

The Breath of my Life



Christian Bartolf (ed.)

GANDHI-INFORMATIONS-ZENTRUM

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THE BREATH OF MY LIFE

The Correspondence of

Mahatma Gandhi (India) and Bart de Ligt (Holland)

on War and Peace

Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum

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VOORWOORD

"Nog nooit is een eeuw zo bloeddorstig, wreed en meedogenloos geweest als deze negentiende eeuw, die in de geschiedenis zal achterblijven als de eeuw der verschrikkingen, getekend door de verderfelijke ideologieën van de grote dictators, de volksverleiders en verlakkers. Nog nooit zijn tevens de vernietigingswapens zo moordend en efficiënt geweest, waar duizende hoogbegaafde geleerden al hun energie in hebben gestoken om de geniepigste wapens te ontwikkelen, hun geweten opzij schuivend, zich schuilend achter het motto 'de verdediging van het vaderland'.

Nu we aan het eind van deze moorddadige eeuw zijn gekomen, zijn er eindelijk stemmen die gaan spreken over 'de krankzinnige bewapening, het schandaal van deze eeuw'. Een uitzonderlijk exponent van de wapenontwerpers, Einstein, heeft aan het eind van zijn leven, in een laatste gewetenszucht, uitgeroepen: "Was ik maar loodgieter geworden!"

De enkele moedige geesten die zich al vroeg tegen de trent van nationalisme, bewapening en verheerlijking van het geweld hebben verzet waren met een kaarsje te zoeken en één van de belangrijkste daarvan was Bart de Ligt, die eerst zijn geweten liet spreken en daar consequent naar leefde. Vanzelfsprekend zocht hij toen contact, tussen de twee gigantische slachtpartijen, met Mahatma Gandhi, de man die aantoonde dat door volhardende geweldloze strijd tegen onrecht, overheersing en onderdrukking in zelfopoffering, de machtigen der aarde tot inkeer en inschikkelijkheid te bewegen zijn. De uitwisseling tussen de twee geweldloze mannen van Oost en West was voor hen zeer vruchtbaar en een steun in hun veelal eenzame strijd.

Ik zie beiden steeds voor ogen als kleine dappere mannen die in een klein roeiboortje op een brede rivier met al hun kracht tegen de stroom oproeien, zoals u begrijpen zult de stroom van de gewelddadige geest van hun tijd.

Toch begreep Bart, de universalist, dat Gandhi zijn geweldloze strijd alleen op nationaal niveau tegen de Engelsen voerde, maar zodra India bevrijd werd van het Britse juk, men ook daar niet afkerig zou zijn van een eigen India's leger, wat ook bewaarheid is, met atoombom inclus!

Bart heeft nooit in korte termijnen gedacht. Zijn aktief pacifisme, dus antimilitarisme, is een streven dat over de grenzen en over de eeuwen heen reikt, waar wij stervelingen niet op moeten rekenen en onze achterkleinkinderen zelfs ook niet. Het offer voor wat nog een utopie is en nog lang zal blijven, moet mogelijk gebracht worden opdat wij een stapje vooruit in de goede richting komen en ons eindelijk gaan schamen voor 'het schandaal van deze eeuw', want zonder inkeer komen wij er niet.

Al noemde Bart zich geen christen meer, omdat in de loop der tijden al te veel misbruik van die naam is gemaakt, toch is zijn hele wezen doordrenkt van de Dienaar Gods, die zei: "Mijn leer is niet van deze wereld", maar wel bedoeld vóór deze wereld, en hij handelde daarnaar.

Zijn zoon J.E. de Ligt."

PREFACE

"Never before there has been an era as bloodthirsty and merciless as the twentieth century, which will be remembered as the era of terror, characterized by the pernicious ideologies of the great dictators, the seducers of the public. Never before the weapons of destruction have been that murderous and efficient and where thousands of highly gifted scientists have invested all their energy in order to develop stealthy weapons, pushing aside their conscience, hiding behind the slogan 'the defence of the fatherland'.

Now, having reached the end of this murderous century at least voices can be heard expressing opinions on the insane armament, the scandal of the century. A singular exponent of these designers of arms, Einstein, exclaimed towards the end of his life in a last examination of conscience: "I better had been a plumber!"

The few brave souls who had early on resisted the trend of nationalism, armament and the glorification of violence can be counted on the fingers of one hand and one of the most outstanding of those people was Bart de Ligt who at first had his conscience roused and then lived accordingly. It is self-evident that between the two gigantic massacres, he established contact with Mahatma Gandhi, the man who demonstrated that a persisting nonviolent and self-denying struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression could move the mighty rulers of the earth to repent and to oblige. The exchange of views between these two nonviolent persons of East and West was, on both sides, prolific as well as a moral support in their often solitary struggle.

In my mind, I picture two small brave men are in a small rowing-boat on a broad river going with all their might and main against the current of the violent atmosphere of their age.

Bart, being the universalist, nevertheless understood that Gandhi merely waged his nonviolent struggle against the British on the level of nationality; but that as soon as India was liberated from the British yoke, they would not be ill-disposed to raise an army, including the atom-bomb, which has now become the reality!

Bart has never thought short-term. His active pacifism, his anti-militarism is a pursuit extending beyond borders and centuries, which we as mortal beings will not live to see, not even our great-grandchildren. A sacrifice to what is still a utopia, and will continue to be for a long time, should possibly be made, so that we make a move in the right direction and are at last ashamed of "the scandal of this century". For without repenting, it will not work.

Even though Bart did not pass himself off as a Christian, because in the course of time this name has been abused too often, his whole being was nevertheless imbued by the words of the Servant of God who said: "My teachings are not of this world", but yet meant for this world, and he acted accordingly.

His son J.E. de Ligt"

Introduction: "A universal issue: Gandhi and War" (Christian Bartolf)

Four times during his life Gandhi offered his services to the army: in 1899-1900 during the Boer War, in 1906 on the occasion of the so-called Zulu rebellion, in 1914 during his stay in London at the outset of World War I; and lastly in India in 1918 near the conclusion of that war. After World War I Gandhi on a number of occasions was asked how he could reconcile his war participation with his principle of nonviolence ("ahimsa"). Bart de Ligt was not the only correspondent on this issue, but the most demanding and urging. In addition, Leo Tolstoy's friend and secretary, Vladimir Chertkov, had asked Gandhi, and exactly the common reverence to Leo Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance or non-violent resistance was the foundation of the critical dialogue between Bart de Ligt and Gandhi between 1928 and 1930. As an introduction to this correspondence documented herewith, we first give a summary of Gandhi's war participation as well as the correspondences and conversations which Gandhi had had on this matter before his dialogue with Bart de Ligt¹:

Although Gandhi was against the Boers' racism in their attempt to reduce the Indians to the status of second-class citizens, he admired them for their courage as well as for their devotion to their religion and their Afrikaans language and culture. Yet when the Boer War broke out in 1899, Gandhi urged his fellow Indians to support their British sovereign, irrespective of whether the war was right or wrong². Gandhi organized an Indian Ambulance Corps for service

¹ This summary is based on Peter Brock's article "Gandhi's Nonviolence and His War Service", published in "Gandhi Marg", monthly of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, India (February 1981, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 601-616). Peter Brock was professor for history at the University of Toronto, Kanada.

² Speech in Calcutta, 19 January 1902, Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG), vol. 3 (1960), pp. 216f. Cp. his statement in his

with the British army. Over a thousand men were enlisted, of whom the overwhelming majority were recruited from the indentured labourers forming the lowest economic stratum of the Indian immigrant population. By recruiting the ambulance corps, Gandhi wanted to achieve and share full citizenship with equal rights and duties within the British Empire. In addition, Gandhi wanted to prove that Indians were no cowards and disprove all allegations frequently made by Europeans. Gandhi appreciated the positive qualities that war participation was supposed to bring out in men: fearlessness, comradeship and sense of duty ("dharma"). In his new philosophical invention of nonviolent resistance ("satyagraha": Firmness in Truth) Gandhi wanted to elaborate and bring out these positive qualities and eliminate the negative effects of war participation (as they are e.g. hate, revengefulness, vengeance, beastliness, brutality, love of death, destructiveness, destruction, unscrupulousness, ruthlessness, ignorance and dullness with respect to human suffering, and many more). Gandhi described his impressions of a military camp during the Boer War where his corps had been helping the wounded:

"There was perfect order, perfect stillness. Tommy (i.e., the British soldier) was then altogether lovable. He mixed with us (...) freely. He often shared with us his luxuries whenever there were any to be had. A never-to-be-forgotten scene happened at Chieveley (Camp). It was a sultry day. Water was very scarce. There was only one well. An officer was doling out tinfuls to the thirsty. Some of the (Indian stretcher) bearers were returning after leaving their charge. The soldiers, who were helping themselves to the water, at once cheerfully shared their portion with our bearers. There was, shall I say, a spirit of brotherhood, irrespective of colour or creed. The Red Cross badge or the khaki uniform was a sufficient passport whether the bearer had a white skin or a brown. As a Hindu, I do not believe in war, but if anything can even partially reconcile me to it, it was the rich experience we gained at the front. It was certainly not the thirst for blood that took thousands of men to the battlefield... they

autobiography (part 3, chapter 10): "My personal sympathies were all with the Boers. "

went to the battlefield because it was their duty. And how many proud, rude, savage spirits had it not broken into gentle creatures of God?"³

Gandhi and his ambulance corps might not have been involved into fighting to any great degree during the Boer War when 28,000 white and 20,000 black people died within three years. They certainly experienced the horrors of war during the so-called "Zulu Rebellion" in Natal 1906, when Gandhi had re-formed his Indian Stretcher-Bearer Corps. In the course of heavy fighting, innocent 'natives' were wounded or killed and their property destroyed. Gandhi witnessed all this at close hand; his corps was given the task of looking after the wounded Zulus. Without the help of the Indian ambulance corps many more Zulus would have lost their lives. This fact contributed to Gandhi's attitude to war participation, although the first-aiders obviously participated in war crimes. Moreover, Gandhi's natural sympathies lay with the Zulus who enjoyed even fewer rights than did the Indians. His motives for offering the services of the ambulance corps were virtually the same as those he put forward during the Boer War⁴: independent from the success or result of the war, Gandhi seized the opportunity to show that the Indians were capable of appreciating the duties of citizenship. The year of the "Zulu Rebellion" saw the birth of "satyagraha" during the emancipation struggle of South African Indians as a nonviolent version of Indian nationalism. Shortly before the beginning of the First World War, Gandhi realized his war participation for Britain as an act of collaboration with criminal acts: "One who would not

³ Speech in Calcutta, 27 January 1902, *ibid.* pp. 222f.; cp. chapter 9 of Gandhi's autobiography "Satyagraha in South Africa"; Gandhi is described as "stoical in his bearing and cheerful and confident in his conversation" at a time when "every man in (General) Buller's force was dull and depressed" (Account of a white South African eyewitness, cited in C.F.Andrews: Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas, London 1929, Appendix VIII, p. 364).

⁴ cp. Gandhi's Autobiography, part 4, chapters 24 and 25

help a slaughter-house should not help in cleaning the butcher's house either."⁵

After the beginning of the First World War, Gandhi repudiated his position by recruiting Indian students in London for army service, although of a non-combatant character. Gandhi, as a public figure, not a private individual, felt obliged to recruit his countrymen particularly because they did not share his faith in nonviolence, just as Gandhi prior to 1906 had almost been alone in this belief compared with his Indian contemporaries in South Africa). They should play their part in the war alongside the young men of England, he believed, if they wanted to prove their country's readiness for self-government. There was considerable opposition to Gandhi's view, however, and some of the Indians argued that they were virtually slaves and had no interest in fighting for their masters. About eighty of them, at any rate, took Gandhi's side and consented to join his corps. In letters to his nephew Maganlal, Gandhi confirmed that his personal pacifist conviction was unconditional and that he would never seize a weapon. That was why Gandhi could never be asked to fight. But if "ahimsa" (nonviolence) should be observed in wartime as in peacetime, the ethical dilemma remained⁶:

⁵ cp. Peter Brock as in annotation 1, p. 605

⁶ Gandhi's attitude to war during his stay in England from 4 August to 19 December 1914 can be read in his letter to Maganlal Gandhi, dated 18 September 1914, and to the South African *satyagrahi*, Pragji Desai, dated 15 November 1914 (CWMG, Vol. 12 (1964), pp. 531 and 554-556; see also Gandhi's Autobiography, part 4, chapter 38). Gandhi responded to Pragji Desai: "A satyagrahi cannot support war directly or indirectly". Gandhi admitted that he had not yet grown into a state of absolute fearlessness on his striving for perfection. In the existing circumstances, however, to nurse the wounded, although scarcely consistent with a rigid adherence to the principle of nonviolence and in a sense a concession to his own weakness, it was the nearest he felt he could get to exemplifying nonviolence. To Maganlal Gandhi he confided: "I cannot say for certain that the step I have taken is the right one."

"I found that, living in England, I was in a way participating in the War. London owes the food it gets in wartime to the protection of the Navy. Thus to take this food was also a wrong thing. There was only one right course left, which was to go away to live in some mountain or cave in England... and subsist there on whatever food or shelter Nature might provide, without seeking assistance from any human being. I do not yet possess the spiritual strength necessary for this. It seemed to me a base thing, therefore, to accept food tainted by war without working for it. When thousands have come forward to lay down their lives only because they thought it their duty to do so, how could I sit still."

Since his conscience forbade him to fight, "there only remained nursing the wounded... I have discovered no alternative." "I myself could not shoot, but I could nurse the wounded."

Instead of seeing service on the Western front, Gandhi returned to India on his doctor's advice, arriving in Bombay in early January 1915. For more than a year thereafter he kept out of politics; in 1917 in Champaran and in early 1918 in Ahmedabad and Kheda (Kaira), both situated in his native province of Gujarat, he conducted "satyagraha" campaigns to right the wrongs suffered there by peasants and workers.

At the end of April 1918, Gandhi proceeded to launch a recruiting campaign to enlist Indian volunteers for the armed forces. It was no longer a case of supporting a noncombatant activity as it had been in 1899, 1906, and 1914. Although under military auspices and army discipline, these had been undertakings aimed at saving lives. For the first time he began to recruit volunteers as combatants. The British Viceroy Lord Chelmsford had called a manpower conference at the end of April 1918 in view of the Western allies' deteriorating war situation. Gandhi saw a chance to gain dominion status for India (similar to that enjoyed by Australia or Canada).⁷ Like in a desperate attempt to square a circle, Gandhi argued⁸: On the one

⁷ Gandhi was already formulating his ideas on recruiting in 1917; cp. CWMG, vol. 13 (1964), pages 350, 485, 519 and CWMG, vol. 14 (1965), pages 29f., 65.

⁸ cp. CWMG, vol. 14 (1965), pages 379f., 382, 444.

hand he strictly rejected to participate in the wounding or killing as soldier on the battlefield. And he confirmed that India should commit acts of "soul-force" according to the "satyagraha" principle of nonviolence. Yet India had not chosen the path of unconditional nonviolence... Bihar and especially Gujarat were his main recruiting areas. In fact, his Kheda satyagraha in Gujarat was not called off until 6 June 1918. Fourteen days later, on 22 June 1918, he started to enlist soldiers. In Gandhi's statements, we find two different, and potentially conflicting, lines of argument: In the first place, there is the nationalist appeal⁹ to contribute to the defense of the Empire and, thus, gain the political status of India as partner with equal rights. Yet there was another level of argument besides the nationalist one in Gandhi's advocacy of the war effort: He believed that Indian soldiers would relearn the courage they had lost as a result of their rulers' depriving them of their fighting capacity, the martial qualities of warriors, in order to become qualified to become true disciples of nonviolence. Indian citizens of the Empire had systematically been excluded from any combatant service except from a small number of professionals drawn from a limited section of the populace. Gandhi defined "swaraj" (home rule) as "complete independence in association with Britain", and this end should be achieved by the use of weapons, if need be; in a speech at Surat on 1 August 1918, Gandhi declared, "Swaraj is not for lawyers and doctors but only for those who possess strength of arms." Gandhi complained about the timidity and incapability of his fellow compatriots, and war participation was supposed to develop in them a spirit of independence and physical and mental fitness. Gandhi compared India's situation with those of the Boers in South Africa who had gained independence by fighting against the British: "We can count only on our own military strength." Gandhi's expectation that India's freedom could be won on the battlefields of France was not shared by most of his compatriots who were afraid of losing their lives and who could not follow Gandhi's idea of becoming strong. In mid-August 1918, Gandhi became seriously ill, the

⁹ cp. *ibid.*, pages 435-443, 453f., 483 and CWMG, vol. 15 (1965), pages 1-3, 14f.

sickness preventing him from war participation, repeating his physical crisis of 1914. In November 1918, after armistice ending the First World War, Gandhi experienced a feeling of very great relief, because he now was devoid of any chance of war participation. Nevertheless, however, he never repudiated the stand he had taken during those summer months of 1918: "But he cannot be a satyagrahi who is afraid of death. The ability to use physical force is necessary for a true appreciation of satyagraha. He alone can practise ahimsa (i.e. non-violence) who knows how to kill, i.e., knows what himsa (i.e. violence) is."

Peter Brock compared Gandhi's spiritual crisis of this time with that of the founder of the Quakers, George Fox, in the year 1659. Like George Fox, Gandhi renewed and revitalized his philosophy of nonviolence during and after this crisis. Gandhi was threatened to merge violence ("himsa") and nonviolence ("ahimsa") as two almost indistinguishable concepts in his mind: he realised nonviolence in acts of violence, for instance when a drunkard liable to inflict harm on others is restrained by force or when a mad dog is killed. His attitude during those months allowed him to regard war as a necessary evil in certain cases just as Mennonites perceived a conditional justification of armed force for the restraint of evil-doers and for the purpose of protection if this were exercised by persons "outside the perfection of Christ". In his correspondences with C.F. Andrews, an English missionary friend, and Esther Faering, a Danish Lutheran missionary, Gandhi tried to justify his recruiting campaigns. As mentioned before, in mid-August 1918, Gandhi became seriously ill abandoning his hope that he would be sent to France or Mesopotamia to serve in the battle zone as a noncombatant alongside the men he had succeeded in enrolling. During his campaigns of recruitment Gandhi was challenged to explain his contradictory way of acting; he should explain what good the Government had done for India to deserve their cooperation. To a member of his Ashram, Nanubhai, who had volunteered to help him with recruiting, he wrote on 24 September 1918 that "war is one powerful means, among many others", that if it were a

powerful means, it were also an evil one and that one could cultivate manliness in a blameless way. When in November 1918 news of the armistice reached him and he no longer had to concern himself with recruiting, he experienced a feeling of "very great relief"¹⁰

As mentioned earlier, Gandhi never repudiated the stand he had taken during those summer months of 1918. While inflexibly loyal to principle, he was at the same time a pragmatist who drew back from pursuing principle in every instance to its logical conclusion, even though this seemed for others to be an inner contradiction: as loyal citizen of the Empire, which he wanted to transform into a multinational commonwealth, as stretcher-bearer volunteer in the service of the British during the war and, at the same time, as loyal follower of the universal principle of nonviolence - this could only lead to an unbearable and unhealthy compromise!

