

## ***The Contemporary Relevance of E F Schumacher***

A panel discussion with

Zac Goldsmith MP and Andrew Redpath, Executive Director, Jeevika Trust

Thursday 26 January 2012 from 7-9pm at

Duke Street Church, Duke Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1DH

The Church is opposite Richmond tube and train stations

The event will include discussion of the influence of Gandhi on

Schumacher's ideas

The event is free but anyone wanting to attend should let Mark Hoda know

at [markhoda@hotmail.com](mailto:markhoda@hotmail.com)

### **GF Peace Award 2011**

Unfortunately it proved necessary to cancel this year's Peace Award ceremony on 9 October at fairly short notice and we apologise for any inconvenience and disappointment resulting.

### **Multifaith Celebration**

We hope to hold the MFC at St Ethelburga's on or near 30th January.

Please check the website or phone the GF (see back cover) for details.

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(Front cover shows a detail from a painting by Oswald Birley)

# Great Soul

*Antony Copley*

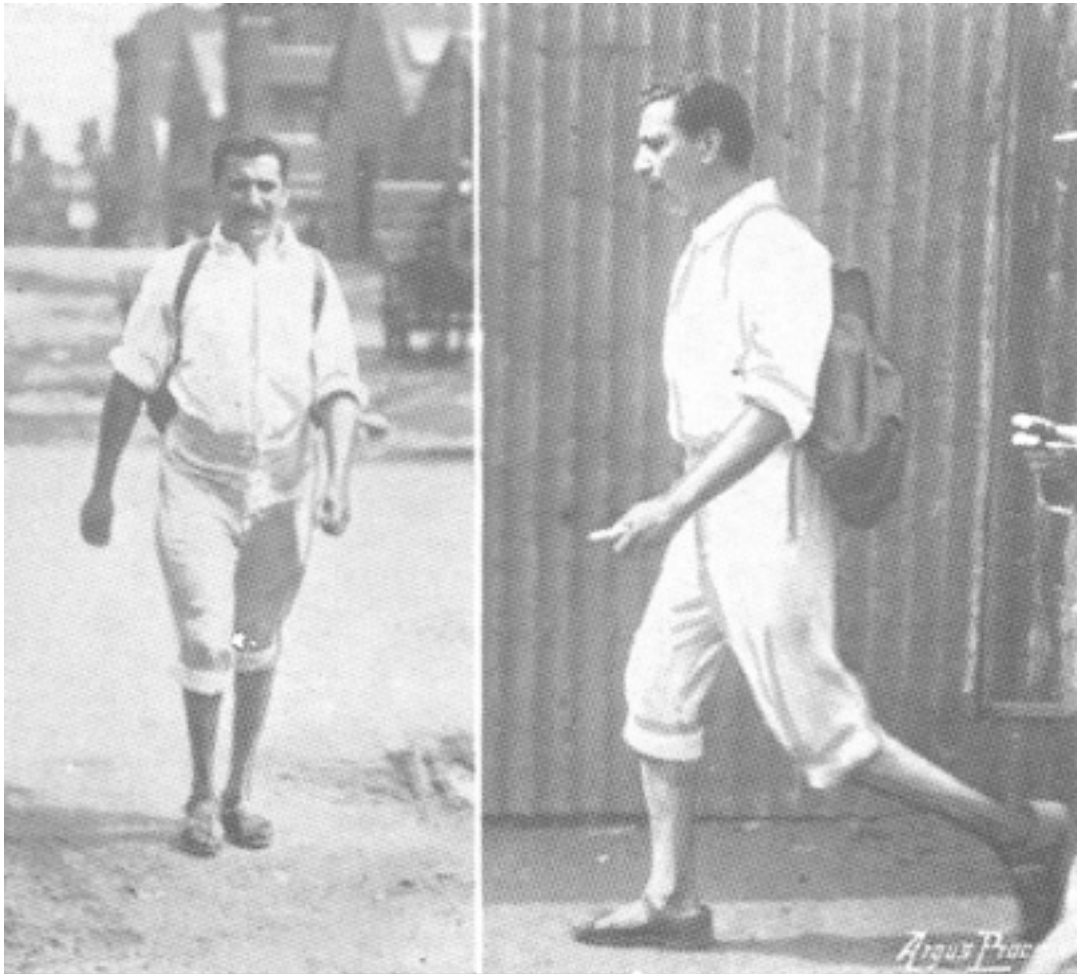
Joseph Lelyveld *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* Alfred A Knopf New York 2011 pp xv + 425

This has proved to be a controversial biography of Gandhi. Hindu fundamentalists have burnt it in Gujarat. It needs to be constantly asserted that book burning is every bit as contemptible as all former forms of cultural vandalism. Strictly speaking it is not a conventional biography. The obvious weakness of the book is its lack of any strong driving historical narrative. But then there are many accounts of Gandhi shaped by the political history of Indian nationalism and we do not need another. Lelyveld gets closer than most in looking at Gandhi in all his humanity, both his weaknesses and his courage. At the outset the author describes himself, 'I was not a pilgrim, just a reporter looking for a story.'(p xi) In his role as journalist he knew India first hand from the 1960's. In a powerful review of a study of the Bengal famine of 1943 he mentions his being in India in 1965 when a like famine threatened Bihar, tartly pointing out that Lyndon Baines Johnson who had the chance to come to India's rescue 'cared for Indira Gandhi only slightly more than Winston Churchill cared for the Mahatma'. By self-reliance India this time came through. (*New York Review of Books* 4 December 2010) In general though in such reflections of then and now contemporary India comes out badly. The author is very unhappy with the way India has evolved after Gandhi's death.

