

## **Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering 2012**

Saturday 28 July - Saturday 4 August

The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire OX14 4AF

Theme: ***The Power of Nonviolence***

A variety of accommodation is available including camping

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## **Gandhi Foundation AGM**

Saturday 12 May at 2pm

at Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3 3HJ  
followed by photographer Brijesh Patel 3-4pm talking about his project

***In the Footsteps of Gandhi***

[www.brijesh.patel.com](http://www.brijesh.patel.com)

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# Gandhi and War

## *George Paxton*

Professor Anthony Parel in his Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture 2011, *Pax Gandhiana* (which can be read on the GF website), asks to what extent Gandhi's nonviolence is compatible with the coercion which any state inevitably exercises. He claims that "coercion based on consent is compatible with Gandhian nonviolence". But when coercion takes the form of physical violence, especially the extreme violence employed by armies, is that really compatible with Gandhian ethics ?

Gandhi spoke and wrote a great deal as the approximately 100 volumes of his Collected Works illustrates. But he was no political philosopher, rather a man of action so his recorded words are strongly linked to the specific circumstances of the time and place they were uttered. It is relatively easy to find quotations which express contradictory positions.

Restricting ourselves to the issue of war, there were three occasions up to 1914 when Gandhi participated in war in some manner. The first was the Boer War (in 1899 and 1900), the second was a Zulu rebellion (1906), and the third was when he was in London in 1914. However in all three instances his participation amounted to raising ambulance units of Indians which I would see as very different from actual combat, although Gandhi did not personally make that distinction. The sole occasion when he did contribute to the armed forces was when in 1918 he tried to recruit Indians to fight on the British side. Without going into the reasons he gave for this, many of his friends and colleagues severely criticised him for this action which ran counter to his long standing advocacy of nonviolent action. Whatever the reasons in this instance (he gave several), the following decades saw him take an increasingly strong stance against war.

As Parel points out Gandhi spoke in favour of armed defence on occasion. But I believe that this can be explained by his recognition that most Indians (or people in general) were and are not pacifists like himself and therefore they have a right, or even sometimes a duty, to serve in the armed forces if their country is attacked or threatened. In his speech to the Second Round Table Conference in 1931, which Parel quotes from, he was representing Congress which in general held a much more conventional position than Gandhi himself. Military defence was however considered by Gandhi to be very much an inferior ethical position. He did not change his position of opposition to violence and war after the Second World War, he had for long held this position. Admittedly, confusion could arise because he held these two positions which many people would see as contradictory, ie absolute opposition to war as the ideal which he always advocated, and support for the right to have military defence for those less advanced in their understanding.

To illustrate Gandhi's long held position on armed force here are some quotations:

*Under Swaraj of my dream there is no necessity for arms at all.*

Young India 17/11/1921

*I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest causes.* Young India 11/12/1924

*I do justify entire nonviolence, and consider it possible in relation between man and man and nations and nations; but it is not "a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness". On the contrary, the nonviolence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness.*

Young India 8/10/1925

Referring to ambulance work in South Africa:

*My repugnance to war was as strong then as it is today; and I could not then have, and would not have, shouldered a rifle.* Young India 5/11/1925

*But the light within me is steady and clear. There is no escape for any of us save through Truth and nonviolence. I know that war is wrong, is an unmitigated evil. I know too that it has to go. I firmly believe that freedom won through bloodshed or fraud is no freedom. Would that all the acts alleged against me were found to be wholly indefensible rather than that by any act nonviolence was held to be compromised or that I was ever thought to be in favour of violence or untruth in any shape or form.*

Young India 13/9/1928

*I would not yield to anyone in my detestation of war.* Young India 7/2/1929

In Switzerland after the Round Table Conference:

Q. *How could a disarmed neutral country allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last war we should have been ruined.*

A. *At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool I must answer this question in the only manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country to allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. But there are two ways in common between soldiers of war and soldiers of nonviolence, and if I had been a citizen of Switzerland and a President of the Federal State, what I would have done would be to refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, by enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland, you would have presented a living wall of men and women and children, and inviting the invaders to walk over your corpses.*

Young India 31/12/1931

In the 1930s Gandhi advised several governments and their citizens to resist aggression by nonviolent means. This included Abyssinians, Czechoslovaks, Chinese, Jews in Germany, Poles, Norwegians, French, Britons, as well as Indians.

