

### **3) Machiavelli or Gandhi?**

## **Chaiwat Satha-anand's Nonviolence in a Comparative Perspective**

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This article examines the doctrine of non-violence formulated by the Thai political scientist Chaiwat Satha-Anand, based on a close reading of his thesis “The Non-Violent Prince”. Chaiwat’s theoretical considerations will be related to the work of the political philosopher Leo Strauss. To illustrate his case for a pragmatic ethics of non-violence, Chaiwat Satha-Anand’s doctrine will also be contrasted with the Gandhian notion of non-violence through a comparison with the writings of the French Islamologist Louis Massignon on the subject. Apart from this contrast, Massignon’s concern with non-violent solutions for conflicts in the Muslim world forms an interesting parallel to Chaiwat Satha-Anand’s engagement with similar issues affecting Thailand’s Muslims.

### **Introduction**

This study examines some aspects of the political thought of Chaiwat Satha-Anand, and more specifically his formulation of a doctrine for nonviolent conflict resolution. Part of it will be presented in a comparative format: juxtaposing some of Chaiwat’s views on nonviolence with those of the French islamologist Louis Massignon (1883-1962) on Gandhian thought and politics involving the Muslim world. This choice is motivated by the instructive parallels and contrasts that can be drawn between Chaiwat and Massignon’s engagement with the interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims.

I begin with what I believe is the foundational text of Chaiwat’s theory of nonviolence and then move on to the elaborations given in a number of later publications. Also I will introduce Louis Massignon’s view of nonviolence, influenced

by Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha or Truth Force, with the purpose of providing some contrast with Chaiwat's views, which will hopefully enhance the contours of the latter's thinking on nonviolence.

In recent times there has been a tendency to move away from regarding scholars' PhD theses as the defining moment for their future careers, as was earlier the case of continental European academe dissertations—which frequently tended to become an academic's opus magnus and often did not appear before the scholar in question was nearing his or her mid-career point. Nowadays they are more seen as a rite of passage, a confirmation of sufficient intellectual maturing to engage in independent research.

I want to make a case for taking Chaiwat's 1981 thesis, "The Nonviolent Prince," not as his definitive piece of work, but certainly as an important stepping stone for his further career as it pertains to peace research and political activism. Many of Chaiwat's later writings on nonviolence may actually appear overly idealistic or even utopian if their reading is not informed by the arguments he put forward in his dissertation. The purpose of this study is to show that Chaiwat's doctrine of nonviolence is both pragmatic and ethical.

Obviously this is not the place for an exact tracking of Chaiwat's train of thought. Instead I will limit this overview to highlighting some key points that are important for appreciating Chaiwat's ideas on nonviolent conflict resolution, and how he has tried to apply these to his work as a peace activist.

## **The Role of the Intellectual**

Because of Chaiwat Satha-Anand's high profile as an engaged or public intellectual, I will begin with his views on the role of the political scientist, which he actually presents in the final chapter of "The Nonviolent Prince." As a student at Thammasat University, Chaiwat had already made a name for himself as an activist, ultimately serving as the vice-chairman of the Student Council (Scupin, forthcoming). In the closing section of his thesis he puts into words what he had already practiced and would continue to practice. Under-scoring the normative character of political science, he states:

The discipline of political science is not a neutral one (Chaiwat 1981: 334).

There is a myth about modern intellectuals [craving] for a single function or static position [...] But shouldn't political scientists and other intellectuals function in more than one way? (Chaiwat 1981: 338).

[...] It should be noted that the suggested functions are as political as they are academic (Chaiwat 1981: 339).

Explicitly narrowing it down to nonviolent conflict resolution, Chaiwat observes that:

[T]he best service peace research could offer to the world today probably consists, not so much in understanding conflicts better, as in providing politicians with an enormous repertoire of actions short of violence, that can be applied in conflict situations (Chaiwat 1981: 332).

