

## **Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering**

Saturday 23 - Saturday 30 July 2011

*Faith and Sustainability*

St Christopher School, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3JZ

Further details and booking from:

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## **Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture**

Thursday 13 October 2011 at 6.30 pm

The Nehru Centre, 8 South Audley Street, London W1K 1HF

*Is Gandhian Nonviolence Compatible with the Coercive State ?*

Professor Anthony Parel

Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Calgary, (Harvard Ph D, 1963), Anthony Parel, is author of *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony* (CUP, 2006), *The Machiavellian Cosmos* (Yale, 1992), and other works. Co-editor with Judith Brown of Oxford University of *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi* (2011)

## **Contents**

Human Rights Among the Tribal Peoples of India Binayak Sen

A Disappearing World Jennifer Wallace & Robert Wallis

Two Contrasting Perspectives on Gandhi  
– Andrew Roberts & Antony Copley

Letter:

Gandhi's message to mega-rich Indians: Trusteeship (A Kaushik)

Book Review:

*Ishmael: An Advance of the Mind and Spirit* (Daniel Quinn)

Money: Fact or Fiction ? Anita McKone & Robert J Burrowes

# **Human Rights Among the Tribal Peoples of India**

*Gwangju Prize Acceptance speech of Binayak Sen*

Dr Binayak Sen and his wife Dr Ilina Sen are among the leading defenders of the rights of tribals (adivasis) of India. Binayak Sen has undergone imprisonment as a consequence of his criticism of the exploitation of ancestral land by corporations and of government actions. He is at present on bail and recently received in Korea the Gwangju Prize for human rights advocacy.

The same theme is further explored here in the report of a seminar at the Brunei Gallery in London associated with the Disappearing World exhibition there. The exhibition is highly recommended for the fine photographs by Robert Wallis and paintings by tribal artists. It closes on 25 June.

I am greatly honored to be chosen as the 2011 recipient of the prestigious Gwangju Prize for Human Rights. It is indeed an honor not just for me but also the countless other human rights workers struggling to establish justice, peace and equity all over India, including Chhattisgarh where I live and work. Let me begin by thanking all those who have taken the time to advocate about me and on behalf of me, and then take this opportunity to speak for myself and in my own words.

I would like to thank the people of South Korea and in particular the citizens of Gwangju whose historic struggles have made freedom, democracy and justice core values of their society. The martyrs of Gwangju will remain an inspiration to people all over Asia as we struggle to make the world a better place.

First, I shall try to briefly clear up some possible misconceptions about myself. I did not violate any laws and never was disloyal to the people of my country. I condemn, unequivocally, all violence by any and all individuals and agencies. I believe that violence is an invalid and unsustainable approach to achieving goals, whether these are the goals of the state or the goals of individuals operating outside the law. Because the state is sworn to uphold the Constitution, I believe we are entitled to hold agents of the state to a higher standard than we hold outlaws. As members and office-bearers of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, it is the responsibility of my colleagues and myself to help hold the state accountable to the promises of the Indian Constitution.

But the state does not only consist of the government or its agencies. As a society, we are all part of the state, and there would be no state without us. We often tend to think of violence only in terms of the use of weapons and explosives against others. However, there is another form of violence in society, which is structural in nature, which I believe is even more pervasive and pernicious than guns and bombs, because it is all around us and we have

stopped noticing it. It is this other form of violence that concerns me as a paediatrician and public health physician.

I would like to begin my speech here today by first telling you very briefly about myself and my work but follow this up with my perspectives on what is happening in my home country India, which is home to over one-sixth of all humanity on this planet. I will also try to deal with the global context which is affecting the health and human rights situation in India.



It was nearly four decades ago that I, as a pediatrician trained at the Christian Medical College, Vellore in southern India after a brief stint at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi decided to go and work in Chhattisgarh. My graduate thesis at CMC had focused on severe malnutrition in children and the theme of nutrition and its interface with health and well-being has been a life-long area of concern for me.

Chhattisgarh, a province in central India that till ten years ago used to be part of the larger province of Madhya Pradesh, was created in 2000 as a separate state ostensibly to benefit the large population of indigenous people or 'adivasis' there.

However, Chhattisgarh is also the most mineral rich state in the country and iron-ore, limestone, dolomite, coal, bauxite are found in abundance. The province also produces 20% of the India's steel and cement and is also a major centre of thermal power production. Much of the mineral resource lies below adivasi lands. Yet throughout India as well as in Chhattisgarh, the adivasis are a much-neglected group, long deprived of such basics as nutritional security, health care and education, who are now also suffering displacement from their natural habitat and their traditional livelihood resources as politically favoured commercial interests seek to exploit the state's vast mineral wealth in their lands.

When we first arrived here my wife Dr Ilina Sen (who is a sociologist with a special interest in gender studies) and I, decided to work with the Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh (CMSS) which was a unique trade union movement among mining and steel plant workers led by the legendary Shankar Guha Niyogi. Under Niyogi's leadership, the mine workers' organization led a militant struggle for the rights of indigenous, contractual mine workers, and combined this with a strong commitment to social initiatives that were anchored in the strength of the people. The idea of basing health outreach programmes on the strength of community based health workers was born here.

In the mid-eighties we moved to the capital city of Raipur and founded Rupantar, a community-based non-governmental organization that aimed at

an integrated approach to health care and human rights, including women's rights and food security. Using this platform we contributed to the mainstreaming of health worker based community health programmes that have now been adopted nationally in India. However, my health work in Chhattisgarh for the last 30 years has demonstrated to me again and again that there is a clear relationship to peoples' nutrition, social, economic and political well being and the state of their health. Health can never exist in isolation and without a broader concept of entitlements.

My participation in human rights work started with my joining the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), a long-established and respected Indian human rights organization established by the late Jai Prakash Narayan during the dark days of the Emergency when the liberty of speech and expression of ordinary citizens stood suspended. When the new state of Chhattisgarh was formed, I became the secretary of the PUCL in Chhattisgarh and in the course of time, its National Vice-President. A lot of my human rights work consisted of highlighting the deprivations of the tribal communities and exposing instances of state insensitivity as well as police atrocities against them.

This was a period when the government of Chhattisgarh was engaged in a major project of land acquisition and mega development that deprived the adivasis of their access to common property resources in land, water and forest, as well as existing livelihood options. State action in the forested parts of the province, ostensibly against the Maoists, severely compromised normal life, with repressive laws, police brutality, and the sponsorship of a vicious civilian militia or vigilante group called the Salwa Judum. On behalf of the PUCL, my colleagues and I organised objective enquiries into the atrocities of this militia. We also led enquiries into so called "encounter killings", by which security agencies sometimes secretly liquidate suspected militants. One such enquiry ultimately led to registration of criminal cases and issuing of arrest warrants against eight erring police officers, much to the discomfort of the state police.

The PUCL has also strongly criticized over the years the forced displacement of the adivasis without proper rehabilitation and without sharing with them the fruits of economic development which is mainly based on exploitation of mineral wealth located in their natural habitat.

