

Nonviolence by Tolstoy & Gandhi: Toward Comparison through Criticism
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1. Nonviolence as Cultural Self-criticism: Tolstoy and Gandhi

Both Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi left great impact on the intellectual history of 20th century by 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 are still being re-estimated in the new context of globalism and post 9.11 political situation.

In his foreword to Tolstoy's "*A Letter to Hindu: The Subjection of India – Its Cause and Cure*" (1909) Gandhi calls Tolstoy "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." 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 with the "truth," which all the 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, i.e. they attach greater importance to spiritual, inner values than to material values, prefer simple or ascetic life (sexual abstinence, vegetarianism) to abundant or convenient urban life. They both regard any violence or power as absolute evil and reject to fight against the evil with the same means as the evil does.

Their aim is not the victory over each evil phenomenon but entire change of the rules of the game. So their nonresistance is by no means passive or escapist measures to cope with the evil, as some critics tend to regard, but quite positive or aggressive position, which aspires the change of total orientation of the world development. Both of them were quite radical or even obstinate in their principal argument. They find the source of evil and violence every sphere of human life, from the level our own inner desire to the level of ruling system of the society (government, police, army...), and tried

to call for nonviolent resistance in various fronts: against capital punishment, military service, war, monopoly, partial taxation, discrimination by the nationalities and castes, etc.

Both Tolstoy and Gandhi were born, to borrow Martin Green's expression, citizens of great empires, which cover enormous land-mass.¹ Tolstoy's Russia occupied a quarter of the land surface of the globe, had the population of 150 million in 1905, composed of quite a lot of ethnic and confessional groups. Gandhi's India was first of all the Hindu empire, which was a part of the British Empire, which covered almost one third of the land surface of the globe, had the population of 372 million in 1897, also composed of quite a lot of ethnic and confessional groups.

Tolstoy was born a gentleman with the title of count, haired the estate of 4000 acres with 350 mail serfs in central Russia. This means a middle level of the gentry class, which occupied only one percent of the Russian population. This estate was once faced with a crisis due to the gambling of its young owner, but mature Tolstoy quickly improved his economy by authorship and bought another 3600 acres in Samara (beyond the Volga). In 1890s Tolstoy tried to renounce his possession and abandon the copyright of his works, which causes a big conflict with his wife. So we can regard him one of the most privileged inhabitants of the empire, who felt a kind of moral obligation to the people around him and to the society.

The Gandhis belonged to the third, Vaisya caste, mostly composed of merchants and farmers. But Gandhi's grandfather and father had been prime minister of a small state in the Kathiawar peninsula, western India, and enjoyed a well-to-do life. But what Gandhi haired was not the estate but education in England to earn his own living and sense of responsibility to Indian people.

As Martin Green puts it, both Tolstoy and Gandhi had had "imperial" experiences in their youth and manhood:² Tolstoy's experience as a soldier of the empire in Caucasus and Crimea, reflected in "The Cossacks," "Sevastopol Stories," and other works, his study of the history of Napoleonic war, his contacts with various ethnic & confessional groups in the empire (Chechens, Tatars, Old believers, Dukhobors and so on); Gandhi's experience of England, the center of the empire, and his colonial emigration to South Africa, and so on. Both had some tint of imperial mentality (Martin Green calls it enthusiasm for empire), for ex. interest in adventure like that of Robinson Crusoe, spirit of self-discipline like Benjamin Franklin, and self-help like Samuel

¹ Martin Green, *The Origins of Nonviolence: Tolstoy and Gandhi in Their Historical Settings*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990. P. 21

² Martin Green, *The Origins of Nonviolence...* pp. 7-20.

Smiles. Of course they both became anti-imperialist in their mature age, but had learned something from the image of diligent citizen of the modern empire.

