

The Gandhi Way



Newsletter of the Gandhi Foundation

No.116 Summer 2013

ISSN 1462-9674 £1

GF Annual General Meeting and Lecture

Saturday 8 June 2013

At Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, Bromley-By-Bow, London

AGM 2-3pm, followed by a talk by Ruhul Abdin 3-4pm on Paraa

Paraa is a London based charitable organisation which works to develop the built environment of various communities in Bangladesh. Paraa provide expertise to various communities that will enable dwellers to maximise space usage for a better standard of living. Paraa believe in the development of a built environment that respects the cultural and traditional architecture and it's context.

There will also be a show of some of the garments and designs that have been produced as part of the Benarasi project.

<http://paraa.org.uk/>

Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering

3-10 August 2013

The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire OX14 4AF

A world of Limited Resources:

Inspirations and Challenges in Sharing the Planet

To book or further information: The Organisers, Summer Gathering, 2 Vale Court, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9NN; Tel: 01932 841135

Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture

Wednesday 23 October 2013

6.30pm - 8pm

Rt Hon Vince Cable MP

at the Inner Temple, London

The Inner Temple is the institution at which Gandhi studied law

Further details in the next issue

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Some Animals are More Equal than Others

Jane Thomas

There are many contradictions in how we treat animals around the world. Some are seen merely as food for the table, others as laboratory ‘tools’, some as entertainment in zoos and circuses and many as cherished pets in the family home. Certainly they are mostly the slaves of men and women in one way or another, however well or badly they are treated. Few are allowed to live freely in the wild in natural conditions without interference from humankind.

Gandhi was respectful of all life and the spiritual philosophy of ahimsa, which he lived by, rejects violence towards men or animals. As he said, “The good man is the friend of all living things” and, “The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

It seems strange to me how some species become popular – or even ‘fashionable’ – whilst others are hated. This is seen particularly at the moment in the UK with the controversy over the red squirrel versus the grey.

I have thought for a long time that grey squirrels in the UK have a ‘rough deal’. It has become fashionable to call them “tree rats” and “vermin” which seem to give people a desire to exterminate them. In recent years there has been much propaganda against the grey squirrel on television and in print, possibly started by Prince Charles in 2009, who, as patron of a new charity, The Red Squirrel Survival Trust, launched a campaign to protect red squirrels by (euphemistically) ‘controlling’ the greys.

Yet, despite their colour and a few very slight differences, grey squirrels are much the same as their red cousins. Both are intelligent and sentient creatures trying to get on with their lives without too much interference from humans.

I personally have a delightful relationship with the tame grey squirrels which visit my garden every day. I keep a good supply of nuts for them – they have their own dispenser on the fence, which I keep well-stocked with nuts – and, as a result they never touch the bird feeders. It astonishes me that anyone could wish to harm these little creatures. Whatever their appearance and colour, they are all sentient and intelligent animals which try to survive, eat, breed and bring up families like all other creatures (including ourselves).

What are the facts?

The grey squirrels were imported to the UK from North America in the 19th century. Most red squirrels in the UK were imported from Scandinavia to

replenish dwindling numbers and there is no datable fossil record for the red squirrel in Britain. 48% of the land mammal species in UK are non-native! The other 'alien species' include all the rabbits, hares, four of our six deer species and many others.



It is said that grey squirrels kill the red by being carriers of the parapoxvirus and it is true that red squirrels are often killed by the virus whereas the grey squirrel is unaffected. A squirrel pox vaccine is unavailable and, of course, there is no political will to develop one.

The Zoological Society of London has also identified at least eight cases in which red squirrels have survived infection. Their immune response is a clear indication that while many red squirrels will die from this disease, there are those who will survive. An example of survival of the fittest!

The red squirrel is less tolerant of habitat destruction which has also led to its population decline, while the greys are more adaptable and have continued to thrive. The grey also has a greater ability to store fat for the winter and can digest acorns and some other foods which the reds cannot.

It is not true that grey squirrels chase the reds away. It is merely a gradual ecological replacement – there is evidence which shows the two species living in close proximity for significant periods.

Unfortunately, it is humans who destroy the red squirrel habitat – and at an alarming rate too. Since the 1940s, 50% of the UK woodland has been chopped down, leaving ever decreasing places for red squirrels to survive. Recently the preference has been for planting deciduous forests, which don't suit the red squirrel at all, only the grey.

Both grey and red squirrels strip bark from trees and this can actually help other species as the damaged areas can provide a habitat for fungi and invertebrates, which are a valuable source of food for birds, and increases biodiversity.

It must not be overlooked that all squirrels 'plant' new trees by burying nuts in and around woodland every year and only ever retrieve a small number of those buried.

The grey squirrel has no conservation status as a naturalised alien species and has absolutely no legal protection in Britain – in fact, it is illegal to rescue, keep or release them without a licence, or even to treat one found ill or injured. Red squirrels are legally protected and killing one is a wildlife crime which can lead to prosecution. Quite a difference!

Culling is not humane

Even if claims against grey squirrels are true, many, like myself, believe that nature should take its course in these matters; we should not cull large numbers of one creature to save another species. Although there is always talk of 'humane culling' there is never anything humane about it. Poisoning squirrels with the chemical Warfarin causes them to slowly haemorrhage to death (for an average of nine days) as the squirrels bleed from every orifice.