Almost certainly because of my growing involvement in human rights work and exposure of state atrocities on indigenous populations on 14 May 2007, I was detained for allegedly supporting the outlawed Maoists, thereby violating the provisions of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act 2005 (CSPSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967, and for indulgence in seditious activity.

On 24 December 2010 a lower court in Raipur sentenced me along with two others to rigorous life imprisonment for 'sedition', under an outdated colonial-era law that was formulated by our Imperial masters in the

nineteenth century, and used for long against fighters for India's freedom from British rule.

Today, as I stand before you here in Gwangju I have been freed on bail by the Supreme Court of India which in a hearing on 15 April has said clearly that the law on sedition has been wrongly applied in my case and there is no evidence at all for such a charge. My appeal to overturn the conviction and sentence of life imprisonment continues at the Chhattisgarh High Court and I am determined to fight the case till it is finally established that my actions were always in the interest of justice with equity, and were never seditious in nature.

What I have said so far about Chhattisgarh, applies today to all of India. India, the country I belong to, is an ancient and great nation. It is a land of stupendous diversity of people, cultures, languages and ethnicities. It is a land that gave rise to at least four major religions of the world Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and to numerous great philosophers, mathematicians, physicians and social revolutionaries.

Today, India is considered around the world as a rapidly developing country posting economic growth rates of around 8-9 percent consistently over the last several years. Along with China, which is much further ahead, India is seen as a powerhouse of the global economy in the decades to come and already it is home to a very large number of dollar billionaires, perhaps the largest such number in Asia.

In our own times as we look around this vast and populated country though the picture that one sees is not as rosy as it is made out to be. India is also home to the world's largest number of people living in absolute poverty. In 2007 a study on the unorganized sector in India, based on government data for the period between 1993-94 and 2004-05, found that an overwhelming 836 million people in India live on a per capita consumption of less than Rs 20 or 50 US cents a day.

In 2010 a UNDP/Oxford University study, using a new Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), said that eight Indian provinces alone have more poor than 26 African nations put together. The report said that acute poverty prevails in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal which together account for 421 million people, 11 million more "MPI poor" than in the 26 poorest African countries.

As a physician and a pediatrician in particular what concerns me is that such absolute poverty among such large numbers of people really translates into a major health disaster the proportions of which can only be called genocidal. I have a specific technical reason for using the word genocide and do not wield it in a rhetorical manner.

The Indian National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB) tells us that over 33% of the adult population of India has a Body Mass Index of less than 18.5, and can be considered as suffering from chronic under nutrition. If we disaggregate the data, we find that over 50% of the scheduled tribes

(adivasis), and over 60% of the scheduled castes (dalits) have a BMI below 18.5.

The WHO says that any community with more than 40% of its members with a BMI below 18.5 may be regarded as being in a state of famine. By this criterion there are various subsets of the population of India – the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes – which may be regarded as being permanently in a state of famine.

So it is not any general population that is suffering the consequences of poverty-induced malnutrition but specific ethnic groups and hence my use of the term ‘genocide’ as per the United Nations definition. All this is, of course, in addition to the mundane reality, to which we have become inured, of 43% of children under 5 in India being malnourished by weight for age criteria. It has the world’s largest number of malnourished children and according to the UNICEF over 2 million Indian children die every year due to malnutrition related diseases.

I want to bring to your and indeed the attention of the world that it is precisely this section of the population, that is stricken by famine, that is today the principal target of a widespread policy of expropriation of natural and common property resources, in a concerted and often militarized programme run by the Indian state.

For a long time, despite their cash poverty, the Adivasis of central India, living in extreme poverty, nevertheless survived through their access to common property resources – the forests, the rivers, and land – all of which are now under a renewed threat of sequestration and privatization as global finance capital embarks on its latest phase of expansion. The doctrine of eminent domain vests ultimate ownership of all land and natural resources in the state. Under cover of eminent domain, vast tracts of land, forest and water reserves are being handed over to the Indian affiliates of international finance capital.

Land acquired from ordinary people in Chhattisgarh, as also in other parts of India, has been handed over to the industrial houses for the purpose of mining or building large steel and power plants. With a few honourable exceptions, the personnel articulating the agency of state power have almost uniformly possessed a colonial mindset. It is not as if the people have not resisted. The forced takeover of indigenous land is being met with resistance that is multi-hued, yet the state has chosen to brand it under the single category of Maoist, and has met it with brutality and human rights violations. The social fabric in many of these regions is today polarized beyond immediate rectification, and the deep fissures in our society will take time to heal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on this solemn occasion, I would like to make an appeal to all of you. In the times we live while oppression is most acutely manifested in remote and local places like Bastar district of Chhattisgarh the truth is that the forces behind such oppression are often global in nature. It is well recognized now that the tsunami-like flow of capital around the world is

a source of tremendous tragedy for many communities around the world which do not fit into the ideologically straitjacketed confines of the 'market economy'.

Countries like South Korea that have suffered the ravages of colonialism in the past and risen from the ashes of the Second World War to become industrially and economically leading nations of the world have a special responsibility today. It is the responsibility of ensuring that they do not do the kind of violence and exploitation to the people of the Third World what they themselves were subjected to in the past by others.

I want to bring up the specific case of the South Korean steel giant POSCO which has embarked on a USD 12 billion dollar project in the Indian state of Orissa to mine iron ore, build a port and a mega-steel plant.

Indian activists have pointed out repeatedly that from a national point of view the MoU signed by the Orissa government with POSCO to give it the rights to mine over 600 million tonnes of high grade iron ore is a scam of immense proportions. According to the original MoU, the royalty that POSCO will pay for the iron ore is around Rs. 24 per tonne whereas the selling price in the international market is around Rs. 5000 today. Besides all this POSCO and its investors from around the world are to be illegally given nearly 5000 acres of land that was originally forest land and cannot be used for any other purpose under Indian law without the consent of forest dwelling people.

For more than five years now the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samity (PPSS), a local people's movement in Jagatsingpur district, has been bravely resisting the POSCO project which threatens the livelihood of thousands of agriculturists, workers and small businesses in the area besides devastating the local environment and ecology. Over 30,000 people, mostly farmers and fisherfolk are expected to be displaced.

Even as we speak here today large contingents of the Orissa police are moving into the villages settled on the targeted land for the POSCO project to uproot local communities using brute force. I would like to appeal to the South Korean people and the people of Gwangju in particular to strongly oppose the POSCO project in solidarity with the brave farmers and fishermen of Jagatsingpur. POSCO should withdraw its investment in this project immediately and an inquiry launched in both South Korea and India into the circumstances under which such a project was considered and cleared.

The spirit of the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights calls upon all of us to continue to oppose violations of human rights in every form, wherever it occurs and whatsoever the costs of such opposition. We remain committed to Peace, but realize that there cannot be any peace without equity and social justice. I am confident that my appeal to you will be heard and responded to and the solidarity of the South Korean people will forever remain with the oppressed people of India and other parts of Asia and the world. Δ

# Disappearing World

A summary of issues raised in the “Disappearing World” seminars

Comments by Jennifer Wallace:

We held two public seminars on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010, in conjunction with the “A Disappearing World: Ancient Traditions Under Threat in Tribal India” exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS.