Gandhi explained and justified his position after the First World War. In his autobiography, first published in 1927, before his correspondence with Bart de Ligt, Gandhi wrote about his efforts to organize an ambulance corps in London in the year 1914¹¹:

"I felt that Indians residing in England ought to do their bit in the war. English students had volunteered to serve in the army, and Indians might do no less. A number of objections were taken to this line of argument. There was, it was contended, a world of difference between the Indians and the English. We were slaves and they were masters. How could a slave co-operate with the master in the hour of the latter's need? Was it not the duty of the slave, seeking to be free, to make the master's need his opportunity? This argument failed to appeal to me then. I knew the difference of status between an Indian and an Englishman, but I did not believe that we had been quite reduced to slavery. I felt then that it was more the fault of individual British officials than of the British system, and that we could convert

¹⁰ M.K. Gandhi in his Autobiography, part 5, chapter 28

¹¹ Autobiography, part 4, chapter 38, quoted in: M.K. Gandhi: Non-Violence in Peace and War, part 1, Ahmedabad 1962 (1942), pp. 21-23; Gandhi described his first encounter with the poetess Sarojini Naidu.

them by love. If we would improve our status through the help and co-operation of the British, it was our duty to win their help by standing by them in their hour of need. Though the system was faulty, it did not seem to me to be intolerable, as it does today. But if, having lost my faith in the system, I refuse to co-operate with the British Government today, how could those friends do so, having lost their faith not only in the system but in the officials as well?

The opposing friends felt that that was the hour for making a bold declaration of Indian demands and for improving the status of Indians.

I thought that England's need should not be turned into our opportunity, and that it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted. I therefore adhered to my advice and invited those who would to enlist as volunteers. There was a good response, practically all the provinces and all the religions being represented among the volunteers."

In the following statement Gandhi described his change of attitude with respect to the Empire¹²:

"I lost no occasion of serving the Government at all times. Two questions presented themselves to me during all those crises. What was my duty as a citizen of the empire as I then believed myself to be, and what was my duty as an out-and-out believer in the religion of Ahimsa - non-violence?

I know now that I was wrong in thinking that I was a citizen of the empire. But on those four occasions I did honestly believe that, in spite of the many disabilities that my country was labouring under, it was making its way towards freedom, and that on the whole the government from the popular standpoint was not wholly bad, and that the British administrators were honest though insular and dense. Holding that view, I set about doing what an ordinary Englishman would do in the circumstances. I was not wise or important enough to take independent action. I had no business to judge or scrutinize ministerial decisions with the solemnity of a tribunal. I did not impute malice to the ministers either at the time of the Boer War, the Zulu Revolt or the late war. I did not consider

¹² Young India, 17.11.1921, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 23-27

Englishmen, nor do I now consider them, as particularly bad or worse than other human beings. I considered and still consider them to be as capable of high motives and actions as any other body of men, and equally capable of making mistakes. I therefore felt that I sufficiently discharged my duty as a man and a citizen by offering my humble services to the empire in the hour of its need whether local or general. That is how I would expect every Indian to act by his country under Swaraj. I should be deeply distressed, if on every conceivable occasion every one of us were to be a law unto oneself and to scrutinize in golden scales every action of our future National Assembly. I would surrender my judgment in most matters to national representatives, taking particular care in making my choice of such representatives. I know that in no other manner would a democratic government be possible for one single day.

The whole situation is now changed for me. My eyes, I fancy, are opened. Experience has made me wiser. I consider the existing system of government to be wholly bad and requiring special national effort to end or mend it. It does not possess within itself any capacity for self-improvement. That I still believe many English administrators to be honest does not assist me, because I consider them to be as blind and deluded as I was myself. Therefore I can take no pride in calling the empire mine or describing myself as a citizen. On the contrary, I fully realize that I am a *pariah* untouchable of the empire. I must, therefore, constantly pray for its radical reconstruction or total destruction, even as a Hindu *pariah* would be fully justified in so praying about Hinduism or Hindu society."

Moreover, Gandhi confessed a dualism of flesh and spirit which he as "a weak, frail, miserable being" was not able to dissolve to his satisfaction which was attainable only by slow and painful stages: on the one hand by a "mechanical refusal to act", on the other hand by "intelligent action in a detached manner" which resolved itself into an "incessant crucifixion of the flesh", "so that the spirit may become entirely free". While Gandhi believed in "ahimsa" (nonviolence) and acted against it, his friends would not believe in nonviolence, but instead their inactivity would be actuated by anger

and malice, they were misled by their ignorance and weakness. That is why Gandhi felt it his duty to guide his fellow-countrymen, to place before them their clear duty. Gandhi did not regret his action in terms of "ahimsa" (nonviolence): For, under "swaraj" (home rule) he would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country. But there would be no necessity for arms at all, according to Gandhi's vision. But the imperfectness of himself and of his countrymen in their present state would prevent them to achieve the aspired end: to attain independence without the use of weapons and to create a weaponless society under "swaraj" (home rule), this perfect state being attainable at any time, however. In his statement before the court at his "Great Trial" in Delhi on 18 March 1922, Gandhi explained the reasons for his new attitude towards the British Empire¹³: Gandhi confirmed that he enlisted his fellow-countrymen in Kheda at the cost of his health in the summer months of 1918 - after the War Conference of Lord Chelmsford in Delhi. The first shock came to him in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, the first emergency law in India; then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations for Indian citizens. Gandhi recollected that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Muslims of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam were not likely to be fulfilled. In spite of the forebodings and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919 he fought for cooperation and work on the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Muslims, that the bloody incidents in the Punjab were followed by investigations, then indictments and reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they had been, would be realised. But the Khilafat promise was not to be kept, the Punjab crime was whitewashed, and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue, and in some cases were even rewarded.

¹³ Young India, 23.3.1922, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 27-29

Due to his new attitudes Gandhi opposed compulsory military training for students in the year 1925, because military services of Indian recruits saluting the Union Jack could be instrumentalized and misused against the nation on due occasions or for an expedition against the innocent Chinese or the equally innocent Tibetans when their subjection was felt necessary in the interest of imperial commerce¹⁴: While Gandhi, as an out and out believer in "ahimsa" (nonviolence), could understand and appreciate military training for those who believed in the necessity of the use of arms on given occasions, he was against compulsory military training in every case and even under a national government. In this context it is a logical consequence that Mahatma Gandhi signed the international anti-conscription manifesto of 1926 which was addressed to the League of Nations and which condemned any compulsory military training and the conscript system, because the pacifist and anti-militarist opposition against war would be immediately suppressed in times of mobilization, because the foreign policy of the modern states had seriously been influenced by the conscript system and because a debasing and humiliating enslavement of soldiers who are suffering from the barrack life, military drill and the irresponsible command-and-obey-system fatally affects the education of the male youth. Bart de Ligt later criticized this manifesto not because of its message, but because of its misdirection to the League of Nations which was condemned by Bart de Ligt (cp. "Beim Teufel zur Beichte...", Berlin 1927). This manifesto, signed by Gandhi, Tagore, Einstein, Russell, Buber, Rolland, Ragaz, Kagawa, H.G. Wells, and several others, was appreciated but valued realistically, because both, Mahatma Gandhi and Bart de Ligt, were convinced that the reformers will have to put up an immense struggle to secure State action in the desired direction and that the national governments were too afraid and distrustful against each other to advocate the abolition of the conscript system!

¹⁴ Young India, 24.9.1925, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 41-43

In 1925 Gandhi, on request, explained¹⁵ with respect to his war participation that "one's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting" so that one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another. Gandhi repeated that he had advised and lead men who believed in war but who, from cowardice or from base motives or from anger against the British Government, refrained from enlisting. Gandhi stressed that, so long these people believed in war and professed loyalty to the British Government, they were in duty bound to support it by enlistment.

Though Gandhi did not believe in the use of arms, and though it was contrary to the religion of "ahimsa" (nonviolence) which he professed, he would not hesitate to join an agitation for a repeal of the debasing Arms Act which the British Government enacted in order to prevent use of arms by the Indian citizens. Although he did not believe in retaliation, he had not hesitated in the year 1921 to tell villagers that they who knew nothing of "ahimsa" (nonviolence) would be guilty of cowardice in failing to defend the honour of their womenfolk and their property by force of arms against any kidnapper. This attitude was, according to Gandhi, not only consistent with his profession of the religion of "ahimsa" (nonviolence) out and out, but a direct result of it.

Responding to the letter of one correspondent¹⁶ Gandhi repeatedly confirmed in 1928 that he had not offered his services because he believed in war but because he could not avoid participation in war

¹⁵ Young India, 5.11.1925, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 53f. Gandhi gave a similar response to George Joseph, the editor of Young India during Gandhi's imprisonment in Yeravda and the editor of his magazine "Independent", on 19 December 1929 in Young India: "The military spirit in the West bids fair to kill the very humanity in man and reduce him to the level of the beast. What is wanted and what India has, thank God, learnt in a measure undreamt of before is the spirit of unarmed resistance before which the bayonet runs to rust and gunpowder turns to dust."- quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 102-106, quotation p. 103.

¹⁶ Young India, 8.3.1928, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 73-75

at least indirectly, that he had no status to resist participation, that he did not believe that war can be avoided by taking part in it, even as he did not believe that evil could be avoided by participation in it, but that this needs to be distinguished from sincerely helpless participation in many things which are held to be evil or undesirable. In the same reply Gandhi made it clear that if another war were declared the next day, he could not assist the government in any shape or form and that he would, on the contrary, exert himself to the utmost to induce others to withhold their assistance and to do everything possible and consistent with "ahimsa" (nonviolence) to bring about its defeat. In this context Gandhi criticized the Briand-Kellogg-Pact ostracizing the wars of aggression in the year 1929, because this Pact in substance meant a desire to carry on the joint exploitation peacefully and because this Pact recommended to avoid violence to those who had already been deprived of any violent means, "even as a person who has never hurt a fly will fail to understand the meaning of an appeal made to him to will not to spill blood."¹⁷ ---

Finally, it should be noted that Gandhi replied to Tolstoy's secretary Vladimir Tchertkov after Gandhi's first letter to Bart de Ligt in the year 1928. This reply has been included in this documentation of the correspondence, jointly with Tchertkov's letter: 'My Attitude towards War'¹⁸.

The controversy of Bart de Ligt with Mahatma Gandhi demonstrates the difficulties experienced in dialogues between "North" and "South"; because the challenge of the autonomy of the "South" means as consequence the free choice of the means of defense of its autonomy. Bart de Ligt's concession that "(he) recognize(d) impartially the right of any oppressed class or race to liberate itself by means of arms", does not sound to be non-violent from a dogmatic point of view. In effect, this concession might mean the militarisation of the Indian nation in order to preserve the achievements of the anti-colonialist liberation movement.

¹⁷ Young India, 4.7.1929, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 95-98, quotation: p. 98

¹⁸ Young India, 7.2.1929, quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 83-88

Bart de Ligt did not ask Gandhi why he reserved his personal position in favour of a political plea for autonomy and free choice of the means of defense during the Second Round Table Conference in London as representative of the Indian National Congress, but he condemned Gandhi's attitude from an anti-militarist and pacifist point of view. Gandhi's political starting-point, however, was India: Before the means of defense could be independently chosen, inner autonomy for home rule should be achieved and preserved outwardly. Only this inner strength would be the basis for a wide coalition for nonviolent resistance, including those parts of the Indian population which had not acted nonviolently from the beginning.

During his correspondence with Bart de Ligt, Gandhi hoped that the anti-colonialist liberation achieved by nonviolent means would lead to an Indian society in social justice which learned to solve its conflicts nonviolently. He wanted to practically contribute to political culture in the specific situation - open for compromises even when these were unfavourable for his nonviolent principle. From today's point of view we know how much Gandhi's hope, expressed during his correspondence with Bart de Ligt, was shattered - Gandhi's aspiration that the Indian National Congress would adopt the nonviolent principle wholeheartedly remained unfulfilled.

Bart de Ligt disregarded the existence of Indian policemen and soldiers in the British service and their importance for the imperial colonial government in India and other colonies. Gandhi had always experienced the political effect of these Indian soldiers as an instrument of imperialist oppression, which India should by all means regain.

Gandhi never wanted to force anyone to adopt nonviolent principles; for Gandhi nonviolence ("ahimsa") was always meant to be a fundamental principle. Nonviolent resistance could only be demonstrated through "soul-force" according to a voluntary

determination to renounce one's self. Bart de Ligt regarded nonviolence as "the surest arm" for anti-colonialist liberation, because by adopting the principle of nonviolence India would escape adaption to the technical-industrial system of modern warfare "becoming more and more a fatal peril for victors as well as for vanquished".

Gandhi regarded India's independence as a great contribution to World Peace, because the imperialism of colonial powers was the prime cause of modern wars. That is why the liberation of India, according to Mahatma Gandhi, was in the interest of all of humanity. With respect to Bart de Ligt, Gandhi put it as follows: "Is not the prime cause of modern wars the inhuman race for exploitation of the so-called weaker races of the earth?"

Gandhi despised hollow phrases, pure declamations and sheer lip services; he strived for consistent acts of non-cooperation which he missed with regard to European pacifists, while Bart de Ligt called Gandhi's attention to more progressive antimilitarist activities: for instance the war tax resistance or the workers' boycott of arms production and strikes in the military industry.

This correspondence herewith published for the first time in the German language shows the high intellectual level of controversial debate on nonviolence and modern warfare, war and peace between the two world wars. The authors were unanimous in how all-embracing nonviolent resistance against war should be in practical terms and in a clear vision, because "it is in peacetime the caves of hell should be evacuated, where the instruments of war have been produced" (Carl von Ossietzky).

Gandhi experienced the correspondence as an excellent challenge by a European contemporary who sympathized with his striving for emancipation. For Gandhi, Bart de Ligt as a European was participating at the exploitation of the Hindu culture by the modern civilization. He regarded himself as a "mouse" who did not want to

follow prescriptions from a "cat" in so far as how to act and which means to choose. That is why this dialogue, in a sense, remained restricted: What was the European pacifist's legitimation to preach morality to the Indian freedom fighter?

Both, Bart de Ligt and Mahatma Gandhi, unanimously condemned the imperialism of colonial powers and their political determination to keep up a military defense system; on principle, they rejected modern warfare and all direct or indirect compulsory military services as well as the personal use of violence and war as political means, because they worked for a nonviolent transformation of their societies, for Peace and Justice.

1. Letter of Bart de Ligt to Gandhi (May 1928)

"Most venerated Gandhi:

Without doubt, there is no man who attracts the attention of the modern world as you do. And you are certainly worthy of this admiration because you have been able in a wise, heroic way to awaken everywhere confidence in that moral force which slumbers in each individual. To oppose the severe oppression of so-called Christian civilization, and the violence of proud and pretentious Westerners, you have awakened in the East immense spiritual forces, making it seem that Christ reigns over your "pagan" world rather than in our official Christian churches. You have not only proclaimed the gospel of non-resistance — or spiritual warfare — but you have yourself practiced it and have paid with your own person.

I am one of those Europeans who are profoundly grateful to you for your actions. Formerly pastor in a Dutch Protestant Church, I defended, in the name of Christ, moral combat as the only form of combat which suits man's true character; and I continued to do so when the Great War threatened our country on all sides.

I am all the more grateful to you because, having separated myself from the church whose spirit in my opinion had become too narrow, I have collaborated for several years in the international anti-military movement. This movement as you know works against war and for the emancipation of all colored people and all oppressed races and classes.

Everywhere, most venerated Gandhi, you arouse admiration. In many circles you are considered the legitimate successor of Tolstoi because you have affirmed that true patriotism cannot have hatred and massacre at its basis, but only love, which is the source of life and not of death.

Nevertheless, when I recently examined the introduction to your book "Speeches and Writings", published at Madras by Mr. C.F. Andrews, allow me to say that I was greatly disillusioned. The information given by Mr. Andrews in regard to your attitude during

the World War obliges me to state that it is not right to consider you the moral successor of Tolstoi. While he was above all a supernationalist, you, Gandhi, have remained consciously a nationalist. Tolstoi subordinated the interests of his country to the essential needs of humanity. On the other hand, you, at a most critical moment in the history of the world, subordinated the essential needs of humanity to what you considered the supreme interests of India.

You have, to be sure, several times condemned violence in the admirable book of which I am speaking. You declared that according to the Oriental conception politics cannot be separated from religion and that true religion is nothing but the practice of love in daily life. You set forth the idea that the English conquerors of India should be themselves conquered by the strength of soul, by the spiritual strength of the Indians, and that the true and best way to serve one's country is to serve humanity. You urged your compatriots to take into their hearts the sublime life which shines out of the soul of Buddha as well as from the spirit of Tolstoi. You explained that *ahimsa* signified not only not to kill anyone but not even to offend anyone. And you praised more than once the strength of those who refuse to use any form of violence.

But during the Great War when in every country conscientious objectors to this bloody and fratricidal struggle were being shut up in gloomy prisons or killed, when in Europe, America, and Asia small groups and even isolated individuals were striving in spite of the greatest difficulties to remain faithful to the cause of humanity, where were you, Gandhi, Prophet of Non-violence? What were you doing in the Orient while these men and women of the West were struggling in their countries against a mad public opinion, against tyrannic governments and inhuman authorities?

Mr. Andrews tells us that in 1914 at London you began to organize a voluntary Indian Ambulance Corps. Didn't you recall that Tolstoi himself condemned the Red Cross because it formed part of the war system? Moreover, during the cruel war of the English against the Boers, you also organized an Indian Ambulance Corps in Africa. Doesn't the fact that you received the English war medal

have any significance for you? And the praise meted out to you in 1911 in the "Illustrated Star" of Johannesburg saying that during the Boer War you "simply did your duty" — was that not sufficient to make you understand that you had failed to accomplish a higher duty?

It is true that the present Red Cross owes its origin to humanitarian motives and that it has done very worthwhile work. But during the war the work of medical officers, nurses, and stretcher bearers, indeed all ambulance service, is entirely subordinated to strategic interests. Last year the Dutch Government decided to have all the nurses of the Netherlands registered in order to enroll them in advance for ambulance service in case of another war. But there was strong opposition to the movement and a number of nurses declared that they would participate in no way in the military system, not even as Red Cross sisters. One section of the public couldn't understand this at all; why refuse to soften the horrible sufferings of those wounded in war? Thereupon one nurse, who from love of humanity had done ambulance service during the war in the Balkans and later on in the Great War, published in *De Wapens Neder* (The Hague) the conclusions she had reached through bitter experience: "Alas, my friends, what can the Red Cross do when hell breaks out? What can we do for the numerous wounded abandoned on the field of battle? Only a small percentage ever reach our hospitals. During the Balkan war there was a cessation of firing between battles so as to search for the wounded. But during the Great War there was nothing of the sort. The stretcher bearers themselves, concerned for their own fate, preferred to go out under cover of darkness to look for the wounded."

It is true that in 1914, in London, you were in poor health and had to go back to India almost immediately. But, once back there, you never ceased preaching loyalty to the British Empire in danger. It is not surprising that once again England rewarded you with a gold medal! This medal was also intended to sugar the bitter pill which the Indian people were to swallow. English Imperialism which was combating without mercy German Imperialism had great need of your compatriots' money and their blood. And you, who

stood for non-resistance, were ready for them to give it! Apparently you had so little aversion to being an accomplice in a great collective crime that you declared at the Conference of War at Delhi in April, 1918: "I recognize that in the hour of danger we must give ungrudging and unequivocal support to the Empire of which we aspire in the near future to be partners in the same sense as the Dominions overseas. ... I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment, and I know that India, by this very act, would become the most favored partner in the Empire and racial distinctions would become a thing of the past. ..."

At this time you left for the district of Kaira as a recruiting agent for the British Government. You even said once that the Indians should try to hasten the moment when they would be capable of defending themselves: "We wish for the time when we may aspire to the Vice-regal office. It, therefore, behooves us to learn the use of arms and to acquire the ability to defend ourselves. If we want to learn the use of arms with the greatest possible despatch, it is our duty to enlist ourselves in the Army. ..."

