

Chapter-III

Ideological Frontiers

Before making an assessment of the influences that shaped the ideologies of the two great icons – M. K. Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, it becomes necessary to find out the factors which generally go into making of the personality of an individual. An individual gains uniqueness because of his complex mental characteristics. The patterns of thought, emotional tone, temperament, values, beliefs and expectations are some of the potential factors that lend individuality to a personality. These factors of a personality come to him through two sources – heredity and environment.

Researches by psychologists show that the emotional tone of an individual is a hereditary product. But the acquisition of beliefs, values and expectations are received by an individual through experiences and the process of socialisation. Therefore, it is essential to know the social set-up, in which an individual and his parents lived, their religious beliefs, their perceptions and their thought processes. This makes us reach to the conclusion that an individual's family is one of the most effective agencies that go into shaping an individual's personality, and in turn, his ideology.

Outside the family, it is the society which helps in building the ideology of an individual. The values, customs, beliefs, perceptions, religion and the economic factors – all go into making of the general ideology of a particular social set-up. These general ideological factors of the society are usually shared by the individual who is a part of it. In this way, the society influences a family which in

turn lends and receives the influences from the individual who is a part of that family and of the society.

Religion is one of the crucial influences that may help in building the ideological construct of an individual's personality. Religious values exercised and shared by a society and family become a part of an individual's ideology. A person tends to adhere to the religious precepts and the rules which are dictated by the religious texts. The moral system of a society is generally guided by the religion and thus becomes a part of the individual's belief system. Thus the religious texts read and analysed by the individual directly help in building his ideological construct. Not only the religious texts of one's own religion but of other religions also may influence a person's ideology if he comes across them.

The ideologies of great men in the history of the world, who have been the heroes of the masses in some way or the other and leave a deep impression in turning the tides of history in some way, may also influence the ideology of an individual. The philosophies enunciated by these great men, their struggle and their successes are the crucial factors that contribute in building the ideology of the men who read them or who come across them. Combining itself with the external influences, the individual's own personality can prove to be so assertive that the person himself acts as a dominating force in influencing the society. A reciprocal system always works – the society influences the individual and the individual influences the society.

Ideological Influences on Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest leaders of the world, the architect of Indian freedom movement and a great visionary had shaped some philosophies of his own

that the world emulates even today. These philosophies were shaped by the influences he received from many sources – family, society, his own religion, and other religions like Jainism and Christianity and the life at large. He was exposed to a wide range of ideologies, and in his thoughts and philosophies, we see an amalgamation of all these ideologies.

If judged in context of the moral standards that formed a part of the caste system and the religious mould in which Gandhi was born and brought up, he had a few weaknesses in the initial stages of life. Meat-eating, smoking and an unconsummated visit to a brothel are some of the incidents that can be marked as blemishes of character vis-a-vis the perceptions of the society of which Gandhi's family was a part. These blemishes he overcame very soon under the influences of introspection and for having a sense of respect for the family, religion and traditions. Love for carnal pleasures was his weakness – he admits in his autobiography, and was gripped by the thoughts of his wife even while in school. But the repudiation of sexual desires and the adoption of celibacy as a principle of life started when Gandhi felt on himself the burden of a guilty mind. On the night of his father's death, he was busy enjoying the pleasures of the company of his wife in bed, instead of being present at his father's feet at the fateful moment. He was much devoted to his parents but was overpowered by the carnal desires at the crucial moment of his father's death. The incident pricked his soul that filled him with shame and repentance and finally aroused in him the thought of a revolt against sexual pleasures. Hereafter, the process of becoming a celibate was set in. Celibacy as an ideal became a part of Gandhi's philosophy under the influence of the pricks of a guilty conscious mind. As a member of the London Vegetarian Society, Gandhi came in contact with the thoughts of the uselessness of sex for

purely the purpose of getting pleasure. Sex for pleasure was considered an offence against purity – ‘the dominion of the animal over the spiritual’ by the founder of the society, A. F. Hills. Gandhi recognises the effect on himself of Hills’ advocacy of self control.