Trapping in cages usually involves putting a bag over the end of the cage, so when the squirrels are chased into it, they are usually bludgeoned to death. (Legally in the UK, death is supposed to be delivered through "a blow to the back of the head" but that is scarcely going to be easy when the struggling animal is in a sack).

Then there is shooting...

There has long been a tradition around the world to hunt animals, either with hounds or guns, as sport and a form of amusement and a pleasant day out (if not for the hunted animal). Sometimes the quarry is eaten but often the object of the exercise is just the exhilaration gained from the hunt itself, especially in affluent countries where man is not hunting as a means to live.

Do these small, helpless creatures not suffer enough from starvation, being hit by cars, their dreys and babies destroyed by storms or man removing their habitat, without us causing more to die?

Henry David Thoreau put this well when he said, "Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it."

The 7th Annual Hazzard County Squirrel Slam

There are squirrel hunting contests in America every year, particularly In New York and, more recently, Pennsylvania. People pay a fee of \$10 to \$20 to shoot squirrels, and a prize is often given to the person who can kill the heaviest. Of course, the heaviest squirrel shot will usually be a pregnant mother, whose babies will die a slow and painful death by starvation.

I was shocked to hear about the horrific 'Squirrel Slam' in Holley, New York, which took place in February 2013. This is an annual contest in the USA to kill both red and grey squirrels and it is branded as a 'fun day out for all the family' and organised by the local fire department. Even worse, from this year, it was open to anyone with a hunting licence upwards from the age of 12! Surely there are plenty of creative, entertaining ways to raise money that don't involve encouraging children to kill animals? Such actions are not only inhumane; they set a bad example to children by teaching them a lack of respect for wildlife – or, indeed, any life. For many children, permission to kill one species can be seen as a green light to kill others that they 'don't like'. Once they get a taste for taking life, some will even take this further.

It is amazing that no one involved in this event seemed to consider the type of mental, emotional, and even spiritual damage it could cause them by teaching them to be cruel. The squirrels are living, feeling, creatures with babies in the nest. They are better parents, in my opinion, than anyone who encouraged their child to enter this appalling contest.

In addition to the cash prizes, this year the fire department was also giving away several firearms, including an AR/22 semi-automatic rifle – a version of the assault weapon recovered from the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, where twenty children and six adults were murdered by Adam Lanza on December 14th, 2012.

Carole Raphaele Davis, the West Coast Director of 'Companion Animal Protection' stated, "I think the Holley Fire Department has a responsibility to promote education and animal welfare, not killing and violence. Given the recent mass murders, you would think the Fire Department would be encouraging respect for life, not the taking of it. The squirrel killing event

could potentially encourage the next Adam Lanza by desensitizing children to senseless violence against animals for entertainment.”

It seems to teach children the following:

- 1) Killing is good and you can win prizes for doing so
- 2) Killing small animals is acceptable and also great fun

How different from Gandhi’s compassionate words, “We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make strong progress towards it.”

"People were just outraged and in disbelief that a fire department could have such a disgusting scheme as a fundraiser that draws in children and rewards them for killing," declared Edita Birnkrant, the New York Director of 'Friends of Animals'.

Tony Avella, a state senator from New York City, described the 'Squirrel Slam' as "insane." He added, "I was absolutely shocked that in this day and age we are going to encourage young kids to get guns, which is an issue unto itself, and go out and shoot as many squirrels as they can to win prizes."

However, State Senator George Maziarz, whose district includes Holley, said he was, “One hundred percent in support of this event”. He continued, “I think what all of the controversy has done is afford the Holley department to sell more tickets and that’s a positive thing... our lifestyle is very much hunting, fishing and shooting sports.”

Even if it were considered morally right to ‘cull’ squirrels there seems to be no evidence that there actually is a problem with overpopulation in the Holley area.

Many opposing this disgusting event started an online petition intended to raise money and they promised to donate it to the Holley Fire Department if they had a change of heart. The petition also offered new alternatives to the competition to raise money in the future. Those who signed included many wildlife rehabilitators who have spent countless hours caring for these little creatures.

I couldn’t help but wonder what Gandhi would make of all this. I’m certain he would have found at least two things shocking. Firstly, that innocent creatures were to be intentionally gunned down (he would have been especially revolted that it was in the name of fun) and secondly, that a large number of children were being trained, and encouraged, to use the firearms.

Gandhi absolutely refused to use guns even in wartime. During his time working with the ambulance corps in England in 1914, he said, "I believe that nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence". He also stated, "A rifle this hand will never fire." And he kept his word.

Despite hundreds of letters, emails, circulating petitions and phone calls from concerned people, including many animal welfare charities, plus a group of peaceful protestors with placards at Holley on the day, all asking the Fire Service to call off the squirrel hunt – many thought that it negatively reflected on the life-saving services that its department provides – this sadistic event sadly went ahead as planned.

Gandhi's call for us all to take nonviolent direct action to bring about change can sometimes be unsuccessful but this is no reason to stop making every effort to raise consciousness about more compassionate methods of achieving social change. As he said, "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history."

The tip of the iceberg

Of course, it's not only squirrels which are hunted and killed. This is a huge subject and there is no space here to cover all these cruel activities, whether in the name of 'sport', 'culling' or even that 'fun day out for all the family'.