These selections from Chaiwat's own words clarify how he views his own role as a political scientist within the academic world and the political arena so that we can now move to an exposition of Chaiwat's formulation of a doctrine of nonviolence, and, in particular, what informs his – as I hope to show – pragmatic moral approach.

### **“The Nonviolent Prince”: Plea for a Radical Paradigm Shift**

That violence is taken as an acceptable way of resolving conflict is illustrated by Chaiwat in his preliminary remarks, where he draws on some concrete examples from close, often personal, experiences: Muslim-Hindu clashes in pre-independence India, the question of Thailand's Muslim south, and the 1976 debacle starting on the Thammasat campus (Chaiwat 1981: 10ff).

Breaking this impasse requires a radical shift from the violence paradigm that currently governs the thinking about conflict resolution towards a nonviolence paradigm. For this shift he draws on the work of the influential philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn. He then identified the MAD doctrine connected with thermonuclear warfare as the radical anomaly needed – according to Kuhn's theory – to make a paradigm shift possible, because it ran counter to the all-pervasive drive for self-preservation (Chaiwat 1981: 30, 32).

An indication of the great difficulty to gain acceptance for such a radical change in the way of thinking about politics and conflict resolution is given by Chaiwat's use of the word “riddle” when considering why violence is considered a normal state of affairs. Similar terms can be found in later writings, where they even appear in the title of publications like “9/11, 9/20 and Gandhi's puzzle” or “Human Security Puzzles” (Chaiwat 1981: 111; Chaiwat 2002).

While conflict is bound to continue and self-preservation will remain man's paramount interest, an important new element is the awareness of the interconnectedness of everything and, with it, the acceptance of symmetry in relationships rather than domination. For this, Chaiwat – a Thai Muslim of Indian origin – finds inspiration in the thought of non-Muslim sages from the Indian

subcontinent. Krishnamurti once observed that violence became possible in the first place because of man's propensity to regard himself as separate from other living beings (Chaiwat 1981: 17). Gandhi's concept of all-pervading love and the idea of Sarvodaya (all-awakening) developed by the Singhalese thinker A.T. Ariyaratne provide further underpinnings for such an axiom of interconnectedness (Chaiwat 1981: 32).

Realizing that the full potential of the nonviolence paradigm on the basis of such metaphysical principles is bound to be extremely difficult, Chaiwat exhibits a good dose of realism by opting for a more practical approach instead. For this he continues his eclectic search for leads in a variety of cultures and traditions. For example, there is a reference to the Buddhist doctrine of Paticca Samuppâda (conditioned or dependent origination) as providing an excellent problem-solving tool because of its focus on the concept of causality (Chaiwat 1981: 34). Since political violence is one of the most acute problems that need to be resolved, and since most violence is perpetrated by rulers, the most effective way to introduce nonviolence is by addressing political leaders. This gave Chaiwat the idea of devising a radical rewriting of Machiavelli's seminal work *The Prince*. Because of his advocacy of a pragmatic approach, and bearing in mind that a mere appeal to "love" would not likely change the mind of the opponent, Chaiwat argues that instead the ruler must be provided with alternatives that match violent ones in efficacy, efficiency and availability of resources (Chaiwat 1981: 34-9). A political treatise composed along the lines of *The Prince* can do exactly that. The choice of *The Prince* is also intriguing from a cultural-religious point of view, because this work is very similar to a genre of educational literature that is very common in the Muslim World: "The Mirror of Princes." Originating in Persia, this form has been frequently imitated in South and Southeast Asia since the Islamization of these regions.<sup>1</sup>

### **Chaiwat and Leo Strauss**

Chaiwat's discussion of the nature of Machiavelli's writings brings us to an issue that – in the current constellation of world politics – might be regarded as a controversial one: the connection of Chaiwat with the legacy of the German-born political philosopher Leo Strauss, who is now claimed by the neo-conservative ideologists of US foreign and security policy-making as one of their chief sources of inspiration. In his essay on Thai Muslim intellectuals, Raymond Scupin explains that Chaiwat was first exposed to a Straussian perspective through his teacher at Thammasat University, Sombat Chantornvong, but later influenced by Manfred Henningsen, a student of Eric Voegelin, another German-born thinker who was in contemporary of Strauss. In his evaluation of this impact, Scupin points out that Chaiwat's interpretation of Strauss is very much influenced by his own liberal political orientation (Scupin, forthcoming).

