

# The Gandhi Way



Richard Attenborough at Kingsley Hall 1996

Newsletter of The Gandhi Foundation

No.122 Winter 2014-15

ISSN 1462-9674 £1

## **Gandhi Foundation Interfaith Celebration 2015**

Saturday 31 January 2015 at 2.30pm

Speaker: Dr Ursula King

***“Caring for the Future of People and Planet”***

***Different faiths, ecology and spirituality***

Followed by a discussion with representatives of various faith traditions

Refreshments afterwards

at the London Interfaith Centre

125 Salusbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW6 6RG

*Nearest stations are Queens Park (Bakerloo Line) and Brondesbury Park (London Overground)*

*and the 206 bus from Wembley Park to Kilburn Park runs right past the venue.*

Please register with [william@gandhifoundation.org](mailto:william@gandhifoundation.org) to aid refreshment planning.

Ursula King is Professor Emerita of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol. She has lectured in many countries and has published on such subjects as religion & gender, interfaith dialogue, modern Hinduism, Christian mystics, and the French scientist and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.



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## BARON ATTENBOROUGH OF RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES CBE

29 August 1923 – 24 August 2014

by John Rowley, Trustee, The Gandhi Foundation

*“We have lost someone utterly irreplaceable. A massively gifted man, he was also the best possible friend. This highly erudite man epitomised everything that was special about his generation of artists, one which cared deeply – treasuring, celebrating and recording all that was best in people.”*

Lord [David] Puttnam, The Guardian, 25-08-14.

Richard's father, Frederick Levi Attenborough, was a don at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and an expert on Anglo-Saxon law, who became principal of University College Leicester. His mother, Mary, was very socially active: she was, for example, a founder of The Marriage Guidance Council. Both were supporters of the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War, took deprived children on holiday and, for eight years, looked after two Jewish girls from Nazi Germany at the outbreak of the second world war. Mary won her sons John, Richard and David over to this latter plan by telling them: “It's entirely up to you, darlings”, a phrase Richard adopted both to persuade others to his bidding and for the title of his autobiography. “That particular decision, not paying lip service but taking positive, responsible action to help other human beings, made a profound impression on me. It has, I suppose, affected my life and my attitudes ever since.” And again: “It was an extraordinary background my brother Dave and I had. Our parents believed in the responsibility of one human being for another and in the idea that you had little right to enjoy the phenomenal joys of life unless you were aware of others who could be three feet or 3000 miles away, facing difficulties you had no understanding of. They believed in the principal of putting something back. That, for them, was what life was about. And boy, they lived their life to the full.”

In 1940, Richard won a scholarship to RADA where he met his wife, Sheila Sim. He joined the RAF in June 1943 and became a navigator. He later expressed his frustration at never becoming a pilot in John Boulting's film “Journey Together”. His first major success as a film actor was Stoker Snipe in Noel Coward's “In Which We Serve” (1942). Richard and Sheila, whom he nick-named 'Poppy', were married in 1945: they had three children, Jane, Michael and Charlotte. In 1952, they both starred in Agatha Christie's “The Mousetrap” for two years which is still running in the West End. His first role as Director was “Oh, What a Lovely War!”, Joan Littlewood's satire on the First World War.

By the end of his life, he had acted in 78 films, directed 12, produced 13 and is credited with different roles in 98 other film and television programmes. He was awarded a BAFTA (Best Actor), three Golden Globes (2 for Best Supporting Actor and Best Director for “Gandhi” 1982) and nominated for Best Director for “A Chorus Line” (1985) and “Cry Freedom

(1987). He won two Oscars for Best Director and Best Film for “Gandhi”.

### “GANDHI”

His book *In Search of Gandhi* is a vivid and inspirational account of the 20 years he spent seeking the funds for and the making of the film. He describes how, in 1962, Motilal Kothari pleaded with him to make the film. “Mr Kothari proved to be a dedicated follower of Gandhi who had left India in disgust following the Mahatma's assassination by a fellow Hindu. He was working at The Indian High Commission. His mission was to disseminate the story of the Mahatma's life as widely as possible, making his philosophy and achievements known to the whole world.”. When he did begin work, he simply got Lord Mountbatten to introduce him to Prime Minister Jawarharlal Nehru and took it from there. Nehru's advice was that it would be wrong to deify Gandhi: “He was too great a man for that”. It was this monumental, three-hour biopic, released 20 years later in 1982 that many said was his finest hour. (Others nominated “Shadowlands”). “Gandhi” won eight Oscars – the biggest haul ever for a British movie. It was a high-minded, old fashioned epic with a compelling central performance using thousands upon thousands of real, non-CGI extras – arguably the last real historical epic of this sort. It was Attenborough's good fortune to have found the Anglo-Indian actor Ben Kingsley and given him the role he was born to play. Attenborough dedicated the film and the book to Mountbatten, Nehru and Kothari.