The following is typical:

*I shall take up the Abyssinian question first. I can answer it only in terms of active, resistant nonviolence. Now nonviolence is the activist force on earth, and it is my conviction that it never fails. But if the Abyssinians had adopted the attitude of nonviolence of the strong, ie the nonviolence which breaks to pieces but never bends, Mussolini would have had no interest in Abyssinia. Thus if they had simply said: 'You are welcome to reduce us to dust or ashes, but you will not find one Abyssinian ready to cooperate with you', what could Mussolini have done ? He did not want a desert. Mussolini wanted submission and not defiance, and if he had met with the quiet, dignified and nonviolent defiance that I have described, he would certainly have been obliged to retire. Of course it is open to anyone to say that human nature has not been known to rise to such heights. But if we have made unexpected progress in physical sciences, why may we do less in the science of the soul ?*

Harijan 14/5/1938

A different situation faced the Jews as they were not a country but a minority in Germany. Their plight produced one of Gandhi's most powerful statements:

*But the German persecution of the Jews seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler seems to have gone. And he is doing it with religious zeal. For, he is propounding a new religion of exclusive and militant nationalism in the name of which any inhumanity becomes an act of humanity to be rewarded here and hereafter. The crime of an obviously mad but intrepid youth is being visited upon his whole race with unbelievable ferocity. If ever there could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton destruction of a whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war.*

*... Can the Jews resist this organised and shameless persecution ? Is there a way to preserve their self-respect, and not to feel helpless or forlorn ? I submit that there is.*

*... If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German might, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this I should not wait for the Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest were bound to follow my example. If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they cannot be worse off than now. And suffering voluntarily*

*undergone will bring them an inner strength and joy which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can.*

Harijan 26/11/1938

In 1940 Gandhi addressed the British:

*I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the war. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just. Harijan 6/7/1940*

This was written as the Battle of Britain was about to commence yet how accurate the prediction of the war's development proved to be.

Of course what Gandhi advocated for other countries he advocated for the Indians although they had no government of their own:

*I have written these lines for the European powers. But they are meant for ourselves. If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in nonviolence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms but we will defend it with the force of nonviolence? Harijan 22/6/1940*

The previous year after the war in Europe had begun he had written:

*So far as I can read the [Congress] Working Committee's mind after a fairly full discussion, the members think that Congressmen are unprepared for nonviolent defence against armed invasion.*

*This is tragic. Surely the means adopted for driving an enemy from one's house must, more or less, coincide with those to be adopted for keeping him out of the house. If anything, the latter process must be easier. The fact, however, is that our fight has not been one of nonviolent resistance of the strong. It has been one of passive resistance of the weak.*

*... My position is, therefore, confined to myself alone. I have to find out whether I have any fellow-traveller along the lonely path. If I am in the minority of one, I must try to make converts. Whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments is to court suicide. With the loss of India to nonviolence the last hope of the world will be gone. I must live up to the creed I have professed for the last half a century, and hope to the last breath that India will make nonviolence her creed ... Harijan 14/10/1939*

Nearly a year after WWII began Gandhi wrote:  
*The present war is the saturation point in violence. It spells to my mind also its doom. Daily I have testimony of the fact that Ahimsa was never before appreciated by mankind as it is today. All the testimony from the West that I continue to receive points in the same direction. The Congress has pledged itself to Ahimsa however limited. I invite the correspondent and doubters like him to shed their doubts and plunge confidently into the sacred sacrificial fire of Ahimsa.* Harijan 11/8/1940

A week later:  
*I believe all war to be wholly wrong.* Harijan 18/8/1940

He continued in this vein until he was arrested in August 1942 after the launch of the Quit India campaign and remained incarcerated until May 1944. After the war ended he wrote:  
*If the Government had not arrested me in 1942 I would have shown how to fight Japan by nonviolence.* Harijan 9/6/1946

A few months before his assassination this report appeared:  
*A friend had asked if the division of the army and the retention of British officers had Gandhiji's approval. The friend should first ask whether Gandhiji approved of the army at all. As it was, the military expenditure in free India would probably be more, not less, than before. Gandhiji could never be a party to it. He viewed the military with apprehension. Could it be that India would also have to pass through the stage of military rule? For years they had said that they did not want any army. He stood by that statement even today, but the others did not.* Harijan 3/8/1947

At an interview at Scottish Church College:  
*One of the scientist members of the staff then asked Gandhiji what scientific men should do if they were now asked by the free Indian Government to engage in researches in furtherance of war and the atom bomb? Gandhiji promptly replied, "Scientists to be worth the name should resist such a State unto death".* Harijan 24/8/1947

I suggest that we hear the true Gandhi in these quotations; certainly the Gandhi that I admire. How far India has travelled away from the path of Gandhi! Of course his message is for everyone irrespective of nationality.

### Postscript

These quotations are taken from the two volume *Nonviolence in Peace and War* published by Navajivan Publishing House in Ahmedabad, the first volume published in 1942 and the second in 1949. Navajivan ('new life') Trust was founded by Gandhi in 1929 to spread his ideas. It is a pity that this particular title has long been out of print.

