The 1950 Constitution of India is an outcome of an ideational battle that had begun long before it was formally framed by the members of the Constituent Assembly in little less than three years between 1946 and 1949. Tracing its intellectual genealogy to the philosophy of Enlightenment, the paper shows that the constitution heavily drew upon the liberal values of constitutionalism which flourished in India in the wake of colonials rule. Being sensitive to the Gandhian preference for village swaraj, the founding fathers also addressed the concern of the Gandhians in the Assembly by incorporating a new chapter in the Constitution. In order to capture the complex interplay of ideas that culminated with the inauguration of the Constitution in India in 1950, the article pays adequate attention to the endeavours that the colonial rulers and their bete-noire, the nationalists, had undertaken to constitutionalize India.

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