The first panel discussion was on Art, Ancestry and Tribal Identity, chaired by Jennifer Wallace (Cambridge University and writer/researcher for the Disappearing World exhibition). On the panel were Bulu Imam, Convener of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art, Culture and Heritage) in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, and Director of the Tribal Women’s Artist Collective; Philomina Tirkey, an Oraon tribal artist whose work was included in the exhibition; Daniel Rycroft, lecturer at University of East Anglia and co-editor of *The Politics of Belonging in India: Becoming Adivasi*; and Rasmi Varma, lecturer at Warwick University and author of the forthcoming book *Modern Tribal: the Cultural Politics of Indigeneity in Post-Colonial India*.

The discussion focused on the issue of indigenous identity. Although Bulu began by declaring that Adivasi identity was defined by the 2007 UN declaration on the rights of indigenous people, the debate became polarised between those (chiefly Bulu and Philomina) who said that Adivasi identity was characterised by the experience of living in accordance with nature, in a way unchanged since ancient times, and those (chiefly Daniel and Rashmi) who stressed that it was more a political definition which was also available to those who no longer live in villages or in accordance with old beliefs and practices and who might still want to claim allegiance to those indigenous roots. In other words, the debate was between whether the Adivasi culture stretched back to the dawn of time and could not be intellectualised or whether it was constantly in transition, able to be appropriated and imposed by different groups and was the product of more recent history (such as rebellions against the British colonialists). While somebody from the audience raised the question of whether this was all just an obscure academic debate, others from the audience and the panel responded with the point that defining Adivasi identity was in fact hugely important for social policy and ongoing legislation. The general feeling was that it was very good for those on the ground and academics to talk to one another, because we are all working towards the same goals and objectives.

In the context of this larger debate, there was also a discussion of Adivasi religious beliefs and practices. Philomina spoke eloquently of the festivals and pujas that her village held every year, and we went on to discuss whether these pujas, which were focused upon the sacred land around the village, could also be continued by those who had been displaced from the land and who now live in urban slums. Rasmi pointed to the comparable example of the Gond tribe, who now paint instead of singing their old traditional songs; this led to a brief discussion of the art practised by the tribal women of north Jharkhand and its connection to their spiritual beliefs. Bulu concluded the afternoon’s discussion by declaring that art was vital to a people’s humanity, that what we are all in danger of losing is a notion



of ourselves as human. This notion is rooted in our sense of belonging, in our history and community; Adivasi traditions (which are endangered) represent that spirit of humanity for us most strikingly.



Displaced adivasis transporting coal

The second panel discussion was on “Mining, Displacement and Resistance”, chaired again by Jennifer Wallace. On the panel were Bulu Imam, as the director of the Save the Karanpura Valley Campaign; Vinita Damodaran, lecturer at University of Sussex and author of many books and articles on popular protest, forest rights, globalisation and mining in Eastern India; Robert Wallis, the photographer for the “Disappearing World” exhibition; and Richard Harkinson, part of the London Mining Network.



Underground fires at open-cast coal mines

The session began with a screening of Robert Wallis’s 6-minute film on the situation in Jharkhand. The panel discussion focused around three questions: what are the laws which are supposed to protect the Adivasi and which also paradoxically allow the displacement of tribal people from their lands ? To what extent is mining a major contributing factor to the Maoist insurgency in the region ? And what is the solution, or in other words, what kind of development, if any, could or should be brought to Jharkhand ? Vinita explained the problems with the recent Forest Rights

Act, and spoke powerfully about the extent of dispossession (about 60 million people) since Independence. With facts like these, she asked, is it any wonder that there is grievance and that some Adivasi are ending up fighting with the Maoists ? The panel were divided on the question of the solution. Bulu was strongly opposed to any form of development imposed by outsiders for the benefit of outsiders. Others felt that some form of local development, in which Adivasi take control of their own industries, could be the way forward. Only through development of this kind might the Adivasi be given a non-violent alternative to the Naxalites or armed insurgency. There was a vigorous debate about whether corporations or NGOs could – or indeed already do – carry out Environmental Impact Assessments, and how these could ever be effective or whether they are completely ignored and used only as a PR exercise. Bulu expressed a faith in young people to realise the importance of nature, community and spirituality for the human race. While Robert was sceptical about whether young, middle-class people living in cities really cared about the cost of the development which was bringing them prosperity, Bulu finished the session by declaring that the power of the internet and other media to raise awareness offered the crucial solution; with knowledge of what was really going on in Jharkhand and the other mining states of India, young people would strive to overturn the mistakes of their parents.



Adivasi women decorating the walls of their mud huts after the monsoon

Additional comments by Robert Wallis:

Further to discussions about the Forest Right's Act, during the seminar and after it, it was pointed out that the FRA, which was ostensibly created to protect tribal land rights, has in fact been used to exploit their lands without fair compensation. While the FRA prevents tribal land from being freely bought and sold like non-tribal land, it does not prevent the government from seizing the land for purposes considered to be in the "national interest"—specifically in the case of Jharkhand, for mining and hydro-electric projects. So in practice Adivasi are forced off their land but paid only a tiny fraction of what it is really worth to corporate interests which will then buy it from the government at a much higher price. Bulu forcefully argued that this is a loophole which the government uses to acquire mineral resources on Adivasi lands at knock-down prices. He said this must be changed. If Adivasi are dispossessed and forced to leave their ancestral lands, they must receive a fair price for the land, the same price that would have to be paid if it was owned by non-tribals. Only in this way can Adivasi purchase other agricultural land (land for land) to continue their traditional way of life or choose alternatives that are economically viable. Otherwise many will end up scavenging on the edge of the mines that have displaced them (as seen in my photos in the exhibition) or working as unskilled day labourers living in urban slums.

To summarise, Bulu said that either the FRA must be respected and not easily overruled by the so called 'national interest', which is really the interest of large corporations but not of those whose way of life is being destroyed, or Adivasi must be paid the same as non-tribals for what their land is really worth to be able to start a new life elsewhere. It becomes a legal issue in either case.

Bulu concluded that even if the law is changed or interpreted fairly, it must then be enforced at the local level which is an entirely different challenge since non-enforcement of existing laws is endemic in India due to bribery, intimidation and corruption. Δ Photographs by Robert Wallis

### **Peace Award 2011**

The Gandhi Foundation International Peace Award will be presented to representatives of the Tribal Peoples of India later in the year. The date and venue will be announced in the next issue of *The Gandhi Way* and on our website.

### **News from Kingsley Hall**

Following the death of Sue Davis who was a dedicated community activist and Secretary of the Kingsley Hall trustees, Shaheen Choudhury-Westcombe has taken over as Secretary. Shaheen is also a member of the GF Executive Committee.

