

10 Creative Contributions to Critiques of Political Economy and Moral Economy

Cooperative Settlement and Utopian Community Projects as Modes of Conviviality for Thoreau, Ruskin, Tolstoy, and Gandhi

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Attempts at establishing cooperative settlement and utopian community projects in the nineteenth century help us to understand concepts of Transcendentalist thinkers and utopian socialists. These concepts, in turn, crystallized in communal land ownership based on the principles of equality, simple living, and trusteeship. We aim to demonstrate how certain farming community examples from English and North American (Curl 2009) history became relevant for the social and political thought of their contemporaries such as Thoreau, Tolstoy, Ruskin, Gandhi, and Kumarappa.

Whereas the Welsh textile manufacturer and founder of Utopian socialism and cooperative movements, Robert Owen, gained reputation not only because of introducing the eight-hour day at his textile mill at New Lanark, Scotland, but also because of his experimental community (1825–1827) at New Harmony, Indiana, we find real precursors embodying the principles of Tolstoy and Gandhi, who lived close to the US Transcendentalist community in Concord, Massachusetts.

A key group involved in the formation of an English vegetarian society in 1847 were supporters of the Alcott House in Ham Common, near Richmond, Surrey, England, the home of a Utopian community (1838–1848) founded by James Pierrepont Greaves (1777–1842), whose major influences were the US transcendentalist Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888) and the Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827). One of the followers was Charles Lane (1800–1870), who aimed at producing the most lovely, intelligent, and efficient conditions for divine progress in humanity on the basic principles of vegetarianism, celibacy, and simple living. The Alcott House became the home of The Concordium, a cooperative vegetarian community and progressive school for children.

Greaves joined Pestalozzi in 1818 at Yverdon, a municipality in the Swiss Jura region, where he taught English and met fellow socialist Robert Owen. Greaves founded a philosophical society in 1836, the Aesthetic Society, meeting at a house in Camden. Greaves not only followed the ideas of Jacob Böhme (1575–1624) and German Romanticism but was also a teetotaler and a vegetarian experimenting with natural cures by bathing in spring water. Furthermore, he recommended a fruitarian diet consisting of fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

Charles Lane was a voluntarist, advocating self-ownership and non-aggression. Lane was the main founder of Fruitlands (Francis 2010), a transcendentalist experiment in community living in the 1840s, and himself a vegan. He collaborated with Amos Bronson Alcott, a leading transcendentalist in the circle of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), a teacher and member of the New England Non-Resistance Society along with William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879).

Fruitlands (1843–1844) was a utopian agrarian commune in Harvard, Massachusetts, an account of which is found in the book “Transcendental Wild Oats” by Amos Bronson’s daughter Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888). Amos Bronson Alcott and Lane conceived of private property in similar terms as the self-sufficient Shakers, who traded handmade goods for coffee, tea, and milk. But Alcott and Lane rid their diet of animal products and stimulants.

A precursor of Fruitlands was another transcendentalist community founded by Unitarian minister George Ripley and his wife Sophia Ripley (1802–1880 and 1803–1861) at the Ellis Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, near Boston: Brook Farm (1841–1847). The Ripleys were involved in “Associationism,” a utopian socialist economic theory. Simple association, according to Charles Fourier (1772–1837), was based on the cooperative enterprise of artisans or farmers (Fourier 1971). Wage labour would be abolished.

Brook Farm, formally referred to as Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, was one of more than 30 Fourierist associations in the United States between 1843 and 1845. The Fourierists succeeded the Owenists between 1825 and 1827, while antedating Icarianists between 1848 and 1898 and Bellamyists between 1889 and 1896. The Ripley’s farm was founded as a joint stock company, where workers shared the profits equally. The Brook Farmers adopted a model based on the Fourierist concept called phalanstery (*phalanstère*, Fourier’s own combination of the French words *phalange* [phalanx] and *monastère* [monastery]). Another founding member of Brook Farm was the famous writer and one of the most prominent US transcendentalists Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864) of Concord, Massachusetts.