It was typical of the man to say, when he won the Oscars, that he was surprised to have won and that he was disappointed to have deprived Stephen Spielberg of the honours for his film “E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial”. “Gandhi” he said “was a piece of narration rather than cinema” whereas “E.T. was an infinitely more creative and fundamental piece of cinema”.

According to *The Daily Express*, it “made a profit of well over £100 million”.

### THE GANDHI FOUNDATION

In 1983, after its phenomenal world-wide success, Surur Hoda (UK Secretary-General of International Transport Workers Federation), Cecil Evans (Assistant General Secretary of Quaker Peace and Service), Diana Schumacher (Co-Founder, The Schumacher Society and Co-Founder, Environmental Action Group for Europe) and Martin Polden (Co-Founder and first Chairman, Environmental Law Foundation) went to see Attenborough with the proposal to set up The Gandhi Foundation and for him to become President. He agreed. Martin Polden drew up the Constitution which was ratified by The Charity Commission in 1984. Lord (David) Ennals (ex-Minister at The Foreign Office under James Callaghan and Chair of The All Party Group on Tibet) became the first Chairman. When The Foundation was moved to Kingsley Hall (where Gandhi stayed in 1931), Attenborough immediately helped to finance its renovation which had fallen into disrepair since R D Laing, Joe Berke and others had moved The Philadelphia Association elsewhere. He then gave generously (as did the Quakers) to both



Kingsley Hall and The Foundation for a number of years.

In 1993, David Baker, Murray Batley (Chair, Kingsley Hall) and I organised a party to celebrate Richard's elevation to the peerage (Labour). He gave an impromptu speech on how it was absolutely imperative for everybody to work hard to eliminate the curse of racism and sexism. He received a standing ovation.

In 1995, he funded a Bangladeshi advice worker, Nurun Chowdhury, for a year and ensured that The National Lottery took over for a further two years.



Presenting the Gandhi Foundation Peace Award in the House of Lords in 1998  
L to R: Surur Hoda, Cecil Evans, RA, Bruce Kent

From the summer of 1997, I was privileged to work with him organising the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gandhi's assassination. This was a multi-faith service held at St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1998. An estimated 1200 people attended many of whom had to be accommodated in the Crypt below where a television screen had been set up. The Rev Nicholas Holtham, now Bishop of Salisbury, opened the service. Saeed Jaffrey (Vallabhbhai Patel) read Nehru's broadcast to the nation on the day of Gandhi's assassination. Balu Raghuraman and N Balachandar played themes from two of Gandhi's favourite ragas. Geraldine James (Mirabehn) read from speeches by Nelson Mandela, HH Dalai Lama and Martin Luther King. Ben Kingsley read three excerpts from Gandhi: "I will give you a talisman:", "It is

not non-violence if we merely love those who love us...” and “To me God is truth and love, ...”. Elisabeth Rosario sang “Ubi Caritas”. Richard delivered the sermon. The Patrons were The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, The Indian High Commissioner, The South African High Commissioner and The Royal Commonwealth Society, all of whom spoke at the Reception held afterwards at The South African Embassy. India's President, K R Narayan, had sent a message. Cecil Evans, Chair, and Surur Hoda, Secretary-General, spoke about the work of The Foundation. Eirwen Harbottle spoke about the work of her husband, General Sir Michael Harbottle, who had been awarded posthumously the first Gandhi International Peace Award, and Diana Schumacher, who had donated the statuette for the Award, spoke about the work of The Schumacher Society.



From left: John Rowley, Richard Attenborough, Prunella Scarlett [Director of Commonwealth Affairs], Ben Kingsley, Geraldine James, Saeed Jaffrey, Surur Hoda, Cecil Evans  
Front: Balu Raghuraman and N Balachandar, St Martin-in-the-Fields, 1st December 1998

Richard chaired three meetings of The Foundation: two in his cinema at Beaver Lodge and one at Capital Radio (which he had co-founded and still chaired) in Leicester Square.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007, Richard hosted the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of “Gandhi” at BAFTA of which he was then President. This was a fund-raising dinner for The Foundation organised by Omar Hayat and Paul Bloomfield of The Prem Rawat Foundation. Lord Bhikhu Parekh, now President of The Foundation, and Ben Kingsley were amongst those who spoke.

The last time I met Richard was in February 2008 when he invited my daughter and me to visit him in Beaver Lodge. Shortly after he and Sheila moved to Denville Hall (a nursing home for actors that he had jointly set up with Gielgud, Olivier and others and had helped fund for many years), we sent him two A3 posters for “The Festival of Non-Violence” (2008) on the back of each were written messages of goodwill and thanks from those attending the Multi-faith Service held at St Ethelburgas. *The Best of P G Wodehouse* was also included. In our last conversation, I told him how much all of us at The Foundation admired and loved him and thanked him profusely for his work.