Lelyveld is equally at home in South Africa. In some ways he is using Gandhi's life to make sense of his own experience as a journalist in both India and South Africa and, despite his denial, is after all a kind of pilgrim. Just how, he questions, did Gandhi's years in South Africa underlie his approach to India? We tend to compartmentalise Gandhi's life in two halves. Lelyveld intriguingly suggests ways in which Gandhi was always drawing on the South African experience following his return to India in 1915. It remains salutary to see Gandhi as a young man, but 23 on coming to Durban in 1893. Our mental image of him tends to be of Gandhi after his return to India, Gandhi then 44. Lelyveld revisits that fascinating story of a search for

a synthesis between his personal development and his role as political leader. In 1893 he sees him as 'more the unsung hero of an East-West bildungsroman (a story of cultural formation) than the Mahatma in waiting'. (p 6) But then begins that process of self-invention, Gandhi thereafter 'never again static or predictable'. By 1914, 'his ongoing self locale was now more or less complete'; 'he completed the synthesis he'd been seeking throughout his two decades in South Africa between his public role and his questing inner self'. (p 127) As the title of his book implies, Gandhi struggled to communicate that vision within India and in many ways his was a tragic life. At the very end Gandhi ruefully reflected he'd never communicated the nonviolence of the strong, only of the weak. Lelyveld shares my own sense of Gandhi's life as 'against the tide'. Gandhi was ultimately forced 'like Lear to see the limits of his ambition to remake the world'. (p 27)

### **Hermann Kallenbach**



Instead of a strong political narrative Lelyveld falls back on cameo portraits, both of human relationships and of particular events. In South Africa the human relationship that stands out is with Hermann Kallenbach, the event, the satyagraha of 1913 when Gandhi for the first time led that majority of Indians in South Africa, the indentured labourers. Again, the underlying theme is the way the private and the public in Gandhi's life are being drawn together.

The book has become notorious through its suggestion of a gay relationship between Gandhi and Kallenbach. At the time many assumed that Gandhi had left his family in Phoenix Farm outside Durban to live with that man in Johannesburg. I think it is true that Gandhi experienced a need to escape the pressures of family and, in a sense, to fashion an entirely new community or surrogate family, as it happens of mainly non-observant Jews. I think it also the case that often Gandhi just wanted to be alone and do his own thing. But such are the pressures of family life in India this was impossible. He and Kallenbach were of an age. Quite possibly there was a homoerotic element in his feelings towards body-builder Kallenbach, and self-evidently there is nothing shameful in that, and Lelyveld makes a plausible case for this being 'the most intimate, also ambiguous relationship in his life-time'. (p 88) Kallenbach became jealous of Gandhi's rival affection for Sonja Schlesin and Charlie Andrews. Indicatively, he suggests that Kallenbach 'is more than an acolyte, less than an equal'. (p 94) It seems far more plausible that all that suggestive correspondence between Upper House (Gandhi) and Lower House (Kallenbach) is that between teacher and disciple. If we follow Erikson's analysis of Gandhi as a passive-aggressive personality, then what greater success could Gandhi hope to achieve as teacher than in persuading this wealthy Johannesburg architect to abandon his self-indulgent life-style, to follow Gandhi's strict dietary regime and eventually with Kallenbach setting up Tolstoy farm to share in a laboratory for the working out of those twin ideals of Gandhi, of satyagraha and brahmacharya ? Was there somehow an even greater triumph in Kallenbach being a European ? Interestingly in the ashram Kallenbach became an observant Jew again and was won over to Zionism. Through his German nationality (the family came from East Prussia), on arrival in England in 1914 he was detained as an alien and sent to the Isle of Man and so unable to join Gandhi on his return to India. After the war he reverted to being an architect in Johannesburg and when finally he and Gandhi did meet

up again in Bombay in May 1937 Kallenbach came as a propagandist for Israel, inspired in part by a visit to the Gandhian-style kibbutz. Gandhi said the Jews must wait on the goodwill of the Arabs.