How could you do that, Gandhi, you who stand for fraternity and moral resistance? How could you take sides with your adversaries and leave in the lurch all those people in the world who were fighting for your ideas? How could you repeat so often throughout the universal carnage that soon the British Empire, which the war would have freed from militarism, would give your country independence and liberty? This seems like a blood spot on the immaculate whiteness of your robe. Therefore we are disquieted. And we understand why Mr. Andrews, who respects and loves you profoundly, has declared that he could not explain this flagrant contradiction in your conduct which you have never really justified.

However, let us leave the past. The question now is the future. I come to you, Gandhi, in the name of the thousands of men and women of the West, who, captivated by the loftiness of your words and the grandeur of your exemplary actions, are combating violence

throughout the so-called civilized world; who are laboring for the emancipation of all human races. In this fight to prevent war and destruction, we need you and the collaboration of millions of Indians and Asiatics. *In the future, at the decisive moment, can we count on you?* Are you, and the powerful masses which follow you, sufficiently disillusioned by the false promises of imperialistic governments to be ready to march at our sides when the supreme hour comes, against every armed imperialism including that of your own government, in order to prevent new massacres and terrible bloodshed?

More and more the world is threatened with a war of continent against continent, of race against race, a war which would destroy humanity. Therefore, Gandhi, examine this question seriously, meditate upon it, and reply. If we can count on you, if we know and if all the world knows, that you stand on the side of the war resisters, you will then become one of the most powerful factors capable of guiding humanity toward that peace which you evoke so magnificently.

Like that European, who called on the Apostle Paul in a dream to come from Asia to Europe and preach the principles of that spiritual combat which would alter the face of the world, we call on you, Gandhi; we who are deeply affected by the misery of the present age, earnestly invite you to join in a moral alliance which nothing could sever, not even a new world war, and which would everywhere prepare the reign of peace and liberty that all the peoples of the world long for.

Convinced that you will give importance to the spirit rather than to the letter in these pages, I dare hope that you will take my request to heart and that after having meditated upon it, you will make reply publicly, setting forth clearly to everyone your position with regard to the fight against all war.

I beg you to believe, dear and venerated Gandhi, that I am,

Yours most sincerely and respectfully,

(Signed) B. DE LIGT

Onex, Geneva, May 1928."

1. Reply of Mahatma Gandhi: My Attitude Towards War (November 1928)

"Rev. B. de Ligt has written a long open letter to me which strongly criticises my participation in the Boer War and then the Great War of 1914 and invites me to explain my conduct in the light of *ahimsa*. Other friends too have put the same question, and I am glad to give the explanation in these columns.

There is no defence for my conduct weighed only in the scales of *ahimsa*. I draw no distinction between those who wield the weapons of destruction and those who do Red Cross work. Both participate in war and advance its cause. Both are guilty of the crime of war. But even after introspection during all these years, I feel that in the circumstances in which I found myself I was bound to adopt the course I did both during the Boer War and the Great European War and for that matter the so-called Zulu "Rebellion" of Natal in 1906.

Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing, if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment's reflection. But I cannot recall a single act which could be so easily determined.

Being a confirmed war resister I have never given myself training in the use of destructive weapons in spite of opportunities to take such training. It was perhaps thus that I escaped direct destruction of human life. But so long as I lived under a system of Government based on force and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for me, I was bound to help that Government to the extent of my ability when it was engaged in a war unless I non-cooperated with that Government and renounced to the utmost of my capacity the privileges it offered me.

Let me take an illustration. I am a member of an institution which holds a few acres of land whose crops are in imminent peril from monkeys. I believe in the sacredness of all life and hence I

regard it as a breach of *ahimsa* to inflict any injury on the monkeys. But I do not hesitate to instigate and direct an attack on the monkeys in order to save the crops. I would like to avoid this evil. I can avoid it by leaving or breaking up the institution. I do not do so because I do not expect to be able to find a society where there will be no agriculture and therefore no destruction of some life. In fear and trembling, in humility and penance, I therefore participate in the injury inflicted on the monkeys, hoping some day to find a way out.

Even so did I participate in the three acts of war. I could not, it would be madness for me to sever my connection with the society to which I belong. And on those three occasions I had no thought of non-cooperating with the British Government. My position regarding that Government is totally different today and hence I should not voluntarily participate in its wars and I should risk imprisonment and even the gallows if I were forced to take up arms or otherwise take part in its military operations.

But that still does not solve the riddle. If there were a national Government, whilst I should not take any direct part in any war I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it. For I know that all its members do not believe in non-violence to the extent I do. It is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.

Non-violence works in a most mysterious manner. Often a man's actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence; equally often his actions may wear the appearance of violence when he is absolutely non-violent in the highest sense of the term and is subsequently found so to be. All I can then claim for my conduct is that it was, in the instances cited, actuated in the interests of non-violence. There was no thought of sordid national or other interest. I do not believe in the promotion of national or any other interest at the sacrifice of some other interest.

I may not carry my argument any further. Language at best is but a poor vehicle for expressing one's thoughts in full. For me

non-violence is not a mere philosophical principle. It is the rule and the breath of my life. I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. It is a matter not of the intellect but of the heart. True guidance comes by constant waiting upon God, by utmost humility, self-abnegation, by being ever ready to sacrifice one's self. Its practice requires fearlessness and courage of the highest order. I am painfully aware of my failings.

But the Light within me is steady and clear. There is no escape for any of us save through truth and non-violence. I know that war is wrong, is an unmitigated evil. I know too that it has got to go. I firmly believe that freedom won through bloodshed or fraud is no freedom. Would that all the acts alleged against me were found to be wholly indefensible rather than that by any act of mine non-violence was held to be compromised or that I was ever thought to be in favor of violence or untruth in any shape or form. Not violence, not untruth but non-violence. Truth is the law of our being.

M. K. GANDHI''

Reply of Gandhi to a Letter of Vladimir Tchertkov (7.2.1929)

"My Attitude Towards War

My article under the above heading published in *Young India*, 13th September 1928, has given rise to much correspondence with me and in the European press that is interested in war against war. In the personal correspondence there is a letter from Tolstoy's friend and follower, V. Tchertkoff, which, coming as it does from one who commands great respect among lovers of peace, the reader will like me to share with him. Here is the letter:

"Your Russian friends send you their warmest greetings and best wishes for the further success of your devoted service for God and men. With the liveliest interest do we follow your life, the work of your mind, and your activity, and we rejoice at each of your success. We realize that all that you attain in your own country is at the same time also our attainment, for, although under different circumstances, we are serving the one and the same cause. We feel a great gratitude to you for all that you have given and are giving us by your person, the example of your life, and your fruitful social work. We feel the deepest and most joyous spiritual union with you.

But the truer and the deeper is the union, the more acutely one feels the least difference or misunderstanding between us. And it is just such a misunderstanding between us that has elicited my present letter to you.

Your article 'My Attitude Towards War', printed in *Young India* of the 13th September of this year, has grieved many of your admirers and friends. And I have felt the need of expressing that which I feel and think on this subject. I hope that you will accept my words with the same feeling of good-will with which they issue from me.

You justify your past participation in three wars waged by the British Government. Alluding to the same subject some years ago you in an article expressed yourself, if I remember right, in

another spirit. Then you did not justify yourself, but recognized your former inconsistency. And I remember that this readiness of yours to recognize your past mistake greatly touched and consoled me and your other friends here. Whereas now, on the contrary, you justify yourself, referring to the usual arguments put forward in defence of war. You say: 'Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing, if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment's reflection.' This is quite correct with regard to all cases which admit of considerations of practical expediency. But there is a category of actions, which owing to their character do not admit of such considerations. They are such actions which for us clearly violate a definitely recognized moral or divine law. To this category of actions belongs the wilful killing of man. In this case the issue should be placed categorically, and one should not allow any considerations of expediency to interfere.

Neither may one solve this question according to whether one sympathizes or not with a given Government. And yet you do so when you say: 'If there was a national Government, I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it.' In this way you justify others who also vote for the preparation for war because they sympathize with another Government. And what a snare is placed in people's way by a man who denies war to such an extent that he refuses to serve in the army and who at the same time votes for military training?

Further you say that 'all its (the Government's) members do not believe in non-violence', and that 'it is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.' But by abstaining from voting for military training I compel no one to do anything, just as by refraining from voting for training pickpockets I do no violence to pickpockets.

You refer to the example of a harvest eaten by monkeys. But by transferring the case from men to monkeys you obscure it. If your harvest were attacked by men not beasts, would you not deem it your duty to sacrifice the harvest rather than destroy the men?

You say that it would be madness for you to sever your connection with the society to which you belong, and that as long as you lived under a system of government based on force, and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for you, you were bound to help it to the extent of your ability when it was engaged in war.

Firstly, by abstaining from approving those evil deeds which men are engaged in around me I not only do not 'sever my connection with the society to which I belong', but exactly the opposite. I utilize this connection for the best possible way of serving this society.

Secondly, if living as I live I am obliged to assist the State in waging war, then I ought at all costs to cease to live as I live, even if I had in doing so to sacrifice my life, and in no wise to help people in the slaughter of their brothers. Besides, it is quite possible to make use of certain facilities afforded by the State, which could be obtained without violence, and at the same time to abstain from supporting the evil deeds of the State.

Perhaps the misunderstanding partly arises from your not having sufficiently rigidly drawn the line between *violence* and *killing*. There are cases when it is indeed difficult, without careful consideration, to make clear whether definite violence is being committed. But in the question of war there is no room for doubt as to its being founded on the killing of man. In this we probably agree.

We hope, dear and greatly esteemed friend, that you will recognize the justice of the considerations I have expressed, and that you will give us an explanation that will quiet our misgivings. At all events believe me that I would not have written this letter, had not the passages indicated in your article indeed called forth misgivings among many of your sincere and earnest friends.

In conclusion, I may only reiterate the expression of my deepest regard for you and my warmest good wishes for yourself and your good work."

I need hardly assure M. Tchertkoff that not only do I not resent his letter but I welcome it for its warmth of affection and for its transparent sincerity.

I do not propose to enter into a detailed reply to the points raised in the letter. For me the matter does not admit of reasoning beyond a point. It is one of deep conviction that war is an unmixed evil. I would not yield to anyone in the detestation of war. But conviction is one thing, correct practice is another. The very thing that one war resister may do in the interest of his mission may repel another war resister who may do the exact opposite, and yet both may hold the same view about war. This contradiction arises because of the bewildering complexity of human nature. I can only, therefore, plead for mutual toleration even among professors of the same creed.

Now for some points in the letter. I do not recall the writing or speech in which I expressed repentance for my participation in Britain's wars. What I am likely to have said is that I was not sorry that I aided Britain though her policy was afterwards discovered by me to have been one fraught with harm to India and danger to humanity. If I had felt remorse for having taken part in the three wars as wars, I should have remembered it and repeated it unless I had changed my opinion about my participation.

Whatever I have done was not done from expedience as we understand the term. I claim to have done every act described by me for the purpose of advancing the cause of peace. That does not mean that those acts really advanced the cause of peace. I am merely stating the fact that my motive was peace.

What is possible, however, is that I was then weak and am still too weak to perceive my error even as a blind man is unable to see what his neighbours are able to see. I observe daily how capable we are of utmost self-deception.

For the time being, however, I am not aware of my self-deception. What I feel is that I am looking at peace through a medium to which my European friends are strangers. I belong to a country which is compulsory disarmed and has been held under

subjection for centuries. My way of looking at peace may be necessarily different from theirs.

Let me take an illustration. Supposing that both cats and mice sincerely desire peace. Now cats will have to adjure war against mice. But how will mice promote peace? What will they abjure? Is their vote even necessary? Suppose further that some cats do not observe that pact arrived at by the assembly of cats and continue preying upon mice, what will mice do? There may be some wise heads among them, and they may say, 'We will offer ourselves a willing sacrifice till the cats are over-satisfied and find no fun in preying.' These will do well to propagate their cult. But what should be their attitude, peace-lovers though they are, towards the mice who would, instead of running away from their oppressors, decide to arm themselves and give battle to the enemy? The effort may be vain, but the wise mice whom I have imagined will, I apprehend, be bound to assist the mice in their desire to become bold and strong even whilst maintaining their attitude of peace. They will do so not out of policy but from the highest of motives. That is exactly my attitude. Non-violence is not an easy thing to understand, still less to practise, weak as we are. We must all act prayerfully and humbly and continually ask God to open the eyes of our understanding, being ever ready to act according to the light as we receive it. My task as a lover and promoter of peace, therefore, today consists in unflinching devotion to non-violence in the prosecution of the campaign for regaining our liberty. And if India succeeds in so regaining it, it will be the greatest contribution to the world's peace. European war resisters, therefore, may well formulate public opinion in Europe that will compel Britain to retrace her steps and stop the continuing spoliation of India.

Young India, 7.2.1929"

2. Letter of Bart de Ligt to Gandhi (1929)

"Rev. B. de Ligt of Onex, Geneva, it will be remembered, wrote an open letter to me last year on my attitude towards war especially in view of my participation in the Boer War, the Zulu Rebellion in Natal and the late War. The open letter was published in the European Press, and I satisfied myself with merely publishing my reply in these pages without publishing the former. The reverend gentleman has now sent me a rejoinder which he calls second open letter, and would have me to publish his letter. Although it is too long for these pages I may not resist the writer's request. He has taken great pains over his composition, and I appreciate the interest peace lovers in the West are taking in my views and conduct. I am publishing the letter in two parts. And after the conclusion of the second part I hope to write out a brief reply. M(ohandas) K(aramchand) G(andhi)"

"War against War ---

I

It is in the name of all those who, throughout the world, are fighting against the terrible mania for violence which is ravaging the universe, that I thank you for having kindly replied, so frankly and precisely, to my open letter of May, 1928.

Your reply cuts both ways. It is reassuring on the one side, but disappointing on the other. From the point of view of immediate opposition to war, it is of great importance that you should have declared openly that you no longer wish to participate in any combat whatsoever on behalf of England. If the masses who are with you are ready to oppose, at critical moments, any war movement on the part of the Government in London, no longer desiring to give either their gold or their blood, they become a real factor for peace.

As I already wrote you, movements are being born today throughout the whole world, and spreading continuously, to oppose

war. You may be sure that your courageous declaration is received in those quarters with joy.

Moreover, you have recognized without circumlocution that the work of the Red Cross forms part of the gigantic machinery of war. This declaration was confirmed by the impressive statement of the American nursing sister, who sent back to the French Government her Croix de Guerre because she had finally become convinced that all her so-called humanitarian work had been, on the whole, only a refined sort of war work. By a happy coincidence, this statement was published in the same number of *The World Tomorrow* (November 1928) as the report of our correspondence. This statement was further confirmed by the letter of Albert de Jong, Secretary of the International Anti-militarist Bureau, to the XIIIth Conference of the Red Cross at the Hague, showing how this institution, willynilly, is today forced even to collaborate in the perfecting of war gases. In the same manner, you also are helping us to tear the veil from the face of false charities, under cover of which the militarists of all countries are trying to arouse at least a little sympathy for 'national defence' in good-hearted men and women.

On the other hand, however, your reply has caused in Western countries profound disappointment. For, in the main, you have accepted rather than rejected war, if not on your own behalf, at least, in principle, for your people. At the present time you are, happily, against India's participation in any war whatsoever undertaken by the British Empire. But, until when? If, for instance, in a short time, a Macdonald Government is formed in England and it should be tactician enough to make advances to you with regard to Home Rule and to give you, at least formally, the reward which you vainly hoped to obtain by participating in the war of 1914-1918, what would you do, if that friendly Government let itself be driven into a new war? That is a burning question. Do not say that such a war is impossible. Everywhere one is preparing for it, even more than before 1914. Politicians are already speaking of an eventual war between the United States and England; strategists and technicians are studying it. And like any other socialist Government, an English socialist Government would continue the tradition of

'national defence'; it would in any case be ready to go to war on behalf of the League of Nations, that trust of modern imperialism whose fatal character I have made manifest in my book *Contre la Guerre Nouvelle* which I have sent to you. Macdonald, who was formerly among the conscientious objectors, has just declared that as a practical man it is for him impossible to renounce the force of arms.

That is why your reply, however frank and courageous it may be, can reassure us, alas, but very relatively.

As I have already written you, I also do not hold to a dogmatic point of view of non-violence. I recognize impartially the right of any oppressed class or race to liberate itself by means of arms. I grant that from a moral point of view a people which defends itself militarily does better than if it did not defend itself at all because of cowardice or lack of character - although I can quite well imagine a people which, urged by worthy humanitarian sentiments, renounces war methods, even while still incapable of liberating itself by higher means. But today the international situation has changed so much that such an affirmation can only have quite an abstract sense. Modern warfare has become a technical-industrial system, so complicated and so refined that for many years to come coloured races will not be able to employ it against the hypercivilized barbarians who have been unconsciously preparing themselves for it for a few centuries past, and have been consciously adapting themselves to it for the last hundred years or so. The surest arm, especially for coloured races, is non-violent resistance. Their objective right of armed resistance is becoming, from the practical point of view, something more and more academic. By the force of things, oppressed races are even obliged to make, so to speak, a virtue of necessity. For that their minds are, fortunately, very favourably constituted, as was shown by your experiences in Africa and in India and by the success of the general strikes and the boycott in China.

All that, moreover, is taking place at a time when the Western nations are beginning to recognize that they must renounce war, the latter becoming more and more a fatal peril for victors as

well as for vanquished. The man of the West risks becoming the victim of his destructive machines: he can no longer control them. "Our civilization", writes Hans Prager, in a little book about yourself, "hides behind a very virile mask our moral weakness, our fear. We are no longer warriors, but mere servants of lifeless machines. Heroic war has turned away from Europe. Soon it will no longer be the men who will take up arms, but the machines which will take up men. That which makes the pride of man, his inventive genius, will become his shame for having created machinery which prevents his defending himself any more by his own strength." This double fact - that while the coloured races are not masters of the means of modern warfare, the modern nations are themselves mastered by these means - constitutes what seems to me the right starting point in order to try to win over all peoples of all races to a united and powerful direct action against war.

I am, therefore, not an absolutist, bestriding some obsolete hobby. Although detesting all vulgar opportunism, I understand perfectly your statement as to the necessity for compromise in order to be able to live and to act. I also feel for you profoundly in your moral difficulties concerning the need of defending your crops by force against the monkeys. As a vegetarian who has lived the greater part of his life in the country, I know by bitter experience that Ahimsa can only be applied in quite a relative manner. The interesting publications on plants of your eminent compatriot, J. C. Bose, render this question still more complicated. In any case, as regards animals, you hope, with good reason, to reach one day a more satisfactory solution. You will understand, therefore, how I hope still more to reach, as regards men, a better solution than this false solution of international questions by means of war, especially the 'total war' of modern times. And I reckon upon attaining my object in this field more quickly than in others, because our political and social enemies are neither beasts nor plants, but living beings endowed with intelligence and human conscience. That, indeed, is the reason why your example concerning the monkeys has scarcely convinced me as an explanation of your conduct towards the Zulus, the Boers, and the Central Powers.

Just while preparing this letter I heard that your intimate friend, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, had arrived at Geneva. In the course of a conversation I had with him, you and your work, you may be sure, were the principal topic of discussion, the more so as he was engaged in the composition of a book on your conception of the world and your ideas concerning life and morality, from the point of view of Swaraj. During those unforgettable hours, he described to me your life, spoke to me of your devotion to India, a work which seemed to be extending more and more until finally its influence should embrace the universe. You, who desired only to be a simple servant of India, have become, little by little, one of the moral leaders of the world.

You feel it yourself. Only a short time ago you sent to the White peoples, through an American press bureau, a statement, published even in the *Journal de Geneva*, saying that you reject official Christianity in the name of the message of Jesus as you understand it in his Sermon on the Mount. Since the memorable letter which Tolstoy sent to you in 1909, we Western peoples recognize more and more our need of you, of your traditions, of your nation. As I wrote you previously, we owe to you some experiences decisive for the world's future.