Worth mentioning is the Hopedale Community (1843–1867), in Milford, Massachusetts, founded by the philosopher of Christian non-resistance and a member of the New England Non-Resistance Society Adin Ballou (1803–1890), whose community stood for abolitionism, women’s rights, and temperance. The latter opposes the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Hopedale Community was founded on Ballou’s universalist beliefs in truth, righteousness, justice, love, patience, non-resistance, and a universal brotherhood of men. While Henry David Thoreau advocated all-out simplicity in his ecological understanding of economy, pioneering the ecology movement against the exploitation of natural resources, he and his friend Emerson were inspired by but remained sceptical of the communal experiments at Brook Farm and the Hopedale Community (see Lane 1844a and Lane 1844b).

In 1842, the transcendentalist and Fruitlands co-founder Charles Lane revised a table of the “The Circumstantial Law,” originally created by James Pierrepont Greaves. Lane published it in the journal *The Healthian* of the Alcott House group (Francis 1973, p. 217; Francis 2018, pp. 168f.). This table appears to have been a spiritual guideline for the communal settlement Fruitlands:

The True Practical Socialist, being aware that Man is not a simple, but a compound, or, rather, a complex Being, whose threefold Character is formed by the threefold Law in the sympathetic, intellectual, and physical Circumstances, or Conditions, by which he is constantly surrounded, is desirous of presenting to such Law, in its several spheres, the circumstances most conducive to Man’s harmonious development.

Though it be true that the CREATIVE POWER cannot properly be attributed to the CIRCUMSTANCES, because the latter term is used to designate the things which STAND ROUND something already created, yet, for as much as RESULTS can never be attained without circumstances, or conditions, or secondary causes, and it is only over these that Men individually, or socially, have any interfering power, the furnishing of suitable conditions, is a subject demanding the deepest consideration. While neither etymology, nor logic, nor truth, permits the assertion, that Circumstances form the Character; we may safely affirm that the END, or the CAUSE in CIRCUMSTANCES produces RESULTS.

(Greaves/Lane 1840–1844;
reproduced in Francis 2018, p. 169)

Greaves and Lane rejected “Prevailing Erroneous Conditions,” which were “Bad, for all Nature,” e.g. “coal-dust, smoke, tobacco,” “Animal Lust,” “Slave-Labour,” “Flesh of Animals,” “Fermented Liquors,” “Luxurious Mansions and dilapidated Cottages,” “Routine of discipline,” “Treatment of the Being as a passive blank,” “Exchange of Commodities, useful & useless.” The virtues mentioned are “Active Benevolence. Love for the unlovely,” “Thoughtful benevolence. Thought for the thoughtlessness,” “Practical benevolence. Bread for the hungry” (Greaves/Lane 1840–1844).

This table is a rare charter text of utopian socialist cooperative settlements of the nineteenth century in England and the United States.

Utopian communities and cooperative settlement projects were linked to great social reformers of the nineteenth century such as Ernest Howard Crosby (1856–1907), Henry George (1839–1897), and John Ruskin (1819–1900).

Comprised of 932 acres (3.77 km²), the Christian Commonwealth Colony in Columbus, Georgia, was founded in 1896 mainly by Christian socialists. While the Colony’s residents were influenced by the economic thought of Henry George and Edward Bellamy (1850–1898), the Colony itself was promoted by Crosby: “After meeting Congregationalist pastor and activist Ralph Albertson [1866–1951] during the 1894 Pullman strike in Chicago, Crosby served on the executive committee

of Albertson's utopian Christian Commonwealth Colony in Columbus, Georgia, which was organized on values compatible with Tolstoyan principles." (Stauber 2018, p. 196; Stauber 1995)

George's concept of land tax, as put forth in his 1879 book *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy*, tremendously influenced Tolstoy and advocated the land ownership of farmers described in the Russian writer's novel *Resurrection* (1898).

Ruskin exposed the principle of equality and equal payment and the concept of guaranteed income in his *Unto This Last. Four Essays on the Principles of Political Economy* (written 1860, published 1862), which inspired Gandhi to create the Phoenix Settlement near Durban in South Africa:

Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.

Of these books, the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last*. I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all).

I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life. A poet is one who can call forth the good latent in the human breast. Poets do not influence all alike, for everyone is not evolved in an equal measure.

The teaching of *Unto This Last* I understood to be:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the hand-craftsman is the life worth living.