Whether religious consciousness awakened in Gandhi’s mind a sense of flesh-hating, is not sure. He renounced sex after long deliberations and could reach to a vow after discussions with Raychandbhai. He had glued to the ideals of monogamy from the very beginning. He overcame the temptations of the pleasures of lust when he got the offers at the brothel and had to suffer even shame and abuses in the hands of the woman there. On other occasions also, he could overcome the temptations of carnal pleasures:

I can recall four more similar incidents in my life, and in most of them my good fortune, rather than any effort on my part, saved me. (Gandhi 34).

Gandhi had started practising the exercise of self-control in 1901 but celibacy as a vow and a strict ideal of life came upon him in 1906 after a discussion with his wife. The influence of his experiments prepared Gandhi to exercise self-restraint but as a dictate of religious studies it came to him later:

The knowledge that a perfect observance of brahamcharya means realization of brahaman, I did not owe to a study of the Shastras. It slowly grew upon me with experience. The Shastras texts on the subject I read only later in life. (Gandhi 212)

Vegetarianism as a principle of Gandhi's philosophy had its roots in his family's strict observance of vegetarianism. During his school days, an aberration in this principle of strict vegetarianism occurred when under the influence of an intimate school friend he was tempted to meat-eating. Gandhi had an urge to get reformed. The argument he heard from his friend was that many of their teachers and well known people of Rajkot were taking meat. His friend pushed the argument further by saying that English people were strong because they were meat-eaters and the Indians were weak due to their avoidance of meat-eating. The temptation worked on Gandhi because he was conscious of his own weak and feeble physical constitution as compared to the stronger ones of his meat-eater friends. But this was only occasional and he abstained from becoming a regular meat-eater. In fact, vegetarianism became a part of his ideology when he went to England for studies and was encountered with the problem of finding vegetarian diets. The sustenance of a vegetarian was more at stake in this new atmosphere. Before his leaving of the shores of India, his mother had sought a vow from him to honour the family's strict principle of vegetarianism and never to stray from the promise. He kept the promise and went everywhere in the streets of London in search of a vegetarian restaurant. Gandhi found such restaurants and from here he came in contact with the people who were working on some 'reforms'.

The people Gandhi met were revolutionists or the members of the working class and sought to create a better society peopled with the better people. These 'reformers' were not the orthodox Christians but they believed in the love of the mankind. They wanted to stop the economic exploitation and create a brotherhood based on love and harmony. Vegetarianism was one of the habits that they wanted to propagate. Gandhi had an indigenous theory on vegetarianism in his mind which

had its basis in his religious background and his family's strict adherence to it. He was attracted towards the discussions on the issue and came in contact with London Vegetarian Society but he did not join it right away. He found an interest in reading *The Vegetarian* but was not much impressed by the purpose of the vegetarians in their choice of adopting the vegetarian habits. Vegetarianism as a habit was backed by two kinds of people – those who were valetudinarians and opted vegetarian diets for health purpose only; there were also those who associated vegetarianism with religion and believed in the unification of spirit in the individual man and other creatures of the universe.

It was in 1890, that Gandhi joined the London Vegetarian Society at the invitation of Josiah Oldfield with whom Gandhi came in contact through a mutual friend. The society was at that time, dominated by A. F. Hills who was its founder, president and the financial backer. Hills encouraged Gandhi to write articles on Indian food and customs for *The Vegetarian*. Hills' own ideas of vegetarianism were different from those who renounced meat eating for health purposes only. His philosophy of vegetarianism had its backing in the religious texture and belief. This philosophy has its roots in the purification and renunciation theories which claim the unity of divine spirit running through the individual man, the animals and the universe. Hills preached a doctrine of 'Sonship' which can be achieved through the 'laws of God' and 'laws of love'. These laws have their basis in vegetarians' principle of not killing the animals for food. In the East, vegetarianism was the very basis of religion which preached the controlling of unruly appetites and thus had a renunciation effect on meat-eating habits and sexual desires. Gandhi's own philosophy which had its origin in his social and

religious background gained strength from the ideologies propagated by the men like A. F. Hills in the west.