To name just a few in the UK at the time of writing:

A deer cull of almost half the entire population of deer is planned – this would mean potentially 750,000 innocent creatures being killed. The justification seems to be land management of forestry.

A cull of badgers has been approved in Somerset and Gloucestershire for this June to try to stop the spread of TB in cattle. The RSPCA opposes this as studies have found that it does not solve the problem. (The charity supports a vaccination programme)

Hundreds of wild boar also face a cull in Forest of Dean this year, after an assessment by the Forestry Commission into the growing numbers of animals there.

There is also currently increasing pressure to repeal the anti-hunting with dogs law. The International Fund for Animal Welfare, the League Against Cruel Sports and the RSPCA have issued a joint statement saying they are "extremely alarmed at moves to withdraw the ban and bring back cruelty to the countryside" and that the "repeal of the Hunting Act would be barbaric and a backward step for a civilised society... the public has consistently

opposed the cruel and unnecessary chasing and killing of foxes, deer, hare and mink by dogs, and does not want any return to killing for fun.”

And so it goes on: more and more needless killing and inhumane attitudes towards defenceless animals, from squirrels to boars, deer and the countless others, usually because their numbers are considered to have become too high for one reason or another.

Humans have overpopulated the planet but we don't shoot them for sport to reduce the population! We need to have a greater awareness about the importance of respecting all wildlife. As the Dalai Lama said, "Life is as dear to the mute creature as it is to a man. Just as one wants happiness and fears pain, just as one wants to live and not to die, so do other creatures."

The last word should go to Gandhi whose words are particularly relevant here, "I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by people from the cruelty of humankind."

Jane Thomas is a Friend of the GF who in addition to her interest in animal issues is a photographer. Some of her work can be seen at <http://jane-in-colour.redbubble.com> Her abstract digital art and nature studies are available as greetings cards and prints. Below is a sample of Jane's abstract digital art.



A note on lopsided judgements

Margaret Chatterjee

I would not have ventured to write on this theme were it not for the current interest being expressed, in certain quarters, about Gandhi's personal life, the intention being to disparage him. A lopsided judgement I reckon to be one which fails to see a subject in the round. Let me give an example of this in another sphere.

The East India Company was formed in order to promote trade with India and the Far East, and Indian historians, by and large, have centred their attention on Robert Clive and his assumption of power in Bengal in 1765. In the meantime the Sanskrit scholar Max Müller was struggling to get funds to enable him to continue with his study of Vedic manuscripts. He heard that there were essential manuscripts in the library of the East India Company in London and scraped enough money to cross the sea. Eventually the East India Company bore the entire cost of publishing his work and made it possible for him to remain in London. Any judgement which assessed the functioning of the East India Company without mentioning the generous assistance given to Max Müller would, in my opinion, be lopsided.

There is no doubt that Gandhi was very aware of the complexity of his own nature, and time and again referred to the task of reducing the 'self' to zero as a lifelong one. His practice and his prescience were far-reaching. I mention only a few points to illustrate this: after Independence was attained the fault lines in Indian society would manifest themselves; taking Assam as an example, if Assam thought of Assam for the Assamese, who would think on behalf of India ? Maybe those outside India would be more likely to understand the positive power of nonviolence and practice it (one thinks of Martin Luther King and Mandela); it is possible to conduct nonviolent resistance *pari passu* with negotiation; constructive work must be guided by recognition of priorities and should focus on matters nearer to hand.

In short, the message of Gandhi's life must be seen in the round. To fail to do so is to deal violently with this most nonviolent man. This is not a time for lopsided judgements about Gandhi.

Life Time Achievement Award

Long time Friend of the Gandhi Foundation, Professor Margaret Chatterjee, was given the Life Time Achievement Award by The Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi on 9th March 2013.



Regional Development: a Geosheelitic Approach

Ram Nandan P Sinha

Geosheelitics is an acronym of three words: geography, **sheel** and politics – geo + sheel + itics. We are quite familiar with the word ‘geopolitics’ which is an acronym of geography and politics, whereby we study the interrelation between geography and politics. We have put the Samskrit word *sheel* between geography and politics. *Sheel* has no English equivalent, but it signifies morality and ethics. So geosheelitics means moralistic and ethical geopolitics; in other words – geopolitics mediated with *sheel*. This is an antithesis of geopolitics because while geopolitics believes in the traditional concepts of power and organismic theory of state which lead to international conflict and war, which therefore is immoral and unethical, geosheelitics takes into account the moral and ethical values in the behaviour of states in keeping with the Indian tradition enshrined in the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana and Mahabharata, but basically the modern ideas of Mahatma Gandhi (especially his principles of Truth and Nonviolence) which aims at universal peace. Thus, geosheelitic approach to regional development signifies development of a region keeping in view the moralistic and ethical principles, guided mainly by the principles of Truth (*satya*) and Nonviolence (*ahimsa*).