### **The 1913 Satyagraha**

Lelyveld makes a very persuasive case of seeing the satyagraha of 1913 as the determining event, more so than the Salt march, in Gandhi's political life. He is fond of the counter-factual and speculates had Gandhi returned to India beforehand then he would have become but one of many gurus in an ashram seeking public attention. He also suggests that had he stayed in South Africa then Jinnah would have remained a Congress nationalist and there would have been a smooth transfer of power to India's westernised elite under Nehru. Gandhi was very slow indeed to reach out to that Indian majority of the indentured. The Durban based journalist, P S Aiyer, editor of the *African Chronicle*, berated him for not addressing the £3 annual tax that Smuts, in breach of an agreement, was going to impose on the ex-indentured and, indeed, of swanning off to Johannesburg and enjoying his cosmopolitan friends there rather than defending the interests of Indians in Natal. Lelyveld suggests that Gandhi 'didn't seize the tax issue. It can almost be said to have seized him'. So to 'the climax of his last act in South Africa'. (p 103) Lelyveld sets the satyagraha in its larger context, with that effective general strike in Johannesburg by the white proletariat, Smuts and Botha surrendering to their pressure, and Gandhi, witness to this successful struggle, staying at the time with the Tamil leader, Thambi Naidoo, and Tamils formed the largest element of the indentured in the Natal coal-fields and on the sugar plantations. For the first time Gandhi found himself the leader of a mass movement. Lelyveld has a wonderful description of Gandhi feeding the miners in Charlestown, setting 'a new standard to Indian leadership, or political leadership anywhere'. (p 116) There were those heroic marches across the border into the Transvaal and courting arrest. The strike spread to the sugar plantations and on one of these, Mt Edgecombe, owned by Gandhi's friend, Meredith Campbell, eight Indians were shot dead.

Gandhi's reflections on the satyagraha are very suggestive. He deplored the way the indentured on the plantations had resorted to burning fields and fighting with sticks. His instinctive caution at unleashing civil struggle is very clear. Indeed he wondered if by calling the strike he was not himself indirectly a murderer. He called

it a religious struggle, less because those marching into the Transvaal did so chanting the names of Ram and Krishna but because of the sacrifice they were ready to make. But Gandhi never fought shy of seeing a political struggle as religious. Gandhi had already come into contact with the indentured through his ambulance brigades, some 800 out of 1100 from that constituency. He wrongly saw them as untouchable – in fact the majority were lower caste – but it was a vital link in shaping Gandhi's obsessive concern with untouchability. But Gandhi only saw himself as their representative: he did not endorse a subaltern revolt from below. All these hesitations were to be carried forward into the struggle in India.

And Lelyveld addresses the great issue about Gandhi's time in South Africa. Had he any sense of the plight of the black African majority? Did he fear if he were to confront South African whites with their oppression they would just turn round and point an accusing finger at inequalities within the Indian community? Did he alternatively intimate some possibility of a rainbow society when he took up the struggle of both Indian and black labour and indeed found himself sharing imprisonment with blacks in 1908? Lelyveld argues, however, that Gandhi failed to grasp an opportunity to reach out to an early leader of the emergent African Congress in John Dube, representative of a small Christianized land-owning black elite, whose progressive school at Inanda was so near to the Phoenix settlement. He had a real chance to form an alliance with Dube following the Zulu Bhambatha rebellion of 1906 but did not do so. He did not speak out against the Land Act of 1913 which reserved 92% of the land to the whites. Lelyveld clearly struggles with what he sees as a failure in Gandhi's political vision in South Africa.

In the same way as he marginalises narrative in South Africa Lelyveld only sketches the political history of the Indian freedom struggle in favour of focussing on the three central concerns of Gandhi during the rest of his life in India, Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability, and khadi. He does so less in terms of doctrine, more in terms of Gandhi's personal behaviour. Jonathan Glover in his *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (1999) has shown how tribalism was the source of all evil in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. How Gandhi confronted communalism, another expression of tribalism, was a huge test of his leadership. Here for obvious reasons the rival claims of sarvodaya (social uplift) and swaraj (freedom) overlapped. This was one issue that had to be addressed before India

could be free. At one stage Gandhi seemed to argue that the other two might have to wait their hour till after independence, though increasingly as he became ever more disillusioned he seems to be saying that India did not deserve to be free till it had addressed its social malaise.

### **Mohammed Ali**

Imaginatively Lelyveld highlights Gandhi's relationship with Mohammed Ali as a way of characterising his engagement with the Hindu-Muslim conflict. His side of the bargain was by adopting the distinctly strange Khilafat programme. Virtually nobody saw any future in perpetuating the Turkish Caliphate, let alone the Turks themselves, shortly to turn to secular minded Kemal Ataturk and its abolition. But Gandhi saw it as a cause which could unite the Indian communities. Winning the secular-minded Oxford-educated Mohammed Ali over to the causes of khadi, let alone cow protection, was every bit as successful a conversion process as had been his relationship with Kallenbach. But of course it did not last. Muhammed Ali broke with Congress in 1928 – he was never a full convert anyway to nonviolence. Gandhi began to surrender to increasing despair at surmounting the communal divide.