In his thesis Chaiwat refers directly to Strauss, in the section on Machiavelli's *The Prince*, but in these references he takes a rather critical view of Strauss' assertions concerning *The Prince* (Chaiwat 1981: 95ff.). One of the key features of Strauss' philosophy is his emphasis on the slow reading of the great classical treatises on politics, in an effort to understand them as their authors did rather than through the lens of history.<sup>2</sup> But in the case of Strauss' own reading of Machiavelli, Chaiwat charges that, already in the first lines of his *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, Strauss breaks his own rule. Instead he places Machiavelli within the framework of the common view held of him: as "a teacher of evil" (Chaiwat 1981: 98).<sup>3</sup> Consequently, Chaiwat's verdict is that:

In doing so the frame work of study is rigidly set [...] [Strauss] petrifies Machiavelli's teachings. With his method, he dehumanizes Machiavelli (Chaiwat 1981: 98-9).

However, another feature of Straussian thought is the recognition that the greatest thinkers often wrote both exoteric and esoteric teachings. Chaiwat uses this Straussian position to criticize the advocates of Machiavelli's supposedly scientific method. One such proponent, James Burnham, has claimed that there was no distinction between formal and real meaning in Machiavelli's writing (Chaiwat 1981: 101). Chaiwat disagrees with that, in part because:

[stretching] Machiavelli's teaching towards scientific orientation will do a disservice [...] [and also because] petrification of his teaching obviously does not render any possibility for a nonviolent application of his ideas (Chaiwat 1981: 103).

Making this point is also crucial for Chaiwat's own rewriting of *The Prince*, because in certain cases Chaiwat will allow the ruler to use deception and fraud as nonviolent means of conflict resolution (Chaiwat 1981: 132, 266, 302).

### **Making the Case for a Pragmatic Ethics**

Chaiwat's emphasis that a rigid reading of Machiavelli's discourse of logic – namely by excluding the historical circumstances, the tradition of Italian political theory, and the author's own experiences – carries with it the grave danger of neglecting to question the premises of that discourse (Chaiwat 1981: 112-4). All these premises are grounded in the perception of violence as part of existential reality. "Machiavelli does not propose violence as an alternative to politics. It has always been there" (Chaiwat 1981: 124). When that outlook is challenged, it suddenly becomes possible to draw radically different conclusions (Chaiwat 1981: 114).

I mentioned earlier that I intend to show that, with regards to nonviolence, Chaiwat can be considered a pragmatic moralist. The ethical dimension of Chaiwat's

doctrine of nonviolence is made possible by his focus on actor-oriented violence and away from structural violence, because the latter invites the tendency to regard violence as being “part of the system”:

[T]his impersonal version of violence tends to neutralize the concept itself by shifting guilt and blame to the structure which is impersonal in itself. In doing so, the political-ethical nature of the concept of violence is undermined (Chaiwat 1981: 57).

The critique of a structure-oriented perception of violence is found in Chaiwat’s examination of the work of the prominent theorist Johan Galtung, as well as in his discussion of the Machiavellian concept of *Virtú* – which I will translate as ‘heroic virtue’: “the efficient cause of political reform or original political creation” (Chaiwat 1981: 107). Structure and worldview are encapsulated in the two other central Machiavellian concepts of *Fortune* and *Necessitâ*. The value that Chaiwat attributes to *Virtú* leads him:

[T]o conclude that the essence of Machiavelli’s teaching lies in the significance that he has given to *Virtú*. He is the radical humanist in the sense that he argues for man’s ultimate emancipation from *Fortune* (Chaiwat 1981: 125).