Of course personal experiences of Tolstoy and Gandhi were quite different. Russia was in itself the main body of the empire, which consists of both European (ruling) part and Asian (ruled) part, while India was a colony of English empire, and contains in 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 that of Tolstoy, because he had to cope with the task of independence of India, on the one hand, and liberation of India from various conventional prejudices and bondages. 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 just on behalf of mankind. This might mean that Gandhi had a series of very concrete tasks before he can cope with the final aim (the realization of the world based on the "truth"), while there was nothing to make Tolstoy hesitate to directly aim at the ideal, only showing on his way the idea of self-perfection through asceticism and nonviolence adapted to each concrete issues. As Valentin Bulgakov puts it, Gandhi's nonviolence reminds us of a curious hybrid, i.e. Tolstoy's ethical idea of self-perfection mixed with Lenin's design of social revolution.³

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 so-called repentant gentry, he found supporters among people of his own class (like Vladimir Chertkov and Pavel Biliukov), the populist actives, 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 prefectures of Europe Russia, Ukraine, Caucasus, Siberia and then outside of empire. But most of the Tolstoyan's communities were depressed by 1930s under Stalin.

Tolstoy's first and fiercest enemy was Russian Orthodox Church. Holy Synod headed by Konstantin Pobedonostsev together with the Imperial government got angry at Tolstoy's "rationalistic" interpretation of the New Testament (his version of "the Gospels"), simplification of the Sermon on the Mount (nonviolence), and criticism of the church ceremonies as falsification, and persecuted him with censorship and anti-Tolstoy propagandas. The Holy Synod finally excommunicated him in 1901, which is still valid in our day. Among the other critics of Tolstoy's nonviolence were liberalists, left

³ В.Ф. Булгаков. Толстой, Ленин, Ганди. Прага, 1930.
http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakow_w_f/text_0090.shtml

populists (terrorists), socialists, communists, religious philosophers, each of whom in his own way critically examined the feasibility of nonviolence method to the reform of 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 Indian people, nobody could be indifferent to his deeds. English government was also among his watchers. But precisely because his idea was constantly tested by the unpredictable, real process of the history, there is no telling who supported his tactics of nonviolence and who criticized it after all. In the book "*Indian Critiques of Gandhi*" the editor Harold Coward lines up five individual critics of Gandhi (Neru, Ambedkar, Besant, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore) and five groups which criticized him (Hindu Mahasabha, Cristian community, Sikhs, Indian Muslim, Urdu), but most of these had once been his supporters or cooperators at the same time.

My main interest lies in the comparison of the experience of modernity by two Eurasian countries (Russia and India) by comparing the ways how 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, i.e. the critical perception of Tolstoy's thought in Russian society in the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. 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. On this aspect of the problem as well as the question how Gandhi's thought was critically perceived in Indian society we will briefly touch 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 the survey of contemporary criticism to Tolstoy I would like to pay attention to 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 upon a new period. At such a time of transition people ought to part with the old (pagan) conception of life and acquire a new (really Christian) one. By Christian doctrines he means those of universal brotherhood, suppression of national distinctions, abolition of private property, and non-resistance to evil by force. But most of the 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*. Ch. 5)

As he mentions the idea of nonviolence has a range of predecessors in the history.⁴ But they have been just neglected under the pressure of tacit, but obstinate, conspiracy of silence around them. The significance of the Gospel is hidden from believers by the Church, from unbelievers by Science. (*The Kingdom of God...* Ch.3)

Tolstoy's version of supposed pronouncements on nonresistance by believers and free-thinkers are 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.

2) In spite of Christ's preach to turn the left cheek, and give the cloak also, 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 non-resistance to evil by force is binding on the Christian when the evil is directed against himself personally, it ceases to be binding when the evil is directed against his neighbors, and that then the Christian is 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 transgressors by force.

4) It is not proper to ascribe to the command of non-resisting 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 non-resistance included, does not cease to be a Christian if he hold the true faith.

5) This question is one which has long ago been decided perfectly clearly and

⁴ William Lloyd Garrison's declaration "Declaration of Sentiments adopted by the Peace Convention" (1838), Adin Ballou's "A Catechism of Non-Violence", Chelicicky's "The Net of Faith" (15 century), Dymond's "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 mennonites, doukhobors, molokans. (*The Kingdom of God...* Ch.1)

satisfactorily, and it is not worth talking about.

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 produced by the conservatives and with their overthrow.