DEVELOPMENT: So, development in the geosheelitic context stands opposed to the traditional (Western) materialistic model, which caters to material progress in terms of Per Capita Income or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Social Indicators of Progress (SIP). Mahatma Gandhi had realised that science and technology will open up paths of power and concentration of wealth which would lead to the enslavement of entire humanity. In his postulation (which was holistic), “the whole gamut of man’s activity today constitutes one individual whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious works into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity.” (Gandhi:1938: 393). Development in this sense, indicates an all-round development of the people which is much more than what is indicated by “integrated development”. His concept of Ram Rajya symbolised the political facet of development. By Ram Rajya he meant the kingdom of God on earth. He defined the ideal society in the Raj as sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. (Gandhi: 1937, 374). Later he added political, economic and moral independence (1946) in the connotation.

The concept of all-round development is contained in his ideal of *Sarvodaya*, “the welfare of all” (both of the people’s various aspects of life like economic, social etc., and of the area or region which they inhabit). The real

progress and development of all human beings should, according to him, be measured in terms of integrated civilized living in all the dimensions of man's life, namely, physical, vital, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual. The ultimate aim is to change the present society into one which is peaceful, harmonious, happy and full of joy and fulfillment and nearing perfection. (Diwakar: 1981, 37-38). The greatest emphasis was, however, on moral progress, as this was, according to him, the foundation of all progress.

This concept of development coincides with the definition given by the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, not in terms of GDP but in terms of "the real freedom that people enjoy". It is also very near to the modern definition: "In the true sense of the term, development must embody five elements: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, guaranteed transparency and protective security" (Gandhi Foundation, 2011). This, however, lacks the kernel of Gandhian model of development: "moral progress".

REGIONAL: We hardly find any mention of the term 'regional' in the Gandhian concept of development as his emphasis was on rural development as the basis of all development. As a matter of fact, in a way, he was against urban development, it seems. Using the 'Metropole' versus the 'Periphery' formulation of the Prebisch-Frank Model (though post-dated) in analyzing world economic development (Frank: 1969) in which 'Metropolis' represents the 'development of the developed', while 'Periphery' represents the 'development of the underdeveloped', we find that Gandhi turned his attention to the periphery, to the villages. He thought that the British power at that time was developing the cities to promote the colonial interests and had left the periphery virtually untouched. Gandhi left the British to build the bureaucratic state and turned his attention to build the Nation, which, according to him, resided in the villages. Had Gandhi been alive now, he might have revised his stand and included the cities also in his concept of holistic development.

However, in the concept of Sarvodaya, Gandhi contemplated the village communities to govern themselves as 'republics' under the Panchayat System. Panchayats, in his system, would go to form Taluka Panchayats which would go progressively from District and Provincial to All India Panchayat, connected with one another by the Presidents of the lower Panchayats. The function of the representative higher Panchayats would be to coordinate, guide, advise, and supervise the political and economic activities of the lower Panchayats and to perform functions of a local nature.

But this was not to be a pyramidal structure of power with the upper level of authorities dominating over the lower. Gandhi wished that "it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which

they are integrated units. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it". (Gandhi:1946)

In this system envisaged by him there would be no question of unequal development or area-wise (regional) disparity. Here we see that he overlooked the inherent geographical variation in space which is bound to cause variation in resource endowment. But probably he thought that such variations would be taken care of by the moralistic approach of the people who would be ready to 'perish' for others.

STRATEGY: The developmental strategy which Mahatma Gandhi envisaged may be enumerated as follows:

1. Gandhi favoured production for the masses (mainly through village- and cottage industries) instead of modern processes of mass-production (through big industries). He said: "You cannot build non-violence in a factory civilization, but it can be built on a self-contained village." (Gandhi: 1939).

2. He held that means justify the end, not the other way. If the means are right, that is, if they conform to the tests of truth and nonviolence, even mistakes, errors and failures aid in growth, while wrong means corrupt the soul and no good can ever come out of them.

3. He believed in full employment in keeping with the concept of 'bread labour' (earning one's own bread by manual physical labour). He thought: "If all laboured for the bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure". (Gandhi: 1951; 20)

4. He wanted no individual ownership of land. He believed that all land belongs to God. He, therefore, advanced the concept of trusteeship for those owning more land, and also cooperative farming and cattle rearing. Otherwise, he advocated a nonviolent uprising against the land owners' oppression.

5. Equal distribution was one of the basic laws of his economic edifice of the society. It implies not that the world's goods should be arbitrarily divided up, but that each man shall have the wherewithal to satisfy his natural needs, not more. (Prabhu & Rao: 1967)

6. Basic education – education imparted through craft – was conceived by him for the social and spiritual transformation of rural life. This would impart dignity of labour in the young mind together with a sense of feeling of equality in the society.

7. He advocated self-sufficiency in the villages. Self-sufficient village economy did not mean autarky, which is impossible even in case of the largest states of the world. What he suggested was self-sufficiency as far as basic needs – food, clothing, other necessities – are concerned. He said: "We shall have to produce more what we can in order thereby to obtain in exchange, what we are unable to produce." (Gandhi: 1962: 63). For this he proposed a properly planned land use system in the villages. A major part of the village land should be given to produce food crops and cotton; some land should be

reserved for the cattle and some for playground for the adults and the children. If land is still available, some cash crops should be grown to be able to get in exchange other things needed. But he denied any land given to the cultivation of such crops as tobacco or opium. (Shah and Chaturvedi: 1983: 35-58).

