

Civil Disobedience and Indian Tradition (1971)

This slim volume (bearing the subtitle: *With Some Early Nineteenth Century Documents*, Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh, 1971) provides empirical evidence for the historical roots of Gandhian *satyagraha* on the basis of colonial reports about wide-scale protests during the period 1810-1811 in the city of Varanasi and the surrounding districts. The book's foreword is by Jayaprakash Narayan. In its detailed introduction, Shri Dharampal delineates the historical and political context for popular resistance to the colonial imposition of a new house-tax, considered arbitrary and unjust. Thereby, he underscores the dynamics of non-cooperation and civil disobedience being practised in early 19th century India. Significantly, Shri Dharampal discusses the traditional concept of the ruler-ruled relationship which allowed for the possibility of negotiation to redress grievances against injustice, an ethical-political mechanism which became increasingly tenuous as a result of colonial hegemony. For an analysis of this documentary evidence, the reader is invited to consult the original volume (1971), or its reprint in: Dharampal, *Collected Writings*, Other India Press: Mapusa 2000 (reissued 2003 & 2007), vol. II. Translations into Gujarati and Hindi were published in *Dharampal Samagra Lekhan* (11 vols.), edited by Indumati Katdare, Punarutthan Trust, Ahmedabad 2005 and 2007, respectively. Recently, this volume has been reprinted as part of the *Dharampal Classics Series* and edited by J.K. Bajaj and M.D. Srinivas, Vol. 3, Rashtrottana Sahitya: Bengaluru and Centre for Policy Studies: Chennai, 2021. This work, constituting an innovative approach to understanding the political-cultural traditions of Mahatma Gandhi's political ethics and strategy, received a highly acclaimed review entitled "People's right to disobey", in: *Resurgence* (edited by Satish Kumar), November/December 1973.