Supposed criticism by foreign critics:

Such a doctrine is not strictly Christian but the Sermon on the Mountain 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 the foreign free-thinkers:

The conviction that mankind could 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, 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 partly it is due to the person's failing to appreciate the full value of the lofty civilization to which mankind has attained at present, with its Krupp cannons, smokeless powder, colonization of Africa, Irish Coercion Bill, parliamentary government, journalism, strikes, and the Eiffel Tower. (*The Kingdom of God...* Ch.2)

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

Now we are going to survey the real arguments by Russian critics about his idea of nonviolence. Everywhere will find 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 critical comments to Tolstoy's thought in Russia I would like to propose certain classification of them by the historical moment to which each utterance belongs. Of course historical time does not necessarily play decisive role for discussion about this kind of "eternal" issues. But it does play certain important role especially in the transitional period with a lot of catastrophes, which cause the rapid change of social mood or psychology. The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries in Russia were precisely such period. So our observation will be separated into the following three periods from 1880s through 1920s.

2-2-1 Critical reviews of Tolstoyism in 1880s-90s

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

Tolstoy himself was in transition from a popular novelist to a thinker-admonitor, and started to spread his warning messages to Russian society. He wrote a letter to New Tsar to reduce the death sentence to the terrorists (1881), issued his own translation of "The Gospels" (81), "Confession" (82), started to preach the sexual abstinence, signed V. Soloviev's appeal "The Protest against anti-Semit movement in the press" (1890), committed the relief activity for the victims of famine (92), and lead the exodus of Russian Dukhobors to Canada (99).

He gradually attracted disciples and sympathizers from among the people of his own class, the populist actives, socialists, Old believers, sectarians, peasants, and ethnic minorities, and hence, became the object of curse, persecution and caricature of the conservatives and extreme right-wingers. Tolstoy's idea of nonviolent, religious community, part of which was also expressed in the style of fables or folk tales, was perceived as one of the alternative designs of future Russia.

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

A) Irresponsible logic of *Tolstoy's left hand*: Mikhailovsky N. K. (1842-1904), Again on

Tolstoy (1886)⁵

Nikolai Mikhailovsky is a critic with the populist background. He is famous for the 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 curious cooperation of his right hand, which symbolizes commitment to the social affairs, and his left hand, which symbolizes detachment or concentration to inner, personal affairs. In his later essays he starts to deplore that Tolstoy is gradually losing the function of his right hand and becoming a left-hand writer. For the critic Tolstoy’s theory of nonviolence only represents the negative virtue of non-commitment of the type “by resisting evil you will only increase the evil itself.”

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

Mikhailovsky also criticizes Tolstoy’s logic “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 must depend upon “what is the war for or what the peaceful relations are based on.” This sort of argument will be repeated by the later critics, including V. Soloviev in his “Three conversations” (1899): (War is not an absolute evil, peace is not an absolute good; there are good wars and bad peace; there is a case of inevitable use of violence in order to cope with the evil).

Mikhailovsky and Soloviev also share the humanist concern about the fate of innocent victims, who are to be saved from the violence (the point presupposed by Tolstoy).

⁵ С.П. Бычков (ред). Л.Н. Толстой в русской критике. Москва, 1952. С. 320-327.

B) Forgetting man's animal nature: N. Ya. Grot (1852-1899), *Moral ideals of our day* (Friedrich Nietzsche and Leo Tolstoy) (1893)⁶

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 moments as the indicators of their difference:

Nietzsche: Preference of ancient, pagan worldview to Christian moral; aesthetic rationalism; ideal of superman on the basis of exploitation of the mass; anarchism; tendency to see the elements of beast, evil, crime, egoism in human nature.

Tolstoy: Belief in Christian moral 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, love as the most essential human nature.

What Grot regards as the 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 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 naively believes the perfect quality of human nature and the possibility for a man to acquire the self-sufficient virtue, irrespective of any outer norms of activity.

Such "existentialist" comment on Tolstoy will also be repeated by various critics.

C) Oversimplification of the Gospel's message: V. V. Rozanov (1856-1906), *Again on count L. N. Tolstoy and his teaching of non-resistance to the evil* (1896)⁷

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

⁶ К.Г. Исупов (Сост.) Л.Н. Толстой: *Pro et contra*. СПб.: РХГИ, 2000. С. 196-215.