8. His idea was to develop the rural community without damaging the environment. Pyarelal (1953: 43) has summarised Gandhi's ideas in this respect as follows:

1. Intensive small-scale farming as opposed to mechanised large-scale or collective farming, the total yield as against yields per agriculture worker being the highest under this system.

ii. Development of cottage crafts as ancillary to agriculture.

iii. Cattle-based economy, with strict enforcement of the 'Law of Return' viz., to return to the soil in organic form what is taken out of the soil, without which the health and fertility of the soil cannot be fully maintained.

iv. Proper balance and relationship between animal, human, and plant life – social health and stability being essentially the product of a symbiosis of the three.

v. Voluntary production of both human and animal power against the competition of machinery as the price of social insurance.

9. A vigorous development programme should be taken up as a people's movement similar to the Constructive Programme of pre-independent India. Government help may be taken, making full use of advisory, institutional, financial facilities etc. but only as a few spokes in the wheel of progress, the other spokes to be of indigenous make. Each village should have a Development Council (*Vikas Mandal*) composed of selected elders including those who visit their homes only occasionally, co-opt some technical hands – overseers, engineers, veterinarians, doctors, teachers, agricultural scientists – of the locality whose advice may be sought in the preparation and implementation of the development plans. Fix priorities in consultation with the local population, estimate the local needs – food, clothing, housing, education, medical, recreational, judicial etc., and assess the available resources, both local and government, prepare a budget, chart a viable time-bound action strategy and switch on the process. But keep always the Gandhian philosophy in mind (even in a modified form) – his elements of development suited to the particular area according to its capabilities and potentialities.

10. Cultural Ethos also must be taken care of. The details of the elements, approach and methods will vary in keeping with the area's specific cultural ethos. While assessing the resource endowment of any area, we often stop after natural (physical) and economic resources, and if we go into human resources, we stop after education and health. The assessment of cultural resources is also a must. This aspect may be assessed with such indices as singing, dancing, instrument playing, wrestling, and above all, morality and ethics (that is, incidence of land ownership disputes, number of cases in

courts or Panchayats, relation between neighbours, cast and religious feuds etc.). Gandhi thought that moral progress was the foundation of all progress. He said: "... by real progress we mean moral progress which again is the same thing as the progress of the permanent elements in us. If, therefore, material progress does not clash with moral progress, it must necessarily advance the latter." (Gandhi 1953: 27)

In the context of present day India, and of course, the whole world, we face the crisis of character as the greatest stumbling block on the way to development. There is no dearth of schemes and finances but the cancer of corruption is eating into every walk of life. Therefore, measures towards character building on moral and ethical principles are indispensable for real development.

CONCLUSION: Gandhi did not insist that everything he said should be accepted as a dogma. Situations change. Priorities may change. He himself changed or modified many of his ideas through time with newer experiences. He supposed that each man must search for the Truth from his own bearing with a clear conscience and decide for himself the best course of action considering him a responsible member of the society and of the world at large. In this spirit the development programmes may be planned and executed which may be in keeping with the spatial and cultural individuality of the area concerned, but within the overarching considerations for the habitability of the land, adaptability of resources, and morality of man. And in this sense the Gandhian concept of development will never lose its relevance.

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Dr. Sinha is a retired Professor and Head of the Department of Geography, M.S.University of Baroda, Gujarat and Founder General Secretary of the Centre for Geosheelitic Studies, Patna, Bihar.

The Food Dimension

Food Jobs & Wars

Mario Molinari

Victoria reveals how tea united east and west, triggered wars and helped us win them.

Victoria Wood's Nice Cup of Tea

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01rx1xc/Victoria_Woods_Nice_Cup_of_Tea_Episode_1/

My focus on food responds to a need to reach out to people. For me food raises hopes for a better today. Not only 'food', of course, but all the activities that go with it including water, energy and land activities.

The temptation then would be to say that thanks to food we could achieve the goal of a fair and equitable world. Backing up this claim is the pledge to make food the entry point for joyful and compassionate living.

Economies of War

Paraphrasing from a Quaker publication, violence is with us whenever we drink from a plastic cup or beer can. Land, deserts and seas are grabbed and exploited every day. Human and physical resources are incidental and expendable.

German President Horst Koehler resigned from his position in 2010 due to remarks he made during a visit to Afghanistan. In his views,

A country of our size, with its focus on exports and thus reliance on foreign trade, must be aware that military deployments are necessary in an emergency to protect our interests, for example, when it comes to trade routes, for example, when it comes to preventing regional instabilities that could negatively influence our trade, jobs and incomes.¹

It is not even a question of history repeating itself, it is a continuum. "We cannot make war without trade, nor trade without war."² (Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Dutch colonialist, seventeenth century.)

Here we touch a raw nerve. Trade, industry, science and technology, the balance sheet, logistics, media reporting, military and civilian deployments, the combat zone... it is impossible to separate them.

Our jobs depend on the roller coaster of wars. We end up supporting them out of choice or necessity. Who do you work for? Where are you located? Which central bank doles out the cash? And talking of which, what do you spend your pocket money on, who benefits from your spending habits, etc.?

Connect a few dots and you can easily establish that each job is linked to wars and war-like activities at home and other countries. All dots will take

¹ <http://recentissuetoday.com/headline/2792/german-president-horst-koehler-resigns-from-position/>

² Cited in *The Ascent of Money*, Fergusson, Niall, London, Penguin Books, 2009, p. 135.

you to the riches and resources of the land.