Cuts in the local Council's grant programme has meant a cut in income for youth work but the Hall continues to give space to 9 youth groups running weekly programmes for about 200 young people.

Community Builders' Grant programme has given £25k for a digital survey and architectural plans for renovation of the building. Major fund raising will be required for the plans to be realised.

It is hoped that the Olympics in 2012 will attract visitors to this historic building. Δ

## Two Contrasting Perspectives on Gandhi

A recently published biography of Gandhi by Joseph Lelyveld has led to considerable controversy. It has even been banned by the Indian State of Gujarat. The following two articles by historians give contrasting views of Gandhi's personality and significance. Andrew Roberts has written books on Winston Churchill and also Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax), Viceroy of India 1926-31. Antony Copley is Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Kent, and author of a number of books on Indian culture; he is Academic Adviser to the Gandhi Foundation.

### Among the Hagiographers

Early on Gandhi was dubbed a 'mortal demi-god'  
and he has been regarded that way ever since.

*Andrew Roberts*

Joseph Lelyveld has written a generally admiring book about Mohandas Gandhi, the man credited with leading India to independence from Britain in 1947. [*Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi And His Struggle With India* Knopf, 425 pages, \$28.95] Yet "Great Soul" also obligingly gives readers more than enough information to discern that he was a sexual weirdo, a political incompetent and a fanatical faddist — one who was often downright cruel to those around him. Gandhi was therefore the archetypal 20th-century progressive — intellectual, professing his love for mankind as a concept while actually despising people as individuals.

For all his lifelong campaign for Swaraj ("self-rule"), India could have achieved it many years earlier if Gandhi had not continually abandoned his civil-disobedience campaigns just as they were beginning to be successful. With 300 million Indians ruled over by 0.1% of that number of Britons, the subcontinent could have ended the Raj with barely a shrug if it had been politically united. Yet Gandhi's uncanny ability to irritate and frustrate the leader of India's 90 million Muslims, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (whom he called "a maniac"), wrecked any hope of early independence. He equally alienated B R Ambedkar, who spoke for the country's 55 million Untouchables (the lowest caste of Hindus, whose very touch was thought to defile the four higher classes). Ambedkar pronounced Gandhi "devious and untrustworthy." Between 1900 and 1922, Gandhi suspended his efforts no fewer than three times, leaving in the lurch more than 15,000 supporters who had gone to jail for the cause.

A ceaseless self-promoter, Gandhi bought up the entire first edition of his first, hagiographical biography to send to people and ensure a reprint. Yet we cannot be certain that he really made all the pronouncements attributed to him, since, according to Mr Lelyveld, Gandhi insisted that journalists file "not the words that had actually come from his mouth but a



version he authorized after his sometimes heavy editing of the transcripts."

We do know for certain that he advised the Czechs and Jews to adopt nonviolence toward the Nazis, saying that "a single Jew standing up and refusing to bow to Hitler's decrees" might be enough "to melt Hitler's heart." (Nonviolence, in Gandhi's view, would apparently have also worked for the Chinese against the Japanese invaders.) Starting a letter to Adolf Hitler with the words "My friend," Gandhi egotistically asked: "Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success?" He advised the Jews of Palestine to "rely on the goodwill of the Arabs" and wait for a Jewish state "till Arab opinion is ripe for it."

In August 1942, with the Japanese at the gates of India, having captured most of Burma, Gandhi initiated a campaign designed to hinder the war effort and force the British to "Quit India." Had the genocidal Tokyo regime captured northeastern India, as it almost certainly would have succeeded in doing without British troops to halt it, the results for the Indian population would have been catastrophic. No fewer than 17% of Filipinos perished under Japanese occupation, and there is no reason to suppose that Indians would have fared any better. Fortunately, the British viceroy, Lord Wavell, simply imprisoned Gandhi and 60,000 of his followers and got on with the business of fighting the Japanese.

Gandhi claimed that there was "an exact parallel" between the British Empire and the Third Reich, yet while the British imprisoned him in luxury in the Aga Khan's palace for 21 months until the Japanese tide had receded in 1944, Hitler stated that he would simply have had Gandhi and his supporters shot. (Gandhi and Mussolini got on well when they met in December 1931, with the Great Soul praising the Duce's "service to the poor, his opposition to super-urbanization, his efforts to bring about a coordination between Capital and Labour, his passionate love for his people.") During his 21 years in South Africa (1893-1914), Gandhi had not opposed the Boer War or the Zulu War of 1906 — he raised a battalion of stretcher-bearers in both cases — and after his return to India during World War I he offered to be Britain's "recruiting agent-in-chief." Yet he was comfortable opposing the war against fascism.

Although Gandhi's nonviolence made him an icon to the American civil-rights movement, Mr Lelyveld shows how implacably racist he was toward the blacks of South Africa. "We were then marched off to a prison intended for Kaffirs," Gandhi complained during one of his campaigns for the rights of Indians settled there. "We could understand not being classed with whites, but to be placed on the same level as the Natives seemed too much to put up with. Kaffirs are as a rule uncivilized — the

convicts even more so. They are troublesome, very dirty and live like animals."

In an open letter to the legislature of South Africa's Natal province, Gandhi wrote of how "the Indian is being dragged down to the position of the raw Kaffir," someone, he later stated, "whose occupation is hunting and whose sole ambition is to collect a number of cattle to buy a wife, and then pass his life in indolence and nakedness." Of white Afrikaaners and Indians, he wrote: "We believe as much in the purity of races as we think they do." That was possibly why he refused to allow his son Manilal to marry Fatima Gool, a Muslim, despite publicly promoting Muslim-Hindu unity.

Gandhi's pejorative reference to nakedness is ironic considering that, as Mr Lelyveld details, when he was in his 70s and close to leading India to independence, he encouraged his 17-year-old great-niece, Manu, to be naked during her "nightly cuddles" with him. After sacking several long-standing and loyal members of his 100-strong personal entourage who might disapprove of this part of his spiritual quest, Gandhi began sleeping naked with Manu and other young women. He told a woman on one occasion: "Despite my best efforts, the organ remained aroused. It was an altogether strange and shameful experience."

Yet he could also be vicious to Manu, whom he on one occasion forced to walk through a thick jungle where sexual assaults had occurred in order for her to retrieve a pumice stone that he liked to use on his feet. When she returned in tears, Gandhi "cackled" with laughter at her and said: "If some ruffian had carried you off and you had met your death courageously, my heart would have danced with joy."

Yet as Mr Lelyveld makes abundantly clear, Gandhi's organ probably only rarely became aroused with his naked young ladies, because the love of his life was a German-Jewish architect and bodybuilder, Hermann Kallenbach, for whom Gandhi left his wife in 1908. "Your portrait (the only one) stands on my mantelpiece in my bedroom," he wrote to Kallenbach. "The mantelpiece is opposite to the bed." For some reason, cotton wool and Vaseline were "a constant reminder" of Kallenbach, which Mr Lelyveld believes might relate to the enemas Gandhi gave himself, although there could be other, less generous, explanations.