⁷ К.Г. Исупов (Сост.) Л.Н. Толстой: *Pro et contra*. СПб.: РХГИ, 2000. С. 264-273.

1) Tolstoy is no more than a novelist and is not endowed with the power of a prophet. His verbosity disturbs his message to reach human mind.

2) His idea of “Do not resist the evil by any means” is a misinterpretation of Christ’s message. It is not true in the literary sense and it is not the most important message of the Gospel.

3) In the Gospel there are series of important message, which should be fulfilled one after another: To love God; to love your neighbor like yourself; to rid the God’s temple of unsuitable institutions; not to resist the 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 eye to the evil deeds.

5) Resistance to the evil by force is not only permitted but also required in the Gospels.

6) A man struggles against, first of all, his own evil, and then the evil within the other person. Throughout the life, all through the history, man fights against the demonic powers with the help of the Divine power within himself. The church and the court are the keystones for this fight.

7) Tolstoy seems to be extinguishing the spark of the fire, which the Savior lighted within us.

Here apparently Rozanov takes Tolstoy’s message not as non-resistance to the evil by evil (violence) but as non-resistance to the evil at all. This also happens with the other critics of nonviolence.

D) Toward the positive definition of the good: N. F. Fyodorov (1829-1903), What is good?⁸

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

In his opinion Tolstoy knows only the negative side of the good (what the good is not), but doesn’t know its positive side (what good is). Tolstoy finds the aim of art not in realization of what the son of mankind bears in himself, but in unification of the mankind in one emotion, whose contents he doesn’t 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 become aliens. Hence what Tolstoy calls

⁸ Н.Ф. Федоров. Сочинения. Москва, 1982. С. 607-610.

brotherhood is not brotherhood at all.

The good is life itself. Not to annihilate the life (“Don’t kill”) is only a negative definition of the good. Its positive definition is to keep life and recover the lost life. The 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 Critical reviews of Tolstoyism in the first decade of 20th century

During the first decade of the 20th century Russia’s crisis became evident. Russia lost the Russo-Japanese War, experienced the general strikes, the first revolution, foundation of the First Duma (Congress), and 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 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 he spread his influence to the outer world by a series of critical appeals concerning political issues: anti-War propaganda (“Bethink yourselves,” 1904), anti-revolution message (1905), anti-capital punishment appeal (“I cannot be silent,” 1908). He also developed contact with Asian people, oppressed by the 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 the society by his sudden run away from home and scandalous death at a local station. This offered the 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 Russian Revolution (1908)⁹; G. V. Plekhanov (1856-1918), Karl Marx and Lev Tolstoy (1911).¹⁰

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 19th century and represents the protest of the patriarchal Russian peasants against the poverty and loss of lands in the

⁹ С.П. Бычков (ред). Л.Н. Толстой в русской критике. Москва, 1952. С. 57-62.

¹⁰ С.П. Бычков (ред). Л.Н. Толстой в русской критике. Москва, 1952. С. 405-427.

age of capitalism. In short both the merits and the demerits of Tolstoyism reflect the specificity of Russia's peasant-bourgeois revolution.

Georgy Plekhanov develops the same kind of view through comparison of Marx and Tolstoy. Unlike Marx, a dialectic 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 situations and social conditions. The moral sanction of the war is also relative, depends upon what war it is. (This traces Mikhailovsky's point)

In terms of class consciousness Tolstoy tends to think from the viewpoint of the gentry class, i.e. from the side of the oppressor, the exploiting class, and discuss the moral harm of the 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 mass.