And further:

The Prince should rely on his own power in order to conquer *Fortune*. This radical humanistic message is the essence of Machiavelli’s teaching (Chaiwat 1981: 126).

Chaiwat finds additional support for his pragmatic approach in the writings of Gene Sharp, specifically the “Clausewitz of Nonviolent Action,” which are based on a theory of power and are action-oriented – although he notes that also Sharp has focused more on developing alternatives for the ruled rather than for the rulers (Chaiwat 1981: 69-70):

Chaiwat seizes on the discussion of the “problem of human action” to further underscore his ethical approach of nonviolent alternatives in politics. A brief survey of how various philosophical schools approach that issue shows that all these traditions understood human actions differently. But instead of “describing” or “interpreting” these actions, Chaiwat moves forward to a prescriptive definition of nonviolence. Consistency and pragmatism are key features of that definition:<sup>4</sup>

Nonviolence for the Nonviolent Prince includes all kinds of ruler actions that are considered to be effective for the ruler’s goal attainment in a conflict situation as long as those actions do not cause irreversible damage to the ruler’s opponent either physically or psychologically or both (Chaiwat 1981: 81).

A radical paradigm shift presupposes a dynamic, therefore action-driven, approach. Action forces the focus on the – violent but potentially nonviolent – actor. In order to make this all happen, the most efficient approach is to make an appeal for nonviolence to the most likely perpetrator of violence, namely the rulers, since they have ready access to arms and other means of violence. This makes *The Prince* rewritten in a nonviolent format a suitable vehicle for Chaiwat's message.

To underscore his pragmatic take on the implementation of nonviolent conflict resolution, Chaiwat shows already in this early work to be well aware that doctrines of nonviolence are often dismissed as unrealistic. He warns his peers against taking “utopian positions” (Chaiwat 1981: 340) and admits that “the enigmatic nature” (Chaiwat 1981: 328) of his own thesis makes it vulnerable to the criticism of not being practical. To drive this pragmatic message home, he does not even shy away from making statements that might be shocking to proponents of other approaches to nonviolence:

The attempt in this dissertation is not to construct a pure nonviolent paradigm [...] It is anti-Gandhian nonviolence since the latter openly suggests the dependency on Truth Force and the ability of the opponents to feel the suffering of the nonviolent practitioners [...] both which are external to the practitioners (Chaiwat 1981: 327).

### **Chaiwat on Gandhian Nonviolence**

At this point it is opportune to take a closer look at Chaiwat's attitude towards the most prominent ideologist of nonviolence: Mahatma Gandhi. In the beginning of his thesis, Chaiwat presents Gandhian nonviolence as representative of an amalgam of spiritually informed nonviolence, as opposed to secularized models from the West. But he rules out Gandhi's Ahimsa [Nonviolence] based on Satyagraha [Truth Force] as a guiding principle on grounds of practicality: both because of the high moral ground demanded of the practitioner and because even a principled activist like Gandhi himself at times was forced to give in to violence, which runs counter to Chaiwat's advocacy of a radical paradigm shift (Chaiwat 1981: 60-6).

Chaiwat also disagrees with Simone Panter-Brick, who in *Gandhi Against Machiavellism* argued that Gandhi was the new prince.<sup>5</sup> His argumentation is that, since Gandhi's nonviolent method is based on conversion and the practitioner's dependence on God for protection, it follows that this form of nonviolence is not exercised through the power of the practitioner and therefore not depending on Virtú but rather on Fortune (Chaiwat 1981: 128).