The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. *Unto This Last* made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first. I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice. (Gandhi 1970a, p. 239)

Ruskin criticized the orthodox notions of capital and value as basic terms in political economy, while George created a single tax movement concerned with the problematic distribution of economic rent derived from the ownership of land.

In England, Tolstoy's secretary Chertkov and his biographer and translator Aylmer Maude were trustees of the Purleigh Brotherhood Colony (1896–1903), founded by John Coleman Kenworthy, who emerged from the Christian Brotherhood Church, of the Whiteway Colony (1898–1909) near Stroud, Gloucestershire, United Kingdom, founded by Quakers, and the Tolstoy Colony (1900–1908) in Tuckton, Dorset, with the Free Age Press (later continued by Charles William Daniel in Christchurch, Hants), which published Tolstoy's pamphlets (translated by Maude, Chertkov, and Isabella Fyvie Mayo).

The Tolstoy Farm (1910–1913), near Lawley station close to Johannesburg, founded by Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach (1871–1945), was a practical experiment with communal cooperative settlements for the Indian community in South Africa. Tolstoy Farm, and Phoenix Settlement, established in 1904 near Durban, were inspired by ideas of John Ruskin, which he laid out in his works *Munera Pulveris* (written 1862–1863, published 1872; Ruskin 1894), *Fors Clavigera* (written and published as pamphlets between 1871 and 1884) and *Unto This Last*. We give a brief insight into some key motifs, which differ from his contemporaries' notions, particularly from those of economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

As for “**wealth**,” Ruskin contrasts two ways:

In fact, it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in Rock, but in Flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures. Our modern wealth, I think, has rather a tendency the other way;—most political economists appearing to consider multitudes of human creatures not conducive to wealth, or at best conducive to it only by remaining in a dim-eyed and narrow-chested state of being.

(Ruskin 1866, p. 61)

As for “**property**,” Ruskin emphasizes that the accumulation of property depends on the commercialized power over labour, be it paid labour, bonded or indentured labour or slavery:

[...] an accumulation of real property is of little use to its owner, unless, together with it, he has commercial power over labour. Thus, suppose any person to be put in possession of a large estate of fruitful land, with rich beds of gold in its gravel, countless herds of cattle in its pastures; houses, and gardens, and storehouses full of useful stores; but suppose, after all, that he could get no servants? In order that he may be able to have servants, some one in his neighbourhood must be poor, and in want of his gold—or his corn. Assume that no one is in want of either, and that no servants are to be had. He must, therefore, bake his own bread, make his own clothes, plough his own ground, and shepherd his own flocks. His gold will be as useful to him as any other yellow pebbles on his estate. His stores must rot, for he cannot consume them. He can eat no more than another man could eat, and wear no more than another man could wear. He must lead a life of severe and common labour to procure even ordinary comforts; he will be ultimately unable to keep either houses in repair, or fields in cultivation; and forced to content himself with a poor man's portion of cottage and garden, in the midst of a desert of waste land, trampled by wild cattle, and encumbered by ruins of palaces, which he will hardly mock at himself by calling “his own.”

(Ruskin 1985, pp. 181f [Essay II: The Veins of Wealth])

As for “**capital**,” Ruskin criticizes the accumulation of capital which merely produces capital as such, instead of products of real use value, which may then be consumed. While the multiplication of capital reproducing only itself leads to an “aggregation of bulbs,” Ruskin pleads for the production of goods which are of real value for people’s use, for example seeds for bread and tulips, anticipating the early twentieth century call for “Bread and Roses”:

Capital signifies “head, or source, or root material”—it is material by which some derivative or secondary good is produced. It is only capital proper (*caput vivum*, not *caput mortuum*) when it is thus producing something different from itself. It is a root, which does not enter into vital function till it produces something else than a root: namely, fruit. That fruit will in time again produce roots; and so all living capital issues in reproduction of capital; but capital which produces nothing but capital is only root producing root; bulb issuing in bulb, never in tulip; seed issuing in seed, never in bread. The Political Economy of Europe has hitherto devoted itself wholly to the multiplication, or (less even) the aggregation, of bulbs. It never saw, nor conceived, such a thing as a tulip.