# Revisiting Gandhi and Tolstoy

*Margaret Chatterjee*

Much has been written about the relation between Gandhi and Tolstoy (See Pyarelal's *The Early Phase*, vol.1, Ahmedabad 1965, for a detailed discussion of Gandhi's response to *The Kingdom of God is Within You*) with a stress often made either on influence or comparison. It is risky to speak of any individual having influenced Gandhi because he tended to find what he had already thought out on his own, confirmed in what he read. The few reflections which follow are by way of a postscript, some of them echoing what I have written about in detail elsewhere and some things which have struck me more recently.

Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* was read by Gandhi the very year he was put off the train at Maritzburg station and he speaks of having his opinion about nonviolence confirmed. This is put succinctly by B R Nanda as follows: "in Tolstoy he found a writer whose views elaborated his own inchoate beliefs" (*Mahatma Gandhi* p123). In his autobiography Gandhi refers to the "independent thinking, profound morality and the truthfulness of the book". (*Autobiography*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad p14).

The gulf between the inward Kingdom and what prevailed outside was writ large both in India under colonial rule and in Tsarist Russia. Gandhi's labours involved him in the throes of politics, although he never neglected the constructive work carried on *pari passu*. Tolstoy was not involved in politics but he exposed practices in Tsarist Russia which had the blessing of the Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. He was excommunicated, many of his writings were suppressed by the censor and his secretary was arrested. It was Lewis W Ritch who wrote to Tolstoy on the occasion of the arrest and informed Gandhi about it. Ritch was an articled clerk in Gandhi's Johannesburg office.

In Gandhi's day a major similarity between India and Russia was the vastness of their peasant populations. This may still be the case notwithstanding collectivisation and other subsequent developments in Russia's economy, if we compare the rural sector in both countries. This reflection introduces the role of the peasant prophet Timofei Mikhailovitch Bondariev whose ideas, via Tolstoy, eventually reached Gandhi. Gandhi's references to Bondariev are brief (see *Harijan* 29/6/35, 156 and *Harijan* 23/2/47, 36). Typically he maintains that he already knows about the concept of bread labour through reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and that it is present in the third chapter of the *Gita* "where we are told, that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean Bread Labour".

Bondariev's conception of labour is to be found in his work *The Celebration of the Peasant or Industriousness and Idleness* which was written during his exile in Siberia. He advocates an exploitation-free society

in which all would do manual work and the gulf between rich and poor would disappear. In fact his inspiration is Biblical in a very down-to-earth manner. Reading between the lines he has a simple argument. If God neither slumbers nor sleeps this shows that He *works*, taking a rest only on the seventh day. Herein lies Bondariev's identification with the Subbotniki.

Comparing this with both Gandhi and Tolstoy this is what we find. In 1921 Gandhi says: "To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can *dare* (my italics) appear is work and promise of food as wages". (*Young India*, 13/10/21, 325) Tolstoy differs from Bondariev in so far as his own inspiration is found in The Gospels. It strikes me that beneath the thinking sketched all too briefly in the above a strong animus shows itself not only against states, but even more specifically, an animus against *cities*. And, as for the importance of having work, this is writ large in the protests against unemployment voiced in so many countries today.

Professor Margaret Chatterjee has written many works of philosophy and several on Gandhi including *Gandhi's Religious Thought*, *Gandhi and His Jewish Friends*, *Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought*.

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## **A Nonviolent Chechen: Kunta-Khadzhi**

Quite recently when reading about Leo Tolstoy your Editor came across a name that was new to him – Kunta-Khadzhi Kishiev. A short time later GF Friend Bhikkhu Nagase sent him an internet article on this man. What follows is a summary of this as an introduction to someone who ought to be better known.

I do not know when he was born but he was active in mid-19th century in the north Caucasus area. As Russia expanded its empire in the late 18th century it took over the predominantly Muslim area of Chechnya but there were frequent rebellions and in mid-19th century the leading rebel was Imam Shamil whose forces were finally defeated by the Russians in 1858.

In contrast to Shamil, Kunta-Khadzhi sought peaceful ways. He was born to a poor family in the village of Iliskan-Yurt and developed a philosophy which was called Zikrism which was influenced by the Sufi form of Islam. He opposed military resistance to the Tsarist regime advocating instead nonviolent resistance. His ideas became popular among the poor. He rejected the concept of holy war or gazavat, was deeply concerned for the poor, and personally lived an ascetic life. By 1860 his supporters were in excess of 50,000 and he was considered a danger by the Russians so he was arrested in the winter of 1864 and imprisoned where he suffered isolation, cold and hunger. When word of his arrest reached his followers they gathered in thousands to demand his release. They sent delegates three times to the



authorities without success. Then the great crowd advanced unarmed towards troops who opened fire resulting in deaths and many injuries.