## Louis Massignon's Understanding of Satyagraha

A deeper appreciation of Chaiwat's stance towards Satyagraha may be gained by comparing it with the position take by Louis Massignon (1883-1962). A French orientalist of strong Roman Catholic persuasion, Massignon had at least one thing in common with Chaiwat: namely, a persistent commitment to applying the principle of nonviolence to solving political conflicts involving Muslims.<sup>6</sup> Massignon was introduced to Gandhian thought in 1921 by Indian Muslims and he was so impressed that he arranged for the integral publication of Gandhi's 1919 pledge to Satyagraha in French (Massignon 1963: 366).<sup>7</sup> In various meditations he has acknowledged his indebtedness to Gandhi.<sup>8</sup>

In his writings, Massignon has focused on the “sense of the sacred” that Gandhi wanted to retain.<sup>9</sup> Massignon regarded Gandhi's activism as a move against desecration of the universe, which – on its most grand scale – Massignon saw occurring in the looming of a third world war. Although he phrases it more spiritually, this aspect of Massignon's outlook has an interesting parallel in Chaiwat's characterization of thermonuclear warfare as a “radical anomaly.”

Massignon's interpretation of Gandhi was to a great extent colored by a very personal mystical experience, which occurred in Iraq in 1908, that subsequently led to his dramatic conversion (or better: return) to Catholicism (Gude 1996: 27).<sup>10</sup> In fact, as he continued his engagement with Gandhian thought, a synergy developed in which Massignon's spiritual outlook was as much informed by what he learned from Gandhi as the other way around. This brought one of Massignon's biographers to the conclusion that Gandhi gave Massignon “a vocabulary for interpreting his own activity” (Gude 1996: 209).

A case in point is Massignon's notion of the “vow” as applied to Islam. Although developed from many sources, it owed much to Gandhi. For example, Massignon adopted Gandhi's saying that “God is the essence of the vow” and then coined his own definition: “The vow is essentially the desire for God” (Massignon 1963: 696). But this did not obscure his view of the more general significance of Gandhi's legacy. Again commenting on “the ideal of Satyagraha, the pursuit of truth by steadfastness in will, by Vrata, by oath,” Massignon observed:

I also learned [...] that satyagraha was a sacred thing for the Muslims also. I realised immediately that there was something in Gandhi which was valuable. For perhaps the first time in the world, there was a man having influence on people of other religions with great social results (Massignon 1963: 366).

Earlier I said that Chaiwat opts for a secularized approach to nonviolence at the expense of “Gandhi's metaphysical foundation of nonviolence” (Chaiwat 1981: 69). This position is partly motivated by modesty:

Unlike Gandhi, the author of *The Nonviolent Prince* operates with a nonviolent paradigmatic mind where violence does not exist in politics. In addition, he has not yet reached the understanding of infinite metaphysical truth as Gandhi did (Chaiwat 1981: 304).

While Chaiwat focuses his critique of *Satyagraha* on its metaphysical dimension, Massignon takes a different view of the grounding of *Satyagraha*: “Instead of explaining his worldwide message from India in a grand mythology or an immense and unwieldy meta- physics [...] he gives us only conscience lived out” (Gude 1996: 210; cf. Massignon 1963: 356).

According to Massignon, *Satyagraha* is action-oriented and very different from the “anti-social hermit traditions followed by the Hindu ascetics” (Massignon 1963: 347). I hasten to add that Chaiwat is also not in any way denying that Gandhian nonviolence is active (Chaiwat 1981: 66-7, 164). It is political action and civic duty, then, within an overall commitment to truth, lived out in one’s own life. *Satyagraha* can only triumph in works of compassion towards fellow human beings. Massignon saw, for example, a parallel between compassionate civic duty and the notion of hospitality towards the guest, which is held sacred throughout the Muslim World.<sup>11</sup> Towards the end of his meditation on Gandhi’s last pilgrimage of 1948, Massignon turns to the practicalities of giving sanctuary to the guest, with a plea for safe havens for those wounded in conflict and for refugees, as well as for the protection of world heritage sites (Massignon 1963: 350-2).