(Ruskin 1985, p. 218 [Essay IV: Ad Valorem])

As for the distinction between “**rich**” and “**poor**,” Ruskin went beyond a mere critique of economy, and instead refers to cultural depravation, too:

The rich not only refuse food to the poor; they refuse wisdom; they refuse virtue; they refuse salvation.

(Ruskin 1985, pp. 223f. and 225f. [Essay IV: Ad Valorem])

As for “**ecology**,” Ruskin proves to be a pioneer of the notions “sustainability,” “equilibrium” and the quality of “good work”:

No scene is continually and untiringly loved, but one rich by joyful human labour; smooth in field; fair in garden; full in orchard; trim, sweet, and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence. No air is sweet that is silent; it is only sweet when full of low currents of under sound—triplets of birds, and murmur and chirp of insects, and deep-toned words of men, and wayward trebles of childhood. As the art of life is learned, it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary;—the wild flower by the wayside, as well as the tended corn; and the wild birds and creatures of the by every wondrous word and unknowable work of God.

(Ruskin 1985, p. 226 [Essay IV: Ad Valorem])

You are to do good work, whether you live or die. It may be you will have to die;—well, men have died for their country often, yet doing her no good; be ready to die for her in doing her assured good: her, and all other countries with her. Mind your own business with your absolute heart and soul; but

see that it is a good business first. That it is corn and sweet pease you are producing,—not gunpowder and arsenic. And be sure of this, literally:—you must simply rather die than make any destroying mechanism or compound. You are to be literally employed in cultivating the ground, or making useful things, and carrying them where they are wanted. Stand in the streets, and say to all who pass by: Have you any vineyard we can work in,—not Naboth's? In your powder and petroleum manufactory, we work no more.

(Ruskin 1985, p. 303 [*Fors Clavigera. Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain [1871–1884]* (Letter Seven: Charitas, Denmark Hill, 1st July 1871)])

As for “**luxury**,” Ruskin stresses the importance of giving, serving and sharing as an antidote to the poison of the orgy of destruction and waste of the Earth's natural resources (cf. the Federal Republic of Germany's “Basic Law,” i.e. *Grundgesetz*, Article 14 (2): “Property entails obligations. Its use shall also serve the public good.”):

Luxury is indeed possible in the future—innocent and exquisite; luxury for all, and by the help of all; but luxury at present can only be enjoyed by the ignorant; the cruelest man living could not sit at his feast, unless he sat blindfold. Raise the veil boldly; face the light; and if, as yet, the light of the eye can only be through tears, and the light of the body through sackcloth, go thou forth weeping, bearing precious seed, until the time come, and the kingdom, when Christ's gift of bread, and bequest of peace, shall be “Unto this last as unto thee”; and when, for earth's severed multitudes of the wicked and the weary, there shall be holier reconciliation than that of the narrow home, and calm economy, where the Wicked cease—not from trouble, but from troubling—and the Weary are at rest.

(Ruskin 1985, p. 228 [Essay IV: Ad Valorem])

As for the frenzy of “**war**,” Ruskin describes its relationship to the follies of greed, robbery, and theft, and the vice of capitalist economy:

The first reason for all wars, and for the necessity of national defences, is that the majority of persons, high and low, in all European nations, are Thieves, and, in their hearts, greedy of their neighbours' goods, land, and fame.

But besides being Thieves, they are also fools, and have never yet been able to understand [...] that the prosperity of their neighbours is, in the end, their own also; and the poverty of their neighbours, by the communism of God, becomes also in the end their own. “Invidia,” jealousy of your neighbour's good, has been, since dust was first made flesh, the curse of man; and “Charitas,” the desire to do your neighbor grace, the one source of all human glory, power, and material Blessing. [...]

But Occult Theft,—Theft which hides itself even from itself, and is legal, respectable, and cowardly,—corrupts the body and soul of man, to the last fibre of them. And the guilty Thieves of Europe, the real sources of all deadly

war in it, are the Capitalists—that is to say, people who live by percentages on the labour of others; instead of by fair wages for their own.