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

F) How to conquer moral dogmatism: S. L. Frank (1877-1950), Moral Doctrine of L. N. Tolstoy (to commemorate 80-year anniversary of the birth of Tolstoy) (1908)¹¹

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

Although Frank finds the problem of Tolstoy in his moral dogmatism, and in this point his criticism sounds like those by Mikhailovsky and Marxists. Frank argues that Tolstoyism is one-sided idea only with great logical power. The difficulty of its disproof lies in the fact that his idea is the fearless and logically irreproachable result of the dominant premises (do not resist the evil by violence, for ex.). By simple logic Tolstoy shows 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 examination of his starting point itself. In fact the starting point of his moral decision lacks in axiomatic authenticity. One should

¹¹ К.Г. Исупов (Сост.) Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. СПб.: РХГИ, 2000. С. 299-308.

not see the evil in some external deeds, in violence, lie, drinking wine, eating meat and so on. The similar acts can be in one case good, but in another bad. It depends upon their motivations, internal meanings, and aims pursued by them. Criterion of good and evil can be applied in absolute sense only to our state of mind, to internal order of personality. One who attach them the absolute, fixed criterion will fall into dogmatism.

Tolstoy's case is a 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 from time to time: At the moment of cruel reaction and intensive request of political reform Tolstoy's call for self-perfection and non-commitment was answered by protest. But now after the first Revolution when we retrospectively look back our way, we cannot but recognize the correctness of Tolstoy, because after all the 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 state (1910)¹²

Evgeny Trubetskoi, a jurist, attributes what Frank calls the moral dogmatism to 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 about the Devine Kingdom. While in the genuine Christian understanding of life this discipline is endowed with just subordinate and limited meaning. It is not the aim itself but just the medium for the establishment of the mystical principle of the all-oneness in human relations. Sword, war, defensive measures of the state are not evil itself but the means to cope with the evil.

2) Tolstoy bases his argument on separate texts from the Gospels, taken out of the relation with the whole, and leaves aside the highest principle for the Christians – the total image of Christ.

3) The Gospels contain the concept of tolerance toward states, military service. Tolstoy unconsciously accuses Christ.

2-2-3 Critical reviews of Tolstoyism under WWI through early Soviet period

¹² К.Г. Исупов (Сост.) Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. СПб.: РХГИ, 2000. С. 386-400.

In the following two decades Russia experienced drastic change: the World War I, the February and October Revolutions, the Civil War, a large scale emigrants and exiles, construction of a socialist country, collectivization of the 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 emigrated to the West, attempted the total examination of his idea of nonviolence in the light of their own experiences of world war and revolutions. 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 social ideal (1917)¹³

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

He names Tolstoy's position as 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 the absolute reason.
- 2) The meaning of life lies in building the Kingdom of God on the earth, i. e. changing violent, obligatory, cruel, hateful society into lovely and 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. While for the perfection one is not alone but God is with him.

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

- 1) He had a tendency of moral absolutism of "all or nothing" type.
- 2) Moral subjectivism can be used as a cover to hide one's indifference to the social well-being, his powerlessness.
- 3) Tolstoy's thought was too one-sided and irreconcilable, that it could hardly become discipline of social movement.

In fact Tolstoy was not alien to more concrete ways of social reform: the revelation

¹³ К.Г. Исупов (Сост.) Л.Н. Толстой: Pro et contra. СПб.: РХГИ, 2000. С. 309-330.

of the serfs, denial of the private possession, introduction of the single taxation system, and so on. But he was so penetrated by 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 the single moral ideal. Even if a person's spiritual life is wider and deeper than politics and society, it does not mean that the politics loses its meaning in its limited but inevitable sphere. Such was Novgorodtsev's argument.

D) Retrospective utopia: A.V. Lunacharsky (1875-1933), Tolstoy and Marx (1924).¹⁴

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

Lunacharsky also didn't forget to mention that Gandhi is a genuine Indian Tolstoy.

J) Call for a common front against the evil: I.A. Ilyin (1883-1954), *On Resistance to the Evil by Power* (1925)¹⁵

Ivan Ilyin, a religious and political philosopher, white emigre publicist and ideologue of the Russian All-Military Union, published in 1925 a quite comprehensive criticism of Tolstoy's thoughts. The specificity of his criticism is, as I think, that it is based on the feeling of a person who experienced the World War I and Russian Revolutions as a really serious ordeal which all human being as well as all human thoughts have undergone. The following sentences sound like the declaration of his initial standpoint:

¹⁴ А.В. Луначарский. Толстой и Маркс. Ленинград: Academia, 1924.