Having being born in a religious family, Gandhi received impressions of Hindu religion and knowledge of the practices of this faith from his home. His mother would observe fast, visit the temples and pray God. His father was also religious and during his illness, he used to listen to *Ramayana* every evening from a reader. This reader – Ladha Maharaj, a great devotee of Rama, was believed to have cured himself of his leprosy just by applying to the affected parts, the bilva leaves which had been cast away after being offered to the Mahadeva in Bileshwar temple. Gandhi's nurse, during his childhood, advised him to repeat Ramanama to cure his fear of ghosts and spirits. Gandhi felt on him the effect of Ramanama that he had received from his childhood nurse. The devotion for 'Ramayana', Gandhi received during his childhood when Ladha Maharaj used to recite its couplets before his father. He got glimpses of *Bhagwat* in Rajkot but was not inspired much till Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya read before him portions of the book during his twenty one day's fast.

It was in his early life, in Rajkot, that Gandhi learnt toleration for the sister religions of Hinduism like Jainism, Islam and Parsi. But about Christianity, he had developed a dislike at this age when he was in Rajkot:

In those days Christian missionaries used to stand in a corner near the high school and hold forth, pouring abuse on Hindus and their gods. I could not endure this. I must have stood there to hear them once only, but that was enough to dissuade me from repeating the experiment. About the same time, I heard of a well

known Hindu having been converted to Christianity. It was the talk of the town that, when he was baptized, he had to eat beef and drink liquor, that he had to eat beef and drink liquor, that he also had to change his clothes, and that thenceforth he began to go about in European costume including a hat. (Gandhi 44).

Gandhi got from his father's collection a copy of *Manusmriti* and was inclined towards atheism at that age. It was at this age, that a conviction took place in him that morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality.

In his mature years, Gandhi considered *Gita* the most sacred text and made it a habit of reading it daily. He did not come in contact with the holy book in its original form, but in its translated version – *The Song Celestial*. The translation was done by Sir Edward Arnold, the author of the verse biography of the Buddha – *The Light of Asia*. Gandhi was introduced to both books by some English acquaintance, the two theosophist brothers, in 1889:

I began reading the *Gita* with them. The verses in the second chapter, 'If one ponders on objects of the sense, there springs Attraction; from attraction grows desire, Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds recklessness; then the memory all betrayed lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind; Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone; made a deep impression on my mind, and they still ring in my ears. The book struck me as one of priceless worth. The impression has ever since been growing

on me with the result that I regard it today as the book par excellence for the knowledge of Truth. (Gandhi 76)

The second book of Sir Edward Arnold – *The Light of Asia*, Gandhi read with greater interest. The book made him realise Gautama Buddha as equal to Jesus in his life and his moral teaching. Gandhi was much impressed by finding the precepts of *Gita* and the effects of the life of Gautama in the heart of Christendom. He could not leave off the book once he began it. This was Gandhi's encounter with *Gita* and the life of Gautama, coming to him after getting filtered through Christian imagination.

The brothers, through whom Gandhi was introduced to Sir Edward Arnold's two books *The Song Celestial* and *The Light of Asia*, took him to Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Annie Besant. He was invited to join the Theosophical Society but, he politely declined saying that his knowledge of his own religion was meagre and hence he did not want to belong to any religious body. On the advice of the two brothers, Gandhi read Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*. The book stimulated his interest in Hinduism and dispelled from his mind the wrong notions about Hinduism:

This book stimulated in me the desire to read books on Hinduism, and disabused me of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition. (Gandhi 77)

Mrs. Annie Besant's name was much in lime light at that time because her conversion from free thinking socialism to theosophy had just taken place. He read

her book *Why I Became a Theosophist*. In his autobiography, he recalls that the reading of this book confirmed his aversion to atheism and his assent to theism.

Blavatsky, born in Russia went to United States and from there to Italy, to Serbia, to Greece, to Egypt, to Tibet in Central Asia and then to London. The varied experiences of different countries and her communication with exalted personalities enabled her to constitute a religious philosophy which advocated a world religion. She believed that something better should replace the bloody intolerance advocated by different religions. The Theosophical Society based on a universal religion was established in 1875 in New York, with an aim to discover the secret laws that govern the universe. Though Gandhi did not join the Society, yet an influence could be traced on his mind of the movement launched by Blavatsky. Gandhi acknowledges some influences on his mind of the movement on vegetarianism launched by A. F. Hills, of the Theosophical philosophy started by Blavatsky and of Annie Besant's spirit behind abandoning atheism for theism.