### **Ambedkar**

So he focussed instead on untouchability. Here was an even more entrenched form of social division. Lelyveld faults Gandhi though for the caution with which he initially addressed their social exclusion. Did Gandhi at any stage seek the comprehensive abolition of caste ? Was his focus on untouchability a means merely of incorporating the untouchables within the caste hierarchy, a means of shoring up the system ? With the Vykam temple satyagraha in Kerala he was slow to be involved and then only sought untouchable use of access roads to the temple. Did he in fact come, Lelyveld asks, more as mediator than crusader, anxious not to offend the high castes, concerned at his encouraging social conflict ? It was a timidity which was fatally to impair his relationship with Ambedkar, in many obvious ways a natural ally in this struggle for social equality.

Gandhi, Lelyveld points out, had never met an untouchable intellectual before and was out of his depth. B R Ambedkar was academically highly qualified and a brilliant constitutional lawyer. He was the son of an army quartermaster and from the upwardly





mobilising Mahar untouchable sub-caste. A little oddly he took his name from a Brahmin teacher and his second wife was a Brahmin but then alliance between Brahmins and untouchables was to be part of India's new emerging democracy. They had met for the first time in Bombay in August 1931 shortly before their departure for the Round Table Conference and then again in London. The second meeting was a disaster and Gandhi was gravely shaken. Both now were sparring to be seen as representatives of the

untouchables, Harijans or Children of God to Gandhi's language, but their own preferred name was to be Dalits. In a way they were ships passing in the night, Gandhi increasingly wedded to temple entry, Ambedkar, initially an enthusiast, now seeing here a kind of caste condescension towards his community and increasingly driven to reject caste altogether and seek genuine social equality.

But the issue that prompted Gandhi's Poona fast, by then a prisoner in Yeravda gaol, having renewed civil disobedience on his return to India, was the Communal award of 1932 of separate electorates to the Dalits. Given the Congress acceptance of the same for the Muslims in 1916, confirmed in the Montford reforms of 1919, though later rejected by Congress in the Motilal Nehru report, here for Gandhi was another form of vivisection and he quite possibly would have gone all the way. After seven days he prevailed. In fact Ambedkar both won a kind of primary separate electorate through



the Dalits electing their own candidates prior to their selection in a general poll and obtained far more reserved seats than under the original award. But politically in the short run Gandhi had won. Ambedkar never rose above being a provincial politician though ironically it was Gandhi's recommendation that led him to be Law Minister in Nehru's cabinet. Between November 1933 and August 1934 Gandhi undertook an all-India campaign against untouchability: 'there's really nothing in Indian annals to which it can be compared'. (p 242) Not that it was not heavily attacked by both Socialists as irrelevant and the Hindu orthodox sanatanists as heretical. In the long run, however, Ambedkar prevailed. The Dalit struggle was to be a subalternist one led by its own people. In the village of Sevagram, as Lelyveld discovered on his visit, the statue to be found on the sports ground is not of Gandhi but Ambedkar.

Gandhi now turned his attention to village India. This of course was equally to address untouchability, at its most repressive in the village. He set up another ashram, Sevagram in the village of Segaon, near Wardha in Central India. At the time he was 'physically and emotionally near the edge' (p 257) He broke off all formal links with Congress to devote himself to tackling rural poverty. Admittedly today this is an area with India's highest suicide rate of indebted farmers. Was it all a hopeless quest? Lelyveld feels otherwise: 'what stands out is the commitment rather than the futility'.(p 263)

## **Noakhali**

Gandhi, Lelyveld claims, 'was never more elusive or complex than he is in the final decade of his life'. (p 283) Once again the author's focus is more on Gandhi the private person than his role in public events during this endgame of Empire. Not that he doesn't have shrewd points to make on these, pointing out how in the Quit India satyagraha Gandhi accepted the need for a free India to meet Japanese aggression with armed force and that the premise of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks in 1944 were of a separate Pakistan. But given his interest in the friendship with Kallenbach, unsurprisingly he focuses on Gandhi's highly controversial stay in Noakhali in East Bengal.

Of course in Noakhali Gandhi was desperately trying to restore the synthesis he had successfully achieved between brahmacharya and satyagraha. If he failed to sublimate his sexuality then he would be an imperfect brahmachari and he would lack the spiritual force to

prevail in the political struggle. As far back as 1936, possibly prompted by Margaret Sanger's visit to the ashram with her modern ideas on female sexuality, Gandhi discovered sublimation was no longer working. There was nothing new about that much criticised experiment with his grand-niece, Manu, during his time in Noakhali. Maybe we do not need to know the full details of that experiment, carried out in full public gaze, with even the President of Congress's wife, Sucheta Kripalani, being invited to join in the experiment. It is much more important to know that the visit was designed to show that Hindus and Muslims could live together even where the Hindus were a minority and a land-owning elite. Lelyveld rightly stresses Gandhi 'was making himself a hostage not only to the cause of peace but that of an undivided India'. (p 295) It is fascinating to learn, however, that Gandhi had never heard of Freud and one wonders how differently he might have reflected on the enormous and dangerous demands made on the superego by sublimation had he done so.