I therefore tend to conclude that – with regards to nonviolence – Massignon often phrases in mystical idiom what Chaiwat coins in Machiavellian terminology. If we juxtapose the following quote with Chaiwat’s interpretations of Virtú and Fortune, the parallel becomes quite apparent:

Destiny is what the milieu we live in imposes on us; vocation is above it [...]. Vocation opens to transcendence [...] The resulting tension which Massignon called ‘knots of anguish’, pits the call of vocation against the imperatives of destiny (Massignon 1963: 689; Cf. Gude 1996: 210-1).

The similarity ends, however, when the ultimate consequence of commitment to nonviolence is considered. As observed earlier, Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* focuses mainly on nonviolent means of resistance for the ruled. In acute situations that can mean that the practitioners give their lives and fates into the hands of the opponents, a far from appealing prospect for a ruler when in fact one is trying to convince him of the value of nonviolent conflict resolution (Chaiwat 1981: 327). This discrepancy occurs because the ruler in Chaiwat’s doctrine operates in a realm shaped by a paradigm shift, settling for “truth in its finite form. His truth is that violence needs to be eliminated first” (Chaiwat 1981: 304).

## Chaiwat and Massignon on nonviolence in the Muslim World

When we compare Chaiwat's positions on nonviolent activism involving Muslim issues with Massignon's, we can again detect some parallels, in spite of the different presuppositions on which their respective attitudes of nonviolence are founded. In fact, if we consider a publication by Chaiwat from 1993, twelve years after the completion of his dissertation, it seems that he has moved somewhat closer towards Massignon's stance on Gandhi's Satyagraha.

In *The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight theses on Muslim Nonviolent Actions* (1993), Chaiwat examines what basis Islamic scripture and traditions provide for a doctrine of nonviolence. Remaining true to his pragmatic, ethical approach, Chaiwat points out that Islam is capable of providing a "whole catalogue of qualities necessary for the conduct of successful nonviolent actions" (Chaiwat 1993: 7). A "repertoire of actions short of violence" internal to Islam is therefore readily available.

A serious challenge, which he already briefly touched on in his thesis, is of course how to reconcile nonviolence with the Jihad-doctrine.<sup>12</sup> Chaiwat's argument that the understanding of Jihad as "holy war" is incomplete and not true to the full notion of the concept also provides him with a set-up for the paradigm shift that is so central to his doctrine of nonviolence:<sup>13</sup>

Generally translated as 'holy war' the term jihad connotes to non-Muslims desperate acts of irrational and fanatical people who want to impose their worldview on others. But this imposition is virtually untenable. [...] Arab conquests were essentially political and ideological [...] [F]or Muslims, whose criteria for conduct are the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* (traditions of the Prophet), historical examples pale in the face of the *Qur'anic* verses (Chaiwat 1993: 8).

Although the Muslim world has also come to accept the normalcy of violence, the message of the *Qur'an* contains a direct moral injunction for the Muslim to refrain from violence. This imperative extends beyond the human realm, as Islam is also very well aware of the interconnectedness of the whole of creation (Chaiwat 1993: 10, 15-6).

While "The Nonviolent Prince" was addressed to potentially nonviolent rulers, *The Nonviolent Crescent* is induced by the desire to provide the oppressed Muslims in Thailand's South with guidance for means of nonviolent resistance. That this brings Chaiwat closer to Gandhian nonviolence is made explicitly clear in the following statement:

[A] nonviolent resister depends on the unfailing assistance of God  
[...] Truth and non-violence are not possible without a living belief in God. A Muslim following Gandhi's teaching would not feel estranged (Chaiwat 1993: 17).

Taking a concrete incident occurring in Pattani in 1975, Chaiwat correlates the conditions that make sustained nonviolent protest a viable alternative for the local Muslims to the “Five Pillars of Islam” (Chaiwat 1993: 20-1). Consisting of the Muslim Creed, the obligations of prayer, almsgiving, fasting during Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca (provided one has the means), the Five Pillars constitute the basic teachings of Islam, underscoring that Islam is more an orthopraxy than an orthodoxy. From these the Muslim can derive all the inspiration that is needed for successful nonviolent action.