Gandhi was not merely confined to the reading of the thoughts of the vegetarians and the Theosophists in London. He took an interest in Christianity also, and attended the Church also. He read Bible at the instance of a Christian friend from whom he bought one copy of the Bible and to whom he narrated his experiences of the Christians at Rajkot. But he was not much fascinated with the study of *Old Testament*. He read the book starting with Genesis, and the chapters that followed sent him to sleep. But he was much impressed with the study of *New Testament*, especially the Sermon on the Mount. This study prompted him to compare it with *Gita*:

But the *New Testament* produced a different impression, especially the Sermon on the Mount which went straight to my heart. I compared it with the *Gita*. The verses, ‘But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man take away thy coat let him have thy cloke too,’ delighted me beyond measure and put me in mind of Shamal Bhatt’s ‘For a bowl of water. Give a goodly meal’ etc. My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the *Gita*, *The Light of Asia* and the *Sermon of the Mount*. That renunciation was the highest form of religion appealed to me greatly. (Gandhi 77)

In this same period, there was another influence felt on Gandhi’s mind which was that of Thomas Carlyle whose *On Heroes and hero Worship*, he mentions in his autobiography. He read the chapter on Prophet Mohammed from which he “Learnt of the Prophet’s greatness and bravery and austere living.” In Pretoria jail also, Gandhi read Carlyle. It was the religious nature of Carlyle’s imagination that impressed him.

Gandhi’s study of Christianity continued in South Africa also after he reached there in 1893. In Pretoria, he attended Mr. Baker’s prayer meetings and was introduced to Miss Harris, Miss Gabb, Mr. Coates and other Christians. His discussions with Mr. Coates on Christianity, and on the books of religion that he read would go on. He read *Commentary* of Dr. Parker, *Many Infallible Proofs* of Pearson and *Analogy* of Butler. In these books, he found arguments supporting Christianity or the arguments favouring theism. Gandhi was already a theist. *Many*

Infallible Proofs supported the religion of Bible but Gandhi remained uninfluenced. The people Gandhi met argued about the beauty of Christianity saying that Jesus is the only sinless son of God and that Jesus suffered and atoned for all the sins of mankind. Gandhi replied humbly that he did not seek redemption from the consequences of sin; instead he wanted redemption from the sin itself.

Mr. Baker took Gandhi to the Wellington Convention which was organised by the Protestant Christians for religious enlightenment or self purification. Baker had hoped that the religious exaltation at the convention and the eagerness of the people would inspire Gandhi to embrace Christianity. Gandhi heard the prayers also with great and unbiased attention and told Baker that he was unable to embrace Christianity unless he felt the call from within. He found impossible to believe that he:

Could go to heaven or attain salvation only by becoming a Christian. (Gandhi 140)

He further says that his difficulties “lay deeper”:

It was more than I could believe that Jesus was the only incarnate son of God, and that only he who believed in him would have everlasting life. If God could have sons, all of us were like His sons. If Jesus was like God, or God Himself, then all men were like God and could be God Himself. My reason was not ready to believe literally that Jesus by his death and by his blood redeemed the sins of the world. Metaphorically there might be some truth in it. Again, according to Christianity only human beings had souls, and not other living beings, for whom death

meant complete extinction; while I held a contrary belief I could accept Jesus as a martyr, an embodiment of sacrifice, and divine teacher, but not as the most perfect man ever born. (Gandhi 140)

Gandhi could not accept Christianity as a perfect or the greatest religion. But Hinduism also could not impress him because of its inherent defects. He could not understand the multitude of sects and castes among Hindus and he found untouchability as the rotten part of this faith. He was not convinced with the claim that the Vedas were the inspired word of God and not the Bible and the Koran. Like Christian friend's endeavours to convert him, efforts by Musalman friends to induce him to study Islam were also made. Abdulla Sheth wanted to bring home to his mind the beauties of Islamic faith but could not impress him much. Gandhi purchased the translation of Koran and read it. He communicated with Christian friends in England. He read *The Perfect Way* and *The New Interpretation of the Bible* and communicated with Raychandbhai and other religious authorities in India. The abiding impression he felt was that of Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* which rendered other books seem to him trivial.

