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**Ostracism**

Ostracism, or social boycott, is a weapon of the community against its members who refuse to join the general program of non-cooperation with the opponent. Thus he who refuses to non-cooperate is non-cooperated in turn. It is generally justified on the ground that by siding with the community's enemy he has forfeited all the privileges that are the result of community life.

The technique in a somewhat different form, has been used in the western world by strikers against the 'scabs'. In the latter use, the weapon has been used generally as form of intimidation. In India, this technique has its roots in antiquity. In fact the birth of the institution of untouchability is ascribed by some scholars to the Hindu practice of social boycott or excommunication of the offender.

Ostracism as such is a spontaneous by-product of the general attitude of non-cooperation. The satyagrahic use of it does not tend to penalize the dissenter but to remind of his unsocial attitude. Consequently, no physical harm is done to him or his relatives. Satyagrahis even see to it that the primary needs of the person ostracized – food, shelter, and clothing – are provided for. Otherwise, he is a political pariah beyond the pale of social intercourse. He has, however, a standing invitation to recant.

Gandhi personally does not look upon this practice with favor. He has declared himself against its use. He used to invite people of all castes and creed to his ashram and his was a "model ashram." Every time there arose a resistance from the inmates against the members who committed mistakes or violated the rules, he was allowed to correct himself by sheer practice of the good.

Ostracism, nowadays, is being followed in variety of forms. Many societies and communities see their non-cooperative members through a passive lens, offering them unjust isolation and neglect. The power center of such institutions are chasing all the time in retaining their headmanship, turning the non-cooperation into an enigma of unknown dimensions. Nobody knows what good the non-cooperation from two extreme ends would brought into.

Source: Interpreted from "War and Peace"



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Row over Hydro-carbon wells in Tamilnadu

After a stint of controversies around extracting methane, laying of pipelines across the state to carry natural gas and crude oil spillage along the seaside, now the farmers of Tamilnadu has aroused in protest against the central government's plan to extract hydro-carbons in south-eastern districts of the state.

Following the proposal by the previous UPA government to produce hydro-carbon based fuel, an alternative form of methane, wells have been dug during last few months in Karaikkal, Thiruvarur, Pudukkottai, Nagappattinam districts. While the Thiruvarur operations were halted due to protests from the farmers, the village of Neduvaasal near pudukkottai farmers along with the opposition parties and student groups want the centre to stop this project.

Hydro-carbons are highly present beneath the ground water-bed which might be a good alternative form of energy upon

processing. Just like borewells are dug to pump ground-water, wells have been dug for upto 200 feet. Traces of hydro-carbons are found both near the cultivable and arid lands. Farmers fear that the extraction of fuel would reduce water level in their wells and affect the crops as well. A possible environmental hazard is also expected as the people believe that these hydro-carbon wells emanate perilous odour and gaseous leakages.

It is understood that the approach of the government to establish this project was suspicious and malicious on certain grounds. First of all, people were told that the government wanted to extract kerosene from their farm fields. Later, the work was contracted to one private company which assured that its job is to just dig out bore wells. People are compensated with their irrigational water needs as a token of yielding their lands for this operation. Another misapproach on the part of the government is that its attempt to hide the actual kind of fuel being extracted from the farm lands. In certain parts of Tamilnadu, viz., Kadalur, Tanjore, Nagapattinam districts, ONGC's attempt to extract methane and natural gas was stopped by people. Here in Neduvaasal, Pudukkottai, it is quoted simply as hydro-carbon fuel, not the exact type.

Currently, the people of Neduvaasal feel that they are deprived of their fertile lands apprehending the spoilage of the entire environment including soil, water, crops and other health disorders.

With many activists and social groups urging the centre to stop the project and threatening to stage a larger hunger-protest in coming days, Neduvaasal has become a village of focus these days. Earlier, daily waged workers were thronging to this village for works on this operation; now, environmental protectionists and social workers are heading towards this small village to attend the people's despair. The centre must keenly look in to this issue to wipe out their tears of fear and insecurity of their lives.

The following are the aspects on which it should take appropriate moves.

1. Leasing out to a private company for a fresh-new project creates panic among the localites. Government should take up the work on its own under its public-sector and assures all the compensation the people needed.
2. Government should disclose the actual type of fuel what is being extracted. The entire chemical nomenclature must be publicly displayed so as to avoid confusion over the benefits and ill-effects of the fuel.
3. If people are not convinced at the preserving of their natural environment, adequate measures must be taken. Since the project is already underway, stopping the project does not help. Abandoning of borewells and other establishments near the farm field would be more hazardous than carrying out the operation itself. A technical expertise is needed to dismantle the installed wells safely.

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The truth about Nonviolence

[The real truth about Gandhiji's philosophy was explained in his own words during the freedom struggle movement. His explanatory oration might clarify the bigger predicament over accepting Ahimsa as a policy for today's youth. And that is the magic and politics behind the philosophy of nonviolence in Gandhi's life. Read the following anecdote from India's history.]