What more gladsome news than to learn from the mouth of your own friend that it is possible, not to say certain, that you may come to Europe soon? You will understand how much I am hoping to see you, in order that we may be able to discuss thoroughly our respective points of view. In the meantime, I shall continue to study your ideas as well as the important book of Mr. Andrews, who is trying, for the first time, to make Western nations understand how your religious point of view dominates your ideas and your acts."

Young India, 2.5.1929

II

Let me venture, for the moment, to explain to you how the greater number of Western war-resisters conceive their attitude towards their Government, what impression your reply has made, and how we fear, as its consequence, an eventual militarization of India.

In the first place we all know that modern governments are only functionaries of capitalism and imperialism. We likewise all - including libertarians and anarchists - recognize that the present governments from time to time, perhaps even as a rule, do good more or less. But that can never be for us a sufficient motive for collaborating unreservedly with them in all their enterprises. I am supposing, for instance, that some one - or some government - does me a great service. Am I then obliged, from the moral point of view, to come to his assistance even when he acts badly, offends and kills, and forms schemes which are in flagrant opposition to any religious or humanitarian conceptions? No, quite the contrary. The more grateful I feel towards him, the less can I collaborate with him in evil work. Quite apart from my own conduct, it is not my duty to hold him back as far as possible from wrong-doing? In the anti-militarist movement of the Netherlands, we have always said to ourselves: Our first duty is to prevent the Dutch Government - that Government which is, besides, rather our enemy than our friend - from committing the great crime of taking part in collective murder. Moreover, if we do not oppose military measures on the part of our Government, we ourselves shall be obliged to take part in acts unworthy of man, the Government compelling us even to attack and kill other men who are not our enemies, but comrades in misfortune on the other side of the frontier, ill-treated by their authorities who, like our own, are serving above all capitalist and imperialist interests whose defence by violence is in conflict with the essential needs of all peoples. Even if we suppose for an instant that foreign armies should really be our enemies, well, also in this extreme case

we would like to defend ourselves in a different manner, in a manner which would at any rate gain for us a moral victory. Doubtless this mode of action might fail from a practical point of view, but the other might fail also; and the first alone assures the existence in the world of that which is truly humane. In short, we wish to strengthen in all countries the power of direct action against war, in such a way that no Government would have the courage to resort to war, that it would even be impossible for it to do so for lack of men, arms and munitions.

During the world war, the greater number of the radical conscientious objectors, English, American, Australian, Canadian, German, Austrian, etc. were convinced that it was their duty, as good citizens, not to participate in the great crime. Indeed, what better could they do from their point of view, than remain during that senseless time, beings truly conscious of their humane ideal, representing the conscience of their nations waging war without scruple? What better could they do than put humanity before their inhuman fatherland, so as to gain over to this cause not only their compatriots but, in the long run, their official enemies also? Romain Rolland has expressed this point of view when he says that no one has the right to betray his conscience for love of his country, his race or his nation. In doing so, does one not betray in oneself that which is best in one's nation, in one's race, in one's country? We have always been told that if Christ had acted in this sense, he would have become the ally of Judas, he would not have been crucified and would have become the Messiah of those of his compatriots who did not wish to renounce national defence. Tolstoy has told us several times that one should have the courage to risk the sacrifice of one's country in favour of humanity and the universal conscience.

You will understand therefore why your participation in three wars of the British Empire against peoples, who were not even your enemies, is for us something very painful. For in doing that you forsook humanity in favour of merciless and unscrupulous imperialism. You accept, in principle, all the consequences of those enterprises of violence: the death of 26,370 women and children in the concentration camps in South Africa, the death and sufferings of

hundreds of thousands of little children of the Central Powers by the monstrous blockade, the unemployment without end to which the British working classes are condemned, etc., etc., all the horror and shame, physical and moral, consequent upon the Great War. We are convinced that you did not foresee such an ocean of misery and decadence. We willingly believe you when you declare that you never wished to act otherwise than in the sense of Ahimsa. But we ask you whether the world war has not shown sufficiently that if one desires above all Ahimsa for men, one must at once break with any system of national defence based on violence.

Do not imagine that we refuse to defend our rights and liberties. We wish, indeed, to defend them in the most sublime manner, by remaining faithful to the noblest traditions of secular Christianity and modern socialism. Even if we considered to be just the cause for which our nation would be fighting in a supposed war, we would only come to its aid in our own fashion, because over and above our country, as well as for the sake of that country, we would have to uphold universal humanity.

These arguments hold good still more today when, as everyone knows, the chief question is this: In what manner will humanity free itself as quickly as possible from that unworthy expedient, war, an expedient which is an unparalleled menace for all, vanquished and victors alike? We must inevitably raise international relations to a higher level, else humanity will be lacerated to such an extent, physically, morally and intellectually, that it will perhaps never recover.

Now, just when the courageous women of the American section of the International Women's League for Peace and Liberty are asserting with reason that all war is today civil war, because of the economic and intellectual interdependence of all nations, just when Western nations, after a frightful experience, are beginning to recognize the meaning of your mission and the practical character of the methods of passive resistance, the efficacy of which is proved by your Asiatic peoples, you write that it is possible that, once India is liberated, you might vote for the military training of the Indian people. This declaration coincides with the publication of the Nehru

plan, according to which India not only demands Home Rule, but also asks to be allowed to assure her own national defence. The articles published in *Foreign Affairs* of April 1928 by Sir Sivaswami Aiyar, conversations I have had with Swami Satya Deva, Dr. Datta, and other compatriots of yours, have led me to fear that India also may one day let herself be carried away by the fatal current of armaments. It is for that reason that a few months ago, at the International Conference against War, at Sonntagsberg, I warned those present of the possibility of a militarization of the Asiatic nations, favoured in a very imprudent manner by Moscow and the III International, accompanied by the menace of a similar militarization of Africa. Making almost desperate efforts to rid the world of the monstrosity of modern war, and just when our action is beginning to be taken seriously, we all at once perceive on the Eastern horizon a new military danger which serves as a pretext to our militarists to say: "But we must arm in order to be able to defend ourselves against the awakening East!" Thus, the vicious circle, on the point of being broken, seems to be closing mercilessly.

You know Afghanistan is becoming militarized. Chiang Kai-Shek has already declared that China will have, in about 15 years, a fleet of war and a powerful army. A Chinese friend, formerly an enemy of all war, whom I saw again in Europe a few months ago, assured me that not only is militarism in China - until now totally unknown - growing steadily, but that the world is threatened by something unheard of in history, a Chinese imperialism! He, who had formerly awakened in me a love for the great anti-war traditions of his country and a profound sympathy for the pacifism of its immortal sages, acknowledged that he too had broken with his anti-militarist past. He spoke almost like you, Gandhi, who now say essentially what has always been preached by the clergy of the West: "We are for love and against all violence, in which personally we shall never participate. But if it is necessary, we shall support military training and national defence, since nations ought to be able to defend their rights, to gain their liberty, to be themselves, whilst the masses have not the spiritual strength of a Jesus, a St. Paul or a Francois d'Assisi."

Perhaps in bygone days this conception had some meaning. But today? The Japanese professor, Inazo Nitobe who understands and loves so intensely the heroic tradition of the *bushido* of his warlike country, writes in his book on the Soul of Japan, in which he recognizes in such an admirable manner the relative right of the fighting instinct which slumbers in each individual: "If one is to believe history, the State, built up on warlike virtues - whether it be a city like Sparta or an empire like Rome - will never be able to build upon earth 'a durable city'.... Life has widened out extraordinarily in the present era. Missions nobler and greater than that of armies are today soliciting our attention. Men have become more than subjects, being raised to the state of citizens; what am I saying? *They are more than citizens*, they are men.... The history of the world confirms the prophecy that the meek shall inherit the earth." And he seeks sublime forces for a nobler fight in the most profound traditions of Christianity, of Buddhism, of Chinese philosophy, and in the religious and moral traditions of his own country. Thus expresses himself a man, in no wise a revolutionary, who, in our opinion, has too much confidence in present-day political methods. But he is right in principle.

It is necessary, in fact, finally to break with this system of scientific ferocity which characterizes modern war, as much from the practical as from the moral point of view. We are, therefore, puzzled and uneasy on hearing you declare yourself ready eventually to vote for the military training of the Indians, you who seemed to us the appointed missionary to awaken such moral forces in your compatriots that they would have less and less need of means of defence as barbarous as hypercivilized.

We wonder whether you, Gandhi, always so distrustful with regard to the industrialism of the West, are not, in fact, now inclined to accept, along with a military training for your people, the most pernicious consequence of this industrialism, the new war. The Nehru Committee, has it not already proposed an army, a naval fleet and an air fleet for India? That is to say, by your last declaration you encourage the introduction into your country of industrialized war, of war industries, of chemical, electro-technical

and even bacteriological war. Once launched upon this path, there is no stopping. It is a question of all or nothing.

Why not keep to the means the most efficacious for Orientals, that is passive resistance, boycott and general strikes? Even if these means fail, their consequence will never be serious as those of modern war. For if a modern war were successful, it would smite fatally the masses of the people in the conquering States as in the conquered. The militarist system is no longer a means of defence worthy of confidence. But confidence in the deepest forces of man himself is an inexhaustible source of energy which is proving itself more and more efficacious in enabling one to stand one's ground, as a man, a nation or a race. And if this energy is not yet sufficiently developed, what better can one do than arouse and strengthen it everywhere?

It is of the greatest importance that, for the time being, we should be able to count upon you for our war against war. But that, however, is not enough. The day you would vote for the military training of your compatriots, you would be setting yourself against those Indians who are in agreement with us who, in the spirit of Garrison, of Ballou, of Keir Hardie and of Tolstoy, according to the ethics of true Christianity and the methods of truly modern socialism, disapprove of all national defence and condemn all military preparation, against those who are endeavouring to relieve humanity of a burden under which it is in danger of succumbing.

In *Die Empörung Asiens* Colin Rosz tells us how you fear, from the humanitarian point of view, the threatening militarization of China. I share your anxiety, as is shown by my statement on China in *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit*, the German manual of the W(ar) R(esisters) I(nternational). Can you not also share our anxiety regarding an eventual militarization of China and of India, of Asia and of Africa? The consequences of such militarization would be a world-madness of war, a universal return to barbarism. help us to shatter the vicious circle that holds the world in thrall rather than fortify it to the detriment of your own people and all the other peoples of the globe.

It is particularly in the name of Tolstoy, the centenary of whose birth we have commemorated this year, that I appeal to you to meditate on this question, in the name of Tolstoy who wrote in 1906 to Kou Hou Ming:

"Whilst European nations have long ago chosen the deceptive path in which liberation from human violence is extraordinarily difficult, the Oriental nations have only arrived at the crossroads."

Your Asiatic nations can still choose the right road. Seeing the misery of the Western peoples, the Oriental peoples should, according to Tolstoy, renounce any attempt to free themselves by political means and endeavour to remain faithful to the only true law which renders impossible the submission of man to violence.

You have not published my former letter in *Young India*. I should be very grateful to you, if you would kindly publish this one, as I, on my side, publish what you write to me in the European and American press. For, in appealing to you, I appeal to those who are with you and who will be with us, I hope, in hatred of war and love of humanity.

I would like those who are interested in the question of the liberation of classes and races to realize that war, as a means of resistance, is morally wrong and practically harmful, and that our conscience and our reasoning condemn it as well as any form of preparation, including military training.

Always ready to collaborate with you against war and for the liberation of oppressed races and classes, and assuring you of my profound sympathy. B. DE LIGT

Young India, 9.5.1929"

2. Reply of Mahatma Gandhi: A Complex Problem (9.5.1929)

"It is not without diffidence that I approach the question raised by Rev. B. de Ligt in his open letter to me with regard to my attitude towards war. To remain silent at the risk of being misunderstood is an easy way out of the difficult situation I find myself in. To say that I made a mistake in participating in war on the occasions in question would be easier still. But it would be unfriendly not to answer questions put in the friendliest manner; and I must not pretend repentance when I do not feel it. My anxiety to avoid a discussion of the question does not proceed from want of conviction, but it proceeds from the fear that I may not be able to make my meaning clear, and may thus create an impression about my attitude towards war which I do not desire. Often do I find language to be a poor vehicle for expressing some of my fundamental sentiments. I would, therefore, urge Mr. B. de Ligt and other fellow war-resisters not to mind my faulty or incomplete argument and still less to mind my participation in war which they may be unable to reconcile with my professions about war. Let them understand me to be uncompromisingly against all war. If they cannot appreciate my argument, let them impute my participation to unconscious weakness. For I would feel extremely sorry to discover that my action was used by anyone to justify war under certain conditions.

But having said this much I must adhere to the position taken up in the article which is the subject matter of Mr. B. de Ligt's letter. Let the European war-resisters appreciate one vital difference between them and me. They do not represent exploited nations; I represent the most exploited nation on earth. To use an unflattering comparison, they represent the cat and I represent the mouse. Has a mouse even the sense of non-violence? Is it not a fundamental want with him to strive to offer successful violence before he can be taught to appreciate the virtue, the grandeur, the supremacy, of the law of non-violence - Ahimsa - in the field of war? May it not be necessary for me, as a representative of the mouse tribe, to

participate in my principal's desire for wreaking destruction even for the purpose of teaching him the superiority of non-destruction?

Here the analogy of the cat and the mouse ends. The mouse has no capacity in him to alter his nature. A human being, however debased or fallen he may be, has in him the capacity of rising to the greatest height ever attained by any human being irrespective of race or colour. Therefore, even whilst I may go with my countrymen a long way in satisfying their need for preparation for war, I should do so in the fullest hope of weaning them from war and of their seeing one day its utter futility. Let it be remembered that the largest experiment known to history in mass non-violence is being tried by me even as I seem to be lending myself for the purpose of war. For want of skill the experiment may fail. But the war-resister in Europe should strain every nerve to understand and appreciate the phenomenon going on before him in India of the same man trying the bold experiment in non-violence whilst hobnobbing with those who would prepare for war.

It is part of the plan of non-violence that I should share the feelings of my countrymen if I would ever expect to bring them to non-violence. The striking fact is that India including the educated politician is *volens volens* driven to the belief that non-violence alone will free the masses from the thralldom of centuries. It is true that all have not followed out the logical consequences of non-violence. Who can? In spite of my boast that I know the truth of non-violence and try my best to practise it, I fail often to follow out the logical conclusions of the doctrine. The working of nature's processes in the human breast is mysterious and baffles interpretation.

This I know that, if India comes to her own demonstrably through non-violent means, India will never want to carry a vast army, an equally grand navy, and a grander air force. If her self-consciousness rises to the height necessary to give her a non-violent victory in her fight for freedom, the world values will have changed and most of the paraphernalia of war would be found to be useless. Such an India may be a mere day-dream, a childish folly. But such, in my opinion, is undoubtedly the implication of an India becoming free through non-violence.

When that freedom comes, if it ever does, it will have come through a gentlemanly understanding with Great Britain. But then it will not be an imperialistic haughty Britain manoeuvring for world supremacy, but a Britain humbly trying to serve the common end of humanity. India will no longer then be helplessly driven into Britain's wars of exploitation, but hers will be the voice of a powerful nation seeking to keep under restraint all the violent forces of the world.

Whether all these fanciful ideas are ever realized or not, my own life line is cast. I can no longer, in any conceivable circumstance, take part in Britain's wars. And I have already said in these pages that, if India attains (what will be to me so-called) freedom by violent means, she will cease to be a country of my pride; that time will be a time for me of civil death. There can, therefore, never be any question of my participation, direct or indirect, in any war of exploitation by India.

But I have already pointed out in these pages that fellow war-resisters in the West are participants in war even in peace time inasmuch as they pay for the preparations that are being made for it and otherwise sustain governments whose main occupation is such preparation. Again, all activity for stopping war must prove fruitless so long as the causes of war are not understood and radically dealt with. Is not the prime cause of modern wars the inhuman race for exploitation of the so-called weaker races of the earth?

Young India, 9.5.1929"

3. Letter of Bart de Ligt to Gandhi (5.12.1929)

'Cat and Mouse'

"Most Venerated Gandhi,

I agree entirely with you in recognizing that indeed the inhuman rivalry, which goes on throughout the whole earth to exploit all the so-called inferior races, is one of the principal causes of modern war. This rivalry was even one of the essential causes of the world war. Moreover, those other two wars also, on the occasion of which we exchanged views, presented an imperialist character. But alas! the explanation of your participation in those wars convinces me less and less.

In any case, the fact that you declare yourself unable "in any conceivable circumstance" to participate in British wars, is a real step forward. As I have already noted, you and the millions who are with you could become (unless some quite unforeseen circumstances should arise) a factor for world peace of the highest importance.

But on the other hand, your assertion, almost diplomatic, that you will never take part in no matter what "war of exploitation" entered upon by an India eventually free, does not seem to offer sufficient security for the future. This assertion, does it perhaps proceed from the fact that you were thinking of an India which, as a dominion, would be obliged in certain circumstances to take part in armed measures of the Empire and in eventual sanctions of the League of Nations?

I repeat, my objections do not concern your relative appreciation in regard to the violent struggle for freedom. But they are aimed solely at the fact that you, who personally uphold a more sublime form of struggle and who from several points of view have carried out this struggle within the frontiers of the British Empire, are at the same time morally encouraging the militarization of your own country rather than opposing it, and that at a time when any national armament begins to be a menace for the whole of humanity. My objections, likewise, are directed against your collaboration in

the preparation of a national Indian State, organized on the same lines as the Western States, in which, according to the supplementary report of the enlarged Nehru Committee, published in the *Indian Forward* of the 21st December 1928, there would function a Committee of Defence formed by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Commander of the Air Forces, the Commander of the Naval Forces and the Chief of the General Staff, whilst the Head of the Government, in the event of India being attacked, or if he should consider it as the victim of an aggression, will have the right to raise what money he will esteem necessary for the security of India or of any part of it. (* Committee of Defence, Minister of Defence; then in paragraph 77: in the event of foreign aggression of India or upon his being satisfied that there is a reasonable apprehension of such aggression. As one can see, all that is borrowed from Western States, where, in order to tranquillize public opinion, one is beginning today to speak of "Ministry of Defence", and where one declares the intention of only defending oneself against aggression or against that which is considered as aggression.)

It seems to us, that in acting in quite a different manner from Tolstoy, you put too much confidence in measures of bourgeois policy, and that you participate in the organization of a form of government which not only will oppress the great masses of your people, but at the same time might become a danger for the evolution of world history. That status of dominion, to the realization of which you are today devoting all your strength, is a political institution which will inevitably be used against the great masses of the population of your own country by the dominant Indian classes, which will become more and more allied with the dominant foreign classes. And the military, aero-chemical and naval measures, for which your country is going also to decide, risk promoting still further the world competition in armaments.

The statements made in the Frankfurt Conference on Modern War Methods and the Protection of Civil Populations have just been published. More clearly than ever they show that all

technique and science are today being directed in the first place towards collective destruction and murder. This Conference has shown that war has become a method of struggle operating in such a fatal manner, from the moral as well as from the practical point of view, that it must be abolished, not only for national defence but also for the realization of the social revolution. Not to enlarge further on this point, I beg you to refer to the speech of Arthur Müller-Lehning and to my own, delivered at the World Congress against Imperialism in Frankfurt. We have now reached a decisive moment in history when the question is to find in all continents powerful groups of men and women who can declare conscientiously: "As for us, we refuse, in all cases, to prepare or to employ any engines of war, and we seek to reduce more and more their preparation and their employment. Strictly speaking, we prefer even to lose our national independence - independence which, moreover, is today becoming more and more fictitious - rather than maintain it by such means."