Gandhi accepts Tolstoy's influence on him. While in South Africa he read his *The Gospel in Brief, What Then Must We* and some other books which helped him to realise 'the infinite possibilities of universal love'. Tolstoy's *The Relation of the Seas*, a compilation of the writings advocating celibacy was read and recommended by Gandhi. The influence of Tolstoy on Gandhi's mind may be traced in his concept of Satyagraha. He recognised that Satyagraha had more force than Tolstoy's passive resistance because in Satyagraha the limitless power of Truth is drawn through self-suffering. He had no taste for Tolstoy's novels but his

principles of non-violence, chastity and simplicity left a deep impression on Gandhi's mind.

Gandhi's spiritual awakening was well-timed. The religious spirit within him acted as a living force that he was set to use in his opposition against the authorities first in South Africa, and later in India.

As we trace the ideological frontiers that shaped the iconic mould of Nelson Mandela, the blood he comes from throws some hints of the presence of an inherited royalty and the stubbornness of nature that prompted him to rebel against the unjust ruling dispensation that was based on the privileges of the caste and colour. Owing to his connection to the Thembu royal house, his father was a chief by both blood and custom and was confirmed as Chief of Mveza by the king of Thembu tribe. Nelson Mandela says that he was a member of the royal household but he was not among the privileged few who were trained for rule. Instead, he was groomed, like his father before him, to counsel the rulers. He inherited from his father a dark skin and a straight and stately posture. Toughness of nature and the stern manner seem to have passed in his personality from his father:

My father had a stern manner and did not spare the rod when disciplining his children. He could be exceedingly stubborn, another trait that may unfortunately have been passed down from father to son. (Mandela 5)

An awakening towards history and the traits of leadership were inspired in him by his father:

My own interest in history had early roots and was encouraged by my father. Although my father could neither read nor write, he was reputed to be an excellent orator who captivated his audiences by entertaining them as well as teaching them.

(Mandela 6)

Mandela acknowledges that the traits of rebelliousness and fairness of nature, he inherited from his father:

When I was not much more than a newborn child, my father was involved in a dispute that deprived him of his chieftainship at Mvezo and revealed a strain in his character I believe he passed on to his son. I maintain that nurture, rather than nature, is the primary moulder of personality, but my father possessed a proud rebelliousness, a sense of fairness that I recognize in myself.

(Mandela 7)

Mandela perceived the gulf between the deprived Blacks and the privileged Whites and found an unjust discrimination based merely on the colour of the skin. The humiliation and subjugation of man by another man could never be acceptable to him. He knew how a man has to suffer mentally if he is humiliated. The idea of equality, brotherhood and the human values had taken roots in his ideology in his very childhood and was held supreme throughout his battle against the apartheid. He wanted to win the battle, but not by putting the human values at stake and also not by inflicting humiliation on his opponents. Even as a boy, while playing with other boys of the village he displayed such a respect for human feelings and

values. He cites an incident from his childhood that taught him a great lesson of human values:

I learned my lesson one day from an unruly donkey. We had been taking turns climbing up and down its back and when my chance came I jumped on and the donkey bolted into a nearby thorn bush. It bent its head, trying to unseat me, which it did, but not before the thorns had pricked and scratched my face, embarrassing me in front of my friends. (Mandela 11)

The incident taught a lesson to Mandela to understand human feelings:

Even though it was a donkey that unseated me, I learned that to humiliate another person is to make him suffer an unnecessary cruel fate. Even as a boy, I defeated my opponents without dishonouring them. (Mandela 12)

