





















The South African experience profoundly transformed Gandhi. The Gandhi who left South Africa in 1914 was very different to the Gandhi who had arrived in Natal in 1893. The most obvious difference was in his external appearance. He had shed his Western dress for a loincloth. From an ethico-religious point of view, he had renounced sex, began living communally as an ashram dweller and gave up all personal possessions.<sup>86</sup> There were changes in his politics and tactics of resistance as well. Gandhi lost faith in notion of an Empire embracing the coloniser and the colonised. He understood that there were clearly defined limits to Victorian Britishness as long as colonialism endured. E M Foster makes this point very lucidly in the closing paragraph of 'A Passage to India' when he writes that Fielding and Aziz, coloniser and colonized, could not be friends until the Indians had driven:

Every blasted Englishman in the sea... The horses didn't want it - they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House...: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.'<sup>87</sup>

As a result of unfair treatment by the British, Gandhi moved from petition politics to the politics of passive resistance. Unlike his outlook at the start of the war, when he was loyal to the British Empire, he came to see colonial rule as unjust and understood the limits to Britishness. Reflecting on this period during the 1920s, Gandhi wrote: 'If I had today the faith in the British empire which I then entertained, and if I now cherished the hope, which I did at that time, of achieving our freedom under its aegis, I would advance the same arguments', showing both the deep seated attachment to Empire and the shedding of that attachment.<sup>88</sup>

According to van der Veer colonialism and nationalism were closely intertwined, producing 'reified national cultures both in the colonies and "at home"'. European colonial expansion stimulated nationalism and the idea of territorially bounded national communities among colonised peoples.<sup>89</sup> In colonial countries nationalism was premised on opposition to alien rule. As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, in the absence of big merchants, native agrarian magnates, industrial entrepreneurs and a significant professional class, the intelligentsia was central to the rise of nationalism in the colonies.<sup>90</sup> This bilingual educated class had access to the 'models of nationalism, nation-ness, and nation-state produced elsewhere in the course of the nineteenth century'.<sup>91</sup> It allowed, according to Anthony Barnett, 'the intellectuals to say to their fellow-speakers [of the indigenous vernaculars] that "we" can be like "them"'.<sup>92</sup> Although the British had intended to produce a class of docile civil servants, their policy of limited liberal assimilation had profound deleterious consequences for them. By 'whetting' the appetite of the educated elite for government service without satisfying it, the government 'bred a class of seditious trouble-makers which was inclined to spread discontent and raise the standard of revolt'.<sup>93</sup> Gandhi represented this class of Indian, though his transition to 'seditious trouble-maker' was a long process. Gandhi's education in England exposed him to 'models of nationalism' while the racist treatment that he endured firsthand in

South Africa despite proclaiming his loyalty to the British Empire, made him understand that Indians were the 'other' of the British, and could only achieve independence outside of Empire.

<sup>1</sup> See J T F Jordens, Gandhi's Religion. A Homespun Shawl, (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1998)

<sup>2</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (London: Verso, 1983)

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Imagined Communities, 113

<sup>4</sup> H Woodrow ed., The Indian Educational Minute of Lord Macaulay, (Calcutta: Ajanta International, 1865), 6

<sup>5</sup> M K Gandhi, The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 1, (Government of India: Publication House, 1958), 53-4

<sup>6</sup> Jordens, Gandhi's Religion, 9 ; For a full account of Gandhi's London experience see James D Hunt, Gandhi in London, (New Delhi : Promilla & Co., 1993)

<sup>7</sup> Judith M Brown, Gandhi. Prisoner of Hope, (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 23

<sup>8</sup> F Meer ed. The South African Gandhi. An Abstract of the Speeches and Writings of M. K. Gandhi, 1893-1914, (Durban : Madiba Publishers/Institute For Black Research, 1996), 32

<sup>9</sup> M Swan, Gandhi. The South African Experience, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), 185

<sup>10</sup> S Bhana and J Brain, Setting Down Roots. Indian Migrants in South Africa, 1860-1911, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1990), 78

