

Friday, August 24, 2007

Commercial cutting and pasting: The Gandhi dilution.

Â Image from Library of Congress's website.Â On August 21, I blogged about a powerful commercial that incorporated part of Mahatma Gandhi's April 2, 1947, speech during theÂ Inter-Asian Relations Conference held on April 2, 1947 at New Delhi. In the same blog entry, I provided a link to the full text of the speech. Â After posting the Gandhi/Telecom Italia blog entry, I closely compared Gandhi's words in the commercial to hisÂ unedited speech found on the website of the GandhiServe Foundation, whose website says that it helpedÂ in the commercial's design. I have posted the key parts of his speech below, which reveal a sharply-worded discussion of the West's conquests -- and a nonviolent and profound solution thereto --Â none of which is conveyed in the commercial, whichÂ whites out some of Gandhi's sharpest words in mid-sentence. Below, I have put the words that survived the commercial inÂ capitals and bold next to the words that immediately preceded the commercially-broadcast words, followed by the remainder of his speech:Â "Don't carry that memory of that carnage beyond the confines of India, but what I want you to understand if you can, that the message of the East, the message of Asia, is not to be learnt through European spectacles, through the Western spectacles, not by imitating the tinsel of the West, the gun-powder of the West, the atom bomb of the West. Â "IF YOU WANT TO GIVE A MESSAGE again to the West, IT MUST BE A MESSAGE OF 'LOVE', IT MUST BE A MESSAGE OF 'TRUTH'. There must be a conquest (clapping), please, please, please. That will interfere with my speech, and that will interfere with your understanding also. I WANT TO CAPTURE YOUR HEARTS and don't want to receive your claps. LET YOUR HEARTS CLAP IN UNISON WITH WHAT I'M SAYING, AND I THINK, I SHALL HAVE FINISHED MY WORK. Therefore, I want you to go away with the thought that Asia has to conquer the West. Then, the question thatÂ A FRIEND ASKED YESTERDAY, "DID I BELIEVE IN ONE WORLD?" OF COURSE, I BELIEVE IN ONE WORLD. AND HOW CAN I POSSIBLY DO OTHERWISEÂ when I become an inheritor of the message of love that these great un-conquerable teachers left for us? You can redeliver that message now, in this age of democracy, in the age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can redeliver this message with the greatest emphasis. Then you will, you will complete the conquest of the whole of the West, not through vengeance because you have been exploited, and in the exploitation, of course, I want to include Africa, and I hope that when next you meet in India, you will all be, exploited nations of the Earth will meet if by that time there aren't any exploited nations of the Earth. I am so sanguine that if all of you put your hearts together, not merely your heads, but hearts together and understand the secret of the messages of all these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become, deserve, are worthy of that great message, then you will easily understand that the conquest of the West will be completed and that conquest will be loved by the West itself. West is today pining for wisdom. West today is in despair of multiplication of atom bombs, because a multiplication of atom bombs means utter destruction, not merely of the West, but it will be a destruction of the world, as if the prophecy of the Bible is going to be fulfilled and there is to be a perfect deluge. Heaven forbid that there be that deluge, and through men's wrongs against himself. It is up to you to deliver the whole world, not merely Asia but deliver the whole world from that wickedness, from that sin. That is the precious heritage your teachers, my teachers have left to us." Â If the GandhiServe Foundation's full text of the Gandhi speech is accurate, how does Telecom Italia explain its whiteouts of Gandhi's critical words in mid-sentence? Was it merelyÂ to keep the commercial to sixty seconds, was itÂ out of concern that leaving in the words would lead many in its Western audience to close their ears, or was there another reason?Â Â How does this topic relate to my trial law practice? It is an example of the need to investigate and review evidence in our cases with a tirelessly and unceasingly sharp, critical, and deeply listening eye. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Jon's news & views at 00:00