Could national independence become a fiction? It might indeed, as we are traversing an epoch of growing international interdependence. As I have stated elsewhere, national units are no longer in a position to dispose of themselves in a really free fashion from the political and economic point of view, neither within the boundaries of Soviet Russia which contains so many different peoples, nor outside those boundaries. If your India attains the Dominion Status, it will be, from several points of view, allied to the British Empire. It will be subjected, as part of that Empire, and also as a member of the League of Nations, to all sorts of obligations which it will not be able to escape, however little they may interest India directly. As soon as your country begins to arm, it becomes immediately dependent upon international capital for munitions, and upon the great foreign banks; as soon as it begins to develop its industry, your ruling class immediately calls upon financial powers outside the country, which inevitably will place heavy chains about the neck of your own people. Modern capitalism, which today embraces almost the whole earth, is tending unremittingly towards a universal dictatorship. This can only be weakened and eventually

crushed, if we create against it a united international front, formed of all races and all peoples, which would fight, not for out-of-date nationalist conceptions, but for the realization of a universal and supernational community. Today all nationalism, considered purely as such, is old-fashioned, not only from the historical but likewise from the moral point of view, although from the ideological point of view it still flourishes and works everywhere. In fact national war is becoming more and more transformed into a struggle of classes and races, embracing the whole earth. It is for us now to fight in the most humane and the most universal manner for our own liberation and for that of all classes and of all oppressed races.

It seems, however, that you, venerated Gandhi, have first of all concentrated your attention in too one-sided a manner upon India instead of taking into consideration, in the first place, the whole of humanity of which, nevertheless, your people also form part, and that with an impatience only too comprehensible you sought, as principal object, to attain 'tangible results'. It is this attitude which risks limiting your horizon and causing your tactics to swerve from their universal tendency. Of course we sympathize with you in your impatience, from several points of view, because we ourselves are fighting against our own Governments for the liberation of the coloured races. Since even we of the Occident cannot bear the injustice endured by the coloured peoples, how much more must it be unbearable to you, son of an oppressed Oriental nation? But when your impatience, so noble in itself, leads you to make use of methods which have a most dangerous tendency, we must set ourselves against it. And when, moreover, you even try to make it believed that India has hitherto been "helplessly driven into Britain's wars of exploitation", in spite of herself, we can only reply: No. Things have not happened thus, for you yourself are one of those who have consciously induced India to participate in such wars, and because of that you also must bear the full responsibility for it.

On your side, you state that those who set themselves against Western wars pay, nevertheless, taxes which are used by the State for war and the oppression of the coloured peoples. That is quite

true. In fact our anti-militarist struggle also is as yet only something very relative, and it must go on extending. But in any case, we have fixed clear and inflexible bounds: we refuse absolutely all direct personal participation in war and in its social and moral preparation. But several of us employ still other means of fighting against it. I refer, for instance, to the Dutch movement of the Manifesto refusing direct and indirect military service, which cost several of its signatories, both men and women, the loss of their social position and created for others all sorts of difficulties; to the Ponsonby Action, begun in England and spreading widely throughout Germany - and there are still others. Moreover, a few of us have already decided individually to refuse to pay any taxes, whilst the organization of which I am a member has already several times been the propagandist of collective refusal of taxation. But whereas refusal, even on a very restricted scale, to do military service has been morally and socially efficacious, the refusal to pay taxes by a restricted number of citizens only has so far had very little result, as the authorities, in confiscating property and inflicting fines, take possession of sums much larger than a direct payment of taxes would have brought them. From this point of view, your compatriots have already given some impressive examples of collective refusal, although they also were not able to avoid the regular exactions of the Government.

However it may be, in the struggle against the oppression of the coloured races, we are *at one* with you. I even belong to an organization which has participated in this struggle already since the beginning of this century (1904). We are endeavouring to do away as soon as possible with the relation of "cat and mouse" existing between the different races of humanity without, however, wishing to replace them by the relations of cat and dog. That is why we not only object to violent tendencies amongst our own people and race, but we also exhort other peoples and races, who are not defenceless mice but moral beings, not to let themselves be seduced by violence, but to adopt those higher forms of combat which, for centuries past, have been recommended on moral grounds by the

most sublime representatives of humanity, and the practical significance of which you yourself in particular have taught us.

As for your expectation of a Great Britain reborn from a moral point of view, it seems to me that you would favour this regeneration more by siding with the most radical of the British war resisters, instead of hoping for salvation from a so-called socialist Government which is inevitably condemned to play a fatal political role in the international imperialistic development. You will already have noticed how, under Macdonald likewise, the persecution of your compatriots who are fighting for their rights and liberty continues. However amiable may be the manner in which you speak to the British rulers and however benevolent may perhaps be the tone of those who answer you, they will, nevertheless, only try to satisfy your people by an apparent and fictitious solution.

I have esteemed you too highly, venerated Gandhi, to content myself with merely taking note of your "unconscious weakness" as you so kindly propose that I should do, but what I tried up to now to do is to reply to your arguments by other arguments. It is in the desire that you may be able to revise your attitude in the past and the present that I have written to you, and that I do so again today. The life of the world has become such a unity, that national interests cannot be really understood nor served except from the point of view of the universal interests of all humanity. This, moreover, is the summing up of everything that I have laid before you.

Onex, Genf, 5. XII, 1929

B. DE LIGT

Young India, 30.1.1930"

3. Reply of Mahatma Gandhi (30.1.1930)

"Difficulty of Practice

The reader should read Rev. B. de Ligt's letter printed elsewhere (Appendix). I welcome the letter as of a fellow-seeker in the field of Ahimsa. It is entitled to respectful consideration. And such friendly discussion leads to a clearer conception of the possibilities and limitations of non-violence.

In spite of the greatest effort to be detached, no man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or of his upbringing. Non-violence of two persons occupying different positions will not outwardly take the same shape. Thus the non-violence of a child towards his father would take the shape of conscious and voluntary submission to his violence when he loses his temper. But if the child has lost his temper, the father's submission to the child's violence would be meaningless. The father would take the child to his bosom and instantaneously sterilize the child's violence. In each case it is of course assumed that the outward act is an expression of the inward intention. One who having retaliation in his breast submits to violence out of policy is not truly non-violent, and may even be a hypocrite if he hides his intention. It should also be remembered that non-violence comes into play only when it comes in contact with violence. One who refrains from violence when there is no occasion for its exercise is simply un-violent and has no credit for his inaction.

Dominion Status ceasing to be a factor, the points raised from that imaginary event now need not be discussed except to say that the enjoyment by India of Dominion Status would have meant India, then become an equal partner, instead of being ruled by it, dominating the foreign policy of Great Britain.

My general and hearty approval of the Nehru Report must not be taken to mean endorsement of every word of it. My approval need not carry endorsement of the constructive programme for the future governance of free India. My non-violence would not prevent me from fighting my countrymen on the many questions that must

arise when India has become free. A mere academic discussion can only hamper the present progress of non-violence. I know, however, that, if I survive the struggle for freedom, I might have to give non-violent battle to my own countrymen, which may be as stubborn as that in which I am now engaged. But the military schemes now being considered by the great Indian leaders are highly likely to appear even to them to be wholly unnecessary, assuming that we have come to our own demonstrably through non-violent means deliberately chosen and used.

My collaboration with my countrymen today is confined to the breaking of our shackles. How we would feel and what we shall do after breaking them is more than they or I know.

It is profitless to speculate whether Tolstoy in my place would have acted differently from me. It is enough for me to give the assurance to my friends in Europe that in no single act of mine have I been consciously guilty of endorsing violence or compromising my creed. Even the seeming endorsement of violent action by my participation on the side of Britain in the Boer War and the Zulu Revolt was a recognition, in the interest of non-violence, of an inevitable situation. That the participation may nevertheless have been due to my weakness or ignorance of the working of the universal law of non-violence is quite possible. Only I had no conviction then, nor have any now, of such weakness or ignorance.

A non-violent man will instinctively prefer direct participation to indirect, in a system which is based on violence and to which he has to belong without any choice being left to him. I belong to a world which is partly based on violence. If I have only a choice between paying for the army of soldiers to kill my neighbours or to be a soldier myself, I would, as I must, consistently with my creed, enlist as a soldier in the hope of controlling the forces of violence and even of converting my comrades.

National independence is not fiction. It is as necessary as individual independence. But neither, if it is based on non-violence, may ever be a menace to the equal independence of the nation or the individual as the case may be. As with individual and national independence, so with the international. The legal maxim is equally

moral: *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*. It has been well said the universe is compressed in the atom. There is not one law for the atom and another for the universe.

Young India, 30.1.1930"

Bart de Ligt: My Correspondence with Gandhi (19.7.1930)

"From various sides, from Germany, Austria and other countries I have been urged for information about my correspondence with Gandhi, which so far only has only been published in French, English and Dutch and for various reasons could not be published in German. I am therefore most grateful to the editorial staff of "New Generation" (Neue Generation) for the opportunity to acquaint you with a few matters.

It was only by 1928 that I could really go in a more profound way into the life of Gandhi. I had read, of course, with great interest a number of his articles. As well as that, I had taken note of various articles which had been written on him. The most important perceptions I owe to the small book written by Romain Rolland and a few articles published in magazines which had been written in the same spirit.

I understood Gandhi therefore as the legitimate follower of Tolstoy. Whereas Tolstoy would have been the "John the Baptist" of revolutionary nonviolence, Gandhi would have been the Christ, so to speak, of this movement; Tolstoy the Great Precursor and Prophet, Gandhi the Performer fulfilling Prophecy.

The way Gandhi always referred to Tolstoy, seemed to justify Romain Rolland's view. I had, however, a vague feeling that in this view something did not correspond to reality. I presumed more and more to be fooled by a Gandhi Myth. Although Romain Rolland spoke about Gandhi's participation in the activities of the Red Cross -three times in the service of the British Army- in such a way suggesting that the great Hindoo had joined the British army-organization for humanitarian reasons. It appeared to me that in this respect something did not completely match.

Moreover, what annoyed me more or less, was the peculiar way Gandhi was worshipped in various circles as if he was a kind of Messiah, whose testimonies had to be accepted without questioning and that even many persons who did not care to know about Western radical ways of combatting War, spoke more or less in a pathetic way of the Nonviolence of the oriental saint, without

following his example in their own country. Moreover, it did not seem quite obvious to me, which revolutionary role Gandhi was playing in India and the whole world. At last, I got the opportunity to occupy myself thoroughly with Gandhi himself and go profoundly into the most significant literature which had been published internationally on him.

In particular I studied profoundly the nearly thousand pages of the book: "Speeches and writings of M. K. Gandhi" with an Introduction by Mr. C. F. Andrews and a Biographical Sketch (Third Edition G. A. Natesan & Co. Madras), which first of all showed Gandhi's position during the World War. In the meantime, I met in Geneva, Vienna and elsewhere several spiritually important Indians who had dedicated themselves more or less in favour of an armed national defense of a potentially independent India. I assessed that the Indian National Congress of 1925, during the chairmanship of the well-known poetess S. Naidu, had adopted a resolution intended to toughen up and create a fighting spirit among the Indian people.

What I quickly read in "Speeches and Writings", I simply could not believe initially. I cannot remember how often I read and re-read the passages concerned. I showed these to my friend Pavel Birukov who in 1925 had dedicated his book "Tolstoy and the Orient" (Tolstoi und der Orient) to the great oppressed Indian people and their great leader Mahatma Gandhi. He could not trust his eyes either.

From the book referred to here it could be clearly concluded that during the World War, Gandhi had not only been active in the service of the British Red Cross in London, but that later on in India, he had also been systematically active in India to induce his compatriots to join the British Army. He said, for example, in July 1918 in a meeting in the Kaira district, that his sisters and brothers there recently had carried out a successful nonviolent struggle and had resisted the British Government courageously and with respect, without harming them. "I now place before you an opportunity of proving that you bear no hostility to Government in spite of your strenuous fight with them." Gandhi concluded that the Indians were

still a subordinated and oppressed people and that they did not enjoy the same rights as the peoples of the British Dominions. "We want the rights of Englishmen, and we aspire to be as much partners of the Empire as the Dominions overseas... To bring such a state of things we should have the ability to defend ourselves, that is the ability to bear arms and to use them... If we want to learn the use of arms with the greatest possible despatch, it is our duty to enlist ourselves in the Army... We are regarded as a cowardly people. If we want to become free from that reproach, we should learn the use of arms. Partnership in the Empire is our definite goal. We should suffer to the utmost of our ability and even lay down our lives to defend the Empire. The easiest and straightest way, therefore, to win Swarajya is to participate in the defence of the Empire. It is not within our power to give much money. Moreover, it is not money that will win the war. Only an inexhaustible army can do it. That army India can supply. If the Empire wins mainly with the help of our army, it is obvious that we would secure the rights we want." (pages 430-432). In this spirit Gandhi demanded from every village 20 soldiers and when these should fall in battle he demanded over another 20. He participated in the large War Conference with the Viceroy.

This all made me address an open letter to Gandhi in May 1928 in which I honoured him in the first place for his pioneering activities in the sphere of nonviolent struggle in Africa and India and stated the extent to which his initiatives in this respect be appreciated everywhere in the world by revolutionary pacifists and anti-war activists. I recalled to what extent the number of those contesting war and how the preparation for war increased daily in Europe and America, and how many conscientious objectors in the West were inspired by Gandhi's words and deeds. I then told him how disappointed I was when I saw that he had engaged three times as a member of the Red Cross in the wars by Britain against the Boers, the Zulus and the European Central Powers, and when I read his fanatic calls to war in 1918, I asked him whether he might admit, like Tolstoy, participation in activities with the Red Cross were warlike activities and how he could reconcile his actual war-

propaganda with the spirit of Jesus and Tolstoy to whom he still appealed. Anyway, what mattered to me was not the past, but the future. To what extent may the international war resisters count - in case there might be again another threat of World War - on Gandhi and his Indian spiritual sympathizers. Gandhi, who from 1914 to 1918 had called upon the Indians to fight as soldiers against Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey, against peoples which had never caused harm to Indians. This in the service of the British Empire, which had oppressed and exploited India during hundreds of years. Gandhi had acknowledged several times that he was occasionally urged on by a national egotism. But had not this *Sacro Egoismo* led him to all too exaggerated, merciless and Jesuitic deeds, which one could only with great difficulty reconcile with the spirit of Jesus?

Gandhi replied in "Young India" of 8 September 1928 that his activity in the service of the Red Cross had been a conscious war activity, but that he, however, felt that he at that time in the situation could show his allegiance to his conviction. As long as he lived under a system of government which was based on violence and under which he voluntarily shared the many privileges this system offered to him, he would consider it his duty to support this government in the event of war with all his strength. He was disappointed that they did not fulfill their promises. Therefore, however, Gandhi was opposed to the British Government and would not participate in their wars any longer. In case, however, India had an independent government, he could imagine that in particular circumstances, although he himself in no way would directly join whatever war, he might nevertheless consider it his duty to vote in favour of those who want to join military exercise.

The arguments by Gandhi did not seem to be adequate in my view. This was the case as well to V.G.Tchertkov who from Moscow had sent an interesting letter to Gandhi on 20 October 1928 when he felt impelled by his reply. Perhaps Gandhi had felt this himself; he referred, more than to his arguments, to his inner voice and the divine light which -as he wrote- always burned in a clear and firm way in him.

One will understand that all this led to further correspondence with the Indian leader. In March 1929, I wrote a second letter to Gandhi in which I referred to the conscientious objectors in England who as citizens of their country and being fully conscious of their responsibility not only to their own country, but to the whole of the world, had refused to join in the Imperialist war of their government from 1914 to 1918, and that finally the Duty of the Citizen would be subordinated to the Duty of Man. I asked him as well whether he who had spoken of Western Civilization in such a supercilious way, might perhaps be prepared to now agree to the worst of this civilization, the modern, industrialized war, the chemical, electro-technical and bacteriological warfare. The military training of a people nowadays cannot mean anything else, this incidentally being proved by the military chapter of the Nehru Report.

I also tried to explain to him under no uncertain terms that one not only has to judge the problem of the armament of India from a nationalist or patriotic point of view, but from a general point of view rendering account of the political and social development of the whole world.

Meanwhile, I met in Geneva the most beloved Englishman in India and the most intimate friend of Gandhi, C. F. Andrews. He confirmed to me that he also could not reconcile Gandhi's position during the World War with the Mahatma's creed of *Ahimsa* and that with Gandhi the national motivation drowns more and more all other motives. One could conclude this clearly from Gandhi's reply in "Young India", 9 March 1929, which did not contain any substantially new information and still confirmed the naive expectation that Indian independence could be realized by a friendly settlement with Great Britain. Gandhi also conveyed that India was drawn in a helpless way into Britain's wars. He further touched upon a few other questions which caused me to address in December 1929 a third letter to the Indian leader, to which he replied in "Young India" of 30 January 1930. This reply was printed in "Die Weltbühne" of 17 January 1930 (translated and completed with critical notes by Kurt Hiller). Gandhi wrote this reponse after he

had at last realized that his hope of forty years of loyal attitude to the British Government towards India, even to a so-called Labour Government, could not be fulfilled. Because for no other reason, despite arguably the most favourable inclination of their membership, they were trapped in the ruthless Imperialist system. Gandhi still claimed that in the past, during the war against the Zulus and the Boers, he had acted in accordance with his good conscience. Had he forgotten, by chance or deliberately, his awful part in the World War? If he forgot this unintentionally, which is most plausible, this slip of the mind would have a fuller meaning. He stated at the same time that in the first place now he would cooperate with his fellow-countrymen in order to tear up the British chains; but already now he knew that if India attained its freedom, he would have to wage a nonviolent struggle against his own fellow-countrymen, which probably might be as difficult as the struggle he had pursued against Britain.

Perhaps Gandhi was influenced in this respect by an article in "The World Tomorrow", which had been sent to him by an American conscientious objector in August 1929 and had been printed on the 22nd of the same month in "Young India". In this article, it is shown how modern armament claims for an ever increasing expenditure and how for an appropriate defense and for an effective protection ever less security will be available. Gandhi warned India therefore to follow the European-American example of modern armament; this would cost hundreds of millions and claim an ever increasing part of industry and capability of the people. "In order to bring about the annihilation of men, women and children one has only to press a button so that within a second poisonous gas will be spread over them. Do we want to adapt this method of self-defense? And, in doing so, are we in a position to finance this?" To compete with modern military powers in the field of arming, would mean suicide for India; war is a matter of monetary expenditure and of the invention of technical means of annihilation. India's power lays elsewhere, says Gandhi. It has to decrease violence in its national life and to promote ever more Nonviolence.

In this context Gandhi, however, considers the problem of national defense, as he himself explains, always from the point of view of a patriot; however important his personal dedication to the cause of India may be, however exemplary he devotes himself to that cause he considered to be the most important one -: From the point of view of revolutionary anti-militarism, Gandhi is not yet a perfectly reliable collaborator. From the point of view of revolutionary anti-militarism, he has achieved marvellous results by his nonviolent way of struggle, although one may ask if the scope of his activity has not been too narrow. And whether he has not been carried away too much by unscrupulous allies. But these are issues that cannot be dealt with here.

Onex near Geneva, 19 July 1930."

Bart de Ligt: Mahatma Gandhi's Attitude Toward War (March 1932)

"At the Congress of War Resisters, held at Lyons in August, 1931, Valentin Bulgakov spoke of the "great experience" gained by India in its struggle against England. And not without reason did he express admiration for the role played by Gandhi in this struggle. Nevertheless, Bulgakov's tendency was to attribute to the Mahatma an attitude consistently hostile to any sort of violence - an attitude which, according to Gandhi himself, does not correspond with the facts.

