	World War II breaks out.	G's fast unto death as part of Satyagraha campaign in Rajkot	
1940	The Muslim League passes the Pakistan Resolution.	Civil disobedience campaign demanding self-rule in exchange for supporting Britain's war effort	
1942		Congress's "Quit India" resolution for immediate independence—the final nationwide Satyagraha campaign lead by Gandhi	
1944		G talks with Jinnah of the Muslim League in Bombay on Hindu- Muslim unity.	
1945			Ambedkar: <i>What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables</i>
1946	Cold War	Four-month tour of 49 villages in East Bengal to quell communal rioting over Muslim representation in provisional government	
1947	Congress decides to accept division of country into India and Pakistan. Nehru becomes first prime minister of India.	G opposes the decision of Congress.	
1948	India dissolves into chaos and killings.	G is assassinated by Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a Hindu nationalist.	