Zikrism was banned and many believers were exiled to Siberia. Kunta-Khadzhi himself was sent to life exile in the province of Novgorod where he died in 1867.

Here are some of his teachings:

*Never respond to evil with evil, for it causes more evil. Any evil is against God. God alone has the power to punish the villains and pardon the benefactors. You will defeat the villains and violent by rejecting them, perfecting your soul and your Order. The clearer and more righteous the way you follow, the more difficult you will make it for villains and tyrants. They will succumb to the power of your truth, for they will feel that the Almighty is on your side.*

*A war is preposterous. Distance yourselves from anything reminiscent of war, if the enemy has not come to take your faith and honour from you. Your power lies in your intelligence, patience and justice. The enemy will never stand up to this force and admit defeat sooner or later. No one can overpower you or your truth if you follow your faith with devotion.*

*Refrain from excesses, for excesses, unlike needs, know no limits. It is a shame and a sin to wish what others haven't got, to wish to stand out from others for luxury, smart clothes or a larger place to live in. It is a shame and a sin to have a lot of cattle and not to share them with those starving. It is a shame and a sin to change clothes every day and go by looking loftily on those wearing threadbare clothes for a long time.*

*.. Excessive food, sleep, clothes and living quarters do not bring us closer but keep us away from Allah. Every Muslim is beautiful for his moderation and modesty. Moderation and modesty are the keys opening the gate to God.*

*We have to be more attentive to animals than to people for the animals are unaware of what they are doing. Cattle caught wandering in the kitchen-garden should not be beaten or cursed. They should be cautiously sent away, for they came there through people's negligence. Torturing or tormenting animals is a grave sin. It is a sin to kill innocent birds, insects, all living creatures. All living creatures that do no harm to human beings must be protected by murids.*

*All vegetation is alive too and has a soul of its own. Hide an axe, when you enter a forest, and cut the tree or pole you have come for. Care for every tree, bush or blade of grass. Love them and treat them as good friends. It is a terrible sin to cut a fruit tree, a tree by the riverside or a tree by the roadside, which gives shadow to a traveller on a hot day. Murids should plant trees everywhere and look after them until they grow. Ω*

## **Global Movement to Create a Nonviolent World Launched** *Robert J Burrowes*

On 11 November 2011, the 93rd anniversary of the armistice of World War I, a new movement to end human violence was launched around the world. *The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World* was launched simultaneously in Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and the United States and has already gained signatories in sixteen countries.

The aim of the Nonviolence Charter is to create a worldwide movement to end violence in all of its forms. According to Anahata Giri, the Charter gives voice to the millions of ordinary people around the world who want an end to war, domestic violence, oppression, economic exploitation, environmental destruction, and violence of all other kinds. The Charter is also designed to support and unite the courageous nonviolent struggles of ordinary people all over the world.

People who wish to join the movement are invited to sign a pledge to take personal action to progressively eliminate the violence they inflict on themselves, others and the earth, and to engage in acts of nonviolent resistance and/or creation to bring about a nonviolent future.

A report from a launch organiser in the United States, Tom Shea, included photos taken by a fellow organiser Leonard Eiger. The launch, which took place in Seattle, involved several groups: the Ground Zero Center



for Nonviolent Action, the Puget Sound Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Declaration, Seattle Veterans for Peace Chapter 92, Collective Voices for Peace USA, Collective Voices Ecologiacas Panama, and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Seattle Chapter. Tom reported that it was a great gathering.

After a moment of silence at Seattle's Wall of Remembrance (which lists the names of Washington State military killed in major US wars), Tom reported, "we began our spoken presence". Even amid a cold rain, over twenty people representing a broad variety of peace people assembled. These included four from Occupy Seattle (two of whom were dressed in military garb), the Colgans – who've been holding a vigil in front of the Seattle Federal Building every Tuesday since 2004, in honor of their son killed in Iraq – a woman in a wheelchair and the Buddhist chair of the Seattle Peace Team (a group that does training and is active as peacekeepers in places of conflict in town). "We spoke briefly about The Charter, how individuals can participate ... and shared information about six of the groups present".

The launch in Malaysia was organised by the International Movement for A Just World (JUST International) and was held as part of the Inter-civilizational Youth Engagement Program (IYEP) 5 held at the Shah's Village Hotel in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. It was organised by Professor Chandra Muzaffar, Helen Ng and Nurul Haida Dzulkifli.