Gandhi wrote to Kallenbach about "how completely you have taken possession of my body. This is slavery with a vengeance." Gandhi nicknamed himself "Upper House" and Kallenbach "Lower House," and he made Lower House promise not to "look lustfully upon any woman." The two then pledged "more love, and yet more love . . . such love as they hope the world has not yet seen."

They were parted when Gandhi returned to India in 1914, since the German national could not get permission to travel to India during wartime — though Gandhi never gave up the dream of having him back, writing him in 1933 that "you are always before my mind's eye." Later, on his ashram, where even married "inmates" had to swear celibacy, Gandhi said: "I cannot imagine a thing as ugly as the intercourse of men and women." You could even be thrown off the ashram for "excessive tickling." (Salt was also forbidden, because it "arouses the senses.")

In his tract "Hind Swaraj" ("India's Freedom"), Gandhi denounced lawyers, railways and parliamentary politics, even though he was a professional lawyer who constantly used railways to get to meetings to argue that India deserved its own parliament. After taking a vow against milk for its supposed aphrodisiac properties, he contracted hemorrhoids, so he said that it was only cow's milk that he had forsworn, not goat's. His absolute opposition to any birth control except sexual abstinence, in a country that today has more people living on less than \$1.25 a day than there were Indians in his lifetime, was more dangerous.

Telling the Muslims who had been responsible for the massacres of thousands of Hindus in East Bengal in 1946 that Islam "was a religion of peace," Gandhi nonetheless said to three of his workers who preceded him into its villages: "There will be no tears but only joy if tomorrow I get the news that all three of you were killed." To a Hindu who asked how his co-religionists could ever return to villages from which they had been ethnically cleansed, Gandhi blithely replied: "I do not mind if each and every one of the 500 families in your area is done to death." What mattered for him was the principle of nonviolence, and anyhow, as he told an orthodox Brahmin, he believed in re-incarnation.

Gandhi's support for the Muslim caliphate in the 1920s — for which he said he was "ready today to sacrifice my sons, my wife and my friends"— Mr Lelyveld shows to have been merely a cynical maneuver to keep the Muslim League in his coalition for as long as possible. When his campaign for unity failed, he blamed a higher power, saying in 1927: "I toiled for it here, I did penance for it, but God was not satisfied. God did not want me to take any credit for the work."

Gandhi was willing to stand up for the Untouchables, just not at the crucial moment when they were demanding the right to pray in temples in 1924-25. He was worried about alienating high-caste Hindus. "Would you teach the Gospel to a cow?" he asked a visiting missionary in 1936. "Well, some of the Untouchables are worse than cows in their understanding."

Gandhi's first Great Fast — undertaken despite his belief that hunger strikes were "the worst form of coercion, which militates against the fundamental principles of non-violence" — was launched in 1932 to prevent Untouchables from having their own reserved seats in any future Indian parliament. Because he said that it was "a religious, not a political question," he accepted no debate on the matter. He elsewhere stated that "the abolition of Untouchability would not entail caste Hindus having to dine with former Untouchables." At his monster rallies against Untouchability in the 1930s, which tens of thousands of people attended, the Untouchables themselves were kept in holding pens well away from the caste Hindus.

Of course, any coalition movement involves a certain degree of compromise and occasional hypocrisy. But Gandhi's saintly image, his martyrdom at the hands of a Hindu fanatic in 1948 and Martin Luther King Jr's adoption of him as a role model for the American civil-rights movement have largely protected him from critical scrutiny. The French man of letters Romain Rolland called Gandhi "a mortal demi-god" in a 1924 hagiography, catching the tone of most writing about him. People used to take away the sand that had touched his feet as relics — one relation kept Gandhi's fingernail clippings — and modern biographers seem to treat him with much the same reverence today. Mr Lelyveld is not immune, making labored excuses for him at every turn of this nonetheless well-researched and well-written book.

Yet of the four great campaigns of Gandhi's life — for Hindu-Muslim unity, against importing British textiles, for ending Untouchability and for getting the British off the subcontinent — only the last succeeded, and that simply because the near-bankrupt British led by the anti-imperialist Clement Attlee desperately wanted to leave India anyhow after a debilitating world war.

It was not much of a record for someone who had been invested with "sole executive authority" over the Indian National Congress as early as in December 1921. But then, unlike any other politician, Gandhi cannot be judged by actual results, because he was the "Great Soul." (*This review appeared in The Wall Street Journal and was posted on-line 26 March 2011.*)

## A Reply to Andrew Roberts's Review *Antony Copley*

Dear Andrew

I can see why you felt driven to write so distasteful a review of Joseph Lelyveld's book on Gandhi. As a historian, indeed it could be said as a hagiographer, of Churchill, you must always have been on the lookout for



some way of getting back at Gandhi. For all his achievements as a liberal reformer in the pre-1914 government and as a war leader Churchill died a disappointed man. His life's ambition had been to save the Empire and he had failed and none bore so great a responsibility for his failure as Gandhi. And of course his contempt for Gandhi as the Inner Temple lawyer, posing in his eyes as a half-naked fakir, betrays his grim awareness of where his imperial ambitions had met their nemesis. Whereas as General Smuts had the insight to recognise a person of high moral stature, Churchill was hopelessly blinkered. His was an odd dichotomy for we can see in his passionate opposition to appeasement the need to stand up to Hitler but he was quite unable to grasp, as a defendant of appeasement like Halifax had, that through Gandhi was the one possibility Britain had for that gradual change from Empire to Commonwealth, one of the more admirable transpositions of British policy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Jawaharlal Nehru famously told Richard Attenborough when he gave the go-ahead for his film on Gandhi, don't turn him into a saint and I agree with you that we do Gandhi no favours by writing hagiography. Gandhi was such an exemplary leader just because of his all too human frailties. Yours is an attempt to belittle Gandhi's achievement in the public sphere and to diminish the man in the private. You readily take up any half-truth going and turn it into calumny. It is a careless and slapdash attempt at character assassination. Wavell would be very surprised to find himself Vice-Roy in 1942: it was the unimaginative Linlithgow who locked up Gandhi and the Congress High Command after the Quit India satyagraha of August 1942. Wavell was only his successor in 1943. So firstly, your sour commentary on Gandhi the private man.

Interpretation of Gandhi's deeply troubled struggle to harness his sexual energies has already become a well rehearsed attempt at salacious denigration. We now understand how Gandhi sought in all those experiments with the truth, as he saw them in his Autobiography, a way of overcoming weakness and gaining strength for the awesome challenge he was undertaking against imperialism. Here is one explanation for his admittedly somewhat obsessive concern with diet. And diet was also one way at controlling sexual desire. Who are we to judge Gandhi if he convinced himself that sublimation of sexual desire was one vital resource in his awesome political struggles? Of course it put almost intolerable constraints on his followers and asceticism has always been psychologically costly. It was when Gandhi faced the simply horrendous possibilities of communal madness leading to partition, fearing that his sexual self-control was slipping and that he would then lack the force to face the impending holocaust, that he embarked on that embarrassing experiment with his grandniece Manu. Indeed, he did find the energy to bring communal harmony to Noakhali. But many have doubts about the wisdom of that experiment. But you show no interest as to what lay behind it.