Bardoli resolution (1922) was one episode when Gandhi was opposed severely within the congress circles. A series of events in carrying out the civil disobedience movement during 1920s had raised a serious question of the despotic character of Mahatma Gandhi who adhered to nonviolence, not letting the Congress to go with alternative ways of protests.

On January 29, ultimo it decided under the presidency of Vithalbhai Patel to embark on mass civil disobedience, having proved its fitness for it in terms of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee passed in its meet at Delhi during the first week of November last. The people of Bardoli taluk took a momentous decision to launch mass civil disobedience at a meeting of khaddar-clad representatives numbering 4,000, including 500 women.

The Working Committee of the Congress met on January 31 at Surat, and authorized the people of Bardoli the campaign and advised all other parts of India to co-operate in the Bardoli satyagraha by refraining from mass or individual civil disobedience of aggressive character, except upon the express consent of Gandhi previously obtained.

Bardoli district was the first unit for mass civil disobedience in order to mark the national revolt against the Government for its consistently criminal refusal to appreciate India's resolve regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab and Swaraj.

The Bardoli decision created consternation among the Congress leaders most of whom were in prison, and left the rank and file angry. Gandhi was criticized from all sides. Motilal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and others sent from prison indignant letters. Why should, asked Motilal Nehru, a town at the foot of the Himalayas be penalized, if a village at Cape Comorin failed to observe non-violence? Isolate Chauri Chaura and Gorakhpur, but go on with civil disobedience, individual and mass.

The resolution moved by Gandhi in March 1922, during the A.-I.C.C. meeting had some amendments in respect of the restoration of the right of individual civil disobedience and the right of picketing of the foreign cloth shops and liquor booths with the permission of the provincial committee concerned. Gandhi said that before civil disobedience could be launched, the people must be better prepared and he submitted a constructive programme.

Several members were dissatisfied with the slow progress of the movement, and they protested against the suspension of civil disobedience. Gandhi's methods, they said, were stifling the nation's ardour. Dr. Moonje and J. M. Sengupta suggested that this resolution be annulled. Maharashtra and Bengal openly opposed Gandhi. Why should civil disobedience not be continued? Why should a civil resister wear khaddar? Dr. Moonje had already confronted the Working Committee with the resolution of the Nagpur District Congress Committee permitting reservation in untouchability and swadeshi. Every line of the Bardoli resolution was subjected to scathing criticism. A vote of censure on Gandhi was moved by Dr. Moonje. Gandhi did not say a word in self-defence. In the absence of Ajmal Khan when Gandhi took the chair, he allowed the supporters of Dr. Moonje to speak and requested those in opposition to refrain from delivering any speech. The storm blew over.

In the end Gandhi triumphed. But he suffered keenly, for he realized that the majority was not backing him sincerely. He knew that some of those who voted for him called him "dictator" behind his back.

He knew that he no longer reflected the sentiment of the country. And he admitted this on March 2 explaining his stand and adherence to ahimsa in India's freedom movement:

"There is so much undercurrent of violence both conscious and unconscious, that I was actually and literally praying for a disastrous defeat. I have always been in a minority. In South Africa I started with practical unanimity, reached a minority of sixty-four and even sixteen, and went up again to a huge majority. The best and the most solid work was done in the wilderness of minority. I know that the only thing that the Government dreads is this huge majority I seem to command. They little know that I dread it even more than they. I have become literally sick of the adoration of the unthinking multitude. I would feel certain of my ground if I was spat upon by them.

A friend warned me against exploiting my 'dictatorship'. I have begun to wonder if I am not unconsciously allowing myself to be 'exploited'. I confess that I have a dread of it as I never had before. My only safety lies in my shamelessness. I have warned my friends of the committee that I am incorrigible. I shall continue to confess blunders each time the people commit them. The only tyrant I accept in this world is the 'still small voice' within.

And even though I have to face the prospect of a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority. That to me is the only truthful position. But I am a sadder and, I hope, a wiser man today. I see that our non-violence is skin-deep. We are burning with indignation. The Government is feeding it by its insensate acts. It seems almost as if the Government wants to see this land covered with murder, arson, and rapine in order to be able once more to claim exclusive ability to put them down.

"This non-violence, therefore, seems to be due merely to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true voluntary nonviolence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his fellow being? Of what avail is it, then, if I fast myself to death in the event of such a catastrophe coming to pass?

Let us be truthful. If it is by force that we wish to achieve swaraj, let us drop non-violence and offer such violence as we may. It would be a manly, honest and sober attitude, and no one can then accuse us of the terrible charge of hypocrisy. If, in spite of all my warning, the majority did not believe in our goal, although they accepted it without a single material change, I would ask them to realize their responsibility. They are not bound to rush to civil disobedience, but to settle down to the quiet work of construction. If we do not take care, we are likely to be drowned in the waters whose depth we do not know."