Richard Attenborough at Kingsley Hall

*A fuller obituary and other memories of Richard can be seen on our website.*



# Gandhi and Anarchism

Margaret Chatterjee

In 1916 Gandhi delivered a speech at the opening of Banares Hindu University in which he declared “I am myself an anarchist, but of another type”, for Indian ‘terrorists’ were referred to as ‘anarchists’ at that time. The occasion was a memorable one for various reasons, and no one present could forget it. It was much later that Gandhi elaborated what he understood by anarchy.

In 1931 he wrote in *Young India* (2/7/31 pp.162-3): “If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour ... But the ideal is never fully realised in life”.

Then in 1935 he wrote in *The Modern Review*, 1 October: “I look upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress for the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.”

It is well to remember that it is the individual who stands at the centre of the oceanic circle, wherever the individual may be. I want to allow no differentiation between the son of an agriculturalist and a schoolmaster.” (*Harijan* 15/1/38, p.416)

As early as 1905 Peter Kropotkin wrote a scholarly article on anarchism for the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Originally an aristocrat in Tsarist Russia, he underwent a total change and became the most authoritative spokesman for anarchism. His own writings reached India and were lapped up by the students, especially in Bengal. Whether Gandhi had read any of Kropotkin’s work is not recorded but his own meaning-system was very much in tune with the Russians line of thought. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article speaks of anarchist thinkers who “differ in the methods they are willing to employ. Some are pacifists who will work only through example, persuasion, nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience, in the tradition of Henry David Thoreau, Lev Tolstoy, and Mohandas K Gandhi.” So Kropotkin knew about Gandhi, and knew enough to recognise a kinship of ideas. Prince Peter Kropotkin (which is how he refers to himself) refers to his book *Mutual Aid: a Factor in Evolution, The Conquest of Bread*, “and other works”.

Jailed for ‘subversive activities’ he managed to escape and was exiled for 40 years, spending part of this time in Europe. He shared whatever little he earned with those in distress, identifying himself with working class people wherever he went. His nobility of heart was recognised by all who knew him and Romain Rolland who knew Gandhi well said that Kropotkin had *lived*



what Tolstoy had *advocated*. He was able to return to his native land in June 1917 when he was seventy-five years old but he felt out of tune with the October Revolution, although he was admired by Lenin.

Both Gandhi and Kropotkin agonised over the course of events in their respective countries. Kropotkin died on February 1921, and the Soviet Government proposed a state funeral to his family which was not accepted. Gandhi was given a military funeral. Nothing could have been more incongruous. Both Gandhi and Kropotkin held fast to the ideal of a nonviolent society which could be worked towards through attacking the *causes* of violence. Industrial and agricultural work could be combined with brain-work and science and technology enlisted for the benefit of the poorest of the poor. These were the lines on which mutual aid could be generated and the economic and political malaise of even the most 'developed' countries be tackled.

Note: I have benefited much by the discussion contained in B M Ganguli's *Gandhi's Social Philosophy* which deserves a close reading for its insight into many aspects of Gandhi's thought including the many ways in which Gandhi and Kropotkin shared their ideas.

Professor Margaret Chatterjee lives in Delhi and has written several books on Gandhi's thought as well as other philosophical works.

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### **A new statue of Gandhi**

The UK Government has commissioned a statue of Gandhi to be erected in Parliament Square in London early in 2015. This is to be a standing figure sculpted by leading sculptor Philip Jackson.

A Gandhi Statue Memorial Trust has been established to raise £1 million by donation. The Trust is headed by Lord Meghnad Desai, Emeritus Professor of Economics at LSE. [www.gandhistatue.org](http://www.gandhistatue.org)

The proposed statue has been controversial in two ways. The whole idea of a statue of Gandhi has been opposed by two British-based Indian organisations, one accusing Gandhi of not respecting women and another accusing him of racism, sexism and casteism, both opinions being substantial distortions of the truth.

More significant was the occasion on which the announcement about the statue was made, viz. a visit to India by the Foreign Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was a trade mission with the aim of increasing trade with India including the supplying of the Indian Government with British made military hardware!

The well-known statue of a seated Gandhi in Tavistock Square, London, is by Polish born sculptor and actor Freda Brilliant (1903-1999) and was unveiled by Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1965. It forms the centrepiece of the Square which is devoted to peace memorials including trees.



Trudy Lewis & Jane Sill, Vanessa Scott with Andrew, Dr Kappusamy Ramasamy, Ivo, Linnet, Andrew

# **Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering 2014**

by *Linnet Drury*

The view from an 11 year old.

The Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering (GFSG) is a great way to combine sharing, peaceful thinking, practicality and ideas on fitting Gandhi's practices into the modern world. This year we all had great fun exploring the Summer Gathering's topic "Gandhi and Education" and it was hosted at the beautiful Abbey and its grounds in Sutton Courtney, Oxfordshire.