On arrival, guests were welcomed, shown the video *Do Unto Others* and given hand-made poppies. This was followed by dance performances of the Indonesian *Thousand Hands Dance* and the Korean *Sorry Sorry*, the music



video *Wonderful World*, and the poem *I want to See What I saw Again*. Guests then heard a talk by Dato Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi on *The Violence of Capital Punishment*, a guitar performance of *That's Why I love You*, a drama performance of *550 Days of Violence*, a talk and video by Mr Khampi on the Zomi Education Centre for Myanmar Refugees, before the song *We are the World*. Finally, *The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World* was read out, with the dramatization of selected clauses, the pledge was taken, the Charter was signed and poppies were placed on a 'field' on their charter banner.

In the Philippines, the launch took place in ten barangay (village) halls in Quezon province and involved the praying of the rosary and lighting of eleven candles. It was organised by Dr Tess Ramiro who is Director of the main nonviolence organisation in the Philippines, Aksyon para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (Action for Peace and Justice) – Center for Active Nonviolence, at the Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila. In her report, Tess indicated that, according to the base groups, the activity was very successful. One base group alone reported an attendance of 100 persons and the event was supported by the parish priest.

The launch in Melbourne, Australia, was organised by Anahata Giri, Anita McKone and myself. Eight ordinary people spoke about why they are going to work to end human violence and what they are going to be doing differently from now on.



The speakers included a diverse range of people from various ethnic and religious backgrounds including Samah Sabawi, a Palestinian born in a

refugee camp in Gaza; Kijana Majok Piel, a Sudanese Muslim who spent 17 years living in a refugee camp in Kenya; Karen Thomson-Anderson, who teaches nonviolent communication; Frank Ruanjie, a Chinese pro-democracy activist now exiled in Australia; Tenzin Lobsang, a Tibetan Buddhist who fled Tibet as a child; John McKenna who relies on a wheelchair for his mobility and works with intellectually disabled people; Isabelle Skaburskis, a Canadian woman who did rehabilitation work (yoga therapy) with women and children who had been sexually trafficked in Cambodia; and Annie Whitlocke, a woman of Jewish heritage who has suffered much violence throughout her childhood and married life.

The launch also featured Samah Sabawi reading her evocative poems *The Liberation Anthem* and *A Confession* (which was accompanied by sound effects, including a recording of the Israeli bombing of Gaza during Operation Cast Lead, managed by her nephew Omer Elsaafin). Tenzing Yeshe sang his powerful song *Cho Sum Mirik* about the life of His Holiness 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet. Anita and Anahata sang *Freedom for Palestine/Everyone* and *We Sing Nonviolence* written by Anita specially for the Charter launch.



Robert Burrowes, Anita McKone and Anahata Giri

My own talk, explaining the purpose of the Nonviolence Charter, included the following words:

“So what is unique about The People’s Charter to Create a Nonviolent World ? The People’s Charter is an attempt to put the focus on human violence as the pre-eminent problem faced by our species, to identify all the major manifestations of this violence, and to identify ways to tackle all of these manifestations of violence in a systematic and strategic manner. It is an attempt to put the focus on the fundamental cause – the violence we adults inflict on children – and to stress the importance of dealing with that cause. (See ‘Why Violence?’ <http://tinyurl.com/whyviolence>) It is an attempt to focus on what you and I – that is, ordinary people – can do to end human violence, and The People’s Charter invites us to pledge to make that effort. It is an attempt, as Anahata said to me the other day, to combine the deeply personal with the deeply global: to listen to our deep inner selves to restore humanity. And it is an attempt to provide a focal point around which we can mobilise with a sense of shared commitment with people from all over the world. In short, as of tonight, it is a new, worldwide movement and its specific focus is ending human violence ...

“So, together with people in Malaysia, the Philippines and the United States, tonight many of us will choose to pledge ourselves to a new, concerted and worldwide effort to end human violence, in all its manifestations, for all time.



Nonviolent peacekeeper Hazel Butterworth signs the Charter in Australia



“This is undoubtedly a monumental endeavour. Perhaps it is the greatest endeavour in human history. I feel privileged to share it with you all. And I love you all for making that endeavour ...

“We are committed to leave here tonight to struggle to end human violence. In my view, there can be no greater calling than this. Whatever our differences, ending human violence is our compelling and unifying dream.”