In plain English, no wars no jobs. If we identify this as a problem to grapple with then I would suggest that what we need to do is to renew, value and make good use of the resources of the land. That's why they are called resources.

Supporting Wars: Where do I Fit in?

In light of the above, to have a 'proper job' acquires a rather different and interesting meaning. If you can not beat them, join them. We need a breakthrough and this means putting solutions first.

One small part of me says that to campaign against wars ('when bombs are dropping') or to give them the extra oxygen of publicity by mounting campaigns all year round misses the point altogether. **Here too, in plain English, we cannot campaign against what we support every day.**

Can we do better than that? It is an all-consuming fulltime job, to say the least, to campaign and agitate but what do we have to show for it? One thing to bear in mind is that we are always part of the system we happen to describe. It cannot be otherwise. Do you want a proper job? Would you like one? Are you resolute in your determination to expose how this system works? In your determination to seek justice?

Fine, you can do all that and the only way to do it is to run a different agenda not the one laid on you by the powers that be. Consider now *the* economy (see also below). We could harness campaigning to better effect by creating work that would gradually replace the offerings of a warfare economy.

It used to be called 'peace dividend'! Suffice to say this *is* the different agenda.

No country ever would go to war without brutalising its citizens first into believing that wars are necessary. It is your resolve which is at stake here. The strategy must change if the problems which I am trying to describe affect us at such deep level as to neutralise us. We experience tension, conflict and war in our blood and jobs right now. It is that close. Wars or else... Mandatory campaigning is not the answer.

In a sense we don't know what peace is. We need a new start.

'U Start with Food' – A University of Food project

'U Start with Food' is an all-inclusive proposal to institute a virtual University of Food. Inclusiveness relates to all matters food. No aspect of living is left untouched by *it!* Food is the real socio-economical driver thanks to which we can:

create communities
shape the economy ■ promote learning

In other words, *the* different agenda. Is this small change? A frivolity? Compare this (because compare we must) to what we have to face up to most

of the times. The shopping list reads:

the horrors we are capable of
food and water wars ■ a fearsome economy
fragile social structures ■ hungry cities

So is food as in food-for-good and as a socio-economical transformer still such a trivial matter?

There is nothing trivial about food if in her book, *A Taste of War*, Lizzie Collingham rightly sets out to explore the ‘often overlooked dimension’ of food to our understanding of WW2. In *Food Wars*, Tim Lang and Michael Heasman are unequivocal about their views whilst inviting caution about possible outcomes, “There is some way to go in the Food Wars before there is Food Peace.”³

There can be no doubt that we need to turn our attention to the dimension of food. All in all, food is big if you get my gist.

In particular, the food proposal as submitted provides a new term of reference that can unite individuals and groups. It suggests looking at food, water, plants, wellbeing, climate and rocks as ONE. One stands for the ‘environment’ of which we are part.

The proposed Food University is designed to establish a core food strategy – the new agenda or strategy – channelling the goodwill of many as we anchor ourselves to what sustains us and to the ground we stand on. Lest we forget the ‘often overlooked dimension’ of food to our understanding of how we live and work. Food is the driver, the pointer, the code name, the backdrop and the capstone. Get the ecosystem on a spin. Get the big locomotive going and all the rest will follow in its wake.

Food of course is also nutrition and dinner parties but someone must grow that food, harvest that water and generate that energy in the first place. Done. It must be said, you would need to stretch your imagination to the limit to call all *this* (i.e. getting things done, accomplishing, leading from the front) much of a challenge. Of course, we all want a challenge but this is a doodle! That’s the point, it is our job! The fact is that food is a simple proposition and the baseline for human understanding.

To ‘do’ food opens up a world of possibilities. This is the beautiful world, rising just above the ordinary world, of work, affections and relationships. Looking for volunteers, interns? Is this something up your street?

With ‘U Start with Food’ we can hope to address many of our social and economic ills.

www.newliteracy.co.uk

³ Lang, Tim and Heasman, Michael. *Food Wars*, Earthscan, London, Sterling (VA), 2004, p. 10.

Review

What Gandhi Says about Nonviolence, Resistance and Courage

Norman G Finkelstein OR Books: New York and London 2012 pp100
\$10/£6

Thinking through how a nonviolent protest might free the West Bank from Israeli occupation led the author to take a close look at Gandhi's own writings to see just what he did say about nonviolence. One of his complaints is that Gandhi scholars in fact rarely do take a close look at the Collected Works, though surely this is transparently unfair in the case of Anthony Parel and, indeed, our own editor, George Paxton. As one would expect of a close friend of Noam Chomsky a razor-sharp intelligence is brought to bear on those writings. Finkelstein has written extensively on the Israel-Palestine conflict and maybe predictably his major critique of Gandhi's ideas lies in their ineffectiveness for dealing with Hitler and the Holocaust. But this is a highly sophisticated analysis and is far more ambivalent in the ways it looks at such questions as Gandhi's consistency and at the psychology underlying these ideas, other historical conflicts, above all the freedom struggle, and this is a measured recommendation for a nonviolent approach at the time of the Arab spring and the Occupy movement.