And now comes another kind of controversy over his personal life. Was he the lover of the German Jewish architect, Hermann Kallenbach? There is

nothing new here at exploring the possibilities at such relationships in the lives of famous Indians: Nehru has been seen as having such a relationship with his tutor and indeed possibly with Mountbatten. It is all grist to the biographical mill. Personally I would not want to reject such a proposal on grounds of the nature of its sexuality: we have had to struggle far too hard in our lifetime to see the acceptability of homosexuality as a part of the spectrum of human sexuality only to fall into the trap of prejudice and here use this possibility as a means of expressing contempt for Gandhi, something you seem all too ready to do. It is also worth pointing out that in Africa, a continent with such an appalling track record of intolerance, South Africa is a rare exception, a country with an extremely enlightened legislation and indeed a recognition of civil partnership. Would that India was anywhere near being so tolerant and enlightened.

Margaret Chatterjee is the best person to comment on Gandhi's friendship with Kallenbach. She has written so sympathetically of Gandhi's friendships with both Kallenbach and Henry Polak in Gandhi's Jewish Friends. Quite clearly this was the friendship that changed Kallenbach's life, a rich Johannesburg architect, who became one of Gandhi's earliest European followers, drastically reduced his material way of life to embrace Gandhi's ideal of ashram poverty, deeply engaged with Gandhi over all matters dietary, and came to the rescue of Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns when he bought Tolstoy farm outside Johannesburg to meet the crucial needs of Gandhi's struggle against the pass law and internal restrictions on migration. There is a wonderful story of their journey to England together in 1914 when Gandhi criticised him for his expensive pair of binoculars and Kallenbach ended (or was it Gandhi?) by joyfully throwing them into the sea.

But a sexual relationship ? Obviously one will have to look at the evidence Lelyveld has discovered but on face value it seems improbable. The earliest use of the fast by Gandhi was when a case of sodomy came to light between two boys at the Phoenix Farm ashram. Gandhi was apparently in great distress and Kallenbach tried to dissuade him from so extreme a response but eventually concurred, and indeed there were to be two fasts, presumably because the boys after the ending of the first had renewed their affair. By any modern standards Gandhi had pretty regressive attitudes to human sexuality and just possibly behind brahmacharya, his vow of celibacy, lay some repressed element in his makeup. But we know that Charles Andrews felt strongly attracted to Gandhi but Gandhi increasingly kept him at an emotional distance, and the same was true of Madeleine Slade. Are we seriously to believe Gandhi made this extraordinary exception of Kallenbach ?

It might be best to respond to your other slurs on Gandhi's role in the public sphere on narrative order.

You point to some radical inconsistency in Gandhi the opponent of Empire working as an ambulance driver in the wars against the Boers and the Zulus. Firstly Gandhi will make no sense unless you accept his commitment to oaths of loyalty, his belief that Victoria had pledged Britain to care for its

Empire and it was not to be till the outrageous massacre at Amritsar in 1919 that Gandhi brought himself to break that oath of loyalty and engage in non-violent resistance. But secondly you need to know that the ambulance brigades were made up of all the different Indian communities in South Africa and was an experiment in nation-building and that Gandhi was deeply moved by the courage of the Boers and here was one inspiration for his freedom struggle, though in his case a nonviolent one. And yes it is true Gandhi was too much a man of his times to reach out to the black majority in South Africa; that was an expansion of the imagination that his son Manilal was to undergo.

Then you find fault with Gandhi's attitudes to one of the leaders of India's Muslim community, Jinnah, and the leader of the untouchables, Ambedkar. Here Gandhi's battle was as an integral nationalist. Jinnah had emerged at the Lucknow Congress of 1916 as the promising new leader of Congress but it had come at the price of accepting separate electorates for Indian Muslims. Gandhi did not contest Jinnah's leadership on grounds of his being a Muslim but his being possibly the classic Anglicised Indian. As Gandhi sought to make sense of where the nationalist movement had reached on his return from South Africa he was keenly aware that it had to change from one led by a westernised elite and pursuing a narrow constitutional path to one reaching out to the Indian population at large, above all to its peasantry, and becoming an authentic mass movement. He tried to undo the damage as he saw it of a separate electorate, which threatened a divide between Hindus and Muslims, by seeking an alliance with the Khilafat movement. But indeed when this petered out the damage to communal relationships became all too apparent.

It was for this reason that Gandhi was so passionately opposed to Ambedkar's campaign for separate electorates for Indian untouchables. Ambedkar, a brilliant constitutional lawyer and chief architect of the Indian Constitution, was a formidable opponent. Gandhi's attack on untouchability was all of a piece. He sought the entrance of untouchables to caste Hindu temples as way of their integration into the caste system. He embarked on a fast unto death in Poona in 1932 at Ambedkar's demand for separate electorate as a means of staving off any further division of the Indian body politic. And who would in comparable circumstance accept separate electorates for Afro-Americans or Hispanics in America or ethnic minorities in the UK?

But his stand had of course consequences. Jinnah, who might have ended his days as a barrister in London, returned to play the communal card, with disastrous consequences. However, at the end, knowing he was dying, he tried to steer the new state of Pakistan towards religious tolerance and to extend friendship to the Hindu minority.

You also ridicule Gandhi's practice of satyagraha. Yes, it is true that violence in 1919 just possibly might have led to independence in the same way as in Ireland. John Grigg made this case a long time ago. But equally

probably the colonial state would have had the power to fight back. It was this awareness that led Aurobindo Ghose, Gandhi's most outstanding precursor as a national leader, to recognise that a tactic of violence would not work. And yes, satyagraha began to look fragile as a strategy as the world closed in on World War II. At least over Czechoslovakia Gandhi was no appeaser and indeed the Czechs did possess the powers to resist Germany by conventional means, had they not been betrayed at Munich. And yes Gandhi had no answer to the plight of the European Jews though possibly had a case against immigration into Palestine. Was he so misguided in 1942 ? The evidence suggests that he had every expectation that the British would stay on anyway to protect India for their own imperial interests against Japan and you overlook the obvious fact that the Japanese were allied to the Indian National Army under Subhas Chandra Bose and, had they won in 1944 – in fact all the evidence suggests they were at the end of their advance – Bose would have mitigated any Japanese brutality. The whole point of satyagraha is an argument about consequences, that a violent struggle can but lead to a violent society. Hence his calling off the campaign in 1922 following the violence at Chauri Chaura. Here is a wisdom that was widely recognised in Eastern Europe in 1989 and possibly today in the Arab Spring.

I wonder if you can bring yourself to see Churchill's bête-noire in a more charitable light?