**ARE YOU TIRED OF ALL THE VIOLENCE**  
*against people and the Earth?*

Would you like to help  
create a worldwide  
movement to end it?

if so...  
with others around the world,  
you are invited to sign

**THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER TO CREATE A  
NONVIOLENT WORLD**

[www.thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com](http://www.thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com)

Take the pledge to  
*listen, feel, resist, create and  
change along with ordinary  
people, everywhere !*

**PEACE**

You can read The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World and, if it feels right to you, sign the pledge at

<http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com>

Email: [flametree@riseup.net](mailto:flametree@riseup.net)

Websites: <http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com>

<http://tinyurl.com/flametree>

<http://tinyurl.com/whyviolence>

<http://anitamckone.wordpress.com> (songs of nonviolence)

<http://robertjburrowes.wordpress.com>

# Conflict Resolution: From Gandhi to Galtung

*Anupma Kaushik*

Peace can be defined as a two sided concept. On the one hand it implies absence of violence and on the other the presence of positive, harmonious, cooperative relationships. These two aspects are referred to as negative and positive peace. Johan Galtung clarifies that peace research is based on the assumption that peace is as consensual a value as health. He further states that interdisciplinary and multilevel approaches are needed for peace research besides adoption of symmetry. Peace research needs to draw from all corners of the world and in order to understand an issue the researcher needs to see it from either side but the solution should not be based on the assumptions of one party alone. No party should be allowed to prevail over the other. Solutions should be found from which both parties might benefit. Findings should be symmetrically available. Peace research should be open in all its phases, never clandestine, never classified. Galtung also opines that for peace research most modern techniques of empirical study should be used. Data should be collected, processed, analyzed and systematized into theories so as to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of conflict and that of peace. Last but not the least is the relevance of research. Research should help in the realization of peace. A researcher should not stop by ending a research project with policy implication but should get involved in concrete action by making propaganda among intellectuals and the public; persuading the establishment into action and challenging the monopoly of decision makers.<sup>1</sup> Thus the scope of peace research is very wide. It covers the efforts for understanding of conditions that may prevent violence and also steps necessary for creation of conditions for furtherance of harmonious relations.<sup>2</sup>

Peace research recognizes that people as people are not always peace loving. Often governments are prodded on by an angry nation but more commonly governments share their nation's idiosyncrasies and they even find it useful to play them up in order to have backing for their rule and policies. In other words irrational nationalism is deeply enshrined in people's feelings about themselves and other people.<sup>3</sup> In order to eliminate conflicts ways are to be devised to prevent misconceptions.<sup>4</sup>

Conflict consists of three components: incompatibility, action and actors. It is a situation in which a minimum of two actors strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources. Examples of extreme conflicts are war, systematic repression, sexual and domestic violence, totalitarianism and genocide. In conflict both the parties want to win but that often is not possible or does not resolve the conflict completely and permanently.



Conflict Resolution is a social situation where the armed conflicting parties in a voluntary agreement resolve to peacefully live with and/or dissolve their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against one another. Thus conflict is transformed from violent to nonviolent behaviour by the parties. In theory there are seven distinct ways in which the parties can live with or dissolve their incompatibility. First, a party may change its goal i.e. its priorities. The second way is when parties stick to their goals but find a point at which resources can be divided. The third way is horse trading in which one side has all of its demands met on one issue while the other has all of its goals met on another issue. The fourth way is shared control. The fifth way is to leave control to somebody else and the sixth way is resorting to arbitration or other legal procedures that the parties can accept. The seventh way is that the issue can be left till later or even to oblivion.<sup>5</sup>

There are certain conflict catalysts which can be divided into positive and negative. Positive catalysts are creative. They promote but streamline the conflict and create a healthy atmosphere for communication, understanding and cooperation for reconciliation whereas negative catalysts activate the conflict, format it, bring a bad taste to it. They substantiate the conflict and escalate it to an irrepressible stage, to the point of liquidating the parties. Negative catalysts are fear, force, bad language, exaggeration, secrecy, distrust, prejudice and adding new conflict issues. Positive catalysts are fearlessness, faith, love of opponent, empathy, morality, openness, introspection, confining to conflict points, readiness to compromise, voluntary initiation of dialogue.<sup>6</sup>

In analyses of conflicts, an analysis of incompatibility is necessary i.e. identification of conflicting interests, positions and needs of the parties. Then conflict strategies are to be analyzed through which parties aim at reducing the influence of the other side and enhancing the influence of its own side. The behaviour of the other side is watched carefully. A positive announcement must be followed by positive steps otherwise the former is regarded as propaganda and the later as the reality. Once there is shift in behaviour a dynamic development may follow and build momentum. The parties may search for compatible positions and finding them will attempt to create new structures via which these can be expressed. Spoilers may be dealt with carefully for they will attempt to shift the conflict back to upper level.<sup>7</sup>