The GFSG this year had people of *all* ages (8 months to 80 years!) and people from many nationalities, even from India! We had great fun sharing games and delicious food from around the world. It was also excellent for our discussions as we had contributions from such varied backgrounds, as well as ideas and points of view about education from many different sources. In our discussions we shared our personal experience with education, and it was interesting that those who had experienced the Comprehensive system seemed to have enjoyed it more and met a broader range of people. We looked at how schools have improved, how they can still improve and about how we can include Gandhi's practices in education even more. We picked up on different styles of education, ups and downs, about home education and learning throughout life.

But the morning discussions weren't the only way of learning at the Summer Gathering. Through living in a community we find that we learn loads from sharing and having fun. Also individual ideas and thoughts can combine to create a harmonious teamwork that showed through in everything we did at the Abbey. In discussions, we combined ideas to think up answers to questions; in *shramadana* we worked together to do the jobs for the community; in free time we could have fun together; and in the creative activities sessions we combined our skills to fulfil Gandhi's ideas on practical work.

We had a lot of fun at the GFSG. The beautiful Abbey (some parts dating back to the Norman period) set in between lawns, woods, orchards and a walled garden, was great for its peaceful and meditative aura and practical facilities. People could camp in the orchard, stay in the modern guest house or in the Abbey building itself. In our free time we set out badminton on the lawn, went on river walks, went swimming in the lido in the nearby town, read in the Abbey library, played games, and just talked on the grass. In our creative activities we did painting, weaving, calligraphy, bracelet making, photography and yoga. We had beautiful weather all week so we could do most activities outside. All the food was vegetarian, and delicious, ranging from salads, pasta and homemade bread to genuine Indian curries. The kitchen always had a great aroma.

We all enjoyed ourselves and with next year's exciting topic "Gandhi in the digital age", I can't wait until next summer.

(Photographs above and below are by Jane Sill and Trevor Lewis)





Linnet Drury with her father Quen Drury



Susheela Chellamuthan with Andrew Scott



Graham Davey



# A Gandhi Alphabet (V)

## T Trusteeship

Of the two economic systems that competed in India in the 1920s, capitalism and communism, both had severe defects. Both were materialistic, while capitalism created and sustained inequality and communism accepted violence as a means to a better end. As an alternative to these Gandhi proposed Trusteeship. This was the idea that capitalists could keep their wealth but use only sufficient for their basic needs while using the surplus for the good of wider society. Thus a highly centralised polity, which Gandhi was suspicious of, would be avoided.

But Gandhi eventually had to acknowledge that only one of his capitalist friends had adopted this trusteeship approach. Gandhi's aims of widespread participation in decision making and reduced inequality could be met by the creation of a variety of co-operatives. The concept of trusteeship however could be a useful one for everyone to voluntarily apply in their own lives.

## U Untouchables

Gandhi named the untouchable or outcaste community of India Harijans or Children of God. But the community itself came to resent such a description and call themselves instead Dalits. Through the nature of their work, street cleaning, garbage disposal, cleaning public toilets, they are seen as unclean and untouchable. The Indian Caste system works through elaborate codes of pollution. If city life brings about an inevitable commingling of people and the caste has been eroded, though Dalits still live in bustees, or slums, in the villages it remains all powerful. The untouchables live isolated lives in their own ghettos, denied access to village facilities used by the higher castes. It is irrelevant that all of this is against the law. In Ambedkar, himself an untouchable, highly educated and a brilliant constitutional lawyer, Gandhi came up against a formidable rival as representative of the Dalits. Whereas Ambedkar stood for positive discrimination in favour of his community and a separate electorate, Gandhi sought their re-absorption within the caste system and was ready to fast unto death to prevent this political concession. He had already seen the Indian Muslims gain separate electorates in 1919 and was appalled at the prospect of further vivisection, as he saw it. Through the Poona fast he prevailed, though the untouchables were to win a larger number of candidates on a general list. But the relationship with Ambedkar never recovered.

In many ways, like the great social reformers such as Vivekananda, Gandhi was now ready to challenge the Hindu Orthodox, the Sanatanists, and embarked on a nation-wide campaign to open the temples to untouchable

worship. But his Congress colleagues were dismayed when he blamed the 1934 Bihar earthquake on untouchability and wondered just how unscientific and unmodern Gandhi had become.

## V Vegetarianism

Gandhi was brought up as a non-egg eating vegetarian within a Vaishnava Hindu family. However as a schoolboy he came under the influence of a Muslim boy called Sheik Mehtab who convinced him that Indians would have to eat meat if they were to expel the British from India. So for a short time Gandhi was persuaded to eat meat but he soon gave it up mainly because he was deceiving his parents.

As a student in London Gandhi at first had great trouble getting a nutritious and filling meal until he discovered a vegetarian restaurant. He found for sale in the restaurant Henry Salt's *A Plea for Vegetarianism* which he bought and on reading it became a convinced vegetarian. Soon he joined the new London Vegetarian Society and a little later became a member of its committee. So not only did he keep his vow but he became a proselytising vegetarian.