(Ruskin 1985, p. 301 [*Fors Clavigera. Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain* [1871–1884] (Letter Seven: Charitas, Denmark Hill, July 1, 1871)])

On this Ruskin further tells us:

[...] capitalists, when they do not know what to do with their money, persuade the peasants, in various countries, that the said peasants want guns to shoot each other with. The peasants accordingly borrow guns, out of the manufacture of which the capitalists get a per-centage, and men of science much amusement and credit. Then the peasants shoot a certain number of each other, until they get tired; and burn each other's homes down in various places. Then they put the guns back into towers, arsenals, etc., in ornamental patterns; (and the victorious party put also some ragged flags in churches). And then the capitalists tax both, annually, ever afterwards, to pay interest on the loan of the guns and the gunpowder. This is what capitalists call "knowing what to do with their money"; and what commercial men in general call "practical" as opposed to "sentimental" Political Economy.

(Ruskin 1894, pp. xxvi, xxvii [Preface])

As against "**violence**," Ruskin anticipates Leo Tolstoy's critique of retaliation and revenge:

Seek to revenge no injury. You see now—do not you—a little more clearly why I wrote that? what strain there is on the untaught masses of you to revenge themselves, even with insane fire?

(Ruskin 1985, p. 304 [*Fors Clavigera. Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain* [1871–1884] (Letter Seven: Charitas, Denmark Hill, July 1, 1871)])

One of Ruskin's practical advice for policy makers is a plea for an appropriate income tax:

All rich people object to income-tax, of course;—they like to pay as much as a poor man pays on their tea, sugar, and tobacco,—nothing on their incomes.

Whereas, in true justice, the only honest and wholly right tax is one not merely on income, but property; increasing in percentage as the property is greater. And the main virtue of such a tax is that it makes publicly known what every man has, and how he gets it.

(Ruskin 1985, p. 303 [*Fors Clavigera. Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain* [1871–1884] (Letter Seven: Charitas, Denmark Hill, July 1, 1871)])

Ruskin himself, being the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford from 1869 on, practiced Bread Labour with his undergraduate students William Gershom

Collingwood, Oscar Wilde, Arnold Toynbee, and others, by reconstructing roads to improve the lot of the villagers near Oxford—a path between Oxford and North Hinksey is known today as “*Ruskin’s Ride*.” Furthermore, The Guild of St George (since 1871) became Ruskin’s education trust, the nucleus of the Ruskin Collection and the Sheffield Museum:

Ruskin announced the formation of St George’s Company, as it was first called, in 1871, but it was not till 1878 that it was properly constituted and given its present name. In its origins, it was a frankly utopian body. It represented Ruskin’s practical response to a society in which profit and mass-production seemed to be everything, beauty, goodness and ordinary happiness nothing.

Ruskin made it clear in a monthly series of “*Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*” called *Fors Clavigera* [...] that the ambitious aim of the Guild was to make Britain a happier place to live in. “I have listened to many ingenious persons,” he wrote, “who say we are better off now than ever we were before” but (he went on) “we cannot be called, as a nation, well off, while so many of us are living ... in ... beggary.” In other words, for Ruskin, no nation should be called rich if its cities were ugly, its countryside polluted and its people poor, hungry and ignorant, and he asked those who agreed with him to join in “establishing a National Store instead of a National Debt.”

In practice the Guild’s efforts were focused on quite modest ideals. He targeted three main areas of English life in need of support and improvement: art education; craft work; and the rural economy. He hoped to promote the understanding and appreciation of good art, to encourage craftsmanship rather than mass production, and to revive what we should now call sustainable agriculture and horticulture. He was trying to create, in effect, an alternative to industrial capitalism. In some ways, as the word “*Guild*” suggests, he looked back to certain values of the past, particularly of the Middle Ages, but he combined those values with a belief in social improvement. St George’s communities were to be based on the land and on agricultural labour, but they were also to include schools, libraries and art galleries, so that Companions, as members of the Guild are still called, worked with their hands and cultivated their inner lives.

(The Guild of St George n.d.)

In the United States, Julius Augustus Wayland founded the Ruskin Colony in Tennessee City, Dickson County, Tennessee (1894–1896):

The Ruskin Colony was a utopian socialist colony and existed on the Tennessee City property from 1894 to 1896, when it moved to the Ruskin property. It stayed there until 1899, when it moved to Waycross, Georgia, and then dissolved in 1901. The Colony was named Ruskin after the English socialist writer, John Ruskin. Five Hundred Dollars was charged to become a member of the colony.