In civil wars and intra-state conflicts concerned parties will have a longer shared history of conflict and cooperation. The dividing lines can be ideological, economic, social, ethnic or racial. Here the most important issues are: first, to construct a social and political system that gives reasonable social and political space to all groups. The second is the issue of security as the one party that wins acts against the other. Thus it is important to end violence in a way that it removes this security dilemma. Without the parties being secure, subjectively and objectively, peace is unlikely to be sustainable. Democracy can be a solution here as it gives a way to handle the participation of parties in a society after a violent conflict and to give space to a host of actors who have

previously been suppressed or excluded from having influence. Democracy also gives choices apart from winning and perishing such as winning but not gaining complete dominance; being strong enough to play a role; having some strength which can be enough to prevent undesirable developments or losing but still keeping a position in society. But for this to be a reality three conditions are important. First, the winner must be committed to respecting the rights of the loser and make a come back. In other words defeat with security. Secondly, the state should not be seen to belong to any of the parties, and thirdly, a neutral peace keeping force. Reconstruction of society on principles of inclusion is also necessary for example to solve the problem of refugees. This signifies that the extreme condition that gave rise to the flight has been removed. Human rights' provisions and international connections are also important.<sup>8</sup>

There can be territorial solutions within a state in the form of self determination, autonomy and federalism. In self-administration devolution of power takes place from the centre to local level. Autonomy is given by the centre and is subject to policy changes by the centre. It can be of weaker or stronger type. Autonomy can also be guaranteed by outside actors not just subject to policy of the centre. Federalism is created for many units with uniform constitution and the central government is composed of constituent units.<sup>9</sup> These are useful especially in cases where minority groups are regionally clustered. Self-control of regional groups over their internal affairs allows the protection of dignity, identity and cultures by placing minority groups on an equal footing with the rest of the national security.<sup>10</sup> These go a long way in building positive peace where exploitation is minimized or eliminated and there is neither overt violence nor structural violence. For structural violence is built into the very structure of social, cultural and economic institutions and is more indirect and insidious than observable physical violence. It denies people important rights such as economic well being; social, political and sexual inequality; a sense of personal fulfillment and self worth. Thus positive peace-building implies establishment of non-exploitative social structure i.e. something that does not currently exist.<sup>11</sup> This also implies that structures and institutions need to be created that are capable of ensuring human rights and managing the effects of democratization and liberalization.<sup>12</sup> In other words positive peace cannot exist without human rights.

### Gandhian Approach to Conflict Resolution

The people who established peace studies in the west – Johan Galtung and Kenneth Boulding were admirers of Gandhi.<sup>13</sup> However in the west peace studies have taken a very different path to that of Gandhi. Probably the reason was that Gandhian peace demands a great deal of sacrifice from the practitioner. He calls it satyagraha i.e. 'adherence to truth' and truth and nonviolence are the main planks of satyagraha. A person who resolves to adhere to truth cannot remain silent at the sight of violence which is negative

of truth. Truth functions in the form of nonviolence or love. While the lover of truth ought to oppose violence such an opposition would mean 'fight the evil' while 'love the evil doer'. It is a dynamic soul force based on the concept of self-suffering. As there are many forms of injustices there are many forms of satyagraha too such as non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, hijrat, hartal, picketing, boycott, and renunciation of titles, honours and positions.<sup>14</sup>

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### Peace in My Lifetime

An International Conference on Peace-building

Thursday 15 March 2012 2.30pm - 8pm

Hilton London Euston Hotel, Upper Woburn Place

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# Multifaith Celebration 2012

*Mark Hoda*

It was really heartening to see such a large audience gather at St Ethelburga's on a cold January evening. They heard thought provoking reflections on the environment and sustainability from a range of faith perspectives as well as on Gandhi's influence on the green movement today, which continues to draw inspiration from his philosophy and satyagraha strategies.

Anglican priest Father Ivor opened proceedings with a quote often attributed to Gandhi that *"There is enough in the world for everyone's need but not for anyone's greed"*. He also quoted from Tagore and the Upanishads before offering the Prayer of St Francis of Assisi, who he said had much in common with Gandhi.

Gandhi Foundation Trustee, Graham Davey, set out how the Quaker Testimonies of simplicity, truth, equality and peace relate to care for the environment by espousing the values of moderation, sustainability and nonviolence and concern for the depletion of nonrenewable resources. The Quaker Book of Discipline calls for us to rejoice in God's world but to appreciate that we are not its owners but its custodians.

Gandhi Foundation and Environmental Law Foundation founder, Martin Polden, offered observations on the teachings of Judaism. He quoted the Old Testament's injunction to *'Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and everything that moves on the Earth'*. He said this should be read in conjunction with Genesis chapter 2 verses 7-8, where Adam first appears, and who is expressed to be 'planted' in the Garden of Eden, with a duty to 'cultivate and keep it', i.e. serve it and conserve it. Throughout the Torah, there is the injunction to take account of cultivation and obey good husbandry, said Polden.