It was in South Africa that he made the biggest change in his diet when he and his colleague Kallenbach gave up milk. But Gandhi then went further and decided to live on a pure fruit diet.



Henry Salt

It was after his return to India that the next big change took place. He fell seriously ill with dysentery and over the following weeks he became progressively weaker while doctors tried to persuade him to take meat broth or eggs or milk, all of which he refused until Kasturbai persuaded her husband that taking goat's milk did not break his vow. Not wanting to die, he drank the goat's milk and began to recover. It remained part of his diet for the rest of his life although he regarded it as a moral failure having to do so. He later changed to a diet of only five different items per day. This diet was very monotonous by most standards but he regarded eating as something whose purpose is to keep one alive and not for pleasure.

## W Women

Gandhi had many women friends and colleagues. In his family his mother Putlibai's religious devotion and especially observance of vows was a great

influence on him. He began as a traditional husband, at 13, to Kasturbai, expecting her to tend to his needs and desires and although her stubborn defence of what she saw as her rights had a salutary effect on their relationship, their marriage was not one of equals due to her lack of education.

He met two powerful women when a student in London, namely Annie Besant and Helena Blavatsky, during his Theosophical phase. He had been much impressed by Besant's oratory and although his interest in theosophy was to fade Besant's and Gandhi's paths were to cross much later in India.

In South Africa, Millie Polak who stayed for a while with her husband, Henry Polak in the Gandhi home, was a critical friend who did not take Gandhi's fads, as she saw them, without comment. And later when Gandhi had set up office in Johannesburg and needed a competent secretary he acquired Sonja Schlesin. Schlesin was a confident feminist of 18 when she arrived. At age 21 she applied to be articulated to Gandhi and got his support, but did not succeed in that because of her gender.

In India there were many women close to Gandhi, both Indian and European. Among the European the best known is Mirabeau (see under M) or Madeleine Slade. In addition, Mary Barr was one of his most dependable village development workers. Muriel Lester took her pacifist views to leading politicians in many parts of the world and persuaded Gandhi to stay at Kingsley Hall in East London when he came in 1931. Three Danish women supported Gandhi's campaigns: Ellen Horup was a feminist, pacifist and radical journalist; Anne Marie Petersen and Esther Faering came out to India as Christian missionaries and teachers but were attracted to Gandhi's work which drew the suspicion of both Danish and British authorities to them. Faering married an Indian but they settled in Denmark, while Petersen lived out her days teaching in India.

Among the many Indian women supporting Gandhi were Sarojini Naidu, poet and one of the leaders of the Salt Satyagraha; Rajkumari Amrit Kaur a Christian princess; Sushila Nayar, Gandhi's physician and biographer. All three held ministerial positions after independence.

Gandhi was a staunch campaigner in India against purdah and child marriage, and for widow remarriage.

## X **Xhosa**

The Xhosa people of South Africa have produced many of the leading figures of the country including Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu both of whom have acknowledged the influence of Gandhi in their lives. The way in which Mandela dealt with lengthy imprisonment and then led his country into multi-racialism was outstanding, although it has to be noted that he had earlier abandoned the traditional nonviolence of the African National Congress. Tutu has advocated many Gandhian causes as well as chairing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Gandhi's own African contacts were mainly with the Zulu people. Dr John Dube (1871-1946), who founded what became the African National Congress, had established in 1901 a rural commune called the Ohlange Institute in Natal. It was close to where Gandhi established the Phoenix Settlement in 1904 and they met occasionally.

## Y *Young India*

*Young India* was Gandhi's second venture into journalism after the first, *Indian Opinion*, which he set up in South Africa. In fact Gandhi acquired two journals at the same time in 1919, the other being *Navajivan* which was in Gujarati. These weeklies had been edited by supporters of his campaigns and now he took editorial control which to him meant writing most of the contents himself. Journalism was of great importance in promoting his ideas and supporting his various campaigns. No adverts were taken in any of his papers so that editorial freedom was assured. It appeared until 1932 and then he started another paper, *Harijan*, in 1933 which was suspended during 1940-41 and during the Quit India period and reappeared in 1946.

## Z *Zionism*

In South Africa, Gandhi's three closest colleagues were all Jewish although they were not practising their traditional religion. They were Henry Polak, a journalist who had come from England, Hermann Kallenbach, an architect from East Prussia, and Sonja Schlesin. Even before Gandhi left South Africa in 1914, Kallenbach had been drawn to Zionism but he did not wish to see a conventional state in Palestine but rather a decentralised country based on agricultural communes.