A huge three-story central building called the Commonwealth house was put up to house The Coming Nation Print Shop. The first floor housed the print shop, press room, stock room, and offices. On the second floor were the mailing rooms,

editorial rooms, barber shop, living quarters, great room, and a library. The third room housed the auditorium and dining hall for 700 members.

A steam plant was constructed next to the central building to provide heat. A water reservoir was built on the hillside above the cave and gravity fed water to each home on the colony.

Among the enterprises were a chewing gum factory, a photo gallery, a steam laundry, a machine shop, a café, a bakery, a school, a sawmill, a cotton gin, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, a wagon shop, a suspender and clothing factory, a plant for a patent cure-all medicine called “*Ruskin Ready Remedy*,” a print shop, a coffee plant, and a canning industry which operated inside the cave.

The coffee plant was known as *Ruskin Cereal Coffee*, which was a substitute coffee made with toasted grain. Their goods were sold in neighbouring towns as well as distributed worldwide due to advertisements in “*The Coming Nation*” (newspaper owned and edited by [the] founder of the colony, Julius Augustus Wayland), which had over 60,000 subscribers. Mr. Wayland used the newspaper to raise both support and money for his proposed colony, The *Ruskin Cooperative Association*. Altogether, seventy-five structures were erected on *Ruskin’s* near 1,000 acres.

Ruskin had a Drama Troupe and the *Ruskin Band*. An eight-hour school was established and a college was planned for the property. Isaac Broome, a well-known sculptor, was given free membership to the colony and was to head the college. The cornerstone to the college was laid on June 19, 1897.

(The *Ruskin* n.d.)

From this discussion of the co-operative settlement and movement initiated by *Ruskin* now let us turn to *Tolstoy*. The *Doukhobors’* example of rural village life had its centre in *Peter Kalmykov’s Gorelovka*, Georgia, and was a role model for *Tolstoy*, who was inspired by *Bondareff’s* concept of *Bread Labour*. In the 1920s, when *Gandhi* created the movement of the spinning wheel (*charka*) for homespun cotton yarn (*khadi*), before the concept *Sarvodaya* had been woven into an all-embracing constructive program with the support of *Joseph Chelladurai Cornelius Kumarappa* (1892–1960), his younger brother *Bharatan Kumarappa* (1896–1957) and *Vinoba Bhave*, *Gandhi* recollected *Bondareff* and *Tolstoy’s* concept of *Bread Labour* in detail and compared *Bread Labour* with the ancient Indian notion of sacrifice (*yajna*):

Jesus was a carpenter. He never used his intellect to earn his livelihood. We do not know how much manual work *Buddha* did before he attained wisdom. Yes, we know this much, that he did not propagate religion for securing his livelihood. He lived on charity. That could not militate against the duty of labour. A roving ascetic has to do a lot of manual work. Now, to come to *Tolstoy*, what his wife has said is true but it is not the whole truth. After the change in his outlook *Tolstoy* never took for himself the income from his books. Although he had property worth millions, he lived like a guest in his own house. After the attainment of wisdom, he worked eight hours a day and earned his wages. Sometimes he worked in the field and sometimes he made shoes at home. Although he

did not earn much by doing such work, still he earned enough to feed himself. Tolstoy strove hard to practise what he preached. This was characteristic of him. The sum and substance of all this discussion is that the duty which the ancients observed themselves and which the majority in the world discharges even today has been presented to the world in an explicit manner by him. In fact this doctrine was not Tolstoy's original idea; it was thought of by a great Russian writer by name Bondaref. Tolstoy endorsed it and proclaimed it to the world.

(Gandhi 1970b, pp. 489f).