It is easy enough for Finkelstein to expose Gandhi's inconsistencies. Gandhi wrote of the hobgoblin of consistency and the author concedes that, for all the apparent contradictions, there were underlying core beliefs: "he probably never consciously lied." (p20). Finkelstein sees a fatal weakness in Gandhi's reliance on intuition, his inner voice, and though I don't wholly see the logic of his conclusion, sees this as bound to lead to authoritarianism: "to doubt Gandhi was to doubt God." (p23) But then he corrects himself and sees Gandhi's ideas as less abstract and incoherent and open to rational explication. The most worrying inconsistency is the way Gandhi wavers

between nonviolence and the need in certain circumstances to resort to

violence. In some ways the whole play between nonviolence and violence could be recast in terms of courage versus cowardice. Gandhi surely rightly saw it as the highest form of courage to meet violence with nonviolence, even a readiness to die. Finkelstein sees Gandhi taking this to an extreme and encouraging a positive cult of death, almost revelling in the number of those who might lose their lives, say in a communal conflict with Muslims. Nothing was so shameful in his eyes than cowardice. Better to resort to violence than to be cowardly. To quote Finkelstein: "Gandhi's Collected Works are filled with, on the one hand, scalding condemnations of ersatz nonviolence, and on the other, exhortations to violence if the only other option is craven retreat." (p35) Gandhi is seen as almost sharing Nietzsche's contempt for Christian passivity, its turning the other cheek.

Oddly the reason for such concern is staring us in the face. Gandhi's was surely a response to an imperialist rhetoric which spoke of the lack of manliness, the effeminacy of Indians. The Raj here had the Bengalis in mind in contrast to the Indian martial races. Here was one way the Raj met the challenge of a nationalist movement initially inspired by the Bengalis. In many ways Gandhi had bought into the martial values of the Rajputs. Evidently the charge of effeminacy stung Gandhi and possibly he overcompensated. Of course there are more complex psychoanalytic explorations possible and Gandhi's complex attitudes to sexuality, evidenced in *brahmacharya*, inevitably exposes him to such enquiry.

Finkelstein's real concern is to test the effectiveness of nonviolence. The example he takes is the plight of European Jews in the Holocaust. Gandhi was obviously not alone in floundering before such crimes against humanity. Might he yet appeal to Hitler's good nature? Might mass nonviolent passive resistance by the Jews work on the conscience of the Nazis? Finkelstein's argument is that the coercive power of *satyagraha*, its capacity to change minds, cannot work against a mind set such as the Nazi. They were impervious to such moral pressure. There is no evidence that the sight of millions of Jews being led to the crematoria 'like lambs to the slaughter house' had the slightest affect on the conscience of the Nazis. Noncooperation simply would not work in this case. He concludes, somewhat ambiguously, that Gandhi's own unique moral force could prevail and "this was his great personal triumph, but also his great political failure. The tactic had no generalised value." (p57) Gandhi himself, to quote his own words, believed "human nature in its essence is open and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love." (quoted p69) Finkelstein does not share this optimism. At this juncture he chooses not to explore the alternative tactic of violent Jewish resistance, both in the camps and ghettos, a violence of course played up today by Israel itself, gripped by a rhetoric of survival. Nor does he mention Gandhi's Jewish friends, Polak and Kallenbach, and Kallenbach's failure to win Gandhi over in the 1930s to a more militant stand.

But then Finkelstein proceeds, along different lines, to try and explain how in fact a coercive nonviolent strategy does work. It is of course

controversial to see nonviolence as morally coercive, which Gandhi always denied, for it seems in flat contradiction to its moral nature. A Gandhian strategy will only work, it is argued, if there is some susceptibility in the opponent either to its moral case or, just as probably, to a sense of its being in its own self interest. Finkelstein puts this well: “the thrust of his campaign was clearly to energize a latently sympathetic public via self-suffering.” (pp61-2) Gandhi might prevail in a temperance campaign, for the Indian public saw the ravages of alcohol, but not against gambling, for here the Indian public were far too committed to gambling for any campaign to work. And of course the classic campaign was the nonviolent freedom struggle itself. But here once again Finkelstein takes a controversial line. He does not believe that it was ‘love power’ that persuaded the British to leave. There was no successful appeal to their moral conscience. Gandhi himself realised that the way to get the British to leave was to make India ungovernable and hence unprofitable. It was not a case of melting British hearts: “instead he set out to coerce them, albeit non-violently, into submission.” “It was not the power of love but the juggernaut of power that cleared the path to India’s independence.” (p78) Of course this is to overlook metropolitan British moral disquiet at the Amritsar massacre and the Christian conscience of the Viceroy, Lord Irwin.