It was only with the rise of Nazism that Jewish settlement in Palestine became urgent. Kallenbach encouraged leading Zionists to try to change the pro-Palestinian stance of the Indian National Congress and he visited Gandhi in India in 1937 to discuss this. Gandhi's position was that Jews should only settle in Palestine with the approval of the Palestinians. While the Zionists considered this unrealistic Kallenbach also pointed out that relying on the British Army or their own self-defence might be unrealistic. Nehru and Azad of the INC as well as Gandhi offered to encourage talks between the Arabs and the Jews but this was not taken up. Kallenbach died in 1945 leaving a substantial legacy to develop Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine.

This concludes *A Gandhi Alphabet* which has appeared over the last five issues of *The Gandhi Way*. It was written collaboratively by Antony Copley, Academic Adviser to The Gandhi Foundation, and George Paxton, Editor of *The Gandhi Way*.



# BEYOND WAR, BEYOND VIOLENCE

*Binnie Degli Innocenti*

"Violence begets Violence....." M K Gandhi

The Freedom Flotilla Coalition have said they are moving forward in another attempt to break the blockade on the port of Gaza by sending in a "Freedom Flotilla" (the first being in 2010 which resulted in the assault by Israelis on one of the ships, the *Mavi Marmara*, and the death of several of its passengers). While the underlying intent is to help the Palestinians and this year is dedicated to Solidarity with the Palestinians this proposed initiative will be seen by much of civil society as an act of provocation.

Civil Society is well aware of the horrendous violence in Gaza leaving the Palestinians in a desperate plight. To begin with they will need food, clean water, clothes, shelter and the reconstruction of their homes, the extension of the fishing grounds beyond polluted waters. **But is that enough ?**

**432 Innocent children have been killed** (70% under the age of 12)

2,979 Children wounded (UNICEF)

373,000 will need professional psychological help (UNICEF)

1,939 Palestinians dead and 9,886 wounded

**Did they all die in vain ?**

**Let us honour** the two Israeli and Palestinian families who made the sublime act of courage, understanding and compassion in comforting each other over the deaths of their student sons.

**Let us honour** the various NGO'S and groups: Israeli and Palestinian Parents, Stairways to Peace, Hand-in-Hand, Wahat al Salaam-Neve Shalom, Creativity for Peace, Hands of Peace, No More Enemies, Building Bridges, Daughters for Life, Libby & Len Traubman, Seeds of Peace and many others, all of whom are dedicated to creating understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians to create hope and peace in the future.

**Let us honour** the many Palestinian and Israeli doctors working tirelessly to treat each other's patients, many of whom have themselves lost members of their families.

In this very sensitive moment the action proposed will not help to create a longlasting solution. We urge Civil Society to do everything possible to help both Israelis and Palestinians to understand each other to the point of slowly negotiating the end of the blockade on Gaza, the reopening of the airport and port, to finally establishing a two-state solution based on reciprocal security,

two homelands side by side, prospering with respect for democratic governance.

**Then the innocent children and civilians will not have died in vain.**

**Shalom and saalam.**

Binnie Degli Innocenti is a Friend of the Gandhi Foundation and lives in Italy.

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## **Living Sustainably:**

An alternative viewpoint to Richard Jurin's article (*The Gandhi Way* No.121)

by Robert Fisher

**Sustainability** “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Re: PRINCIPLE 1 – A pre-requisite in a system of systems approach to global resource and asset management is humanity's ability to apply itself in study, identifying, quantifying and understanding the physics, chemistry and the symbiotic relationships between all those elements comprising our solar system and the earth upon which we live, in so doing it may begin to understand how to properly manage its behaviours. In industrialised society we are surrounded by the innovations and engineered benefits that have lifted vast numbers of the population out of poverty and attracted many to our shores.

Re: PRINCIPLE 2 – Technological and scientific advancement over the past two centuries has reduced the incidents of many diseases and has eliminated others. It has extended the average period and quality of life, provided houses, employment, sanitation, infrastructure, sent men to the moon and satellites deep into space. The diversity across social and cultural society has enabled the many, as opposed to a privileged few, to study and innovate, finding their own direction in thinking about and acting in ways that are sustainable. It is the engine that motivates and drives humanity forward.

Re: PRINCIPLE 3 – Being sensitive to the needs of others when we are poor or under threat is both logical and a natural phenomenon – we are after all a social species. There appears to be no direct correlation between our standard of living and quality of life, one being physical the other psychological. The metrics for measuring such a relationship, should one exist, must be through epidemiology or psychology, measuring the impact of our behaviours on our physical and or emotional health, i.e. good housing and food against the emotional costs to acquire it. Our spiritual health can be measured by the

way in which we come together and apply ourselves in truth and goodness when addressing the many challenges – opportunities we all have as society moves forward.

Re: PRINCIPLE 4 As in principle 1, understanding the symbiosis between humanity, the earth, its subsystems and other life forms is the first step towards enlightenment and thereafter the ability to model and measure the impact of any human initiative on the earth in a number of different ways must be the way forward to a sustainable future.