### **Assassination**

As holocaust threatened with the imminence of partition Gandhi almost eagerly anticipated his own death by violence. On leaving Noakhali he went to Bihar, to Lahore but could not be everywhere. His greatest resistance to the communal madness was in Calcutta, sharing a platform with Muslim league maverick Suhrawardy in much the same way he had with Muhammed Ali, and his three day fast brought some sense to the city. So to Delhi, a city being flooded with refugees from the Punjab and with mounting communal violence against its Muslims. He would have preferred to live once again in the Bhangi untouchable bustee but for safety reasons stayed in Birla House. There was another fast in January 1948. Gandhi insisted that Pakistan's share of assets should be transferred. In consequence he was increasingly identified by the Hindu right as a friend of Pakistan and traitor to India. There were plenty of warnings. A bomb exploded in the garden 20 January. The police were aware of the threat from his future assassin, Nathuram Godse. But Gandhi refused permission to search those attending his prayer meetings the better to demonstrate his faith in nonviolence. At the very end he called on Congress to surrender all political office and convert itself into a People's Service League. On the evening of his assassination he was late for prayers, taking time to bring about a closer working relationship between Patel and Nehru. Manu saw the

biretta Godse was carrying but is knocked to the ground. Did he die as he forecast with the word Rama on his lips ? Lelyveld says we cannot know but it became a necessary part of his Mahatmaship.

Very unfortunately some reviewers have used Lelyveld's book to promote their own anti-Gandhi agenda. In the process they have seriously misrepresented its nature. It is true as a journalist Lelyveld has an eye for a good story and his own careful interpretation of such sensitive issues as his friendship with Kallenbach and the Noakhali story can lend itself to sensationalism. By sidelining the grand narrative of the freedom struggle the author has focussed instead on an all too human Gandhi and in consequence we have an even greater sense of his vision and courage. Lelyveld has written a tough and honest book.

Antony Copley is the author of *Gandhi: Against the Tide* (Blackwell 1987, OUP 1993). He is Academic Adviser to the Gandhi Foundation and an Honorary Senior Research Fellow, School of History, University of Kent.

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## Summer Gathering 2011

In 2011 the Gandhi Foundation Summer School and Gathering was held from Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July to Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July inclusive. It was held in the same venue as in 2010, i.e. St Christopher School in Letchworth Garden City, Herfordshire. The school was founded in 1915 by Dr Armstrong Smith, with the aim of creating a community that would encourage the positive development of all capacities within the child: the ethos is based upon principles taught by Krishnamurti of the Theosophists. The accommodation available for the members of the Gathering was in the sixth form residential block, some considerable distance from the main buildings of the school. Camping spaces were also provided.

Each year the intention behind the Summer Gathering remains the same: to form a temporary community in order to have a taste of an ashram-like experience. The days were divided up into various activities. Every morning we would start the formal part of the day after breakfast with a group session. This would begin with a group meditation then be followed by a time for expressing thanks or giving



Esther Klaassen, Linnet Loseby  
and Brian Parker



Trudy and Natasha Lewis  
Linney and Ivo Loseby

praise to some members of the community, for raising any issues that needed to be dealt with and with a time for expressing hopes for the coming day.

As in previous years there were sessions during the morning in which the group held discussions on some aspect of the overall theme. This year the theme of the week was 'Faith and Sustainability'. The format of these sessions is always the same: it starts with a short presentation and is then followed by active participation in discussions with everyone taking part, with a view to identifying lessons for us in our present situations.

The programme of daily sessions was set as follows:

Sunday     *Gandhi: the simple life and care of the environment*

Monday *Why faith ? What do we mean by sustainability ?*

Tuesday *Earth religions – beliefs and practices of indigenous peoples*

Wednesday *Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Islam and Christianity*

Thursday *Eastern religions – Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism*

Friday *Chinese religions – Confucianism, Taoism*

The presentations were given by Arya Bhardwaj on Thursday, Trevor Lewis on Sunday and Wednesday and Graham Davey on the remaining days.



Michael Snellgrove and Arya Bhardwaj

Ken Scott presided over the kitchen as in previous years, ably assisted by his fiancée Vanessa, plus assorted helpers from the rest the community. As always the food was vegetarian, excellent quality, and plentiful.





Esther Klaassen and Linnet



Trudy Lewis and Kush Patel

On most mornings a session of yoga instruction was available at 7am for early risers.

Traditionally the afternoons have been left free for people to engage in some form of craft activity, such as painting, knitting, and other pursuits. Graham Davey made some loaves of bread, as is his custom.

Michael Snellgrove had brought his 16mm film projector and showed several films from his collection, mainly in the evenings.

On the final evening we held the usual 'concert party.' This consists of a miscellany of songs, poetry readings, recitations and music.