This short, incisive work has to be taken very seriously. In the end Finkelstein, however ambiguous his whole interpretation, seems to come down on Gandhi’s side. He looks at the world today and decides on balance a nonviolent struggle leads to less loss of life than a violent. (cf the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt compared to what happened in Libya.) But does it set the bar of courage too high ? Is it necessarily more ethical than a violent struggle ? (Obviously here he has the Second World War in mind). But he proceeds: “but what can be said with confidence is that the results of violent resistance have at best been mixed.” So just how far will a nonviolent struggle take us ? He argues: “the further along it gets nonviolently, the more likely it is that the new world will be a better one.” (pp79-81)

Finkelstein’s interpretation of the limitations of Gandhism confronting Nazism reminds me of Ernest Gellner’s critique of moral relativism. Confronted by Nazism one has no alternative but to believe in an absolute right and wrong. You cannot in anyway qualify Hitlerism. And the debate over the need for fearlessness, Gandhi’s belief that could the British overcome their fear of loss of Empire they would happily surrender, reminds me of Aung San Suu Kyi’s belief that could the Army in Burma lose its fear of the loss of power, they would come into line with more progressive policies. It is in Burma that the Gandhian ideal is currently being put most critically to the test.

Antony Copley

Photo above is of Norman Finkelstein at Suffolk University in 2005 (*Wikipedia Commons*)

Kingsley Hall 2012-13

Kingsley Hall continues to be a community hub in East London's Bromley-by -Bow. A range of activities for women, children and young people are run by different groups regularly. Since its inception Gandhi Foundation's office has been based on the top floor of Kingsley Hall, next to the historic Gandhi cell.

The highlight of 2012 has been the events linked to the Olympics. In the summer the building was opened up for visitors. There were various exhibitions on the life and philosophy of Gandhiji and the Lester sisters. Brijesh Patel displayed his works on Gandhiji's Salt March. Sculptures by artist May Ayres on the theme of war were displayed in the Peace Garden and the garden on the roof.

Jim Kenworth a theatre director presented a play titled When Chaplin Met Gandhi, based on the Mahatma's stay at Kingsley Hall in 1931. The local school children participated with some professional actors and the play was highly commended. GF was one of the supporters of the project. The play has generated much interest among the local teachers and Jim Kenworth has been running workshops on Gandhi in various schools.

Due to the austerity measures of the local authorities and various funders KH has been struggling financially. The centre is able to operate simply due to the goodwill of the staff and volunteers. The female community worker is away on maternity leave. It has not been possible to replace her. A major fund raising exercise is needed to restore the building and keep this historic centre running.

The Three Bees Cafe providing healthy food at a very reasonable price continues to operate every Tuesday. It is run by volunteers and is popular. The Bangladeshi women's group entered a competition on healthy cooking and won an award. KH aspires to develop the Peace Garden and have an eco garden to grow vegetables that can be used in the cafe. The garden would be used by local school children for educational projects. This requires resources which will have to be sought. Any help from the well wishers of Kingsley Hall to raise funds for the much loved historic building, promote the heritage of the Lester sisters and run the centre would be welcome.

Shaheen Westcombe

Cruelty free cosmetics in the EU

After many years of campaigning the EU has banned the import and sale of new animal tested cosmetics. This means that anyone who wishes to sell new cosmetics, toiletries or beauty products and ingredients in the EU must not test them on animals anywhere in the world. Although testing on animals can take place in countries outside the EU if the 'Leaping Bunny' is displayed on a product animals have not been used to test the product. (*Onekind* Spring 2013)

Letters

Gandhi and the Nobel Peace Prize

Having been reminded in the spring edition of *The Gandhi Way*, of the fact that Gandhi was never awarded the Nobel Peace prize, I was wondering if there is any way to ‘right’ such a blatant ‘wrong’. I am aware of the chequered history of the prize, and that in some ways Gandhi does not need, and certainly would not have wanted it. But nonetheless feel that if The Gandhi Foundation were able to initiate a global movement calling for Gandhi to be awarded the prize posthumously for the year 1948 (when it was not ultimately given to anyone), it would be a wonderful thing.

Among other reasons it would:

- enable the Nobel Committee to acknowledge and remedy what must be their most glaring omission to date
- remind the world of Gandhi and his vision and relevance in the 21st Century.

Even if the Committee still refused to make the award, involving people worldwide in such a campaign may inspire them to deepen their knowledge and understanding of him.

Paul Mukerji paulmukerji@hotmail.com

Need and Greed

I have just read with great pleasure the latest edition of *The Gandhi Way*. In it Graham Davey discusses whether Gandhi ever said the famous saying “The earth has enough for everyone’s need but not for everyone’s greed”. It might interest readers to know that in the collection called *Mahatma Gandhi: The Essential Writings* (OUP) Gandhi’s grandson Gopalkrishna Gandhi states firmly that Gandhi never made that statement. He also quotes other well known sayings wrongly attributed to Gandhi at the start of his introduction.

Mark Tully, New Delhi

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*Just as violence has its own technique, known by the military, which has invented means of destruction unheard of before, nonviolence has its own science and technique. Nonviolence in politics is a new weapon in the process of evolution. Its vast possibilities are yet unexplored. The exploration can take place only if it is practised on a big scale and in various fields.*

M K Gandhi 23 October 1937

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The Gandhi Foundation

Charity number 292629

The Foundation exists to spread knowledge and understanding of the life and work of Mohandas K Gandhi (1869-1948). Our most important aim is to demonstrate the continuing relevance of his insights and actions for all of us.

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The Gandhi Way

Articles, book reviews and letters of a specifically or broadly Gandhian nature will gladly be received by the Editor. Maximum length 2000 words.

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The deadline for the next issue is the end of July 2013

Printed on recycled paper by www.hillingdongreenprint.co.uk

Tel: 020 8868 7852