Re: PRINCIPLES 5 & 6 Economics is simply the balance between supply and demand and the measures that governments and institutions have at their disposal to apply pressure to one side or the other of that balance to achieve their objectives, be they environmental, social or financial. Globalisation has brought with it many benefits along with which comes responsibility. The catastrophe at Chernobyl in April 1986 and later at Fukushima in 2011 are just two examples of what can happen when things go wrong – the recent banking crisis another. The international response in helping those who find themselves in difficulties demonstrates the commitment to support our neighbours when they are in trouble. We no longer can say ‘it’s not my problem’, we are part of a global family from which we all benefit.

Re: PRINCIPLE 7 – Herds of bison once roamed the landscape of North American in millions and were instrumental in shaping the ecology of the great-plains. All animals, human or otherwise, will multiply and shape their environment to the full extent that it will support their own species. Animal husbandry has been going on for thousands of years and the genetic shaping of characteristics within different species for profit since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ethics, regulation, compliance and enforcement must work together to guide the ways in which our agricultural and other industries develop in the future. The food industry has evolved over many centuries and is highly sophisticated with different crops having characteristics that lend themselves to certain climatic or soil related conditions. A climate ideal for growing coffee for example may not be suitable for growing wheat or the vegetables needed to feed a local farmer and vice versa, the ideal situation being the elimination of waste, optimal yield and the equitable distribution of the end product, see Principle 4 (the ability for the earth to repair and renew itself a pre-requisite).

Re: PRINCIPLE 8 – Sustainability means taking out no more than is put back, being aware of the impact that our actions / consumptions have on our environment, the ability for every individual and industry to innovate in finding better ways of doing things and mitigating any negative impact they might have and in so doing deriving some financial or other benefit. The idea of educating our young people to live in a way that is prescriptive because of some belief or because Gandhi endorsed a particular lifestyle is neither

helpful nor is it moral. The politicisation of our education system and the children within it should be avoided at all costs.

Re: PRINCIPLE 9 – The nature of energy radiated by the sun and stored within fossil fuels, is such that when it is released, the by-products pollute our atmosphere, causing, we are advised, climate change. Big Science looking at the potential of fusion instead of fission energy generation costs money, and lots of it. To pay for this we use the crude financial mechanisms (perhaps not so crude) of our time, humanity intellectually investing in its future as has been done since the dawn of civilisation. Everything we do has some cost-benefit, the accurate calculation of which is essential in deciding if we build a wind turbine or whether or not the copper might better be used in the creation of some new particle accelerator or building some high-speed levitating mass transit infrastructure.

Re: PRINCIPLE 10 – Living and working within one physical community at the same time working in any number of virtual communities around the globe is a situation a decade ago would have been unimaginable, but now an everyday experience for many.

Re: PRINCIPLE 11 – Without intergovernmental consensus on the regulatory framework within which all nation states should operate in ways that are sustainable, equitable and that do not threaten their neighbours with nuclear reactor or financial meltdown, the world becomes an infinitely more dangerous place.

Re: PRINCIPLE 12 – Reality is the tenet we must embrace in all the things that we do and how we think. People are hard wired to survive and only equal to the mystery and wonder of our earth, its surrounding universe and its endless bounty is the capacity of humanity to innovate and overcome its difficulties.

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## Godric Bader's speech on receiving the Gandhi Foundation International Peace Award

30 October 2014 in the House of Lords

My deepest thanks to the Gandhi Foundation for the great honour of rewarding us with this year's Peace Award. It was truly heart-felt when Anne told me – there was a deep physical reaction – literally heart-warming.

Needless to say this award would not have happened without the support of family and many close and distant friends who have supported me down the years, particularly those allied to our purpose with the same endeavour for our purposes. Thank you all !





Godric Bader with his wife Anne receiving the Peace Award statuette from Lord Parekh

Above all I am delighted that the Scott Bader Commonwealth, receiving primary recognition, is being acknowledged as a living, working, example, for nearly 70 years, of a struggle to build and demonstrate a viable basis for making a truly democratic and worthwhile working life, whether in our lab, factory or office, particularly one that fundamentally endeavours to live out the 1651 words of the Quaker George Fox “to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of war”, and obviously too, of Gandhi's life, an example of living the kind of life that builds – creates – peace between people in the world, showing that resort to war has no place in the way we all want to live on and enjoy our unique planet. (Evening TV shows how unique!)

The development and building of the Commonwealth company would not have happened without the Second World War – it was our answer especially for those who came back saying ‘never again’ – which included my black brother, Ramsay, (whose son, Adrian, is here today). Ramsay was driving the second tank off his landing craft on a Normandy beach on D Day, the first one drove off into the sea and did not come up again, He was to drive on – all the way to Hamburg when peace was declared.