Massignon made a comparable connection between Gandhi’s nonviolent practices and the Five Pillars, although he specifically singled out the pilgrimage and fasting for closer consideration (1963: 340-53). For Massignon, fasting was the perfect vow, because it meant that the practitioner intended to “live on God alone” (345). The central importance of fasting to Gandhi’s is also acknowledged by Chaiwat, who treats it, however, from a more practical angle as Gandhi’s weapon of choice in crisis situations that made nonviolent coercion necessary (Chaiwat 1981: 310-4).

Just as in his dissertation, towards the end of *The Nonviolent Crescent*, Chaiwat directs his moral message towards the intelligentsia:

It remains to be seen how Muslim intellectuals will attempt to tap the fertile resources of nonviolent thought within their own tradition and resolve the paradox of living as a true Muslim in the contemporary world (Chaiwat 1993: 22).

A final parallel between Massignon and Chaiwat can be drawn when we consider the concrete political issues to which they apply their advocacy of nonviolence. Massignon was very much preoccupied with the Arab-Jewish confrontation in Palestine, and – in the twilight of his career – with the question of French Algeria. For the Thai Muslim Chaiwat, the most acute issue is the lingering problem in Thailand’s four southern provinces where Malay Muslims form the dominant group.

On the basis of the earlier notion of hospitality towards the guest and inspired by Gandhi’s efforts to maintain the unity of British India, Massignon denounced the idea that segregating warring parties would resolve conflicts (Gude 1996: 168). To this end he founded in 1947 the Comité Chrétien d’Entente France-Islam (Gude 1996: 161). Unfortunately, his hopes to create a Franco-Muslim society were eventually dashed by the indifference of the French government and the hostility of the European settlers, but in spite of that independence was not then and never an issue for Massignon because in his mind Algeria formed part of France (Gude 1996: 126).

While both the Indian and Algerian experiences ended in violence, and might provide reason for pessimism regarding the situation in southern Thailand, Chaiwat has clearly not given up. In a paper entitled “Crossing the Enemy’s Line” he draws on concrete examples from a variety of war zones, including the India of 1947, to

illustrate that reaching out across these lines, real or imaginary, is of paramount importance to avoid situations where the decision to segregate results in lingering hatred on both sides of the divide (Chaiwat 2000). With regard to Chaiwat's work in Thailand, developments in the South have given new urgency to the message contained in that paper. Although the challenge of maneuvering between "indiscriminate assimilation" and "discriminatory separation" is considerable, the suggested path is of essential importance to affirming the shared humanity of all those involved (Chaiwat 2000: 7).

## Conclusion

I hope to have shown that, although a Thai Muslim, Chaiwat Satha-Anand is not to be regarded as an Islamic thinker with partisan views on Islam or a political scientist solely preoccupied with Thailand, because his ideas have relevance beyond the Thai, the Islamic, and the Thai Muslim setting, just as equating Massignon with the stereotypical Christian Orientalist belies his significance as a spiritual thinker and engaged intellectual. It would be more correct to qualify both as intellectuals, whose syncretic ways of thinking are well-suited for our current globalized world.

The political theorist and activist Chaiwat Satha-Anand is first and foremost concerned with how to act in the concrete in order to bring about peaceful solutions to political conflicts, and can as such be characterized as a pragmatic moralist. But the motivation to continue this work he finds in his commitment as a practicing Muslim.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A.C. Johns (1979) 'The Turning Image: Myth and Reality in Malay Perceptions of the Past' in: Anthony Reid and David Marr (eds.) (1979) *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Heinemann, 43-67; Arifin Mansurnoor (2001) "Morality and Social Order: The Malay World in Historical Perspective." *Prajñā Vihāra: Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 2(1): 49-91; A.C. Milner Islam and the Muslim State' in, M.B. Hooker (ed.) (1982) *Islam in Southeast Asia*. Canterbury: University of Kent, 23-49.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., <http://www.straussian.net>

<sup>3</sup> The quote is from Leo Strauss (1958) *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Glencoe: The Free Press, 9. (Cf. Chaiwat 1981: 135).