¹⁵ И.А. Ильин. О сопротивлении злу силою. Берлин, 1925.
(<http://www.philosophy.ru/library/il/01/00.html>)

Our generation has experienced the evil with unprecedented power. The naivety of all-equalizing, abstract moral has long been exposed in the field of philosophy. It is nonsense to require so that “all always” or “none ever” should resist the evil with power.

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

1) There is no awful evil, but just harmless delusions and errors, weakness, passions, sins and degradation.

2) In case the evil appears in others, we had better turn away and neglect them without judging people for it.

3) The problem of judging people for their evil doesn't occur to loving man. To love others is to pity them and let them also love, without causing any distress to them, so that love excludes any possibility of physical resistance to the evil.

4) The problem of resistance to evil is itself vain, because moral person cares only about his own self-perfection and gives the others freedom of self-control, leaving everything at the mercy of the God's will.

5) Even if we fight against the 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:

1) 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 purely “personal” or “private” nature in human life, so that the idea of self-perfection separated from the problem of social evil cannot be justified.

2) Common front against the evil: Our community should form a common front against the evil, where non-resistance to the enemy (evil) will mean its acceptance and betrayal to the common front.

3) What is evil and what is the fight against evil?: The evil is an insurmountable power, which is endowed with four basic natures: commonness, aggressiveness, craftiness, diversity. To overcome the 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.

4) What should we love and what should we 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 consolation on our side to the evil against God, and you must fight with it. The purpose of the fight should be not personal revenge but compulsion or correction of the evil. To love all without any distinction between the good and evil is no more than a sentimental philanthropy. You must follow the selective love.

5) Nonviolence is not means but result: It takes thousands of years to restrain and re-educate the human-faced animals into the social and disciplined existence. So non-violence is no more than the result of such improvement, not the condition or means of the fight against the evil.

6) Defects of Tolstoyism: Tolstoy compensates the lack of religious experience with moral one. He analyses religious dogmas with simple common reason. His is a religious nihilism, moral utilitarianism, esthetical nihilism, legal, state, patriotic nihilism, anti-spiritual hedonism. Tolstoy's position is no more than that of sentimental, self-oriented, egocentric, subjectivist, rational moral, which has no power to overcome the catastrophes of the modern world.

K) What Gandhi added to Tolstoyism: Bulgakov, V. F. (1886-1966), Tolstoy, Lenin, Gandhi (1930).¹⁶

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

As he counts the merits and demerits of the three leading figures of the 20th century, let us summarize his argument in the following scheme.

1) Tolstoy's merit: Tolstoy is right in that human soul is, after all, in any conditions, the center, around which all rotates in the world. The happiness of the world depends upon how the individual people are. Self-perfection, the basic commandment of Tolstoy's catechism, cannot but remain to be one of the most inevitable bases of man's reasonable life.

¹⁶ В. Ф. Булгаков. Толстой, Ленин, Ганди. Прага, 1930.
(http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakow_w_f/text_0090.shtml)

2) Tolstoy's demerit: Tolstoy is a religious subjectivist and not interested in the physical conditions of our life. According to Tolstoy's dogma our personal non-commitment to the war, revolution, is enough to have a clear conscience and to be free from the responsibility for the fact that such tragedies are happening and will happen. He has no practical picture of our better, future life, and hence no concrete, active tactics of organizing the social power and realizing the fair social system.

3) Lenin's merit: Lenin has the power of sympathy to the depressed and the theory and tactics of freeing the working class.

4) Lenin's demerit: Lenin doesn't understand the value of a man as such, is not interested in individual person. Hence, the cruel violence in his politics.

5) Gandhi's merit: Gandhi is a kind of synthesis Tolstoy's idea of self-perfection and Lenin's tactics of organization of people's power and realization of the good society.

6) Gandhi's method of peaceful resistance, noncooperation, nonviolence is useful only when the people committed are prepared for the idea and understand her essence. He is also so concerned with the liberation of the Indian nation that he is sometimes under the influence of Indian nationalists.