In 2011 fewer people attended the Gathering than in previous years, but all who did attend contributed in making it a lively and rewarding success.

*Trevor Lewis*



(Back L to R) Nat Sharma, Adam Lewis, Vanessa Mobiglia, Graham Davey, Michael Snellgrove, Trevor Lewis, Brain Parker, Chris Conisbee  
(Middle L to R) Esther Klaassen, Trudy Lewis, Natasha Lewis, Mark Hoda, Kush Patel, Hester Conisbee (Front) Linnet and Ruth Loseby, Ivo Loseby



## **The Gandhi Way in Colombia**

*Esteban Coronel Salazar*

The Mahatma Gandhi Foundation is a nonprofit institution in Medellin, Colombia, with no political or religious affiliation, dedicated to the practice of nonviolence, through leadership youth training and promoting awareness and peaceful coexistence.

This foundation has as its institutional vision a society that practices nonviolence as a permanent way of life and the only alternative to conflict. Its mission is to encourage the practice of truth, nonviolence and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi through our example of life and the promotion of peaceful coexistence to achieve a fairer society every day. This is supported through the training of young people in truth and nonviolence with emphasis on children, youth, teens and social leaders



and the deepening of knowledge on the causes and consequences of violence and peaceful coexistence.

Values like life, truth, forgiveness, equity and freedom are the components that direct our work and underlie projects that makes part of the foundation.

In almost ten years of operation, the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation has given about 120 scholarships for young people and all of them have been trained as social leaders grounded in the philosophy of nonviolence, which turn them into multipliers of this philosophy in the city.

The main objective of the Foundation is to increase higher education levels and nonviolence in poor communities in Medellin, which seeks to create local development spotlights through the professionalization of youth from disadvantaged communities. This is accomplished through the award of scholarships for university studies, which subsidize the whole academic training process of the young until they reach professional level. In addition to this, the foundation provides a complete program of additional training in leadership for nonviolence. This is in response to the need to train not only persons academically capable of transforming their environment but also train persons intimately connected with the human concept of development; this implies the apprehension of key elements for peaceful coexistence such as Peace, Truth, Tolerance, Respect, Teamwork, and so on, which are components that are definitely an integral part of any community development process and today are urgently required in the social structures of our regions.

Our slogan is "PLANTING TO SERVE" which is the premise of our management. We try to follow this consistently through different inclusive projects, which have allowed us to change the lives of many people, and our decision is to continue to do so with the same tenacity and strength than when we started, almost 10 years ago.

For many years Colombia and especially Medellin has suffered the most indiscriminate violence: drug cartels in the 80's, followed by the phenomenon of urban guerrillas and militias, after the wave of paramilitary blocks and in recent years the "combos" and drug gangs. There are believed to be around 300 criminal groups in the city.

For this reason, to create a space within the city to identify this philosophy is vital, so the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation from a humane proposal, seeks to articulate the citizenship to a deep internalization of the idea of resisting violent attitudes with

attitudes as simple as adopting the culture of respect and tolerance in the neighborhood communities, in public places and anywhere that requires a minimal standard of public sharing, with special reference that the example begins at home – it is necessary to turn ourselves into the example that we want to see in our community. This is part of the teachings of nonviolence.

The Foundation has as one of its top premises the effective establishment of a society free of violence and intolerance, and that's why we are inviting all who are interested in civic life and peace to join in this effort, support us and become with us, co-authors of this difficult process of human development, which could become a reliable alternative in the consolidation of peace and nonviolence spaces in the city, a city that has a long history of subordination to violence and social conflict and that every day shows his disagreement with these situations that haven't allowed us to have the city we all dream.

Peace and Nonviolence is not a utopia, it is a way of life that makes visible the human race's ability to seize their destiny and the society that wishes well not only for us but for all beings that surround us and that justify their existence on this earth.

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## **Schumacher Centenary Festival**

Judging by the eight hundred passionate activists who filled Colston Hall in Bristol on 8 and 9 October, the ideas of Gandhi-inspired economist, E F Schumacher about sustainability and human scale appropriate technology, are still hugely persuasive and relevant today.

Both the Gandhi Foundation, and its sister organisation Jeevika Trust which Schumacher helped to establish, were well represented at the Schumacher Festival, which was organised to mark the centenary of his birth. The Foundation and Jeevika ran a joint stall which generated a lot of interest from delegates and Jeevika ran a workshop on how Schumacher inspires its work to address vast rural poverty in India through village livelihood projects.

As well as workshops, film screenings, poetry and music, a diverse range of plenary speakers explored different aspects of Schumacher's ideas and how they are inspiring environmental campaigners today.