In *Le Semeur* of October 15th, 1931, Bulgakov declared that the correspondence which Vladimir Tchertkoff, of Moscow, and that which I myself have had with the Indian leader, relating to his attitude during the Boer War, the Natal War and the World War, concerns only "a few ill-advised declarations" of Gandhi, "purely accidental" and remaining "without effect, Gandhi's actions proving that he in no way approves of the cooperation of violence."

One wonders how it is that such a clear-sighted and sincere man as Bulgakov is not able to grasp what Gandhi himself has written in regard to his own past. In his autobiography, Gandhi declares that he took part in the work of the Red Cross with the English Army during the Boer War although he knew that the Boers were in the right, and in the Zulu War, though in the latter stage he understood very well that here there was no longer a war, but a veritable man hunt. Without doubt, Gandhi endeavored, as a member of the Red Cross, to relieve the sufferings of the unfortunate blacks in particular, but, as he declared in *Young India* of September 8, 1928, he recognized that participating in the work of the Red Cross was nothing else but participating in war. As to 1914, Gandhi declares in his autobiography that he again joined the Red Cross because he wished to express by this action that it was the duty of the Hindus to participate in the defense of the British Empire. The principal reason why Gandhi took part, on three different occasions, in British wars and was even induced to participate in the war conference of the Viceroy of India and to

carry on a recruiting campaign among his compatriots in 1918, was the hope of seeing his loyalty and that of India to the British Empire in time of danger rewarded by the gift of dominion status.

But when, in the course of the reception given in Gandhi's honour at Lausanne, I asked the Hindu leader this simple question: "What would you do if an eventually free India were to enter into a war?" Gandhi replied that he was convinced that, if India freed herself by non-violent means, she would never more go to war. If, however, contrary to all his dreams, an eventually free India should go to war, he hoped - with divine assistance - to have the strength to rise up against his government and to stand in the way of violent resistance.

Deeply moved by the fatal consequences of the World War, Gandhi seemed to consider it his chief duty to indicate to his hearers how methods of direct non-violent action could be employed by Western nations in order to free themselves from the scourge of armaments and of war. At Paris, at Lausanne, at Geneva, he insisted repeatedly on the effect which non-cooperation, boycott and other non-violent means could have in this struggle. At the same time, he emphasized that non-violent resistance ought to be based upon a profound conviction, upon faith, so to speak, and that one should be able to bring to it a courage superior to that of the soldier. In this resistance, men and women, old and young, all can collaborate. Gandhi even emphasized what can be done in this respect by women and young people. Resistance, however, is not possible unless one has the courage to break with the modern state, which rests essentially upon violence and which, without militarism and without war preparation, could not even subsist, all modern civilization being based on the exploitation of oppressed classes and races. That is why Gandhi thinks that the struggle for world peace ought to coincide with the struggle for the liberation of the colored races and for social justice.

Gandhi does not believe that Professor Einstein's proposal to raise as soon as possible to two per cent the number of those who would refuse military service would be sufficient to upset the whole

military organization. In the first place, it does not seem to him right that, while war and militarism are symptoms of the mentality of a whole nation, the full weight of the struggle should fall upon a very small percentage of the entire population. It should not be forgotten that young men are enrolled only because compulsory military service exists. But the most profound cause of war does not reside in this military service, but in the fact that the whole of modern society is, in principle, built upon violence. Although Gandhi may have all possible respect for individual refusal to do military service, he does not think that one has the right to leave the struggle against war in the hands of a few. On the other hand, he maintains, by drawing special attention to the refusal of military service, one gives the impression that the struggle against war can be put off until the last moment. It remains, however, to be seen whether, during an eventual mobilization, the single act of refusing service would really be sufficient to render fighting and bloodshed impossible.

To put into effective practice methods of non-cooperation, boycott, collective refusal of tax payment, etc., there must be moral preparation and a systematic education of the great masses of the people. What has been done in this domain in India was preceded by a decade of continuous propaganda. People must become conscious of the extraordinary moral forces at their disposal. Each participant in non-violent resistance should undergo an internal regeneration; he must understand that armaments, compulsory military service and even war are only relatively superficial symptoms of a very deeply rooted moral disorder, of capitalist-imperialist mentality which must be vanquished and overcome in one's own conscience. The more closely men approach this aim, the better will they be able to break the power of the modern state by depriving it of all collaboration.

Although Gandhi formerly participated in war by joining the Red Cross, recently, at Geneva, he deplored the fact that that institution was still subordinate to the military system, and now, from this point of view, he condemns it as much as Tolstoi did. According to Gandhi's new attitude, the Red Cross should cease to

recognize and tolerate the crime of war. Instead of preparing especially to do good work during the bloody combat, it ought to do everything to abolish war. Instead of talking exclusively about saving the wounded in time of war, and of restoring war-devastated regions, why not get ready to heal and to prevent all the ills of humanity, since millions of men are injuring themselves daily through their own folly, and innumerable homes are destroyed through the immoral conduct of those who inhabit them? If, as it is sincerely to be hoped, the Mahatma will persevere in this attitude, even under circumstances in which he would have to sacrifice immense national interests, and, if necessary, the political independence of his own people, he will have done well in the interests of the international anti-militarist movement and in the interests of the future of humanity.

Yet there are still some problems to face in connection with Gandhi's attitude. The same Gandhi who, at Lausanne and Geneva, advised the Swiss people and all Western nations suffering beneath the burden of armaments and threat of war, to renounce violent national defence and to free themselves from all armaments by practicing direct non-violent action, demanded for India, at the Round Table Conference in London, "control over her own defence forces and over her external affairs." "Defence, its army, is to a nation the very essence of its existence," he declared, "and if a nation's defence is controlled by an outside agency, no matter how friendly it is, then that nation is certainly not responsibly governed. This is what our English teachers have taught us.... Hence I am here very respectfully to claim, on behalf of the Congress, complete control over the army, over the defence forces and over external affairs."

Gandhi considers the army in India at present as an army of occupation. Whether it is composed of Indians or of Europeans, that does not alter its character in any way. The armed force in India today is there for "the defence of British interests and for avoiding or resisting foreign aggression... it is an army intended to suppress rebellion against constituted authority." An India really free could

not support such an institution. Even if the British troops stayed in India, they would no longer have to protect British citizens, who would then be foreigners in that country, but would be there "to protect India against foreign aggression, even against internal insurrection, as if they were defending and serving their own countrymen." At London, Gandhi declared: "It should be the proud privilege and the proud duty of Great Britain now to initiate us in the mysteries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings, it is their duty to give us wings whereby we can fly, even as they fly. That is really my ambition, and, therefore, I say, I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of defence." In view of the contradiction which exists between what Gandhi asked for in London for his own people and what in Switzerland he advised others to do, one might apply to the Mahatma the biblical words: "Physician, heal thyself."

Of course, when Gandhi speaks at public meetings in Europe and replies to questions on present-day subjects of vital interest to those who ask them, he does not need to consider the exigencies of the Indian Congress, which he had to represent at the Round Table Conference. Gandhi has always two ways of looking at things. In the first place, he is struggling, in collaboration with the Congress, whose first delegate he was at London, for the political freedom of India, and while doing this, he identifies himself completely with the desiderata of the National Congress. In the second place, he himself, as adherent of a religion and ethics having a universalist and humanitarian tendency, could go much farther than the Congress and his nation in general. That is why, on the one hand, he hopes that India, by increasingly practicing non-violent methods, will, once she has gained her independence, rise to the point where she will no longer have recourse to war; whereas, on the other hand, he declares that, if an eventually free India should go to war, he hopes to receive, from God Himself, the strength to go against his own government and to refuse to participate in violent measures of national defense.

This attitude, however, presents a fundamental contradiction, the consequence of which might very well be that if an eventually free India were to go to war for one cause or another, Gandhi, in spite of his better intentions, or at least a great many of his partisans, would enlist in the Indian army with the same enthusiasm as Gandhi himself showed when he enlisted for three British wars.

Here, a tactical error leads to fatal consequences. Gandhi, whose non-violent point of view is in flagrant contradiction to the Indian bourgeois State which the Congress is engaged in preparing, has nevertheless acknowledged that between the demands of the Congress and those of his own doctrine there is a certain agreement, in the sense that both insist upon India's complete liberation, national independence, and, as Gandhi puts it, the right for India even to do wrong if it appears to her right. Gandhi has admitted that in an eventually free India he may be obliged to set himself more than ever against his own people, because that people may, according to the Mahatma, deviate from the right path. However, in order to attain that state of purely formal liberty, Gandhi has identified himself too much with the Congress, and is thus fulfilling ambiguous functions which often force him to support dangerous social and political tendencies which he ought, on the contrary, to fight against continuously, if he is to remain true to his own principles.

All those who are fighting for social revolution, without, however, being in favour of the dictatorship methods and military measures still practiced by the great majority of those who are endeavoring to create a more humane society, can understand the difficulties in the midst of which Gandhi is battling. Like them, from what can be called a negative point of view, he is the firm ally of all those who are fighting to destroy an oppressive yoke, but from several other angles, his real object and his means of combat differ greatly from those of his fellow combatants.

Even concerning the question of national defense, Gandhi could have avoided any ambiguity and rendered great services in the

struggle against any kind of war, if, at the Round Table Conference, in claiming for his country complete liberty, he had not joined forces with those who hope to profit from India's eventual armaments and wars, but had simply asked for his country the right to organize its own national defense forces as it thought best. Thus he would have, from the beginning, avoided any responsibility concerning India's eventual armaments and the disastrous consequences which may result therefrom. He could even have declared to the Round Table Conference: "I claim for India full right to defend herself as she thinks best, but I assure you that I myself, who feel responsible, not only for India's future, but for the future of all mankind, shall do all in my power to prevent India from following the deplorable example of England and other Western nations in arming herself with the means of physical and murderous combat. I am sacrificing myself for the future of a people which will fulfill its vocation in the world only if, even in the most dangerous circumstances, it employs solely those non-violent methods which have already enabled me to come among you at this conference. This is a first step to victory and has been gained in an exemplary manner such as ought to inspire all nations to adopt non-violent methods, even for their national defense."

A statement such as the foregoing is, in my opinion, the *minimum* that all war resisters have the right to demand from the great Oriental leader, since he has come to give a lesson in anti-militarist morality to the Western nations. If, inspired by his great love of truth and veracity, Gandhi realizes the consequences resulting from his own theses as set forth at Lausanne and Geneva, it is certain that he will come more and more to the point of view of the revolutionary anti-militarists. "

Richard Gregg: A Reply to M. de Ligt (March 1932)

"Those who are familiar with Gandhi's life will recall that up to 1919 he believed that the British Empire did more good than harm to the world and to India. He had not then evolved his program of hand-spinning and weaving, nor in his South African struggles had he used the boycott or refusal to pay taxes as political weapons. He has stated that up to that time he did not have strength to resist war effectively.

Therefore, I think that he did war service because up till then he did not realize the extent of violence and untruth inherent in the State; he did not fully understand the complex and subtle nature of its control over people; and had not yet devised practical methods of ending that control. Nevertheless, he knew that war is only a result, a final stage of a psychological process that begins with fear, anger and greed. In organized social life most of us support the State by paying taxes, by buying articles from people or corporations which similarly support the State, and by not effectively helping others to escape this domination. To refuse military service after taking part in all this is merely to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen. Gandhi seems to have preferred to take some part in war to see if somehow he could render good for evil. Innocent or inconsistent perhaps, but with deeper understanding than that of most.

What about Gandhi's demand at London for Indian control of the army? I think that Gandhi wants India to make a free choice as between violence and non-violence, and he believes that no such choice can be made until India has at least the complete right to maintain and control her own army. Moral character and growth can be attained not through external prohibitions, but only by free individual choices in a situation where alternatives are open. Gandhi will do his utmost to persuade India to choose non-violence, but nevertheless he wants the choice to be voluntary.

Non-violent resistance requires courage greater than the courage to fight violently. In the evolution of mankind, courage to fight comes first. Therefore, among a people who have been rendered timid by centuries of subjection, there may be many who may first have to learn the courage of violence before they can develop the higher courage of non-violence. Gandhi hopes that the process of waging a national struggle by non-violent resistance will bridge over and eliminate that stage for his people and will convince the whole Indian nation that non-violent resistance is much more effective than violence.

The consistency which M. de Ligt apparently wishes for Gandhi is an affair of intellectual logic which overlooks the immense complexity of human personality and the complexity of the forces which play upon it. To ask a man always to be consistent would mean to ask him not to grow, not to engage in joint action with many people; indeed, not to be human."

"Gandhi and Bart de Ligt - Dialogue between East and West" (Christian Bartolf)

"Between the years 1928 and 1930 Mahatma Gandhi and Bart de Ligt corresponded, the Dutch Reverend taking the initiative. This open-hearted dialogue was foremost in the interest of Bart de Ligt, because he could elaborate his own statements by criticizing Mahatma Gandhi's justification for his war participation. Bart de Ligt's attitude towards war competed with Gandhi's for disclosing the Third Way - against the Communist glorification of the militarized State and against the hierarchy of professional diplomats or the Fascist version of securing power by militarization of the population (e.g. Mussolini), against the colonialism of an imperialistic force of oppression with shotgun and fountain-pen and against the violent terrorism of an anti-colonial liberation movement (e.g. in the colonies of the British Empire). Bart de Ligt and Mahatma Gandhi were united in their radical principles of anti-militarism, their determined stand against imperialism and the opposition against counter-"brute force". Their controversy circled around the issue of nonviolent resistance against the bloody domination of colonialists and autocrats, the issue of genuine and radical nonviolent resistance and the resister's ethical and political duties to serve Truth on the pathway of Nonviolence. Their common vision of a nonviolent socialism is rooted in their empathy with the enslaved, exploited and miserable workers or unemployed who remain in "voluntary servitude" (Etienne de la Boétie) compromising their progress to emancipation. In so far as this correspondence can be understood not only as justification and exposition of inner contradictions in "cat" and "mouse", but also as a meditation on a new revolutionary programme for political liberation from domination, without bloodshed, compulsion or coercion - violence-free. Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi gave us the key concepts: civil disobedience, active non-cooperation, emancipation through Truth force by active nonviolence. The

second last ancestors of ours who cultivated the concept of nonviolent resistance (non-resistance) are numerous, but nevertheless hardly known to today's generations: in the United States of the nineteenth century for example William Lloyd Garrison, Adin Ballou and Henry David Thoreau with his famous essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" against the Government¹; in Europe, already centuries before, for example Etienne de la Boétie, contemporary and friend of the French philosopher Montaigne, with his essay on "voluntary servitude"² or Peter Chelcicky during the Czech protestant revolution of Hussites in Bohemia, a nonviolent critic of the Church ("The Network of Religion")³, in Russia foremost Leo Tolstoy who could refer to the rich tradition of rational "sectarians": Doukhobors⁴, Molokans, Nazarenes comparable with the religious communities of Quakers, Brethren and Mennonites in the West. The impact of Anarchist philosophers as e.g. Count Kropotkin ("Mutual Aid in Animal and Human Life") or Utopian Socialists as Gustav Landauer and Kurt

¹ cp. "Pazifismus in den USA" (two volumes, Materialien nr. 14, John-F.-Kennedy-Central Institute for North American Studies of the Free University Berlin), ed. Prof. Ekkehart Krippendorff, Berlin 1986; especially my articles about the "Non-Resisters" Ballou and Garrison on the one hand and Henry David Thoreau on the other hand, first volume with a reprint of the sources

² cp. Etienne de la Boétie: Von der freiwilligen Knechtschaft (On Voluntary Servitude.), Frankfurt am Main 1980, on page 226 the letters of Gustav Landauer to Max Nettlau dated 7 June 1911 and Auguste Hauschner dated 24 November 1918: cp. in addition Tolstoy's 1905 pamphlet on the State "One Thing is Needful", and even before (1893) his attack against the system of conscription "The Kingdom is Within You"

³ Peter Chelcitzki: Das Netz des Glaubens (The Network of Religion), Hildesheim 1970

⁴ Paul Birukov: Die Duchoborzen (The Doukhobors) /Leo Tolstoy: Märtyrer der neuen Ordnung (Martyrs of the New Order). Aus der Leidensgeschichte der Duchoborzen (From the Passion of the Doukhobors), Heppenheim 1929

Eisner in the Germany of the suppressed November Revolution and the autonomous progress of a Dutch anarchopacifism (Clara Meijer-Wichmann, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis) as well as the influence of representatives of European culture, from Erasmus of Rotterdam to Aldous Huxley, all these intellectual influences formed the mind and thought of independent thinkers of the West who like Bart de Ligt criticized the power blocs of organised ideologies and searched for a "Third Way" beyond Capitalism and Communism. The economic-philosophical analysis of Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, of Henry George⁵ and John Ruskin⁶ had already been printed: the active pacifism was supposed to be a Utopian socialism and a nonviolent libertarian anarchism as well as the social movement to end history as the law of violence in time, from the violent revolutions in the United States of America and France to the Russian and Chinese revolutions of Lenin and Sun Yat-sen. Gandhi's Western teachers: Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau, came from Europe and America; they themselves were inspired by

⁵ The theories of the North American economist Henry George (1839-1897), especially the reform schemes he had recommended in his main work "Progress and Poverty" (1879) to solve the land issue (nationalising of land and territory, standardized land tax, system of wages) had the strongest impact on Tolstoy in his search for social transformation. Tolstoy and George were in correspondence; Tolstoy wrote in the second part of his novel "Resurrection" (1899) about his experiments in applying the principles of Henry George.

⁶ John Ruskin (1819-1900), scholar in aesthetics and social reformer, wrote four essays on the principles of political economy "Unto This Last", a basic work of Christian socialism. This book was paraphrased by Gandhi and spread throughout South Africa. "Unto This Last" inspired Gandhi to construct his first farm experiment near Durban: the "Phoenix Settlement" (1904). Ruskin's influence on his contemporaries should be reconsidered.: Bart de Ligt reflected Ruskin's concept of "responsible producing" written in "Fors Clavigera", and Janusz Korczak received his educational principles (Respect for the smallest and tiniest Being) from the "Ethics of the Dust" by John Ruskin.