He explained how Gandhi was influenced by the Jewish community in South Africa and how the 12<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Maimonides influenced E F Schumacher's 'Guide for the Perplexed'. As a lawyer, Polden has worked with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian environmentalists *'on issues that concern the region and where each marks the other with respect and recognition of each as human beings, with the key of living together, as distinct from stereotypes'*.

Martin Polden also said that our prayers are with GF President Lord Attenborough, who is unwell. Trustee John Rowley also collected messages from the audience to send to him.

Reverend Nagase from the London Peace Pagoda, said that in Buddhism, there are two paths open to attain Buddhahood: creating the pure land, and to lead the people to the teachings of Buddhism. *"When people become peaceful and affectionate, the land in which they live is also bound to become peaceful and affectionate in accordance... It may seem as if the path is separated into two: the land and the people, yet originally both are the realisations of a single truth"*.

Reflecting on the Japanese earthquake and tsunami last year, Rev Nagase said *"If the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure, in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of people's minds. It is the same with a Buddha and a common mortal. While deluded, one is called a*

*'common mortal', but once enlightened, is called a 'Buddha'. Even a tarnished mirror will shine like a jewel if it is polished".*



Mark Hoda addressing the gathering at the St Ethelburga centre

Madhava Turumella from the Hindu Forum explained how he stayed at Gandhi's Sevagram ashram after graduating from university. He said he found serenity there and appreciated the many faiths that influenced Gandhi. This religious pluralism in Turumella's branch of Hinduism believes in the universality of humanity and harmony with other belief systems. He echoed previous speakers when he said that the earth does not belong to anyone. He said all life is interconnected and we must not covet or steal its resources. He said that this is precisely what is happening today, however, and it is causing great damage to our world.

Gandhi Foundation Trustee, Omar Hayat, speaking about Islam, also echoed much of what previous speakers had said and highlighted the great commonality between faiths. Muslims are guided by the Koran and the teachings and conduct of the Prophet and Hayat gave examples of both to explain the faith's environmental perspective. The Koran states that man is not at the centre of the world, but just one part of the environment. Islam emphasises the unity of creation and equality of all creation and the role of man as a trustee of the earth and its resources and calls for humility. The current environmental crisis reflects humankind's spiritual crisis.

The teachings of the Prophet, emphasise that the earth must not be exploited or abused and flora and fauna have equal rights to man as God's dependants.

Hayat concluded with a quote from Prophet Mohammed “*Act in your life as though you are living forever and act for the Hereafter as if you are dying tomorrow.*”

Green London Assembly Member, Darren Johnson, explained the impact that Gandhi has had on modern environmentalists. Johnson said Gandhi was one of the first public figures to warn of environmental damage, warning of the consequences of pollution of air water and grain, and he described him as “*A patron saint of the green movement*”.

He said that Gandhi's contemporary influence was based on his emphasis on sustainability, social justice, democratic participation and nonviolence. Johnson felt that Gandhi would approve of modern London's multiethnic society but not the massive gap between rich and poor. Gandhi would understand the reason behind the current Occupy movement in the capital.

Gandhi's nonviolent methods have inspired civil rights movements across the world and are fundamental to the green movement today. Johnson said that we have a long way to go to realise Gandhi's vision but his philosophy is as relevant as ever.

John Daldin, representing the Catholic faith, like Father Ivor, offered a Franciscan prayer – the Canticle of Creation. He talked of the deep links between St Francis and Gandhi.

Ajit Singh explained the influence of the Sikh faith on Gandhi. He posed the question: what is the world and our place within it ? Quoting Guru Nanak and Sikh morning prayers, he said that God creates and sustains the earth but mankind is responsible for it and all its life forms. All life is interconnected and any damage done to the earth is damage to me, said Singh.

David Fazey from Village Action India talked about a month long Ekta Parishad (an Indian grassroots movement) Satyagraha march in October in India in which 100,000 people will participate. It is inspired by Gandhi and is being staged to highlight the plight of Indian rural communities who are being denied rights to their land, water and forests. This march builds on the Janadesh march in 2007.

Fazey said that if the March is to be successful, it must be witnessed and he called on all those present to raise awareness of the event. A leaflet on the march was circulated and further details are available at [www.marchforjustice2012.org](http://www.marchforjustice2012.org)

There were further impromptu contributions at the end of the event; Margaret Waterward highlighted a march of 450 slum children dressed in Khadi in Kolkata the previous day, calling for education and a future free of poverty; from a representative of the Jain faith, Sagar Sumaria, highlighting the environmental damage created by our demand for consumer electronics, such as mobile phones. A peace petition was also circulated on behalf of Newham Mosque.

Mark Hoda concluded the event by thanking Omar Hayat and GF Friend Jane Sill for all their help in organising this year's Multi Faith Celebration. Rev Nagase and Jon Daldin were also generous in assistance.