<sup>4</sup> As already alluded to in the preceding discussion on human action: "Prescriptive definition is useful in this case because it enables the theorist to take the actor very seriously" (Chaiwat 1981: 74); "Prescriptive definition deals with open-ended actions, actions in the future, or to be more precise, political action in general. It cannot be petrified by any concrete set of rules" (Chaiwat 1981: 77); "Methods other than love

and kindness are, sometimes, required. But the limit of the methods is governed by the result of the action on the actor's opponents" (Chaiwat 1981: 79).

<sup>5</sup> Simone Panter-Brick (1966) *Gandhi Against Machiavellism*. Bombay: Asian Publishing House, 1966: 232-3; cf. Chaiwat (1981: 1939 n. 79).

<sup>6</sup> Mary Louise Gude traces Massignon activism back to 1929: "The foundation of the Institut d'études islamiques by Massignon dates from 1929. that same year his commitment to the disenfranchised took a decisive step towards the 'activism' which so characterized his later years [...] In 1929 also, the issue of justice in Algeria began to elicit a response from Massignon" (Gude 1996: 125).

<sup>7</sup> Massignon would meet Gandhi in person only once in 1931 in Paris. When Massignon visited India for the first time in 1945, Gandhi was in jail. In 1953 Massignon attended a conference dedicated to "Gandhian outlook and techniques" on which occasion he also had opportunity to retrace Gandhi's last pilgrimage to a Muslim shrine, days before being murdered (Massignon 1963: 340).

<sup>8</sup> The example of Gandhi provided the ongoing impetus for the "Christian examination of conscience" that guided Massignon's response: "the one to whom I owe the most in that is regards is Gandhi" (Gude 1996: 175, quoting Massignon 1963: 535). In addition Gude observed that "[I]f Charles Foucauld had exemplified how to live out the radical faith which had first attracted Massignon to Hallaj, the life of Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated how to integrate such faith with the struggle for political and social justice. When the Hindu first came to his attention a decade earlier, in 1921, he was immediately struck by the power of his thought" (Gude 1996: 127); Cf also: "Over the next fifteen years he would participate in several such groups and the example of Mahatma Gandhi would influence him profoundly [...] Gandhi's own practice of *satyagraha* in the struggle for the independence of India seemed to indicate the path he himself should follow " (Gude 1996: 162); "When he spoke a year before his death, in January 1961 [...] He noted how all his efforts had been undertaken in the spirit of Gandhi and how, like his model, he had known failure [...] Only his faith and the example of Gandhi would allow him to endure the anguish of the years between 1954 and his death in 1962 "(Gude 1996: 212-3).

<sup>9</sup> Louis Massignon takes this very seriously indeed, even objecting to the employment of terms like "technique" when discussing Gandhian activism (Massignon 1963: 340).

<sup>10</sup> Louis Massignon's fame as an Orientalist mainly rests on his monumental study of the Sufi martyr al-Hallâj (858-922): Massignon (1975) *La Passion de Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 4 vols., Paris: Gallimard, 1975 [1922].

<sup>11</sup> "Moreover, mystical substitution was seen by Massignon as the ultimate expression of the hospitality he had found in Islam before his conversion and which became a paradigm for his own Christian life" (Gude 1996: 160).

<sup>12</sup> "Perhaps the most ambiguous religious tradition concerned violence and nonviolence is Islam. But even in this tradition the commandments concerning nonviolence are numerous [...] In Islam the concept of *Jihad* (struggle) has often been understood as holy war. This understanding, though, not totally incorrect, is incomplete" (Chaiwat 1981: 145).

<sup>13</sup> “It is indeed necessary that Islam is looked at from a fresh angle. Because the conventional worldview accepts violence as normal, a nonviolent Muslim must part with this paradigm. To have a paradigm shift, the fundamental acceptance of violence must be seriously questioned” (Chaiwat 1981: 23).

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