Eastern philosophy. Gandhi's student life in London was enriched by meetings with theosophists and vegetarians; his time as a lawyer in South Africa was enriched by meetings with Quaker friends and Jewish co-workers and friends from Europe like Henry S.L. Polak, Sonia Schlesin and most of all Hermann Kallenbach. Gandhi's Indian "political gurus" were the moderate and conciliatory Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the radical activist Bal Gangadhar "Lokmanya" Tilak. Gandhi drew his lessons from his studies of the holy Scriptures of various religions, the Sermon on the Mount, the Ramayana, the writings of Sir Edwin Arnold, about Buddha and most of all his translation of the Bhagavadgita, which he interpreted in its updated meaning, and from his studies of the English translations of the writings of Leo Tolstoy as his spiritual guide.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), fifty years of age, had experienced his vanity and he had overcome his crisis of nihilism, that is why he became the most engaged and important critic of society in the modern era. His socio-ethical writings were inspired by a new interpretation of the Gospels which Tolstoy wanted to read and understand in the original languages, Greek and old Hebrew. In controversial conversations with one of his language teachers, Rabbi Minor, Tolstoy arrived at the fundamental idea of analysing society on the moral basis of the Christian commandments, not to resist by means of violence. Tolstoy immediately became the most dangerous and the most radical critic of the state, the government, the church, the military, the judicial system, the industry and his own privileged caste, the noble society. Tolstoy's confessional writings "My Confession", "My Religion", "The Kingdom of God Is Within You", his criticism of society, drawn from his own experiences as an agent of a census in the poorest districts of Moscow, "What Shall We Do Then?", his numerous pamphlets against state enforced injustice, against the legalised crimes of the government, e.g. "The End of an Age", "One Thing Is Needful (About the State)", and his plea for vegetarianism ("The First Step") and for morality in sexual gender relations ("Kreutzer-Sonata"); all of these writings tremendously impressed his reader Gandhi. The uncompromising

opposition against war and the appeal to non-cooperate out and out (e.g. by individual conscientious objection), as Tolstoy had expressed in his last letter to Gandhi, was the starting-point of the controversy between Bart de Ligt and Gandhi, who were successors of Tolstoy and who were united in their political efforts to practise his ethics of nonviolence. Gandhi's second farm experiment in South Africa was named after Tolstoy: Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg in the Transvaal. Gandhi had constructed this farm together with Hermann Kallenbach; they became friends and experimented with Tolstoy's ideas. Both corresponded with Tolstoy communicating their experiences with nonviolent resistance in the Transvaal, and Tolstoy was deeply impressed by it - in the years 1909 and 1910, before the First World War. In India, Gandhi's activities founded on his South African experience. Hermann Kallenbach, arrested as a Prisoner of War in a British detention camp on Isle of Man, was prevented from following Gandhi, who initiated new campaigns of nonviolent resistance on regional and national levels in India: in Bihar and in Gujarat, the province of his birth and upbringing. Gandhi launched a nation-wide campaign of civil disobedience and non-cooperation (1919-1922), and then he was eliminated from the Indian political scene because he was held for two years duration in a British prison. During these years, between 1922 and 1924, he wrote his autobiography of his South African experience: "Satyagraha in South Africa". Gandhi insisted on non-cooperating with the British colonial power which led to a split in the Congress movement. Gandhi, therefore, developed and expanded his social scheme: the cotton home industry, improving the spinning-wheel and mechanical weaving looms, various village industries on the countryside in favour of sustainable subsistence economy for peasants and craftsmen, the promotion of small and medium-scale technology in production units, Indian independence from the Manchester industry of manufactured goods, the inexhaustable dedication for the solidarity between Hindus and Muslims, the dangerous activity for the eradication of untouchability in the Hindu caste-class-system. During the third decade of this century Gandhi, who had become popular in Europe because of his friend Romain

Rolland's biography, published his statements with reference to international politics and he continued to do so after the miscarriage of the system of collective security formed by the League of Nations during the Thirties. Gandhi applied his social ethics of nonviolence to international conflicts more and more, stressing most of all the universal aspects of "Satyagraha" ("Firmness in Truth") in order to gain sympathy with the nonviolent movement to de-colonialise India. In his two autobiographies, he wrote about his childhood and youth, his years as a student in London, his experiences with "Satyagraha in South Africa" and also about his war participation in the Indian Ambulance Corps during the Boer War and during the so-called "Zulu Rebellion" which had been instigated by the British in South Africa. Gandhi was awarded the "Kaiser-i-Hind" medal as decoration for his and his fellow compatriots' stretcher-bearer service as non-combatants. Gandhi, however, returned his war decorations in the beginning of the twenties when he declared his disloyalty with respect to the British Empire during the nonviolent resistance campaign.

When Gandhi corresponded with Bart de Ligt, he was almost 60 years of age. Shortly before the crisis of world economy in 1929 and during permanent political turmoil (in Stalin's Russia) and the continuous post-war scenario in Europe, the democracies in the US, England, France and Germany only appeared to be solid. Politically motivated murders, the execution of political enemies (e.g. the death penalty against Sacco and Vanzetti in the US), the ideolocal agitation campaigns against the "Red Scare" (a bloody propaganda against the worker movement after the First World War) or against the socialists who were held responsible for the November Revolution contaminated the atmosphere of whole society whose democratic experiment was devoid of any protection for minorities or of any efficient penal action against the assassins (the right wing extremists in Germany, the "Ku-Klux-Clan" in the US). The spread and multiplication of ideological racism and obscurantism without censorship and the economically unstable situation of the poor workers created a social atmosphere of imminent catastrophies: the Black Friday at New York Wall Street's stock-market in 1929, the

seize of power by Hitler in Germany in 1933 and the first waves of political elimination under Stalin in Russia. Mussolini's Fascists held manifestations in Italy that were to become a European phenomenon (in Spain, Austria and Eastern Europe): the transition of democracies to totalitarian dictatorships. Thomas Masaryk's Czechoslovakya or Holland's democracy (in spite of its colonial power in South East Asia) were conservative patterns of a democratic new beginning. The Indian citizen of the British Empire, Mohandas K. Gandhi, who suffered from the British colonial power, who strived for Home Rule ("Hind Swaraj") and organized a unique social movement of emancipation and independence, and the active Christian socialist, pacifist and anti-militarist Reverend and social thinker Bart de Ligt from Holland who lived in Switzerland: the dialogue of these two personalities took place at a political cross-road during crucial times.

The Dutch Reverend and Peace Thinker Bart de Ligt⁷ (1883-1938) descended from a clergy family near Utrecht, a member of the Netherlands Reformed Church and Calvinist. The studious adolescent absorbed, among other books, the social writings of Tolstoy and Ruskin until he studied theology in Utrecht (1903-1910), during which period Bart de Ligt read especially the philosophers Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. During his studies Bart de Ligt was already publishing frequently. These were articles in a students' weekly and in the Christian-Social magazine "Wereldvrede" (World Peace). In 1910 Bart de Ligt was appointed pastor in Nuenen, about ten kilometres from Eindhoven, in the south of the Netherlands.

⁷ The following paragraphs are a paraphrase and summary of the excellent biographical essay of Herman Noordegraaf: Bart de Ligt (1883-1938): Peace Activist and Peace Researcher; His Life and Ideas, on pages 10 to 26 in the compilation with the same title, introduced by Gene Sharp, edited by the Bart-de-Ligt-Fonds and by the Foundation for Information about Active Nonviolence (Herman Noordegraaf, Peter van den Dungen, Wim Robben) from 1988 (with an extensive bibliography of the articles and books written about and by Bart de Ligt).

Bart de Ligt joined the "Alliance of Christian Socialists" which did not belong to the Social Democratic Labour Party, but opted for socialism. The Alliance was a Christian organisation, but open to members of different origins and attitudes. Bart de Ligt, author and co-editor of the Alliance's periodical "Opwaarts" (Upwards), borrowed some of his ideas from the Marxist analysis of society, but his analysis stayed within the framework of a strong ethical tendency. He associated the idea of class struggle with the method of nonviolent resistance and he condemned the Church because of its politics in favour of capitalism. In 1913 Bart de Ligt came into conflict with the Church for the first time; in connection with the celebrations around the centennial of the Dutch Independence (in 1813 the French occupation of the Netherlands came to an end) and a nationalist statement by the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Netherlands. Bart de Ligt criticized the humiliating shortcomings of established Christianity with regard to social issues ("Profeet en Volksfeest" -Prophet and national Feast-, 1913).

After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Netherlands remained neutral. Bart de Ligt and some colleagues drafted the manifesto "De schuld der kerken" (The Churches' Guilt), in which the churches were criticized for siding with imperialism and modern nation states. Bart de Ligt now focussed his interest on the war participation of the churches, the problems connected with war, and how to demobilise people after general mobilization. Because of his Whitsun-sermon which he delivered in Eindhoven on 6 June 1915, Bart de Ligt was banished from the southern provinces of the Netherlands by the military authorities; he spoke, among others, the following words in a church packed with soldiers:

"There are many Romans among us, who consider the State to be the highest of all and, question-less, vested with Divine authority. What the State tells them to do must be done unquestioningly. We find this idea embodied in that damnable militarist system. What kind of system is that? The soldier is subservient to the corporal, the corporal to the sergeant, the sergeant to the officer, the officer to the field-officer, and at the top there is the general. But the general is like a handle in the hand of the government, directing him: either to

the right, or to the left. If the government moves the general, everybody moves with him: it is like one big machine. And when the general shouts: "Fire", everybody fires, at anybody, if one had to even at the Heart of Jesus Christ, God's Sacred Heart. The first thing the militarist state demands of you is, if necessary, to fling away your conscience from your chest."

At the time, refusal of military service was an illegal act, Bart de Ligt wanted to legalize it. The Manifesto for Conscientious Objection, which was a result of the cooperation among Christian anarchists, anarchists, Christian socialists, communists and left wing social democrats, had been signed by 178 signatories in September 1915. The Manifesto's signatories considered conscientious objection to be one of the means by which they, joining hands, would be capable of destroying militarism, keeping in mind the great moral value of privately refusing to obey orders, also in order to realize a mass rejection of military service. The Manifesto was circulated in thousands of copies, the number of signatories was to grow to more than 1.200 while it was circulated even internationally. A number of civilian servants who had signed the manifesto were dismissed, because they refused to withdraw their signature. Because of the fact that they had signed and circulated the Manifesto, some people were summoned to appear in court. Eventually Bart de Ligt was sentenced, after appeal, to 15 days in prison; he was actually imprisoned in 1916. Conscientious objection, according to Bart de Ligt, was an accusation of the state, the church and the society not to suppress a moral rebirth. Conscientious objection was considered a "representative act" of the individual citizen by means of which other people might be challenged to act in the same way, so that militarism might be broken if there were enough people willing to imitate this act; the basis for conscientious objection always being the freedom of conscience and a determination of the objector's conscience.

Bart de Ligt pleaded for "mental resistance" in numerous lectures, articles and pamphlets: Nonviolence, according to his reflections, was not necessarily identical with defenselessness in defense and passivity, but on the contrary involved inner strength. The main

characteristics of the nonviolent resistance, elaborated by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, had already been realized by Bart de Ligt:

- that those who employ these methods run the greatest risk themselves;
- that they sacrifice themselves rather than victimize others;
- that the resisters renounce violence;
- that the continual appeal to the best qualities of those who use these methods and of those who are subjected to nonviolence by principle improves the quality of the struggle;
- that nonviolence inspires self-criticism and unpretentiousness;
- that nonviolence stimulates loyalty to one's most sacred qualities (that is Life, Humanity, Peace);
- that nonviolence rouses the fighter, who wants to win others over to his cause, first to conquer himself;
- that even if this approach is not successful with respect to others, those who use it will be able to manifest their own humanity at the service of mankind.

This mental resistance as the foundation of nonviolent resistance was elaborated by Bart de Ligt in numerous plans for direct action: in addition to conscientious objection Bart de Ligt discovered the origin of the social conscientious objection in the works of the English author and social reformer John Ruskin (1819-1900); the concept of non-cooperation with the arms industry. Ruskin had advocated the conversion of military activities into social and cultural work. During the Franco-German War (1870-1871), when British industry made enormous profits by manufacturing munitions, Ruskin, in his book "Fors Clavigera", called upon the British workers not to take part in this shameful business: "You are to do good work, whether you live or die", and "... be sure of this, literally: you must simply die rather than make any destroying mechanism or compound". Responsible production had also been advocated by anarchists like William Morris, Rudolf Rocker or Max Nettlau.

By studying the French philosopher Jean Marie Guyau's writings, Bart de Ligt took the idea that morality should not be a duty

emanating from outside the human being, but from the inner abundance of man and that the source of freedom can only be found within ourselves. At that time Bart de Ligt set much store with parliamentary action, mainly to obtain a more extensive forum for the presentation of ideas. (At the 1917 parliamentary elections, Bart de Ligt was nominated as a candidate for a parliamentary seat, though without any success.) During a spiritual crisis -in which he interpreted Christianity as a cultural-historical phenomenon - he married Catherina Lydia (van Peski-)van Rossem. It was 1918. Their son Joan was also born. In 1919 Bart de Ligt cancelled his membership to the "Alliance" because of the change of his religious views. Together with a kindred spirit, the lawyer Clara Meijer-Wichmann, Bart de Ligt became editor of the New Amsterdam Magazine ("De Nieuwe Amsterdammer") for the "Union of Revolutionary Socialist Intellectuals" and he took an active part in protests against the hemming in of Soviet- Russia by western powers around 1920. In 1921 he was one of the originators of the International Anti-Militarist Bureau (IAMB), the successor of antimilitarist associations, which had been founded by the former clergyman Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919) in 1904. Until 1925 Bart de Ligt was president of the IAMB. He built up an international contact-network, became editor of "De Wapens Neder" (The Weapons Down) and delivered speeches at numerous meetings and protest-demonstrations, for example on the occasion of the imprisonment of the Dutch conscientious objector Herman Groenendaal who went on hunger strike. "In the name of Jesus Christ, in the name of Marx, in the name of Bakoenin, in the name of Kropotkin, in the name of Tolstoy and in the name of Groenendaal" - with these words, he instigated the crowd to stop doing any kind of evil work, to refuse cooperation in the building of barracks and prisons, to refuse the production of war-material and to refuse any kind of military service. As a result, Bart de Ligt was sentenced to 26 days of imprisonment because of attempted sedition. Because he wanted to have time to reflect and study, and on account of his poor health, Bart de Ligt decided to move to Switzerland, he settled near Geneva, not only temporarily but for all of his life. A

couple of times every year he returned to the Netherlands to lecture and teach courses, but his direct involvement in actions and campaigns in the Netherlands decreased. In numerous correspondences and meetings in Geneva, Lausanne and other nearby environs (with Einstein, Nehru, Gandhi, Maria Montessori and Aldous Huxley), Bart de Ligt broadened his cosmopolitical horizon and studied intensively in Geneva so that he could publish a number of writings, such as the two volumes of his work "Vrede als Daad" (Peace as Action; part 1 in 1931 and part 2 in 1933). Inspired by Tolstoy, with whose secretary, Paul Birukov, Bart de Ligt became close friends, de Ligt attempted to document the radical tradition of resistance against war, violence and oppression in all kinds of different cultures. He demonstrated that nonviolence was certainly not merely figment of the imagination, but something that is deeply rooted in human nature.

In 1936, Bart de Ligt published his extended biography of the ardent opponent to war, the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam (to be compared with the works of Johan Huizinga and Stefan Zweig), and he edited the periodical "Bevrijding" (Liberation) of the Alliance of Religious Anarcho-Communists (after 1932: Alliance of Anarcho-Socialists). This high-level publication published articles written from the angle of various disciplines (biology, psychology, sociology, politics, economy, philosophy, history, etc.). Under the influence of the peril of war in the Thirties and the advance of fascism in Europe, Bart de Ligt drafted a resistance-scheme against war and preparations for war, which he presented to the War Resisters' International Triennial Conference in Welwyn/Herts (England) in 1934. This plan was based on nonviolent direct action and led to the establishment of the International Meeting against War and Militarism which held its first Congress in Paris between 1 and 5 August 1937. His plans to establish an international working-group for a "science of peace" and a "peace academy" could not be realized by himself. Bart de Ligt could not deliver his inaugural lecture for this "peace academy" in August 1938 because he was seriously ill in Brittany. On 3 September 1938 he died because of a heart-attack at Nantes railway station. He was cremated in Paris

after which his earthly remains were laid to rest in the Netherlands on 10 September 1938.

Bart de Ligt was an Anarchist revolutionary and freethinker. His creed could be summarized in one of his famous statements: "The more violence, the less revolution." Or: "Violence will always be the weakest and never the strongest side of the revolution." Initially, Bart de Ligt had welcomed the Russian Revolution in 1917. Soon he condemned the relentless persecution of conscientious objectors. Nonviolent activists should act as the conscience of the revolution; they had to bring about "a revolution of the revolution" without actually condemning those who used violent methods. He expressed this point of view during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). This war produced a severe crisis in the anti-militarist movement. Bart de Ligt took up an intermediate position: not to condemn armed resistance, but to actively support nonviolent resistance only. The International Anti-Militarist Bureau, however, was paralysed by this issue to such an extent that this organisation virtually stopped functioning.

That Bart de Ligt did not simply condemn violence per se became evident from his correspondence with Gandhi between 1928 and 1930 documented herewith and compiled in the 1930 Dutch edition "Een wereldomvattend vraagstuk. Gandhi en de oorlog." (A world-wide question: Gandhi and the war): "As I have already written you, I also do not hold to a dogmatic point of view of non-violence. I recognize impartially the right of any oppressed class or race to liberate itself by means of arms. I grant that from a moral point of view a people which defends itself militarily does better than if it did not defend itself at all because of cowardice or lack of character - although I can quite well imagine a people which, urged by worthy humanitarian sentiments, renounces war methods, even while still incapable of liberating itself by higher means." In the last sentence, Bart de Ligt stresses essential "mental resistance" with obvious similarities to Mahatma Gandhi's and Martin Luther King's "soul-force".

Bart de Ligt and his wife had a keen eye for the mental aspect of the problem of violence; they did not ignore the role of modern

education and the socialisation-process of the individual which influenced his attitude towards violence. In Hamburg (Autumn 1928) and Vienna (Spring 1929) Bart de Ligt and his wife visited reform school projects. These visits resulted in their book "Nieuwe scholen in Hamburg en Weenen" (New schools in Hamburg and Vienna) (1930). The education of the child by an all-round development, and a universal perspective were central concerns. For example, the teaching of history, in which the own nationality was glorified, was firmly rejected by them. Bart de Ligt thought that the struggle for nonviolence would find adherents among those groups who suffered most in contemporary society, namely, the workers, the coloured peoples and women. He argued in favour of women's liberation and advocated their participation in direct action as a kind of vocation for gender solidarity. Many women had contributed to the production of war material in the First World War. He now called upon all the women's organisations to call an international strike of women in case of war. Bart de Ligt directed specific attention to the role and the position of intellectuals, because of their direct or indirect influence on ideologies and their involvement in the manufacturing of arms. He wanted to strengthen their sense of responsibility for peace, especially in the case of specialists. A detailed study of the development of military strategies taught him that the Achilles' heel of modern warfare was to be found in the industrial resources and in the link between the frontline and the base. According to Bart de Ligt, by concentrating on the strategic points it should be possible to prevent or stop war with the help of a relatively small number of people: by direct action. He expected hardly anything from the League of Nations or the peace-talks in Geneva. According to him, the League of Nations was nothing but an attempt to systematize modern international imperialism. Instead, Bart de Ligt advocated coordinated direct action and nonviolent non-cooperation as the only efficient means to stop the war activity."

PLAN OF CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALL WAR AND ALL PREPARATION FOR WAR, PROPOSED TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL, HELD AT WELWYN (HERTS, ENGLAND), JULY 1934, BY B. DE LIGT.

This plan for the mobilization of all anti-war forces is not based on any kind of compulsion, compulsory service or conscription. The anti-militarist movement is entirely composed of volunteers, every one of whom is called upon to act as energetically as possible according to his conscience but without being obliged to go beyond his strength. The deeds to be accomplished and the attitudes to be taken up under the following plan are dictated to no one. They are instanced in order that individuals and collective bodies may become conscious of the numerous possibilities within their reach to-day, to make all and every war impossible. The cases mentioned below should especially stimulate men to put into the service of this new fight their maximum of energy, devotion and courage.

A. IN PEACE TIME:

I. Direct INDIVIDUAL action to prevent war and all preparation for war.

A. Refusal of military service:

1. as conscript, 2. as soldier or sailor, 3. as reservist (return your military papers to the state), 4. as citizen called to arms: (a) for the purpose of manoeuvres, (b) on the occasion of a strike, (c) on the occasion of political and social conflicts.

B. Refusal of non-combatant military work (even in the Red Cross or the Army Medical Corps which both are by their nature subordinated to the military system).

C. Use every possible means for making anti-militarist propaganda in the army or in the navy in order to create nuclei of resistance and establish relations between these and the anti-militarist movement with a view to mass refusal of orders.

D. Refusal of industrial, technical and social service:

1. refusal to make war materials, munitions, etc.
2. refusal to take part in military aviation.
3. refusal to construct barracks and fortifications.
4. refusal to make (a) military clothing. (b) military boots. etc.
5. refusal to make optical instruments, instruments of precision, etc., destined solely for war purposes.