Gandhi further tells us:

The Ashram holds that every man and woman must work in order to live. This principle came home to me upon reading one of Tolstoy's essays. Referring to the Russian writer Bondaref, Tolstoy observes that his discovery of the vital importance of bread labour is one of the most remarkable discoveries of modern times. The idea is that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food, and his intellectual faculties must be exercised not in order to obtain a living or amass a fortune but only in the service of mankind. If this principle is observed everywhere, all men would be equal, none would starve and the world would be saved from many a sin. It is possible that this golden rule will never be observed by the whole world. Millions observe it in spite of themselves without understanding it. But their mind is working in a contrary direction, so that they are unhappy themselves and their labour is not as fruitful as it should be. This state of things serves as an incentive to those who understand and seek to practise the rule. By rendering a willing obedience to it they enjoy good health as well as perfect peace and develop their capacity for service. Tolstoy made a deep impression on my mind, and even in South Africa I began to observe the rule to the best of my ability. And ever since the Ashram was founded, bread labour has been perhaps its most characteristic feature.

In my opinion the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita. I do not go so far as to say that the word yajna (sacrifice) there means body labour. But when the Gita says that "rain comes from sacrifice" (verse 14), I think it indicates the necessity of bodily labour. The "residue of sacrifice" (verse 13) is the bread that we have won in the sweat of our brow. Labouring enough for one's food has been classed in the Gita as a yajna. Whoever eats more than is enough for sustaining the body is a thief, for most of us hardly perform labour enough to maintain themselves. I believe that a man has no right to receive anything more than his keep, and that everyone who labours is entitled to a living wage. This does not rule out the division of labour. The manufacture of everything needed to satisfy essential human wants involves bodily labour, so that labour in all essential occupations counts as bread labour. [...]

Gandhi continues:

In an institution where body labour plays a prominent part there are few servants. Drawing water, splitting firewood, cleaning and filling lamps with oil, sanitary

service, sweeping the roads and houses, washing one's clothes, cooking,—all these tasks must always be performed. Besides this there are various activities carried on in the Ashram as a result of and in order to help fulfilment of the observances, such as agriculture, dairying, weaving, carpentry, tanning and the like which must be attended to by many members of the Ashram.

All these activities may be deemed sufficient for keeping the observance of bread labour, but another essential feature of yajna (sacrifice) is the idea of serving others, and the Ashram will perhaps be found wanting from this latter standpoint. The Ashram ideal is to live to serve. In such an institution there is no room for idleness or shirking duty, and everything should be done with right goodwill. If this were actually the case, the Ashram ministry would be more fruitful than it is. But we are still very far from such a happy condition. Therefore although in a sense every activity in the Ashram is of the nature of yajna, it is compulsory for all to spin for at least one hour in the name of God incarnated as the Poor. (Daridranarayana)

(Gandhi 1970c, pp. 214–216)

All these early examples of utopian and cooperative settlement projects influenced Gandhi's and Joseph Chelladurai Cornelius Kumarappa's concept of village industries as integral part of the Constructive Program, and at the same time reflect the background of Martin Buber's book *Paths in Utopia* (Buber 1949).

Joseph Chelladurai Cornelius Kumarappa was a professor of Economics at the Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad. Between May 1930 and February 1931, he also edited "Young India," which coincided with the Salt Satyagraha ("Salt March"). Kumarappa organized the All India Village Industries Association in 1935 and participated in the National Planning Committee of 1938 (Nehru 1938). During his imprisonment (Quit India movement, 1945), he wrote his *Economy of Permanence* (Kumarappa 1946). Gandhi, while riding the train to Bombay on 20 August 1945, penned a foreword to this book:

This doctor of our village industries shows that only through them we shall arrive at the economy of permanence in the place of that of the fleeting nature we see around us at present. He tackles the question—shall the body triumph over and stifle the soul or shall the latter triumph over and express itself through a perishable body which, with its few wants healthily satisfied, will be free to subserve the end of the imperishable soul? This is "Plain living and High thinking."

(Gandhi, in Kumarappa 1957, p. iii)

Kumarappa published a substantially extended second edition in 1948 and an identical third reprint of his *Economy of Permanence* in 1957. In the latter edition—for the first does not contain the following—Kumarappa fleshes out his idea of a cooperative society:

Co-operation implies the elimination of competition and working in a kind of partnership resulting in advantages to all. Its basic requirement is an identity

of interest of parties to the enterprise. There can be no exploitation in co-operation. Therefore, there can be no co-operation with an exploiter at one end and his victim at the other end. Foreigners come to sell their goods to us. That is their only interest in us. It is for that, they hold others in political bondage. If co-operative societies help hand-loom weavers to obtain American yarn they are linking up incompatibles and therefore are not functioning in the true spirit of co-operation. Their legitimate sphere would be to bring local village spinners and weavers into a living touch with one another. They have to bring about co-operation all along the line—raw material produced with artisan and then with the consumer. The co-operative societies should be the link binding all parties together—like a silver wire that holds the pearls together.