3. From Tolstoy to Gandhi: Toward Comparative Study

Russian intellectuals in the last decades of the 19th and the first third of the 20th centuries criticized Tolstoy from various viewpoints: unreality of his utopian, idealist or metaphysical understanding of evil; dogmatism in moral judgment; self-righteousness, which is blind to the agony of innocent victims of violence; ignorance of the duality of human mind; oversimplification of the Gospel's messages or lack of Christ's image; absence of positive aim; limitation from historical or class background; moral individualism or subjectivism; mistake of means for aim; religious nihilism, moral utilitarianism; lack of practical approach to the real life, and so on.

As was mentioned above, most of the arguments traced the counter logic, which Tolstoy presupposed against his theory.

What is the most interesting for us is that Gandhi's idea of nonviolence has also gone through the similar kind of criticism by representatives of various ideological or political groups, the 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.¹⁷

¹⁷ Julius Lipner, Conclusion: A Debate for Our Times // Harold Coward (ed.), *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.

For ex., Bhim Rao Ambedkar, leader of movement against caste discriminations, who could cooperate with Gandhi in refraining from physical violence, did not hesitate to recommend another form of violence, i.e. destruction of the Hindus' scriptures which seem to support caste discrimination. He couldn't share Gandhi's moderate idea to reinterpret the scriptures in 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 the WWII if the British promised freedom for India in return. Such position was shared by Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, and others. For those people, like for 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 *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 self and the universe. According to V. D. Savarkar, author of "Hindutva" and president of Hindu Mahashabha (1937-42), violence (both physical and military) is necessary in human affairs not only as an occasional strategic ploy, but because it is the law of human nature, at least 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 which are militarily weak shall be politically subjected or cease to exist at all. From the viewpoint of these theories Gandhi's concept "nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute" seems 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 agony of innocent victims of violence; ignorance of the duality of human mind, religious nihilism, moral utilitarianism; lack of practical approach to the real life, and so on.

People who cared for more moderate way for the liberation of Indian society were cautious against 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 the 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 against 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, 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 integration of religion, social concern, and politics, was by no means understood or shared by most of the people around him. Neither was his "inclusivist" way of thought, for which 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 could Gandhi "synthesize Tolstoy's idea of self-perfection and Lenin's tactics of organization of people's power and realization of the good society," as Valentin Bulgakov put it? Was it due to the unique synthetic personality of Gandhi himself, or to the background of religious or philosophical culture of Indian society, or to the historical experience of Indian people which is filled with glories and hardships, or to the existence of appropriate social institutions for negotiation among various groups, such as Indian National Congress or All-India Home Rule League, which had no equivalence in Tolstoy's Russia?

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

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year	Social affairs	Tolstoy's & Gandhi's lives	Major publications
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	Petrashchevsky affairs		
1851	SPb.-Moscow railway	T travels to Caucasus and joins army.	
1852			T: "Childhood"
1853	The Crimean War (-55)		T: "The Raid"
1854		T fights along the Danube and then in Crimea.	
1855	The Fall of Sevastopol		T: "Sevastopol Sketches"
1857		T shocked by the Guillotine execution in Paris	
1859	The origin of Species	T opens a school in the estate	
1861	Emancipation of the serfs	T is nominated a member of agro-mediation committee.	
1862	T's house was searched by the police.	T's Marriage	T issues journal "Yasnaya polyana."
1863	Polish rebellion		T: "The Cossacks"
1866		T. defends a soldier in the court-martial.	
1869		G is born in Gujarat.	T: "War and Peace" completed
1871		T buys 6700 acres in Samara	
1872			T: Textbook "Azbuka"
1873	Populist movement (-75)	T's relief activity for the famine in Samara	
1876	Queen Victoria becomes		