6. refusal to set up type for or to print articles, pamphlets, books, manifestoes, tracts, etc., of a distinctly military, militaristic, jingoistic or imperialistic tendency.

7. refusal to make military toys.

8. refusal to handle, forward or transport anything used for war and its preparation, etc.

E. Refusal to put trade at the service of war (as employer or employee):

1. banks. 2. co-operatives. 3. publishers. 4. clothing trade. 5. saddle makers, harness makers. 6. shops for technical, optical and precision instruments, etc. 7. bookshops. 8. bazaars (children's toys). etc., etc.

F. Refusal to pay taxes.

G. Refusal to put up soldiers billeted on you. (Or they may be received hospitably and as imposed guests may be subjected to a judicious anti-militarist propaganda while the indemnity paid by the State may be used in favour of anti-war propaganda.)

H. Refusal of intellectual and moral service:

1. Abstentionist methods:

(a) direct (i.e. refusal, to undertake research work which aims at creating means for war purposes or to draw up plans connected therewith, and refusal to direct any technical or intellectual work of preparation for war):

2. Constructive methods:

(a) direct (i.e. the endeavour, to place at the service of peace and human civilization alone those technical and intellectual inventions and means which are actually placed at the service of war; the endeavour not to pervert science in its applications):

1. as physicist. 2. as chemist. 3. as bacteriologist. 4. as civil engineer.
5. as technician. 6. as speaker, orator or broadcaster etc., etc.

(b) indirect (i.e. refusal, to prepare a war-like mentality):

1. as parents,

(a) by keeping the children as far as possible away from all nationalistic, militaristic, jingoistic and imperialistic influence (by watching over the influence exerted by their reading matter, their teaching, festivals, etc.).

(b) by refusing to hand over to the State children who have not yet attained their majority, for the purpose of military training or of compulsory military service.

b) indirect (i.e. by preparing a humanitarian and *international* mentality):

1. as parents,

(a) by leading as harmonious as possible a family life, inspired by a truly universal spirit (the home atmosphere exercising a capital influence on youth).

(b) by educating youth in as free and wide a spirit as possible, and especially indirectly by awakening in youth a sense of respect for others, love for the inorganic and organic kingdoms, for plants, animals and man; by awakening sympathy for foreign peoples and races; by awakening the sentiment of social justice and admiration for all forms of courage and heroism, even in war - by a constant direction of the attention of the new generation to that which rises above all violence.

(c) by sending one's children to schools where they are sure to receive modern and up-to-date instruction in the widest sense

(and if such schools do not exist, establish same) remaining in constant touch with the teachers, the parents of the other pupils and the pupils themselves by taking part in parents' circles, teachers' and pupils' meetings, etc.

2. as schoolmaster, teacher and professor by refusing to educate youth in a national, imperialistic and militaristic spirit.

2. as schoolmaster, teacher or professor by educating youth in a truly universal spirit according to the method of self-government (and with this aim in view seeking to keep up regular contacts with the parents).

3. as journalist, publicist, lecturer or man of letters, by refusing to influence public opinion in a nationalist, militaristic or imperialistic spirit, by showing up modern politico-economic life, etc.

3. as journalist, publicist, lecturer or man of letters by directing public opinion as much as possible to the ideals of justice and freedom and teaching the readers to appreciate foreign nations and races.

4. as religious or moral leader, by refusing to sanctify or to glorify national defence and war.

4. as religious or moral leader by awakening by word and deed the sentiment of universal solidarity and a sense of responsibility to mankind generally, seeking to sublimate the fighting habit and war.

5. as chief of a movement or a political group or party by refusing to prepare public opinion in any manner whatsoever for national defence.

5. as chief of a movement or political group or party by inciting the masses to work for a new civilization, giving them confidence in the method of

6. as jurists by refusing both to subordinate international law to national interest and to interpret the law with a bias in favour of one's own country.
7. as historian by refusing to commit the common error of making the history of one's own nation the starting point of world history by elevating it as the chosen one above any other nation and by refusing exclusively to glorify one's own race.
8. as artist, by refusing to place one's services at the disposal of nationalism, militarism and imperialism.
9. as sociologist by showing up nationalism, militarism, imperialism, pride of race, etc.
- non-violent struggle.
6. as jurists by directing law towards a harmonious international world in which individuals, groups, nations and races would entertain free relations and exchange all their products (material, intellectual and spiritual) according to their nature and need.
7. as historian, by taking universal life as a starting point, pointing out the qualities of every nation and race, demonstrating the relations and influence which each has with and upon the others and showing according to universal history the existence of an undeniable tendency towards a social life which would be as free as it would be varied, offering to every individual the greatest possibility of free development.
8. as artist by directing every effort towards a truly human and universal harmony.
9. as sociologist, by recognizing the relative meaning of war and showing why and by what means the nations may rise above it and pass out of the stage of violence and barbarism.

10. as medical man, psychologist or psychiatrist by revealing the unconscious and subconscious tendencies which make for war, the retrogressive character of military discipline, and by showing that modern war is an odious crime against life, the physical, moral and mental health of man as well as against his aesthetic sense (millions of dead, mutilated, unbalanced, sexual illnesses, consequences of undernourishment, rachitis, tuberculosis, etc.).
11. as philosopher, by showing up all forms of dogmatism and absolutism, especially in the field of the history of civilization of religion and of comparative philosophy.
12. by organizing effectively from the points of view of science, propaganda and action in respect to the above mentioned aims and by associating on a federal basis with other organizations for direct action against war and its preparation.
10. as medical man, psychologist or psychiatrist:
 (a) by analysing the pathological phenomena of society with a view to individual and social self-cure and the establishment of moral hygiene.
 (b) by demonstrating the possibilities of canalizing and sublimating the instincts and passions which formerly found their outward expression in war.
11. as philosopher:
 (a) by recognizing the relative value of all traditions of thought and civilization and by permitting them all full expression and in showing how they complete each other mutually.
 (b) by making universal philosophy a force of social dynamics.
12. by organizing effectively from the points of view of science, propaganda and action in respect to the above mentioned aims and by associating on a federal basis with other organizations for direct action against war and its preparation.

II. Direct COLLECTIVE action to prevent war and all preparation for war.

1. THEORETICAL

- A. Propaganda by public and open meetings, etc.
- B. Propaganda by congresses, courses, schools, etc.
- C. Propaganda by study circles, etc.
- D. Propaganda by writing or by pictures.
- E. Propaganda by plays, pageants, etc.
- F. Propaganda by cinema.
- G. Propaganda by wireless.
- H. Propaganda by processions and demonstrations.
- J. Propaganda by house to house canvass (a far too neglected method).
- K. Youth Organization:
 - 1. Children: Do not moralize; borrow what is good from the Boy Scout Movement; awaken above all a sense of respect for others and for oneself and a sentiment of responsibility and of human solidarity.
 - 2. Adolescents: Should organize themselves according to their own methods to discuss the subjects in question.
- L. Women's Organizations.

(These are chiefly needed where women do not yet or have only for a short time taken any interest in social questions and where in connection with their maternal and social functions they require special education. The central idea must here be *their responsibility towards the new generation* in respect of physical, moral and intellectual health; it is of the greatest importance that women should become conscious of the fact that in modern war the industrial, intellectual and social work of women behind the front is as necessary as the men's work at the front; that if the system of national defence is to work well, at least 20 per cent. of the mobilized men should be replaced by women and that without the constant collaboration of millions of women the making of munitions would

be paralysed. In this connection house to house canvass by women to women is one of the highest importance.)

- M. Anti-militarist propaganda in the army and navy (see I.C).
- N. Special propaganda amongst the workers adapted to every kind of trade, especially those of first necessity for war purposes, in order to explain to these workers the technical function of their trade and what can be done individually or collectively - by each on his own ground - in order to undermine and to prevent war by refusing to serve and by systematic and reasonable sabotage:
 - 1. transport (goods and material, men):
 - (a) by rail. (b) by autobus. (c) by car. (d) by tramway. (e) by boat. (f) by aeroplane. (g) by beast. (h) by men.
 - 2. minerals:
 - (a) coal. (b) iron. (c) lead. (d) aluminium. (e) zinc. (f) tin. (g) nickel. (h) mercury. (i) copper. (j) manganese. (k) sulphur. (l) pyrite. (m) tungsten. (n) chrome. (o) antimony. (p) graphite. (q) mica. etc., etc.
 - 3. Iron and Steel Industry (engines of war material, munitions).
 - 4. Chemical Industry (asphyxiating gases).
 - 5. Mineral oils, petroleum, heavy oils, petrol (gasoline), wells, refineries, pipe lines, tanks, etc.).
 - 6. Alcohols.
 - 7. Cotton.
 - 8. Wool.
 - 9. Rubber.
 - 10. Leather.
 - etc., etc.

2. PRACTICAL.

A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H (see I, A-H)

- J. Organisation of a movement based on direct action for the immediate abolition of military slavery (compulsory military service).
- K. Organisation of a movement based on direct action for the immediate liberation of all objectors to military service.

L. Organisation of special movements for direct action connected with special events of an anti-military character (such as f.i. the 1921 movement in Holland on the occasion of the hunger strike by the objector Herman Groenendaal and the one of 1932 in Belgium on the occasion of the hunger strike by R.A. Simoens).

M. Organisation of a popular movement with the aim of eliminating immediately from the laws of one's country the right to declare war.

N. Unarmed mass opposition to the imprisonment of objectors in own town or village and organization in connection with such injustices of demonstrations, meetings, strikes of protest, etc.

O. On the occasion of parliamentary decisions or special governmental measures (such as a vote for the increase and the modernization of war material, manoeuvres, dispatch of military or naval forces to a place where a strained situation has arisen, dispatch of military forces to some colony), to prevent such measures from being carried out by demonstrations and strikes.

P. Wide distribution of manifestoes inciting to refusal of service in which thousands of men and women - giving their names, callings and addresses - declare openly that they refuse to take any part in war or in its technical and moral preparation whether it be in the army, the navy or in social life.

Q. Creation of funds in aid of the victims of refusal to take part in war:

1. in favour of those objectors who have lost their work in consequence of their anti-military attitude.
2. in favour of propagandists in a similar situation.
3. in favour of those who refuse to make war material or to participate in the technical, intellectual or moral preparation of war.

R. Compelling the governments to renounce all forms of national defence (if f.i. reasonable plans for universal disarmament are proposed the masses must compel the governments by direct action to accept the same).

S. Organization of international itinerary peace crusades (this campaign lasting several weeks or several months begins at the same time in different countries and in the most important centres. The crusades pass through towns and villages holding meetings and

march to a designated spot where a grand international demonstration is to take place).

Should political tension between two countries threaten to lead to the danger of war:

T. A common front of all organizations who are opposed to war and its preparation should immediately be established in order to:

1. create a Committee and a special fund for any proposed action.

2. inform public opinion of the threatening danger through:

a) the press.

b) lectures and meetings.

c) manifestoes, tracts and pamphlets dealing with the political difference in question in an objective and anti-war manner.

3. appeals should be launched by wire or express letter to all pacifist, anti-militarist and workers' organizations, etc., to exert pressure upon the government and parliament to avoid war at all cost.

4. leading personalities of the country should be supplied with full particulars concerning the point in dispute, with a request that they should influence public opinion, the government and parliament, to avoid war at all cost.

5. appeals should be addressed to all teachers, journalists, religious or political leaders, lawyers, historians, etc., that they may use all their influence to avoid war.

6. the government and parliament should be warned that in case war is declared the masses will refuse to take part in it and this all the more since modern states dispose of political and juridical means - such as arbitration - for settling any political difference and so to avoid all war.

7. in the country which might become the enemy country manifestoes should be published declaring clearly that should war break out the masses will refuse to take part in it and inviting all human beings worthy of the name, on the other side of the frontier, to act in a like manner.

8. enter into immediate contact with kindred movements, committees and organizations in a prospective enemy country so

that parallel action may be taken in both countries in peace time as well as when war threatens to break out.

9. in towns and villages situated on the frontiers of both countries in question conferences and meetings should be organized at which the war resisters of both countries should meet in order to

a) examine the political dispute in question and devise means for a pacifistic solution.

b) examine all possible means to be employed for preventing the outbreak of war.

c) examine all means to be employed to oppose mobilization and prevent the outbreak of war.

10. a general strike, the collective refusal of military service and non-co-operation, etc., should be prepared in advance and if necessary commenced at once and any other steps taken to render the threatened outbreak of war impossible.

U. All things and persons having any connection with militarism - particularly officers - should be boycotted in social life.

Since it is likely that in case of a mobilization or on the outbreak of war the members of the directing committee of anti-war organizations and the best known propagandists of the anti-war movement will be arrested and the documents, archives, etc., of these organizations confiscated, it is necessary

V. to take the following preventive measures:

1. educate the members of the organizations in question in such a way as to enable them more and more to continue their illegal work even should all their leaders be arrested, banished or killed.

2. to keep several duplicates of membership lists in different places in order to avoid the consequences resulting from confiscation.

3. bear in mind the possibility that the funds of the organizations in question which may be deposited in official institutions (Savings Banks, Banks, etc.) may be confiscated by the state and avoid the danger of being deprived of means at the moment of action.

In order to be able to act effectively at the given moment and to forestall possible proclamations launched by the government it is necessary:

W. to have prepared already in advance proclamations of different sizes and colours, drawn up in clear short terms, inciting to direct action, individual as well as collective, against war and its preparation and calling upon all to mobilize their forces in the service of humanity, to meet the following cases:

1. state of war. 2. state of siege. 3. rumours of mobilization. 4. mobilization. 5. rumours of war. 6. civil war. 7. colonial war. 8. international war.

B. IN THE TIME OF MOBILIZATION AND WAR

III. Direct INDIVIDUAL action to make war impossible.

A. Refusal of military service.

B. Refusal of non-combatant military work (even in the Red Cross or the Army Medical Corps, which both are by their nature subordinated to the military system).

C. Use every possible means for making anti-militarist propaganda in the army and the navy in order to create nuclei of resistance and establish relations between these and the anti-militarist movement with a view to mass refusal of orders.

D. Refusal of industrial, technical and social service:

1. refusal to make war materials, munitions, etc.

2. refusal to take part in military aviation.

3. refusal to construct barracks and fortifications.

4. refusal to make (a) military clothing. (b) military boots. etc., etc.

5. refusal to make optical instruments and instruments of precision, etc., destined solely for war purposes.

6. refusal to set up type for, or to print articles, pamphlets, books, manifestoes, leaflets, etc., of a distinctly military, militaristic, jingoistic or imperialistic tendency.

7. refusal to make military toys.

8. refusal to handle, forward or transport anything used for war and its preparation.

9. refusal to place at the disposal of war everything connected with the postal, telegraph, telephone and wireless services.
etc.

E. Refusal to put trade at the service of war (as employer or employee):

1. banks. 2. co-operatives. (see I.E 2.(...)) 3. publishers. 4. clothing trade. 5. saddle makers. harness makers. 6. shops for technical, optical and precision instruments, etc. 7. bookshops. 8. bazaars (children's toys). etc., etc.

F. Refusal to pay taxes.

G. Refusal to have soldiers billeted upon you (or they may be received hospitably as imposed guests and subjected to a judicious anti-militarist propaganda while the indemnity paid by the state may be used in favour of anti-war propaganda.)

H. Refusal of intellectual and moral service by abstentionist and constructive methods:

(a) direct methods:

1. as physicist. 2. as chemist. 3. as bacteriologist. 4. as civil engineer. 5. as technician. 6. as speaker, orator or broadcaster etc., etc.

(b) indirect methods:

1. as parents. 2. as schoolmaster, teacher or professor. 3. as journalist, publisher, lecturer or writer. 4. as religious leader or moral leader. 5. as leader of a movement or political party. 6. as jurist. 7. as historian. 8. as artist. 9. as sociologist. 10. as physician, psychologist or psychiatrist. 11. as philosopher. (See I. H 1b and 2b.) 12. notwithstanding the most deplorable circumstances and the most disastrous events, seek to maintain, to create or to restore the local, national and international relations which are indispensable for individual and collective direct action against war.

J. Render impossible the requisitioning of your horses, mules or any of your cattle by the military.

K. Render useless for mobilization and war service any bicycle, motor car, boat, aeroplane or other means of transport requisitioned by the military.

L. Render useless for mobilization and war the telephone, telegraph, wireless, etc.

M. Render useless for mobilization and war: bridges, railways, etc. (not forgetting to place *danger signals* on roads and railway lines in order to avoid any accidents and save human life).

etc. etc., by practising in every sphere of social life the most effective non-cooperation boycott and sabotage without ever damaging or destroying instruments, machines, bridges, roads, etc., to a greater extent than is strictly necessary.

If the choice is left open it is always preferable to convert the means of war - in time of mobilization and war everything is so to say a means of war - into means of peace rather than to destroy them: f.i. by using your aeroplane to shower down upon town and countryside of your own as well as of a possible enemy country anti-war manifestoes and leaflets, by placing your wireless (ordinary or secret installation) at the service of the anti-militarist mobilization and of the war against war movement in order to appeal to the people of the countries in question to join the fight against all war, etc., etc.

IV. Direct COLLECTIVE action to make war impossible.

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H the same as under III- Direct Individual action.

J. BOYCOTT, NON-CO-OPERATION AND GENERAL STRIKE SHOULD BE EMPLOYED:

1. In time of war danger to oblige the government to give up its disastrous plan.

2. In time of war to stop the slaughter.

WHERE THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO RENDER A NATIONAL MOBILIZATION IMPOSSIBLE ATTEMPTS MUST BE MADE:

K. To create a united anti-war front:

1. *in time of mobilization but when war has not yet broken out* to put on foot the most active propaganda campaign throughout the country and by making use of all available means to prepare for the general strike and mass refusal of military service.

2. *in time of war* to act in a like sense but secretly and with tact, a task which, however, should already be prepared for in peace time.

L. To attempt to win over to the anti-war mobilization soldiers, sailors and workers still mobilized for war by:

1. demonstrations. 2. house-to-house canvass. 3. picketing in front of barracks (in this sphere *women* can act to great advantage), etc., etc.

M. To disorganize as much as possible the great mechanism of war, chiefly by seeking to paralyse transport (and here again *women* have a special task to accomplish, for instance by placing themselves in their thousands on the railway lines or on roads in order to prevent the departure of military transports, in one word by practising methods of passive resistance as has been done in these recent years in India by all the *women* who have fought so heroically against the police and the Imperial British Army).

N. Wherever it is possible to do so without the risk of endangering human life, arms, munitions and all war materials should be destroyed, etc., etc.

If the choice is left open it is always preferable to convert the means of war - in time of mobilization and war nearly everything is so to say a means of war - into means of peace rather than to destroy them; f.i. by using aeroplanes to shower down upon town and countryside of your own as well as of a possible enemy country anti-war manifestoes and leaflets, by placing your wireless (ordinary or secret installations) at the service of anti-militarist mobilization and of the war against war movement in order to appeal to the peoples of the countries in question to join the fight against all war, etc., etc.

O. The collective opposition to war should be converted into SOCIAL REVOLUTION (in this revolution it will likewise be the duty of all anti-militarists and radical pacifists to carry on their fight by such means only as may be worthy of man, by rising above any bourgeois, feudal or pre-feudal methods of violence, such methods being in strict contradiction to any rebirth of human civilization).

(Bart de Ligt: "The Conquest of Violence. An Essay on War and Revolution", London 1937, pp. 269-285; without his annotations)

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We are certain to speak in the name of all readers of this
English language publication.**

„For me non-violence is not a mere
philosophical principle.

It is the rule and the breath of my life.“

Mahatma Gandhi, 1928

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