(Kumarappa 1957, pp. 144f.)

Kumarappa envisaged village panchayats for village administration based on self-government and multi-purpose cooperative society—gram seva sangh as non-profit charitable trust:

The panchayat will have direct responsibility in regard to all village services, such as, village roads, village water supply, village education, village dispensaries, village sanitation, administration of justice within certain limits, village, lighting etc. These services will have to be compulsorily provided for in every village. If the revenue raised and allotted is not sufficient to provide for those services the deficit should be borne by Government.

(Kumarappa 1957, p. 196)

This economic model bears out upon Gandhi's educational philosophy of *Nai Talim* (basic education), originating from Gandhi's Tolstoy Farm experiences and the National Education Conference held at Wardha, October 22–23, 1937 (Sykes 1988; Lang-Wojtasik 1999; Holzwarth 2015; MacDonald 2018). In the aftermath of this conference, two model basic education schools opened at Wardha and nearby Segaon. Following Gandhi's death, the Gandhigram Rural Institute continued this new approach. Kumarappa wrote about the meaning of education:

If education is to fit us for life—to make us better citizens, better husbands and fathers—it has to be a continuous process from the cradle to the grave. Through all the changing scenes of life we ought to be able to pass with the least shock. If, on the other hand, education taught us only certain tricks which we could perform we should be completely at sea when a different set of circumstances confronted us. Education need not cramp our minds with facts and figures but it should give us an attitude towards life. An educational system has to have a philosophy behind it and its purpose should be to elicit the best in an individual.

(Kumarappa 1957, pp. 177f.)

Kumarappa provided a general outline:

The Wardha or Basic scheme, as this new plan has come to be known, recommends a course for seven years' compulsory basic education for boys and girls from the age seven to fourteen. The medium of instruction is to be a craft like spinning, around which all subjects are taught. The everyday life of the child and the correlation of the craft, the physical and social environment of the child afford points of co-ordination for all departments of knowledge. The standard aimed at is the present matriculation without English. There will be no effort to teach writing until the child has learnt drawing. Reading will be taught at first. After the age of twelve, the pupil may be allowed to choose a craft as a vocation. It does not aim at turning out expert workmen at the age of fourteen but the pupil will have acquired sufficient training to enter a vocation in which he will do his talent justice.

The central idea of this scheme is that intellectual development must be attained through vocational training.

(Kumarappa 1957, pp. 185f.)

A visit to the United States inspired Kumarappa to combine concepts of vocational training, education through art and convivial living:

I had the opportunity of visiting a school in New York State run by the Federation of Labour Unions. In that school the whole community lived together and the children took part in the supply of food products and all other domestic matters.

(Kumarappa 1957, p. 187)

No vocational training or education can be complete unless it has some relation to art. Thus part of our education has been attended to by Poet Tagore. The emphasis placed on folk songs, music and art must form part of every village school. If such schools can be found to function with a vocation of craft as the base and art as an aid, however simple the courses may be, the result will be an outturn of men and women with a backbone of character and self-respect who will not purr round the feet of foreign masters for a silken couch to lie on but who will hold their head erect, independent, and be prepared to share the lowly life of the general run of the people.

(Kumarappa 1957, p. 189)

We have presented visions and practices of alternative political and moral economy in the works of John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi and J. C. Kumarappa. Their works show how elements of an alternative political economy shall be free will as well as mutual aid and sharing; character building and spiritual development; high standard of living and voluntary simplicity; integration of manual and intellectual labour; communal living and cooperative economy in home rule and

self-reliance; rejection of coercion and violence; and life-long learning in conviviality and freedom of spirit. All these have a great salience in our contemporary critique and reconstitution of political economy and moral economy.

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