<sup>11</sup> Bhana and Brain, Setting Down Roots, 99

<sup>12</sup> Bhana and Brain, Setting Down Roots, 123

<sup>13</sup> For details see Bhana and Brain, Setting Down Roots; B Pillay, British Indians in the Transvaal: Trade, Race Relations and Imperial Policy in the Republican and Colonial Transvaal (London: Longman, 1977) and B Pachai, The International Aspects of the South African Indian Question, 1860-1971 (Cape Town: Struik, 1971)

<sup>14</sup> The Wragg Commission of 1885, in Y S Meer et al, Documents of Indentured Labour in Natal 1851-1917, (Durban: Institute for Black Research, 1980), 131

<sup>15</sup> M W Swanson, 'The Asiatic Menace: Creating Segregation in Durban, 1870-1900', in International Journal of African Historical Studies, 16, 3 (1983): 401-421, 421

<sup>16</sup> See S Bhana, Gandhi's Legacy. The Natal Indian Congress, 1894-1994, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1997), Chapter One

<sup>17</sup> Swan, Gandhi, 76

<sup>18</sup> This proclamation guaranteed to safeguard the interests of the 'natives' of India in the same manner that white subjects of the British Empire were protected. Swan, Gandhi, 84

<sup>19</sup> Meer, South African Gandhi, 207-220

<sup>20</sup> Report of the Indian Immigration Trust Board of Natal, 1900, 1

<sup>21</sup> "Times of India", 9 December 1899, in Collected Works, Vol. III, (hereafter CW), 119

<sup>22</sup> "Natal Mercury", 18 October 1899

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Select persons, 16 September 1899, CW, 111

<sup>24</sup> "Times of India", 9 December 1899, CW, 120

<sup>25</sup> M K Gandhi, Satyagraha in South Africa. Translated by Valji Govindji Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1928), 73

<sup>26</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 72

<sup>27</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 72

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Gandhi to select persons, 16 September 1899. In Gandhi, CW, 111

<sup>29</sup> "Times of India", 9 December 1899, in Gandhi, CW, 120

<sup>30</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 71

<sup>31</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 72

<sup>32</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 72

<sup>33</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 72

<sup>34</sup> Ruth Lindborg, 'The "Asiatic" and the Boundaries of Victorian Englishness', in Victorian Studies, (Spring 1994), 381-404: 401

<sup>35</sup> Lindborg, 'Boundaries of Victorian Englishness', 383

<sup>36</sup> See Ranajit Guha, 'Dominance Without Hegemony and Its Historiography,' Subaltern Studies 6, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989).