The religious affiliations played a crucial role in matters of schooling of the children of the African tribes. The amaMfengu were a section of the society, different from the Xhosas to which Nelson Mandela belonged. They were among the first to become Christians, and were the most advanced section of the community, and furnished the clergymen, policemen, teachers, clerks and interpreters, of the society. They were the first to build better houses, to use scientific methods of agriculture and were wealthier than the Xhosas. Mandela's father befriended two amaMfengu brothers but did not embrace Christianity under their influence. But his mother adopted the Christian faith and under their influence, Mandela was baptized into the Methodist Church. It was at the instance of the two brothers that Mandela was sent to school which helped in changing his

dress and in getting him the English name 'Nelson'. No one before him, in his family, had ever attended the school. He was exposed to an advanced world of education and to the British culture which proclaimed its superiority over the African culture:

The education I received was a British education, in which British ideas, British culture and British institutions assumed to be superior. There was no such thing as African culture.

(Mandela 16)

Mandela lost his father when he was merely nine years old. His father's death brought a big change in his life; he had to leave Qunu and was shifted to the Great Place, Mqhekezweni, the provisional capital of Thembuland, the royal residence of Chief Jongintaba, the acting regent of the Thembu people. Jongintaba was his guardian who treated him as he treated his other children. Mandela received varied influences here that helped in shaping the religious and political aspects of his ideology:

The two principles that governed my life at Mqhekezweni were chieftaincy and the Church. These two doctrines existed in uneasy harmony, although I did not then see them as antagonistic. (Mandela 22)

Earlier he had attended the Church only on the day that he was baptized. That was taken by him merely as a ritual. But at Mqhekezweni, religion was a part of the fabric of life and he attended Church every Sunday along with the regent and his wife.

It was at Mqhekezweni that Mandela learnt the earlier lessons of leadership. He observed the life of the regent who enjoyed respect from both blacks and whites. His chieftaincy was the centre around which life revolved. Here he learnt the lessons of democracy. It was here that everyone was allowed to speak:

Chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and labourer. People spoke without interruption and the meetings lasted for many hours. (Mandela 24)

Mandela acknowledges the influence on him of the regent and his court:

My later notions of leadership were profoundly influenced by observing the regent and his court. I watched and learned from the tribal meetings that were regularly held at the Great Place. (Mandela 24)

He claims that in his career as a leader, he followed what he learnt from the regent:

As a leader, I have always followed the principles I first saw demonstrated by the regent at the Great Place. I have always endeavoured to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. (Mandela 25)

His stay at Mqhekezweni expanded his interest from the knowledge of Xhosas to the history of Africa. He was able to discover the great African patriots who fought against Western domination. He was much impressed by the glory of the African warriors. He learnt from the chiefs and heads that the White man had divided

brother from brother and had brought misery and perfidy to the black people. Mandela learnt that the real history of South Africa was not to be found in standard British textbooks.

In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela dwells in detail on different aspects of African culture along with the beautiful and salubrious landscapes of South Africa. The child grew into manhood passing through adolescence and youth, living in a typical African culture receiving at times the impression that he belonged to a community whose subjugation under a White ruler was reality. At a very tender age, he found that his father was chief but only through ratification by the British Government. He heard historical accounts from his father, from the Chiefs and heads at the meetings at the Great Place and through the speeches and outbursts of different African fellows on different occasions. The myth that the Whites mean only the welfare and uplift of the illiterate Blacks started breaking away. After their traditional ceremony of circumcision, the Chief Meligquili addressed the boys who were transformed into manhood. His words, describing how the White men had robbed the native Blacks of their rights, touched deeply the heart of Nelson Mandela. His illusions about the Whites were broken; he found himself and his people thrown into a world of misery:

At the time, I looked on the White man not as an oppressor but as a benefactor, and I thought the chief was enormously ungrateful. This upstart Chief was ruining my day, spoiling the proud feeling with wrong-headed remarks.