Satish Kumar, editor of *Resurgence*, spoke of how Schumacher brought ecology – working with nature – and economy together through his thinking. The lawyer Polly Higgins, spoke about a judicial campaign to add ecocide – defined as

crimes against the earth – to the existing crimes against peace. Caroline Lucas MP, leader of the Green Party, said it was difficult to think of a more economically and spiritually important book than Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*. It provides a positive agenda for change which the world cannot afford not to act on given the climate change, economic and population growth challenges it faces. Paul Blom, head of the ethical bank, Triodos, spoke about how the current economic crisis was caused by the huge debt entirely created by banks and the financial system. He called for the recreation of a diverse financial system based on a number of small, ethical, transparent banks with big networks. The environmental activist, Bill McKibbin spoke about the devastating consequences of climate change and his youth campaign to address it; 350.org. Rob Hopkins spoke of local transition town initiatives up and down the country, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Academic Tim Jackson explained how Schumacher was inspired by Buddhist economics.

In the concluding speech Diana Schumacher said:

One of the impressions I have from today is that we can no longer go on with 'component level thinking', and that every decision we make has to have at its roots 'systems level thinking'. How does what I do today affect the entire system to which I belong? One of the things which Fritz Schumacher used to say was "The secret is to look at the world and see it whole", not in isolated units or little fragments. I should like to read a brief quotation from him, which seems fairly relevant. It comes from *Small is Beautiful*.

*Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complicated and more violent. It takes a touch of genius, and a lot of courage, to move in the opposite direction.*

I think what we have heard from most of the speakers is the need to move in that opposite direction to which Schumacher referred – in fact all of you here seem to be moving in the opposite direction already! I think this room is full of 'red corpuscles' and activists, and we now have to go out and make the change which was the mission of Schumacher's life.

We have just heard some quite revolutionary ideas coming from a green lawyer, a green politician and a green banker. If Fritz Schumacher was mildly suspicious of any categories of people, I think that you could count these three professions in. However, I think he would have been absolutely delighted to hear these somewhat challenging and controversial ideas coming out of the mouths of green lawyers, politicians and bankers. There has recently been a very significant 'sea change' and we should all be very encouraged by this enormous shift in consciousness. It gives one hope doesn't it?

Conference speeches, delegate feedback and coverage can be found at [www.schumacher.org.uk](http://www.schumacher.org.uk)

# Pax Gandhiana

Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture 2011

*Antony Copley*

In a wonderfully grave and meditative manner Professor Anthony Parel delivered the Gandhi Annual lecture for 2011 in the Nehru Centre, London, 13 October. His title: Pax Gandhiana: is Gandhian Non-violence Compatible with the Coercive State?

First, let me introduce our lecturer.

An Indian Christian from Kerala, Professor Parel's has been a distinguished academic career as a political scientist. On completion of a doctorate at Harvard he taught at the University of Calgary and, although there were to be several Visiting Professorships, there he remained loyal till retirement in 1993.

In his academic career as a political scientist Parel paid special attention inter alia to Machiavelli and Gandhi. I find this a fascinating combination for in a way they are binary figures, Machiavelli known for arguing that ends justified means, Gandhi insisting that means shaped ends. But then both sought ultimate forms of integrity, Machiavelli Virtù, Gandhi the Truth. I can think of few more worthwhile ways of pursuing a career as a political scientist.

It is always tricky knowing where generations begin and end, but in our lifetime we can look back to an earlier generation of Gandhi scholars, Raghavan Iyer, Joan Bondurant, Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph, Eric Erikson to the fore, and a later one, and indisputably Anthony Parel is a leading interpreter in this contemporary generation.

His reputation as a Gandhi scholar lies considerably on two texts, his critical edition of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and his remarkable *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony* (Cambridge University Press 2006). I note incidentally that both appeared in retirement which somehow makes them all the more impressive.

It is not that Parel builds on the ideas of that earlier generation. To the contrary his interpretation constitutes what philosophers call a paradigm shift. No account has so persuasively explained Gandhi's commitment to the political in terms of the Indian value of *artha*, politics and economics. It is an interpretation that invites an entirely

new consideration of the relationship between a this-worldly and an other-worldly spirituality.

In an earlier talk on Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* Parel drew a distinction between political philosophy in India and an Indian political philosophy. He advocates the development of the latter though still insisting on the study of western political philosophy. He saw Gandhi's text as seminal in its emergence. The development of an Indian political philosophy clearly also lies in Parel's writings. His lecture was both to suggest further paradigm shifts on the conventional wisdom on Gandhi's ideas on pacifism and the state, as well as making a further fascinating contribution to that Indian political philosophy.

Parel began by drawing a contrast between Pax Britannica and Pax Gandhiana, the former based on force, the latter, consent. He reminded us that Machiavelli had seen Pax Romana as based on arms first and then laws. But Parel takes the distinction between force and consent in a crucial direction, to quote: "coercion based on consent is compatible with Gandhian non-violence". We need a new equilibrium between consent, coercion, nonviolence and the state.