	empress of India.		
1877	Russia-Turkish War		
1878	Terrorism prevails.	T's Depression and impulse of suicide	T: "Anna Karenina" completed
1881	Assassination of Alexander II	T's letter to New Tsar to reduce the death sentence to the terrorists	T: "The Gospels" (tr.) T moves to Moscow.
1882	The Census of Moscow The first Theosophical Society in India	Tolstoyism prevails.	movement T: "Confession"
1885	The Indian National Congress Convention		
1886	George Kennan visits T and talks about Siberian exile and nonviolence.		T: "The Death of Ivan Ilich" "What then must we do?"
1888		T preaches the sexual abstinence. G leaves for England to study law.	T: "On Life"
1889			T: "The Kreutzer Sonata"
1891	Famine in Russia (-93)	T renounces his possessions.	
1892	Lotus and Dagger society in London	T's Relief activity for the famine (91-93)	
1893	Government propagates to discredit T as a revolutionary.	G goes to South Africa as a lawyer.	T: "The Kingdom of God is within You" G reads it in SA.
1894	The Dreyfus Affair	G founds the Natal Indian Congress in SA.	T: "Christianity and Patriotism"
1895		T drafts a will to abandon all copyright at his death.	T: "Be Ashamed"
1896	Famine in India		T: "Patriotism or Peace"
1897	Zionist movement	Persecution of Tolstoyans	

1898	Famine in India (-00)			
1899	Boer War in SA (-91) V.D. Savarkar's rev. org. Mitra Mela	Exodus of Russian Dukhobors to Canada G organizes an ambulance corps for the British.	T: "Resurrection"	
1901		T is excommunicated from the Orthodox Church. G returns home and attends the INC.		
1902		T's appeal to Tsar Nicolas for the freedom of the nation		
1904	Russo-Japanese War (-05)	T's anti-War propoganda	T: "Bethink yourselves"	
1905	First Russian Revolution	T's anti-revolution message		
1906	The first Russian Duma (parliament)	G takes the vow of sexual abstinence.		
1907		G organizes Satyagraha (soul-force) against compulsory registration of Asians.		
1908	V. I. Lenin: Tolstoy as a mirror of Russian Revolution	G is attacked and wounded by Indian extremist. G is arrested and sentenced to two months in prison.	T: "A Letter to an Indian" T: "I cannot be silent"	
1909	Assassination of Sir William Curzon by a follower of Savarkar	Correspondence between G and T	T's "The Subjection of India" with Intro. By G G: "Hind Swaraj"	
1910	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	G helps campaign against nullification of non-Christian marriages.		

	calls for Muslim self-government.	G: the Third Satyagraha campaign as “great march” of 2000 miners and was arrested three times.
1914	World War I (-18)	Satyagraha campaign is suspended.
1915		G returns to India. G establishes Satyagraha Ashram near Ahmedabad.
1917	February Revolution October Revolution	Satyagraha campaign for rights of peasants on indigo plantations
1918		Satyagraha campaign for peasants in Kheda Viceroy's War Conference at Delhi agreed that Indians should be recruited for World War I
1919	Rowlatt Bills passed.	Nation-wide hartal - suspension of activity for a day - against Rowlatt Bills G suspended Satyagraha campaign in penitence for violence. G becomes editor of English weekly, “Young India,” and Gujarati weekly, “Navajivan.”
1920		G becomes president of All-India Home Rule League.
1921		G presides at bonfire of foreign cloth in Bombay. G: “The Story of My Experience with Truth.” Tagore & Andrews criticize G's non-cooperation movement.
1922	The establishment of the Soviet Union	G suspends mass disobedience because of violence at Chauri Chaura.

		G is sentenced to six years' imprisonment in Yeravda jail (-24).	
1923			Writes "Satyagraha in South Africa" and part of his autobiography
1924		21-day "great fast" as penance for communal rioting (between Hindus and Moslems)	
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. Third all-Indian Satyagraha campaign starts.	
1930		200 miles salt march from Sabamarti with 79 volunteers to sea at Dandi	G: "Varnadharm and Duty of Labour"
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: "The

		Annihilation of Caste”
1939	World War II breaks out	G’s fast unto death as part of Satyagraha campaign in Rajkot
1940	The Muslim League passes 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 nation-wide Satyagraha campaign lead by Gandhi
1944		Talks with Jinnah of Moslem League in Bombay on Hindu-Moslem unity
1945		Ambedkar: “What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untachables”
1946	The Cold War	Four-month tour of 49 villages in East Bengal to quell communal rioting over Moslem 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 the Congress.
1948	India dissolves into chaos and killings.	G is assassinated by Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a Hindu nationalist.