- <sup>37</sup> Natal Archives Repository (hereafter NAR), Colonial Secretary's Office (hereafter CSO), Vol. 1632, 8047/1899, Gandhi to Colonial Secretary, 19 October 1899
- <sup>38</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1632, 8047/1899, Gandhi to Colonial Secretary, 19 October 1899
- <sup>39</sup> "Times of India", 9 December 1899, CW, 120
- <sup>40</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1632, 8047/1899, Principal Under-Secretary to Gandhi, 23 October 1899
- <sup>41</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1632, 8047/1899, Gandhi to Colonial Secretary, 24 October 1899
- <sup>42</sup> Gandhi to William Palmer, Secretary, Durban Women's Patriotic League, 17 November 1899, CW, 121.
- <sup>43</sup> "Times of India", 14 March, 1900, in CW, 140
- <sup>44</sup> NAR, (Public Works Department (hereafter PWD), Vol. 1633, 4964/1900, Barnes, Chief Engineer, to Griffin, Accounting Department, 30 January 1900
- <sup>45</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 71
- <sup>46</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1632, 9294/99, L Booth to Principal Under-Secretary, 4 December 1899
- <sup>47</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 74
- <sup>48</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1633, 9588/1899, Gandhi to Colonial Secretary, 15 December 1899
- <sup>49</sup> Gandhi to Colonial Secretary, 4 December 1899, CW, 127
- <sup>50</sup> "Times of India", 16 June 1900, CW, 141
- <sup>51</sup> "Times of India", 14 March 1900, CW, 140
- <sup>52</sup> "Natal Mercury", 14 December 1899
- <sup>53</sup> NAR, PWD, Vol. 2/71, 4694/99, Gallwey to Barnes, 22 December 1899
- <sup>54</sup> NAR, PWD, Vol. 2/71, 5117/1899, Barnes to Gallwey, 23 December 1899
- <sup>55</sup> "Times of India", 16 June 1900, in CW, 138-139
- <sup>56</sup> "Times of India", 16 June 1900, in CW, 140
- <sup>57</sup> Partha Chatterjee, 'Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society', in Ranjit Guha ed., Subaltern Studies III, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), 153-195, 186
- <sup>58</sup> "Times of India", 16 June 1900, in CW, 188
- <sup>59</sup> "The Englishman", 28 January 1902, CW, 223
- <sup>60</sup> Third of the Pandava princes to whom Lord Krishna expounded the Gita
- <sup>61</sup> "The Englishman", 28 January 1902, CW, 223
- <sup>62</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 71
- <sup>63</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 74
- <sup>64</sup> Narayan, Selected Works, 301
- <sup>65</sup> This is Swan's hypothesis in her study of Gandhi
- <sup>66</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 76
- <sup>67</sup> Narayan, Selected Works, 301
- <sup>68</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 76
- <sup>69</sup> For example, after agitation against the Rowlatt Bill in 1919, Gandhi was asked by the Disorders Inquiry Committee whether the masses should accept the judgement of others equipped with better intellectual faculties. He replied: 'Naturally, but I think that this is human nature... Certainly, he would have to follow somebody. The masses will have to choose their leaders most decidedly.' In Chatterjee, 'Critique of Civil Society', 184
- <sup>70</sup> Narayan, Selected Works, 301
- <sup>71</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 76
- <sup>72</sup> Antoinette M Burton, At the Heart of Empire. Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late Victorian Britain, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1998), 19-20
- <sup>73</sup> van der Veer, Nations and Migrants, 5
- <sup>74</sup> "Natal Mercury", 15 March 1900
- <sup>75</sup> "Natal Advertiser", 15 March 1900
- <sup>76</sup> "Times of India", 9 December 1899, CW, 119
- <sup>77</sup> "Times of India", 9 December 1899, CW, 119
- <sup>78</sup> "Times of India", 16 September 1900, in CW, 161
- <sup>79</sup> Mayor's Minute, 1899, 28
- <sup>80</sup> "Natal Mercury", 15 March 1900
- <sup>81</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1641, 1462/1900, Gandhi to Colonial Secretary, 22 February 1900
- <sup>82</sup> NAR, CSO, Vol. 1641, 1462/1900, Colonial Secretary to Gandhi, 9 March 1900
- <sup>83</sup> NAR, PWD, Vol. 2179, 2458/1900, Clarence to Barnes, 14 July 1900

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<sup>84</sup> Nazar to Gandhi, 13 May 1903, in S Bhana and J Hunt, Gandhi's Editor. The Letters of M. H. Nazar, 1902-1903, (New Delhi: Pomilla & Co., 1989), 36

<sup>85</sup> A J Parel, 'The Origins of Hind Swaraj', in J M Brown and M Pruzesky eds, Gandhi and South Africa: Principles and Politics, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1996, 35-68), 41

<sup>86</sup> Jordens, Gandhi's Religion, 24

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Nicholas B Dirks ed, Colonialism and Culture, (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1992), 2

<sup>88</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, 73

<sup>89</sup> P van der Veer, Nation and Migration. The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 3

<sup>90</sup> Anderson, Imagined Communities, (London: Verso, 1991) 116

<sup>91</sup> Anderson, Imagined Communities, 116

<sup>92</sup> In Anderson, Imagined Communities, 116

<sup>93</sup> T V Sathyamurthi, 'Victorians, socialization and imperialism: consequences for post-imperial India', in J A Mangan ed., Making Imperial Mentalities. Socialisation and British Imperialism, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 110-126, 116