In 1944 Gandhi, a prisoner in the Aga Khan's palace, had attempted to write a thesis on nonviolence in India but then – and Parel sees this as an astonishing admission from the apostle of nonviolence: "But as I proceeded with my writing, I could not go on. I had to stop"... Why ? : "because he realized India in her present condition was not ready to become a nonviolent country, neither philosophically nor socially nor politically". In his lecture Parel expands on how Gandhi tried to overcome this limitation, by providing, firstly, a new philosophy of nonviolence, secondly, an account of what an appropriate civil society would look like, and, thirdly, a description of the nature of a Gandhian coercive state.

Point of departure for a new philosophy of nonviolence is to attribute ahimsa no longer exclusively to an Indian spiritual elite of yogis but as a virtue that any good citizen could obtain to, no longer a monastic virtue but a civic one. It is a question of pursuing "the ethic of right action": "Gandhi repudiates the distinction between this-worldly and other-worldly activities as being totally irrelevant to today's conception of action". Here is Parel's highly original reinterpretation of *artha*.

He then introduces another fascinating differentiation between religion and what he calls 'deep ethics'. "Doctrines tend to separate,

ethics tend to unite.” Gandhi saw in all religions a golden rule, a pure ethics, non-sectarian, a universal ethics that puts paid to any divide between the secular and the religious. His inspiration for engaging in this-worldly activity had been his guru, Gokhale, and, rather surprisingly, the prophet Isaiah. In his friendship with C F Andrews Gandhi felt here was a coming together of this new deep ethics.

So how to characterise a civic nationalism which could embrace this new philosophy of nonviolence ? It could not be based on ethnicity or religion, it had to see its citizens as individuals, as bearers of fundamental rights and capable of swaraj. Five true men could pave the way, “humans in whom true humanity has fully developed. True humanity supplies the link between secular civic nationalism and deep spiritual life”.

The tragedy of Jinnah and Savarkar and, Parel feels, South Asia generally lies in this failure to differentiate between religious doctrines and ethics: “where religion becomes a complete social order, it becomes less and less personal, more and more national, and more and more violent”.

Only a few are capable of what Gandhi called ‘heroic non-violence’, acting in that Jesus tradition of vicarious suffering.

Parel then addressed the obstacles in India in the way of realising this version of civic nationalism, untouchability and caste prejudice. How to overcome the fear of ritual pollution ? It is here that Parel sees Gandhi making a decisive connection with the third stage of his own argument: “the battle against caste prejudice could never be won without the support of the coercive state. Ethics alone was not enough”.

So to the critical third phase of the lecture: “Gandhi’s distinctive contribution to the theory of civic nonviolence is that its effectiveness depends on the coercive state”. To Gandhi our very embodied self entails a level of violence. Somewhat opaquely Parel also claims “without the mediation of the state the pursuit of rights leads to violence”. But then comes one major caveat: we also have a right to civil disobedience: “citizens have the right to exercise soul-force in their dealings with the state. Satyagraha is based on this assumption”. We are primarily spiritual beings.

And here Parel opens up a new paradigm on what Gandhi had to say on national self-defence. He sees an old philosophy of non-violence as putting “on shelf the duty of self-defence by military means”. He quotes a revealing commentary by Gandhi at the Round

Table Conference in 1931 on the need for a nation state to have the means of military self-defence: “I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of defence. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark upon responsible government although I cannot control my defence .... That is my fundamental position.” All this sets him apart from a traditional pacifist like Leo Tolstoy. He is more in line with Immanuel Kant’s vision of a league of republican states as a zone of peace. But, even so, Gandhi did modify his views after World War 11 and the emergence of nuclear weapons, saw the necessity of progressive disarmament and spoke in terms more of a nonviolent national civil self defence. And Gandhi’s version of a coercive state was always one of minimal interventionism, for his emphasis was always on individual initiative.

In conclusion, Parel argues it is not enough as Anna Hazare is doing just to attack political corruption, the real enemy is the violence practised “daily on the basis of religion, caste or ethnicity”. The need remains for “ ‘five true Indians’ ‘with whom there is neither Hindu nor Muslim nor any other’, or with whom there is neither high caste nor out-caste. Pax Gandhiana depends on them. May their tribe increase.”

In a Question and Answer session questioners worried away at Gandhi’s concept of national self-defence, wondering how that was compatible with the advice he gave to the Czechs and Jews to offer merely nonviolent passive resistance to Nazism but also drawing attention to the post-war Gandhian style Shanti Sena. Might Gandhi have tolerated a more interventionist coercive state in the light of the post-war Welfare State ?

A full version of the lecture is available on the Gandhi Foundation website.

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### **David Maxwell**

We are sorry to report that David Maxwell, Trustee of the GF, has decided to step down from the Executive Committee of the GF for health reasons. David organised many of the Multifaith Celebrations held yearly in January and was also an active participant in many Summer Gatherings. He wrote the Gandhi Foundation publication *Muriel Lester, Gandhi and Kingsley Hall* which is available from the Editor for £3.50. We hope that David’s health will improve sufficiently for him to resume active involvement in the future.

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