Turning to the minority, Gandhi said: "The patriotic spirit demands loyal and strict adherence to non-violence and truth. Those who do not believe in them should retire from the Congress organization."

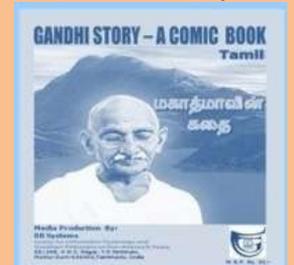
There was bitter sadness in these words. Gandhi's arrest was imminent. He wrote: "My removal from their midst will be a benefit to the people... it will give me a quiet and physical rest, which perhaps I deserve."



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Hate crimes – America at the loose again.

I could not stop myself from writing about the heinous crime happened in Kansas on 23rd of February this year in which an Indian techie, Srinivas Kuchibotla was shot in a restaurant by a gunman. “Get out of my country” – words howled by the shooter may be a symbol of his patriotism but the cruel form of its representation is what highly condemnable. This is not the single incident! Many times earlier Indian techies were victimized in similar brutal attacks.

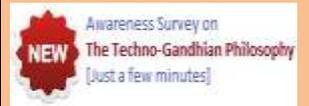
This shoot-out at the time of the President’s Donald Trump’s tight immigration plans definitely tells a scary fairy-tale to those who lives illegally in America, but not to America’s strong partner India. India has been a long-time friend to America; sadly the same is not communicated to the common man. Miscommunications and misunderstandings shall not be

the cause of hatred and violence. The land of immigrants from all over the world must surely know that America and the American government is not for such guns and violence.

India’s diplomatic mission and plans with the United States of America is on and always on. Efforts are being taken to neutralize the ill-aspects of the relationship between India and America. Nonetheless, attack on minorities in the land of equal opportunities is an unwelcome sign.

Such isolated incidents weaved alongside cordial relationship between two nations will never favor the vested. It won’t help India and America either. My heart-felt condolences for the deceased and his family. RIP.

- Balamurali Balaji, Founder President, TGF



Awareness Survey on the TGP

Non-native trees cause menace in Tamilnadu!

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in Madurai High Court to remove and stop planting non-native trees like Eucalyptus, Wattle and Pine indicating that these trees draw more of ground water causing a near complete depletion of ground water resource in a decade. The court has asked the Forest department of Tamilnadu government to respond to this petition.

In the meantime, activists and student groups along the districts of western ghats, and Kerala as well, have gather ground in protests and marches for the cause. Some regional parties too have taken stand in removal of these trees in Dindugal, Madurai, Ramnad and other southern districts of the state.



The exotic trees have been invasive during the last many years since 1970s. While the firewood needs of the yesteryears were the main cause of planting such trees in small numbers, it has grown drastically as the needs diversified. Today, these exotic trees are not only planted for making firewood, but for wood-pulp in paper industry, breweries and medicinal exports. Alongside the natural, native crops, these trees are also being planted for another reason: marginally huge profits.

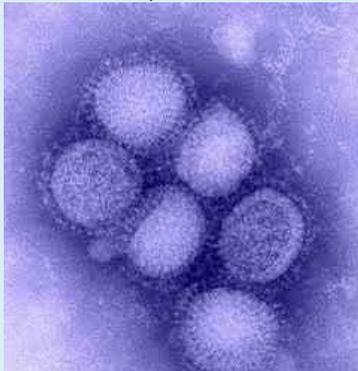
Now, environmentalists and researchers who were knocking their heads for preserving water and increasing water resources. are coming out with various plans to get rid of these trees.

The recent awakening about Wattle, Pine and Eucalyptus has created a spur among the villagers who are now put in a baffled state of living for they have two basic needs from their environment: One, adequate supply of water and two, firewood as an alternative form of kitchen fuel (even though half the villagers are equipped with LPG facility).

Uprooting of these trees will deprive the environment of atmospheric weather conditions and the firewood needs of the villagers. However, people have experienced the snag on these demonic trees that suck their groundwater liter by liter. In view of the fact that ground water is a major source of water in villages, this action is a far-fetched necessity.

Is there really a cure to treat Swine Flu?

The reports say that Swine Flu (H1N1) caused 1200 deaths in India in the last few months. Until the end of 2015, the death toll was 2280 all over India. Now, the number of affected cases has risen nearly to 40.000. These figures are continually on the rise not only in Tamilnadu but in Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat.



Year	Mortality (in numbers)
2017	1200
2015	812
2014	218
2013	699
2012	405
2011	75

This killer virus took its first toll during August 2009 when a 14-year old girl died in Pune. The stories of deaths began then, and continue to haunt various parts of India.

As of March 2015, 33,781 cases of H1N1 flu were reported while the death toll touched 2035. In 2017, these numbers grow as the death toll touches 4000 approximately.

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