But without exactly understanding why, his words soon began to work on me. He had sown a seed, and though I let that seed lie

dormant for a long season, it eventually began to grow. Later I realized that the ignorant man that day was not the Chief but myself. (Mandela 35-36)

In his struggle for freedom, Mandela's inclination was towards having Blacks only, in the organisations he worked with. This intent of the man scores for his antagonism towards Communists and Indians. At the instance of Lambede, Mda, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela in 1943, it was decided that a Youth League be formed to draw the mass support. The League was actually formed in 1944 with the basic aim of nationalism. The Communists were unacceptable to most of the members because they were mostly dominated by Whites and a multi-racial struggle would make the Blacks enamoured of white and a prey to a sense of inferiority:

We were extremely wary of communism. The document stated: 'We may borrow ... from ideologies, but we reject the wholesale importation of foreign ideologies into Africa.' This was an implicit rebuke to the Communist party, which Lembede and many others, including myself, considered a 'foreign' ideology unsuited to the African situation, Lembede felt that the Communist Party was dominated by whites, which undermined African self-confidence and initiative. (Mandela 115)

Mandela doubted that if a joint action was started including the whites, the Communists or the Indians, they would dominate the movement. He believed that an undiluted African nationalism, nor Marxism or multiracialism could liberate them. He gave vent to his antagonism towards communism to the extent that he

along with many of his fellow Leaguers made a move towards the expulsion of the members of Communist Party. The same thoughts he nourished about the Indians also:

Despite the influence the Indian passive resistance campaign of 1946 had on me, I felt about the Indians the same way I did about the communists: that they would tend to dominate the ANC, in part because of their superior education, experience and training.
(Mandela 124)

The people, Mandela met at the very outset of his carrier, also helped in shaping his ideology. On the recommendation of Walter Sisulu, Lazar Sidelsky took Mandela as a clerk in his law firm. Lazar Sidelsky was a liberal who was involved in African education donating money and time to African schools also treated Mandela with kindness. He preached the value of education for Mandela and for Africans in general. He told Mandela that only mass education:

Would free my people, arguing that an educated man could not be oppressed because he could think for himself. (Mandela 82)

Sidelsky warned Mandela against politics. But his thoughts on mass education had a deep impression on Mandela's mind.

The thoughts and ideas of Gaur Redebe, Mandela's fellow clerk, also had an influential personality with strong opinions and arguments. He was a member of Western Native Township and also a prominent member of both the ANC and Communist Party. He often chided the employers for their treatment of Africans. He was without BA but was better educated than the ones having glittering

degrees. From his confidence and boldness Mandela learnt that an educational degree could not do much than individual's attachment with the community:

I learned from Gaur that a degree was not in itself a guarantee of leadership and that it meant nothing unless one went out into the community to prove oneself. (Mandela 85)

Gaur's devotion to the freedom struggle left a lasting impression on Mandela:

What made the deepest impression on me was Gaur's total commitment to the freedom struggle. He lived and breathed the quest for liberation. Gaur sometimes attended several meetings a day where he featured prominently a speaker. He seemed to think of nothing but revolution. (Mandela 99)

Mandela acknowledges that it was through his friendship with Gaur and Walter that he was beginning to see that his duty was to his people as a whole, not just a particular section of branch.

One very important influence that shaped Mandela's ideological set up and that he acknowledges himself was the Indian Campaign against the Asiatic Land Tenure Act which was passed by Smuts in 1946. The Act had curtailed the free movement of Indians and had restrained their right to buy property. Led by Dr. Dadoo and Dr. G. M. Narcker, the Indian Community conducted a mass campaign. The people in ANC and Youth League were much impressed by the way Indian waged a passing protest against racialism. Mandela recalls Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance of 1913 that was enacted afresh by the Indian Community in 1946:

They (Indian Community) reminded us that the freedom struggle was not merely a question of making speeches, holding meetings, passing resolutions and sending deputations, but of meticulous organization, militant mass action and, above all, the willingness to suffer and sacrifice. The Indians' campaign harkened back to the 1913 passive resistance campaign in which Mahatma Gandhi led a tumultuous procession of Indians crossing illegally from Natal to the Transvaal. That was history; this campaign was taking place before my own eyes. (Mandela 119)

The people from all walks of life belonging to the Indian community participated in the struggle. Mandela acknowledges that Indian Campaign become a model for the type of protest that they in Youth League were calling for. The influence of Gandhi and its subsequent reflection in Mandela's way of struggle is a crucial force that worked in shaping his career as a freedom fighter.

Works Cited:

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Howrah: Future, 2012. Print

Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom*. London: Abacus, 1995. Print