So, how to live in the ‘power that takes away the occasion of war’ ? What could we do out in Northamptonshire ? Post war we could see the unhealthy growth of greed, power and selfishness, and the counter power of the Trades Unions, both monsters growing in the business world – with its outlook that

defines happiness and success by being powerful, dominant, and at the top of the tree, driven there by material gain and personal self-interest backed by the law – the rise of *homo-economicus* as it has been called.

How to counter its unhealthy growth ? We had worked together in war, why not common ground in working together for peace, and in peace ? Work to create Common Wealth requires common motivation and we developed it only with constant struggle, including a strike, and especially with company law lawyers – the whole business fraternity and company law was based on ways of building gain and advantage, and still largely is, although there is some breakthrough at last. *Homo-profitus* was rampant and entrenched in law, until the idea of Common Wealth, (that is, wealth held in common) and forming a charitable trust to hold the shares evolved, so to develop what has come to be called *homo-ethicus* – our basic purpose.

Our lawyer, seeing the smiles on our faces as we got up to leave remarked “Gentlemen, I must remind you that the invitation cards to the funeral of capitalism have not yet been issued”.

It took several years to convert the 30-year-old private company to one of Commonwealth – one that could not be bought and gambled with on the stock exchange, having its work force and their jobs gambled with too. I remember Anita Roddick (yes, remember her and her Body Shop?), Anita was very disappointed that she left it too late to persuade her fellow shareholders to become a commonwealth – the business laws had her – and I am sure there are a good number of dispossessed Rowntree and Cadbury chocolate workers who feel similarly about their original owners !

At the Royal Society of Arts I was challenged by some who believe that they can and do hold their shares in trust.

As I said in a paper in Davos, Toronto and to the LSE in 1983, the Founders believed that by pursuing a middle way in marrying capital and labour on the new ground of Common Ownership a new individual would evolve without class, that would find the synergy of this co-operation such a force that it would develop a space in which he or she could be free and find their spirit becoming warm, creative, productive and responsible.

If a true *homo-ethicus* is to be achieved then our companies must predominately turn to Trustee based structures, John Lewis Partnership must move on – they are not there yet – and there must be a forward step with the Employee Ownership Association and their structures, to be ‘Trustees’ not ‘owners’, –and not ‘employees’ (a capitalist title – i.e. those who are dispensable) – or we have no hope of living sustainably on our planet; it is now clear – we need, we are told, two more Earth planets to maintain even the present status quo. Any ambition of further growth is no longer economic. Equality of distribution is the growth we need – and above all growth in common sense !

Years ago, in our Commonwealth Centre, Fritz Schumacher said “I am 6ft tall – what good would it do for me to go on growing ?”

It is understandable that some growth must occur, but this should no longer be personal greed. Clearly the whole world desperately needs a better balance, no extremes of rich or poor, north or south.

**As Gandhi said ‘there is enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed !’**

There is also the basic fact, as Fritz Schumacher told us years ago, in clear economic terms, we cannot use capital – our earth, oil, gas, minerals, etc. – as income (which we still do), a basic first principle which is a fundamental in all economics text books, and in all households – capital is guarded and used to create income ! We do not own, and did not create the sun, the rain, or the soil we live on and from – our world's capital. We must hold it in Trust, and learn to use our resources in common – like a good family would, united in holding its resources in trust – this is the future I seek to build, for as an article in *Time* magazine put it a few years ago:

‘Don't blow it! Good planets are hard to find !’

**Postscript** One of the many people present at the event was Fiona Joseph, author of *Beatrice*, a member of the Cadbury family who gave all her shares to the Bournville factory workers in 1920. Fiona's next book is to be a history of the Scott Bader company and Commonwealth. <http://fionajoseph.com>

## Letter

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### **We could live with 9 billion vegetarians**

The world population is indeed growing inexorably (‘Population explosion of planet can't be halted’, *The Independent* 28 October). Would the planet be able to sustain a population of 9 billion by 2050 ? Yes it could as the planet is sustaining over 65 billion animals raised for meat consumption every year. There are at any time three times more chickens on the planet than human beings. Any discussion on the growth of population should also account for the other living beings who also need to be fed and watered just as we do. It is this massive number of animals which is causing global warming, desertification of fertile land, using up a huge amount of the world's fresh water supplies and almost 40% of the world's cereals for animal consumption. Billions of tons of animal manure and slurry seeps into the earth causing massive pollution and acid rain. It would be possible to feed the world if so much of the cereals produced were not fed to animals. The health impact on human beings is also great as animals are fed antibiotics rendering them ineffective as the meat consumed carries antibiotics. A move away from a predominantly meat diet to a plant based vegetarian and vegan diet is imperative if we are to avoid mass starvation and catastrophic climate change.

Nitin Mehta, Croydon

# 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 January 2015**

Printed on recycled paper using vegetable based inks and 100% renewable energy  
by [www.hillingdongreenprint.co.uk](http://www.hillingdongreenprint.co.uk)  
Tel: 020 8868 7852