## Letter

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### **Gandhi's message to mega-rich Indians: Trusteeship**

Gandhi had a plan for economic regeneration of India and villages constituted the basis of it. He believed that since India lives in villages the foremost need is to rid the villages of their poverty. It has been a long time since Gandhi emphasized upon it however even today Indian villages lack basic infrastructure like good roads, schools, colleges, hospitals, electricity, water, toilets, etc. Successive governments have failed terribly to improve the situation. Can the Gandhian concept of trusteeship make a difference ? In trusteeship the rich act as trustees of the poor and use their wealth for the benefit of the disadvantaged. Today industrialists like Bill Gates are doing just that. Imagine the change that India will go through if one mega-rich person in India like Mukesh Ambani were to adopt one village each and provide basic infrastructure to it like good roads, one good school for girls and one for boys, one college, electricity, piped water, health centre, toilets, etc. India which has many mega-rich industrialists, players and actors will be transformed in a decade because if these highly successful professionals will take on the challenge then they will execute it professionally and successfully. And perhaps their very talented wives can ensure the continuity of good work.  
*Dr Anupma Kaushik, Associate Professor, Banasthali University, India*

# Book Review

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**Ishmael: An Advance of the Mind and Spirit** Daniel Quinn Random House, New York ISBN 978-0-553-37540-4

According to many systems of Indian Philosophy the ultimate aim of human life is liberation – which means freedom from worldly life. The soul of the individual human being is supposed to unite with the Universal Soul which is referred to as Paramatma, Brahman, etc. For the attainment of this ultimate goal one has to lead a life of renunciation – a simple life without greed, without possessions, etc. That is to say that such great human beings would be ‘Leavers’ and not ‘Takers’ – categories which the author of this book divides human beings into.

Human beings appeared on this planet some three million years ago; till about 8000 BCE they lived like other living things – plants and animals – belonging to the earth and did not try to dominate it – Leavers, not Takers.

The practice of agriculture proved to be a turning point. This was a very big moment – the biggest in human history up to this point. The limitations of the hunting-gathering life had kept humans in check for three million years. With agriculture, those limitations vanished, and the rise was meteoric. Settlement gave rise to division of labor. Division of labour gave rise to technology. With the rise of technology came trade and commerce. With trade and commerce came mathematics and literacy and science, and all the rest.

This was also the moment when humans became Takers with disastrous consequences. Humans now started claiming that the world belonged to them. To quote the author, “The problem is that man’s conquest of the world has itself devastated the world. And in spite of all the mastery we have attained, we don’t have enough mastery to stop devastating the world – or to repair the devastation we have already wrought. We have poured our poisons into the world as though it were a bottomless pit – and we go on pouring our poisons into the world. We have gobbled up irreplaceable resources as though they could never run out – and we go on gobbling them up. It is hard to imagine how the world could survive another century of this abuse, but nobody is really doing anything about it. It is a problem our children will have to solve, or their children.”

The author searches for a law that keeps the living community together. It organizes things on the biological level just as the law of gravity organizes things on the macroscopic level. The law we are looking for here is much like that with respect to civilizations. It is not about civilizations, but it applies to civilizations in the same way that it applies to flocks of birds and herds of deer. It makes no distinction between human civilizations and beehives. It applies to all species without distinction. This is one reason why the law has remained undiscovered in

human culture. According to Taker mythology, man is by definition a biological exception. Out of all the millions of species, only one is an end product. The world was not made to produce frogs or katydids or sharks or grasshoppers. It was made to produce man. Man therefore stands alone, unique and infinitely apart from all the rest.

Basic ecological and planetary systems are being impacted by the Taker Thunderbolt, and that impact increases in intensity every year. Basic, irreplaceable resources are being devoured every year — and they are being devoured more greedily every year. Whole species are disappearing as a result of human encroachment and they are disappearing in greater numbers every year. Pessimists, or it may be that they are realists, look down and say, ‘Well, the crash may be twenty years off or maybe as much as fifty years off.’ Actually it could happen anytime. There is no way to be sure.

The author claims that in the Leavers’ culture, i.e. before 8000 BCE, crime, mental illness, suicide and drug addiction were great rarities. How does Mother culture account for this ? Mother culture says it is because the Leavers are just too primitive to have these things. In other words, crime, mental illness, suicide and drug addiction are features of an advanced culture.

The change in human life-style from the stage of hunter-gatherers to that of agriculture was somewhat slow and reversible. The practitioners of agriculture did not pressurize the hunter-gatherers to adopt agriculture as a way of life. There are innumerable instances in human history where some people changed over from hunter gatherers to agriculture – but reverted back to hunter gatherers. Even in the twenty-first century there are small communities here and there, practicing the life of the Leavers.

The author defines culture as the sum total of accumulation. It comes into being when members of one generation begin to pass information and techniques to the next. The next generation takes this accumulation, adds its own discoveries and refinements, and passes the total on to the next. Chimpanzees in the wild are already passing along tool-making and tool-using behaviours to their young. Human culture began with human life, which is to say with *Homo habilis*. The people who were *Homo habilis* passed to their children all they had learned, and as each generation contributed its mite, there was an accumulation of this knowledge. All this was passed to *Homo erectus*, then to *Homo sapiens*, then to *Homo sapiens sapiens*, ie, modern man.

The African continent was explored in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was always referred to as the ‘Dark Continent’ by Western scholars. “When the people of Western culture encountered the hunter-gatherers of Africa and America, it was thought that these were people who had degenerated from the natural, agricultural

state, people who had lost the arts they had been born with. The Takers had no idea that they were looking at what they themselves had known, there was no 'before'. Creation had occurred just a few thousand years previously, and Man the Agriculturalist had immediately set about the task of building civilization.” What are we doing at present ? Humankind is enacting the destruction of the world. When you have more food than you need, then the gods have no power over you.

I have reserved the most interesting intriguing part of this book for the end part of my review. The book is actually written as a novel starting with an advertisement in a newspaper “TEACHER seeks pupil. Must have an earnest desire to save the world. Apply in person”.

The teacher happens to be a gorilla. There was a poster in that room where the Gorilla lived: “With Man gone, will there be hope for the gorilla ?” The entire foregoing story is told by a gorilla, the teacher or guru, to the pupil (our hero, the author) in a sign language. The book ends with the departure of the gorilla and this observation: “ With the gorilla gone, will there be hope for man?”

The gorilla does give a programme for saving the world before his departure. The Leavers are the endangered species most critical to the world — not because they are humans but because they alone can show the destroyers of the world that there is no one right way to live. And then, of course, we must spit out the fruit of that forbidden tree. We must absolutely and forever relinquish the idea that we know who should live and who should die on this planet. We should try to reinvent and emulate the Leavers’ culture. In the modern context that is the Gandhian formula of simple living in a decentralized society full of self sufficient villages growing their own food, clothing and other needs, and self governing Panchayats. The code of conduct could only be the eleven vows or vratas of Gandhi, viz, Nonviolence, Truth, Non-stealing, Brahmacharya, Non-avarice, Physical Labour, Control of Palette, Religious Harmony, Fearlessness, Swadeshi, Abolition of Untouchability.

