

MAHATMA GANDHI'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: THE FORMATION AND PRACTICE OF THE THEORY OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

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Abstract: This article analyzes Mahatma Gandhi's political views, the core ideas formed during his political activity, and his role in the Indian independence movement. Gandhi's principle of nonviolence (ahimsa) and the concept of satyagraha based on the power of truth are extensively discussed. Furthermore, Gandhi's political philosophy and its influence on global political thought are examined from a scientific perspective. The findings suggest that Gandhi's political ideas played a crucial role not only in India's independence movement but also in civil movements across the world.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, political philosophy, ahimsa, satyagraha, nonviolent resistance, Indian independence, political leadership, civil movements.

Introduction. Mahatma Gandhi is considered one of the most prominent political and spiritual leaders of the 20th century. He became a symbol of India's struggle for independence and is widely recognized as a figure who promoted peace, justice, and nonviolent resistance worldwide. Gandhi's political views occupy an important place not only in Indian history but also in global political thought. This article examines Gandhi's political ideas, the key concepts developed during his political career, and their role in the Indian independence movement.

Furthermore, Gandhi's concept of nonviolent resistance, the theory of *satyagraha*, and his views on political ethics are examined in detail. Mahatma Gandhi is regarded as one of the most prominent political and spiritual leaders of the twentieth century. He became a symbol of India's struggle for independence and is widely recognized as a figure who promoted the ideals of peace, justice, and nonviolent resistance across the world.

Gandhi's political views occupy a significant place not only in the history of India but also in the development of global political thought.

Gandhi's life and the beginning of his political activity

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbandar, India. From a young age, he valued justice, truth, and moral principles. Gandhi's political views were largely shaped during his time in South Africa, where he witnessed discrimination against Indian immigrants and began his struggle for justice. The Indian people call him "Mahatma" ("Great Soul"). The doctrine of Gandhism associated with his name became the official ideology of the leading political party in India — the Indian National Congress. Between 1887 and 1891, he received a legal education in England. From 1891, he worked as a lawyer, and between 1893 and 1914, he served as a legal advisor for a Gujarati trading firm in South Africa, which was then a British colony. It was during this period that he developed the idea of nonviolent resistance.

Ahimsa – the idea of nonviolence

At the core of Gandhi's political philosophy lies ahimsa, the principle of nonviolence. According to this idea, political and social problems can be resolved peacefully without the use of force. Gandhi considered human life the highest value. Ahimsa served as a guiding principle throughout his political activity. He believed that violence only generates further conflict, whereas peace can be achieved through patience, dialogue, and justice.

Satyagraha – the theory of the power of truth

Satyagraha is one of Gandhi's most famous political concepts. The term originates from Sanskrit and means "truth force" or "devotion to truth." According to Gandhi, individuals should not resort to violence when fighting for truth and justice. Through satyagraha, opponents are not viewed as enemies, but as individuals capable of understanding truth. Following the shooting of demonstrators in Amritsar in 1919, Mahatma Gandhi decided, during the wave of protests, to launch his first nationwide campaign of civil disobedience against the British. This campaign took the form of a mass boycott of British goods, educational institutions, courts, administrative bodies, and elections.

This movement played a significant role in advancing the independence struggle throughout India and contributed to transforming the Indian National Congress into a mass organization with millions of supporters and tens of thousands of active participants. However, at the beginning of 1922, the protest campaign was suspended, as certain radical actions indicated that the movement was beginning to deviate from the principle of nonviolence and was slipping beyond the control of the Indian National Congress.

Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi (1869 – January 30, 1948) was an Indian political and public figure, as well as one of the leaders and ideologists of the movement for India's independence from Great Britain. His philosophy of nonviolence (*satyagraha*) significantly influenced movements for peaceful reform around the world.

Gandhi was one of the key leaders of India's struggle for independence. He applied methods of nonviolent resistance, including boycotts of British goods and institutions, as well as acts of civil disobedience. One of the most notable movements was the Salt March of 1930, which drew global attention to India's independence struggle.

Global influence of Gandhi's ideas

Gandhi's ideas had a profound impact not only in India but also across the world. His concept of nonviolent resistance inspired many political leaders and civil rights movements. For example, leaders of the civil rights movement in the United States drew inspiration from his peaceful methods. This demonstrates the global significance of Gandhi's political legacy.

Mahatma Gandhi's political ideas hold an important place in human history. His philosophy based on nonviolence, truth, and justice remains relevant today. His legacy shows that political struggle can be conducted not only through force but also through moral values, patience, and commitment to truth. Gandhi led an extremely frugal and modest lifestyle. In accordance with his religious traditions and a promise he made to his mother, he refrained from eating meat. Not limiting himself to vegetarianism alone, he also gave up drinking milk. Only when he became seriously ill and was on the brink of death did he reluctantly agree—under strong insistence from his wife and his doctor—to drink goat's milk.

Although he had resolved not to consume cow's milk, he could not forgive himself even for drinking goat's milk. He acknowledged that while he had formally adhered to his vow, he had essentially violated its true spirit. Such behavior may appear unusual to individuals with a different worldview; however, it provides a clear insight into Gandhi's way of life and personal discipline.

He remained steadfast in his beliefs both in everyday life and in his social and political activities.

Gandhism is a socio-political and religious-philosophical doctrine developed by Mahatma Gandhi, which became the ideological foundation of the Indian national liberation movement. Gandhism was adopted as the official ideology of the Indian National Congress following the shooting of a peaceful gathering in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, carried out under orders of the British authorities.



The central idea of Gandhism is the ideal of *ahimsa*, which manifests itself in the principle of non-harm toward all living beings and the absolute rejection of violence. Its main principles include:

- achieving independence through peaceful, nonviolent struggle by mobilizing broad masses of the population (*satyagraha*);
- idealization of the past and appealing to the religious sentiments of the masses;
- opposition to caste inequality;
- endorsing the possibility of achieving class harmony and resolving conflicts between classes through arbitration, based on the concept of landlords' guardianship over peasants and capitalists' responsibility toward workers;
- idealization of patriarchal relations, and advocating the revival of rural society, traditional crafts in India, particularly hand-spinning and weaving.

Nonviolence, as a moral category, was considered by Gandhi both in ethical and political dimensions. In the first case, it functions as a principle of individual behavior; in the second, as a method of political struggle. According to Gandhi, nonviolence can be realized when a person is able to love even those who hate him. Nonviolence is inherent in human nature. It is not a manifestation of weakness or passivity; rather, it is an active force directed at overcoming the spirit of violence within the opponent.

According to his views, the practice of nonviolence requires courage. Gandhi called for fearing only God and not fearing any human being, regardless of their status. However, courage, in his understanding, was not meant for aggressive struggle against enemies, but for the willingness to endure suffering voluntarily.

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