The book has received rave reviews. One of them reads:

“From now on I will divide the books I have read into two categories – the ones I read before *Ishmael* and those read after”.

**M.R. Rajagopalan**, *Managing Trustee, Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram – 624 302, Tamil Nadu, India*

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**Gandhi Foundation Annual Report 2010-11**

The 20 page Annual Report is available on request from the Editor, George Paxton.

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# Money: Fact or Fiction ?

*Anita McKone and Robert J. Burrowes*

Far from being a 'hard fact' of life, money is actually just a bunch of numbers held in the imagination – a symbol of being allowed to do things, regardless of whether or not they are good for you; a symbol of being allowed to have things, regardless of whether or not they are what you need. You cannot eat, drink, breathe or make clothes or shelter out of numbers and if no-one else believes in the value of your particular numbers they have no power to achieve anything at all. A bag of oranges and a t-shirt have no equivalence in function (you cannot eat a t-shirt or wear an orange), although they may be valued equivalent financially. Certainly, neither of these is equivalent to a similarly priced six-pack of soft drink, which has no positive biological function at all. Numbers in your bank account are not a reliable resource for survival. If you desire security, it makes most sense to live in the real world with genuine economy.

The most self-reliant and self-sustaining economy is one where each individual feels powerful enough to take what they need for themselves for survival, care about and cooperate with others to make sure that all people's basic needs are met, and remain mindful of the needs and limitations of the living environment that sustains human life over the long term. This economy is based on trust, truth and balance and does not require money for its successful functioning. Working against this ideal is the human propensity for fear and paranoia (the unconscious remembering and inappropriate projection of fear) and the dysfunctional behaviours that arise from these: unnecessary hoarding and the use of violence to steal resources in excess of one's actual needs from those who are deprived of basics. Over the course of human history, and particularly since civilisation, lack of self, community and environmental trust appears to have been intensifying, leading to the situation today where people have no land of their own and are forced to work as obedient 'slaves' for money in order to buy back the basics they need for survival, and (if they are lucky) the entertainment they need to distract themselves from the pain of this unloving and unjust system. In the current economic system, money has value and people are intrinsically valueless unless they gain money via self-denial, legalised violence (e.g. war) or legalised trickery (e.g. advertising). The problem with a non-trust based economy is that it is self-reinforcing – the more insecure people feel, the more unethically, violently and desperately they behave, increasing everyone else's insecurity. Distrust and panic have a tendency to spiral and spread. So, what are some of the conscious actions you can take to rebuild (or perhaps create for the first time) an economy of trust that helps everyone feel secure ?

These are some of our ideas:



1. Use your current excess money to buy resources, set up technologies and gain skills which will allow you to produce/collect the food, energy, water and other resources you will need in future without further use of money.
2. Look for ways in which you can contribute to others' basic needs and receive what you need without the use of money (e.g. swapping or giving produce from your vegie garden when you have more than you need).
3. Consider helping people with specific needs when they ask you and asking for specific help when you need it, rather than simply giving or accepting impractical or untimely gifts on the basis that 'it's the thought that counts'. Symbols can make you feel good, but gifts that meet real needs are more functional.
4. Work voluntarily on projects that feel worthwhile to you and ask for donations of money or appropriate material resources to support you.
5. Consider working for enough money to provide yourself and your family with basic needs only, rather than luxuries, and think creatively about how to make your life vibrant and interesting without the use of money.
6. Lend your excess money within your local community without asking for interest.
7. If you are renting, try negotiating a rent reduction with your landlord on the basis of your contribution to saving the planet (for their benefit as well as yours).
8. Run a local business for no profit.
9. When you use money, support businesses owned and run by members of your local community. As far as you can, boycott major chainstores. A few large retailers are fast becoming the wealthiest companies in the world and are doing phenomenal damage to the mainstream economy, local communities, poor people and the environment by relentlessly squeezing all of their suppliers in order to provide an endless succession of artificially cheap products to 'addicted' consumers. Increasingly, workers are being more heavily exploited and the cheap labour of illegal immigrants, who live in appalling conditions, is being used by primary and secondary producers in a desperate attempt to prevent their own bankruptcy as they compete to sell their products to the ruthless companies that control the retail market. Also, the quality of goods is sacrificed again and again as manufacturers fear to lose the edge on competitive pricing. This insanity stops with your decisions as a consumer (and local producer) however. All 'big' business relies on the contribution of each and every 'small' consumer. If you invest your money and energy in self-reliant production, local business and the trust economy, you remove the financial power of 'Bigism' to do harm. Buying only what you really need makes it easy to boycott supermarkets and other chainstores – these retailers mainly provide unhealthy and unnecessary products anyway.
10. Be prepared to pay more for the minimum you need of local, quality goods. Global 'cheapism' is artificial and, in the end, everyone is paying.

## **A Psychosocial Definition of Money**

In psychosocial terms, money is social permission to control physical resources and other people's behaviour. It is sought to avoid facing one's fear that one is worthless (not worthy of existence), powerless (not able to act to defend/support one's own existence) and unloved (not going to receive willing help from others to sustain one's existence). Money is therefore a *substitute* for self-worth, self-power and communal care and does nothing to decrease the individual's sense of insecurity. This is why it functions as an addictive drug, promising security but only delivering momentary delusory relief from fear followed by a resurgence of the underlying anxiety and the repeated craving for more. Those who suffer this addiction most intensely are not satisfied with *any* level of monetary gain, but seek more money regardless of their capacity to use it for any practical purpose in their own lives (or even their own lifetimes), regardless of the means they use to gain it (e.g. false advertising, corruption and violence) and regardless of the effect of their behaviour on the physical environment and the people around them. It is difficult to get money addicts to perceive that their behaviour is damaging to themselves and others – they have a mental screen in place that denies the reality of any information that contradicts their false belief in the drug. Money addicts promote their drug as being 'the real thing' partly to justify their addiction to themselves and partly to con others into cooperating with, rather than providing impediments to, their addiction. This has led to the unfortunate situation where those who collect and hoard the most money are seen by many people as the most successful, competent and well-adjusted members of society, rather than being recognised as deeply insecure and in need of social and psychological help to deal with their emotional problems more functionally. Ultimately, an economic system that uses no money at all is indicative of the greatest emotional strength and psychological health of its members, showing a level of self-trust and trust in others which is sadly lacking in modern society where money has become the basis for almost all human interactions.

The above is an extract from *The Flame Tree Project* which can be read in full on line as can another paper by the same authors, who live in Australia.

The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth <http://tinyurl.com/flametree>

Why Violence? <http://tinyurl.com/whyviolence>

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**Buddhist Celebration** at the London Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park, on Saturday 18 June 2011 at 2pm. Devotional music and dance and speeches followed at 5pm by refreshments.

**Hiroshima Day** – Saturday 6 August at Tavistock Square 12 noon to 1pm.

**Nagasaki Day** – Tuesday 9 August an ecumenical service in Westminster Cathedral at 6.30pm in memory of Franz Jagerstatter followed at 7.45 by a Peace Walk to Battersea Park .

